

## **TECHNICAL APPENDIX 8.4: ASSESSMENT OF DESIGNATED AND PROTECTED LANDSCAPES**

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## 1. Technical Appendix 8.4: Assessment of Designated and Protected Landscapes

### 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The following statutory designated landscapes, or landscapes otherwise protected by the planning system, were identified in the baseline review as potentially experiencing landscape effects as a result of the Proposed Development:

#### National Context

- Glen Affric National Scenic Area (NSA);
- Wild Land Area (WLA) 19: Braeroy – Glenshirra – Creag Meagaidh; and
- WLA 24: Central Highlands

#### Local Context

- Loch Ness and Duntelchaig Special Landscape Area (SLA); and
- Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA.

1.1.2 The above areas are illustrated in Figures 8.2.1, 8.2.2, 8.3.1 and 8.3.2, and assessed in the following tables, in accordance with criteria outlined in section 8.5 of Chapter 8 of the EIA Report.

1.1.3 The assessment of designated and protected landscapes gives consideration to effects on landscape character and identified Key Qualities (identified in WLAs) and Special Qualities (identified in SLAs). Conclusions made during the assessment of Landscape Character Types (LCTs) (see Appendix 8.5) are used to feed into this assessment and are cross referenced as necessary. Evaluation of sensitivity to development of the type proposed and magnitude of change has been undertaken for all relevant Key Qualities / Special Qualities. Given the status of these Qualities, the value is considered to be universally high. Therefore the sensitivity rating is based on susceptibility to change only.

1.1.4 The assessment of Key Qualities / Special Qualities has given cognisance to and is adapted from the following draft guidance documents:

- *Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities* (SNH<sup>1</sup>, now NatureScot, 2018<sup>2</sup>); and
- *Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas – Technical Guidance* (NatureScot, 2020)<sup>3</sup>.

1.1.5 The method for assessment of Special Landscape Qualities gives consideration to the principles outlined in SNH working draft guidance (SNH, 2018)<sup>2</sup>, taking account of the relationship with landscape character effects, as described in Appendix 8.5.

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) formally changed their name to NatureScot on 24 August 2020. Many of their documents referred to in this EIA report were published prior to this date. As such reference is still made to SNH where appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Natural Heritage. (2018). *Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities. Working Draft 11, November 2018.*

<sup>3</sup> NatureScot. (2020). *Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas: Technical Guidance.* Published September 2020.

- 1.1.6 The final conclusion on the significance of effect for each designated or protected landscape considers the effects on Key Qualities / Special Qualities and landscape character.
- 1.1.7 This assessment does not include cumulative landscape effects which are discussed in Appendix 8.7.

## 1.2 National Context

**Table 1.2.1: Glen Affric NSA**

| Landscape Baseline  |   |  |                     |
|---|---|--|---------------------|
| <b>Description</b>  | This NSA, located 11.6km from the Proposed Development, comprises a range of high conical peaks enclosing a long, narrow and steep-sided valley. Some of the lower slopes are covered by tracts of native Caledonian pine forest, interspersed with patches of birch woodland, transitioning to exposed moorland towards the west. Water is present in the glen in the form of wide rivers, tumbling burns and lochs, the most prominent of these being Loch Affric. The lack of buildings and other human artefacts contribute to a sense of remoteness, although the baronial Affric Lodge introduces a human element into this otherwise wild landscape. The glen is also popular with visitors, and the old drove road which travels through the glen is now often used by hikers and hill walkers. |  |                     |
| <b>Landscape Value</b>  | This is a nationally valued landscape, which is appreciated for its scenic qualities and natural heritage. It is therefore considered to have a <b>high</b> landscape value.  |  |                     |
| Assessment of Effects on Special Qualities  |   |  |                     |
| Special Quality   | Sensitivity   | Potential Effects  | Magnitude of Change |
| <p>One of the most beautiful glens in Scotland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dramatic mountains with high corries rising above a narrow glen.</li> </ul> | High  | <p>The Proposed Development would be experienced from summits and elevated areas on the northern side of the glen (see VPs 11, 20 and 21) and some elevated areas on the southern side of the glen (see VP12, just outside the NSA), as well as some lower south-east facing slopes. An appreciation of the dramatic mountains can be sensed from many parts of the NSA, including these areas. From the vast majority of locations, the Proposed Development would be seen within the context of the Operational Development turbines (often as tips or as an extension to existing development) and other wind developments, therefore in a part of the context already affected by wind turbines. From northern summits, the perceived influence of wind development may increase marginally but this would not affect the appreciation of the dramatic mountains, high corries and narrow glen of the NSA.</p> | Low                 |

|  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ancient Caledonian forest, grading to open moorland in the west.</li> <li>• Lochs with rocky shores, small bays and promontories, occasional beaches and wooded isles.</li> <li>• Fast flowing and broad rivers, tumbling burns with falls.</li> </ul>  | <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Low</p> | <p>In wooded areas, the Proposed Development would be screened by trees and not perceptible. In areas of open moorland there is theoretical visibility from some upper slopes, although visibility decreases to the west-south-west. It would usually be seen within the context of the Operational Development turbines and therefore in a part of the context already affected by wind turbines where it would not alter the experience of the the transition from ancient Caledonian forest to open moorland.</p> <p>There is no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from the shores of Loch Affric or Loch Beinn a’ Mheadhoin, and it is therefore not anticipated to have an impact on the appreciation of these qualities. This would also be true from other parts of the NSA, where the loch shores are experienced in the distance.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would be unlikely to affect any appreciation of the landscape relating to these qualities.</p> | <p>Negligible</p> <p>Negligible</p> <p>Negligible</p> |
|  | <p>Overall Medium-high</p>             | <p>Although there may be a very marginal increase in the perceived influence of wind development on northern summits in the NSA, this Special Quality would not be affected by the Proposed Development. In particular, the appreciation of the dramatic mountains and high corries surrounding the glen would not be affected.</p>  | <p>Overall Negligible-low</p>                         |
| <p>A glen of transition, from dense forest to exposed moorland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travelling westwards, the wooded glen gives way to open, exposed moorland and bog. The mountains of Kintail provide a spectacular backdrop. At the far end of Glen Affric, three glens open up leading deeper into the hills.</li> </ul> | <p>Medium</p>                          | <p>The Proposed Development would not be perceptible from the wooded glen floor. From more open areas of moorland in the west of the glen, it would be visible but barely perceptible amongst other developments of the Operational Development and Dunmaglass, and other wind farms in the same direction of view. The sense of distance and seperation from the development, as well as context of other similar features, would mitigate potential effects on this Special Quality.</p> <p>The experience of a transition from woodland to moorland, and sense of exposure and openness in the west, would not be affected by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>There would be no discernible change to this Special Quality.</p>  | <p>Negligible</p>                                     |

|   |              |   |                        |
|---|--------------|---|------------------------|
| <p>A journey into wildness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strong feeling of leaving civilisation when travelling westwards, as roads give way to tracks and then paths, and moving into a harsh environment where natural forces dominate, often reinforced by strong winds and rain.</li> <li>• Sense of calm and shelter within trees of the eastern glen, where surrounding mountains can be clearly visible in the sunshine.</li> <li>• The general absence of buildings and other obvious man-made features lends the glen a sense of remoteness.</li> </ul> | High         | <p>There would be theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from some of the northern slopes of the glen, although visibility would generally decrease when travelling westward. It would usually be seen within the context of the Operational Development turbines and therefore in a part of the context already affected by wind turbines and seen to the east, which is already perceived to be more 'developed' in relative terms. In the western part of the glen, the Proposed Development would appear particularly distant, and often barely perceptible, whereby it would be less visible than existing wind developments. It would therefore not change the sense of wildness or any appreciation of the landscape relating to the dominance of natural forces.</p>  | Negligible             |
|   | Medium       | <p>Theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development in the eastern glen is limited to upper slopes, and is unlikely to be perceptible from wooded areas. The sense of calm and shelter of the eastern glen would therefore not be affected.</p>   | Negligible             |
|   | High         | <p>The sense of remoteness associated with the general lack of man-made features would not be affected by the Proposed Development, which would be introduced into a separate and distant area where there are already similar features, such as the Operational Development, Corrimony and Dunmaglass Wind Farms, as well as other wind farms in a similar part of the landscape context.</p> <p>Some man-made features are perceptible from parts of the NSA (such as fences, tracks, Affric Lodge etc), but are relatively small and un-intrusive in nature. This would also follow for the Proposed Development, which would occupy a small and distant part of elevated vistas, with other turbines. Therefore, a marginal increase in the presence of wind turbines may be experienced but this would be virtually imperceptible over an extensive area and perceptible from some localised elevated areas.</p> | Low                    |
|   | Overall High | <p>Although there may be a very marginal increase in the perceived influence of wind development for elevated open parts of the NSA (such as in the north-east), overall, the 'journey into wildness' would not be notably affected by the Proposed Development. The west of the NSA would be less affected and the overall sense of remoteness would remain.</p>   | Overall Negligible-low |

|   |        |   |            |
|---|--------|---|------------|
| <p>The prominence of water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the east the valley floor is filled by Lochs Affric and Beinn a'Mheadhoin, in the west the glens contain fast-flowing rivers with pools and riffles, and rocky burns tumbling down the mountainsides.</li> <li>The often-present rain, drizzle, mist or snow adds another dimension, emphasising the prominence of water within this landscape.</li> </ul> | Low    | <p>The prominence of water in this landscape, in the form of lochs, rivers, burns, rain, drizzle and mist, would not be affected by the Proposed Development. There is limited theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from the valley floor and near the lochs and rivers, and as the lochsides are often lined by woodland the Proposed Development is unlikely to be perceptible from here. Even where visible, the perception of this Special Quality would not be affected.</p>   | Negligible |
| <p>A glen for all seasons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The tranquillity of the lochs and woods, and the wildness of the surrounding mountains attract visitors. The continual changes in mood and colour provide a feast of sensory experiences throughout the year.</li> </ul>   | Low    | <p>The Proposed Development would not affect any appreciation of the landscape relating to the seasonal changes and vast array of sensory experiences. There would be no discernible change to this Special Quality.</p>  | Negligible |
| <p>A historic and popular route through the Highlands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once a drove road, the glen is still popular with walkers of all descriptions.</li> </ul>  | Medium | <p>The Proposed Development would be visible from some open, elevated sections of hill tracks and mountain routes in the NSA, seen within the context of the Operational Development turbines and other wind developments, therefore in a part of the context already affected by wind turbines (see VPs 11, 19, 20 and 21). It would not be experienced on the low level core path around Loch Affric, and the nearest area of visibility would be a glimpsed tip from a track leading up to Màm Sodhail (VP 19). Given the experience of other similar developments, the appreciation of the NSA as a historic and popular route would not be affected.</p> | Negligible |

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|--|---|---|------------|
| <p>Venerable pine forest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Famous stands of ancient Caledonian pine trees in the east, where mature trees add a sense of timelessness to the dramatic setting of loch and mountain.</li> </ul>  | Low   | <p>The qualities associated with this valued woodland, and in particular, the perceived sense of timelessness, would not be affected by the Proposed Development, which would not be perceptible from woodland areas in the east of the glen. From more elevated locations on upper slopes, the Proposed Development may be experienced in vistas that include these ancient trees, but would not detract from their character and setting, given distance, separation, and introduction into an area already characterised by existing wind development.</p>   | Negligible |
| <p>Beautiful Loch Affric</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ancient pine trees surround the loch, providing a foreground to the dramatic backdrop of Carn Eige and Mam Sodhail which tower above the water with their steep and rocky slopes.</li> <li>Views eastward towards a gentler landscape of rolling hills, while westward the eye is led over a sandy beach into a panorama of narrow peaks.</li> </ul> | Medium-high   | <p>The experience and setting of Loch Affric would not be affected by the Proposed Development, which would not be visible from the shores of Loch Affric or the lower slopes of the glen, due largely to landform as well as some tree screening. From more elevated locations, Loch Affric also sits as an important and highly valued feature in the glen and is a focus for views in multiple directions. The Proposed Development is perceptible in these elevated views but would not detract from the loch and is often barely perceptible in the context of the Operational Development and other turbines. It is more perceptible from north-eastern summits and slopes (VPs 20, 11, 21), but here Loch Affric is seen in a different direction, in a lower part of these long ranging and panoramic vistas.</p> | Negligible |
| <p>The baronial Affric Lodge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The baronial Affric Lodge, and its surrounding buildings, brings a sense of human order into the heart of a landscape dominated by nature.</li> </ul>  | Low   | <p>The Proposed Development would be introduced to a relatively distant landscape but would be experienced from elevated slopes in the vicinity of Affric Lodge (such as at VP 20). It would not affect appreciation of the lodge, however, and would be barely perceptible in the context of other existing wind development, including the Operational Development.</p>   | Negligible |
| <b>Assessment of Landscape Effects</b>   |   |   |            |
| <b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>   | <p>This is a highly valued landscape. Its wild character and sense of remoteness which are due to the lack of man-made features and perceived dominance of natural elements, particularly in the western glen, make it susceptible to new wind development. However, the wooded and relatively enclosed nature of the glen, along with the presence of existing wind development to the east, reduce its sensitivity to the type of development proposed, although the more open moorland slopes and the dramatic mountains which surround the glen are potentially more susceptible to change.</p> |   |            |



|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <p><b>Magnitude of Change</b></p> | <p>There would be no direct change to this landscape. The ZTV indicates intervisibility with the Proposed Development from upper slopes and summits particularly on the northern side of the glen. The Proposed Development would be perceptible from these elevated areas and experienced in the context of the Operational Development and other wind developments in this direction. It would be more perceptible from elevated north-eastern parts of the NSA (such as VPs 21 and 11) and visibility would decrease in the western part of the NSA, where turbines would be barely perceptible behind the Operational Development (see VP 19 and 20) and in the context of other wind development. From low lying parts of the NSA, it would be not experienced at all.</p> <p>For open, elevated parts of the NSA, there may be a very marginal increase in the perceived influence of wind development. This would not affect the majority of Special Qualities, where a <b>negligible</b> magnitude of effect would occur, but as described above, this is anticipated to result in a <b>negligible-low</b> magnitude of change for those Special Qualities relating to the appreciation of dramatic mountains; and the sense of remoteness associated with the general absence of man-made features.</p> |
| <p><b>Effect Significance</b></p> | <p>Effects on this NSA would be indirect, resulting from the experience of the Proposed Development turbines within the wider context. These would virtually always be seen in the context of existing turbines, or other wind farms in the wider landscape. Although the Proposed Development may increase the perceived dominance of wind development in the wider visual context of this landscape, this would not change the Special Qualities or characteristics of the NSA.</p> <p>The effect significance is therefore considered to be <b>negligible</b> during construction and operation.</p>  |

**Table 1.2.2: WLA 19: Braeroy – Glenshirra – Creag Meagaidh**

| Landscape Baseline  |  |   |                     |
|---|--|---|---------------------|
| <b>Description</b>  | <p>This WLA, between 17km and 37km due south of the Proposed Development, extends across south Inverness-shire, west Badenoch and Strathspey and north Lochaber. It consists of a group of hills that run east-west, divided by the rivers Roy and Spey and is characterised by open rolling moorland hills and plateaux which are large in scale. The northern hills have simple, open and sweeping slopes while the southern hills tend to be steeper and higher with corries, cliffs and crags. The hills are penetrated by a number of deep glens which contain dynamic rivers, tributaries and waterfalls as well as glacial and fluvial deposits. Extensive native woodland extends up the hill sides at Creag Meagaidh. The interior of the WLA is concealed from the outside, and vice versa, due to screening by the outer hill slopes. There is a strong contrast of experience between the hill tops and the straths, glens and corries below. Upon the tops an open platform offers views over a succession of elevated hill horizons that extend into the distance. The area is largely uninhabited, although some of the glens within the margins or just outside the WLA include contemporary land use such as estate buildings, stock grazing, forest plantations or electricity power lines. The area attracts visitors for recreation hillwalking, climbing, shooting or fishing, and there are some access tracks. Historic features such as old enclosures, buildings or shielings occur within many of the glens.</p> <p>Wind turbines already influence the context of some parts of the WLA. Summits and higher north facing slopes share intervisibility with turbines of the Stronelaig wind farm whilst north-west facing slopes and summits share intervisibility with the Millennium and Beinneun wind farms.</p> <p>The SNH Map of Relative Wildness (see Figures 8.3.1 and 8.3.2) (obtained from the NatureScot Natural Spaces website (<a href="https://gateway.snh.gov.uk/natural-spaces/">https://gateway.snh.gov.uk/natural-spaces/</a>)) shows the areas of greatest wildness to be to the north and south of a central pass between Glen Roy and Loch Spey, in and around the highest tops. Moderate and lower degrees of wildness are shown through the central pass and around the periphery. It should be noted that the relative wildness mapping does not include Beinneun Wind Farm or the Operational Development and only includes Stronelaig wind farm as a footprint (not a visual envelope). It should also be noted that the description of this WLA (SNH, 2017) was written before Stronelaig was constructed (September 2017).</p> |   |                     |
| <b>Landscape Value</b>                                      | <p>This WLA has been nationally recognised for its wild land characteristics. Its south-eastern part falls within the Ben Alder, Laggan and Glen Banchor SLA and its eastern tip is located within the Cairngorms National Park. Landscape value is therefore considered to be <b>high</b>.</p>  |   |                     |
| Assessment of Effects on Physical and Perceptual Attributes |  |   |                     |
| Attribute   | Sensitivity  | Potential Effects   | Magnitude of Change |
| Perceived naturalness                                       | Medium   | The Proposed Development would not lead to any perceptible changes in vegetation cover within the WLA.  | Negligible          |
| Lack of construction or other artefacts                     | High   | The Proposed Development would appear in the northern context adjacent to the Operational Development from an area of facing slopes in the north-west corner of the WLA at a distance of 17 - 22km and a few higher summit areas to either side of Glen Roy and around Creag Meagaidh towards the south of the WLA at distances typically over 30km from the Proposed | Low (localised)     |

|  |        |   |            |
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|  |        | Development. Apart from a very small area to the east of Glen Roy over 30km from the Proposed Development, it would always be seen in the context of the Operational Development. Areas affected, show a moderate degree of attribute strength in the south of the WLA and a lower strength in the north, although this mapping does not take into account the Operational Development or much closer Stronelaig development. Given the distance, and visibility of existing closer developments, it is considered that the Proposed Development would have a barely perceptible influence on this attribute in areas toward the south of the WLA. Although the increased numbers of turbines would be potentially more noticeable in the north, this would be in the context of a much lower baseline attribute strength where the existing Beinneun, Millennium and the Operational Development already exert considerable influence. The vast majority of the WLA would have no intervisibility with the Proposed Development. |            |
| Little evidence of contemporary land use | High   | The appearance of the Proposed Development in the northern context from small parts of the WLA would be reflective of existing patterns of wind farm development in the surrounding hills in this part of the context. The Proposed Development would be seen at considerable distance and, whilst it may lead to a perceptible increase in wind turbines seen from closer parts of the WLA, it would be unlikely to noticeably increase a sense of contemporary land use in the surrounding context where other, closer sites are already present.   | Negligible |
| Rugged or challenging terrain            | Low    | The Proposed Development would not affect the challenging nature of the terrain.  | Negligible |
| Remoteness and inaccessibility           | Medium | The Proposed Development would not alter accessibility within the WLA. The appearance of the Proposed Development within the northern context would be unlikely to increase the sense of accessibility in the wider landscape as it would be seen in the context of existing wind farms which already give a sense of accessibility within these parts of the landscape context.  | Negligible |
| A sense of sanctuary or solitude         | High   | As described for the attributes 'Lack of construction or other artefacts' and 'Little evidence of contemporary land use', the Proposed Development would be evident in the northern context, adjacent to the Operational Development. Whilst the increased number of turbines may be perceptible from the northern edge of the WLA it would be unlikely to affect the existing sense of sanctuary as the Proposed Development would appear relatively distant, and with other wind farm developments present  | Negligible |

|   |                    |  |                            |
|---|--------------------|--|----------------------------|
|   |                    | at similar and closer distance, it would not appear to increase the sense of other people within the landscape.  |                            |
| Risk or anxiety   | Low                | It is unlikely that the Proposed Development would affect any sense of risk or anxiety.  | Negligible                 |
| Arresting or inspiring qualities / sense of awe   | High               | As described under the attribute 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts', the Proposed Development would appear in the northern context adjacent to the Operational Development from an area of facing slopes in the north-west corner of the WLA at a distance of 17 - 22km and a few higher summit areas to either side of Glen Roy and around Creag Meagaidh towards the south of the WLA at distances typically over 30km from the Proposed Development. Whilst this may form a perceptible addition of wind turbines to these views, it is considered unlikely to result in any change to arresting or inspiring qualities as existing wind turbines are almost always already perceived in these views, usually at closer proximity. Therefore, the sense of expansiveness, scale and drama of the existing mountains and interior of the WLA would remain substantially the same. | Negligible                 |
| Physically challenging  | Medium             | The Proposed Development would not lead to any change to the physically challenging nature of the topography or the sense of physical challenge that is perceived.   | Negligible                 |
| <b>Assessment of Effects on Key Qualities</b>   |                    |  |                            |
| <b>Key Quality</b>  | <b>Sensitivity</b> | <b>Potential Effects</b>   | <b>Magnitude of Change</b> |
| Rounded hills and plateaux that are awe-inspiring in their massive scale and simplicity, whilst geological features and rivers contribute strongly to the sense of naturalness. | High               | The Proposed Development would be intervisible with areas of the hills and plateaux in the north of the WLA and some summits towards the south. From these areas it would generally be seen in a context of other existing wind farms including Stronelaig to the north / north-east and Millennium and Beinneun to the west and would appear adjacent to the Operational Development to the north at a distance of at least 17km. Given the existing intervisibility of the wind turbines, often at closer proximity, and the distance of the Proposed Development from the WLA, it is considered that the Proposed Development would be unlikely to result in any changes to the perceived scale and simplicity of the hills and plateaux that are cited in this Key Quality. The Proposed Development is also unlikely to lead to any perceived alteration to the sense of naturalness. | Negligible                 |
| A strong contrast of experience between the hills and plateaux with the straths, glens and  | High               | The Proposed Development would reflect the existing contrast in experience between the hills and plateaux and straths and glens as it would not be visible from within the straths but would   | Negligible                 |

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| corries, varying in their accessibility, exposure and visibility of human elements.  |  | have similar intervisibility to existing sites with the hill and plateau areas where wind farm development is already experienced within the surrounding and more distant landscape.   |            |
| A hidden interior that is simple in landform and land cover, contributing to a perceived 'emptiness' and a strong sense of remoteness and sanctuary.   | High   | The Proposed Development would not be intervisible with any of the interior areas where the attributes 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' and 'Absence of Contemporary Land Use' are strongest.   | Negligible |
| Access and recreation focused around the margins, with an interior that is visited by few and possesses a sense of solitude, physical challenge and risk.  | High   | The Proposed Development would not be intervisible with any of the interior areas where the attributes 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' and 'Absence of Contemporary Land Use' are strongest. It would not affect any opportunities for access and recreation or the sense of physically challenging terrain or risk. As it would be adjacent to existing wind turbines, it would reflect the appearance of wind turbines within the distant northern context, away from the WLA. | Negligible |
| Long, remote glens that penetrate far into the hills and plateaux: some arresting by virtue of their narrowness and steep side-slopes, and some because of their openness against a surrounding backcloth of towering mountains. | High   | The Proposed Development would not be intervisible with any of the glen areas  | Negligible |
| <b>Assessment of Landscape Effects</b>   |  |  |            |
| <b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>   | This is a highly valued landscape and, though existing wind farm development is already evident within the context from some elevated areas, the wild land attributes are generally sensitive to new development.<br>Landscape sensitivity is considered to be <b>high</b> .   |  |            |
| <b>Magnitude of Change</b>   | The Proposed Development would be located between 17km and 37km from this WLA and therefore would lead to only potential indirect change. There would be limited intervisibility of the Proposed Development within the WLA comprising an area of facing slopes in the north-west corner of the WLA at a distance of 17 - 22km and a few higher summit areas to either side of Glen Roy and around Creag Meagaidh towards the south of the WLA. From these areas it would be evident in the mid to far distance adjacent to the Operational Development, with the exception of a very small area to the east of Glen Roy over 30km from the Proposed Development. Whilst the increased numbers of turbines may be perceptible in this distant part of the setting, the presence of closer wind turbines seen from most of the areas affected are anticipated to lead to very little perceptible change to wild land attributes and perceptual responses. This is anticipated to be Low for 'Lack of construction or other artefacts' within around 22km of the Proposed Development, but would be Negligible for all areas beyond this distance. Magnitude is anticipated to be Negligible for all other attributes.<br>Overall, magnitude of change is anticipated to be <b>locally low</b> on slopes and |  |            |

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
|                                   | <p>summits to the north of Glen Roy within 22km of the Proposed Development but would otherwise be <b>negligible</b>.</p>   |
| <p><b>Effect Significance</b></p> | <p>The Proposed Development would affect only very small parts of the WLA, at considerable distance and where a context of existing wind farm development is usually already perceived. This existing context of wind turbines, would result in little perceptible change to the wild land attributes and perceptual responses, limited to only a small increase in perceived numbers of wind turbines in the mid-ground of the surrounding context from a relatively small area in the north of the WLA where existing attribute levels are already lower. As such, this is considered to lead to only a small perceived change in one in a very localised area of the WLA.</p> <p>A <b>locally minor</b> effect, limited to a very localised area of the WLA on the summits and facing slopes of mountains within 22km of the Proposed Development. The effect on the WLA as a whole is anticipated to be <b>negligible</b>.</p> <p>There would be no perceptual degree of effect to any of the WLA Key Qualities.</p> <p>The integrity of the WLA would not be affected.</p> |

**Table 1.2.3: WLA 24: Central Highlands**

| Landscape Baseline  |   |  |                     |
|---|---|--|---------------------|
| <b>Description</b>  | <p>This WLA, located from 10km to 45km to the west of the Proposed Development, extends over a large area across the central Highlands, comprising a diverse landscape of mountains, glens and peatland. The mountains are large in scale, often with steep and rugged slopes, and appear interlocking, although they are cut by a number of glens running west-east. Water is often a dominating feature in these deep glens, in the form of lochs, rivers and burns. Small tracts of native woodland can be found in some parts of this WLA, mainly along watercourses and on inaccessible slopes. Human settlement is largely absent apart from a small number of estate lodges located mostly in the glens, although the area is frequented by tourists and visitors, and used for various recreational activities including hill walking, mountain biking, fishing and deerstalking. The absence of modern human artefacts contributes to the sense of remoteness of this WLA, although hydroelectric dams and occasional conifer plantations act as evidence of human landuse.</p> <p>Wind farm development is a notable feature of the eastern landscape context, seen from upland areas and ridges within 10km of the WLA boundary. The Operational Development and sites at Corrimony, Millenium, Beinneun and Fairburn are all within 10km of the WLA to the east. Sites on the eastern site of the Great Glen are also seen more distantly within this context from upland areas towards the east of the WLA. However, there are no wind turbines within the WLA and no intervisibility with wind turbines from the lower lying valleys between the ridges.</p> <p>The SNH Map of Relative Wildness (see Figures 8.3.1 and 8.3.2) (obtained from the SNH Natural Spaces website (<a href="https://gateway.snh.gov.uk/natural-spaces/">https://gateway.snh.gov.uk/natural-spaces/</a>)) shows a predominantly high degree of wildness across the upland areas throughout the WLA. A lower to moderate strength of wildness is indicated across higher areas closer to the boundary of the WLA, typically up to the 5km from its eastern edge. Lower strength of wildness is also seen through many of the glen areas.</p> <p>It should be noted that although the wildness mapping includes consideration of Corrimony, Fairburn and Millenium Wind Farms, it does not include Beinneun Wind Farm or the Operational Development in the baseline. It should also be noted that site work for the description of this WLA (SNH, 2017) was undertaken in 2013 and 2014, before Beinneun Wind Farm and the Operational Development were built in 2017 and 2016 / 2017 respectively although the description completed in 2017 may have given consideration to these sites.</p> |  |                     |
| <b>Landscape Value</b>                                      | This WLA has been nationally recognised for its wild land characteristics. Much of it is also included within NSA and SLA designations and therefore, landscape value is considered to be <b>high</b> .   |  |                     |
| Assessment of Effects on Physical and Perceptual Attributes |   |  |                     |
| Attribute   | Sensitivity   | Potential Effects  | Magnitude of Change |
| Perceived naturalness                                       | Medium  | There would be no change to vegetation cover within the WLA and therefore the sense of perceived naturalness is considered unlikely to be changed. | Negligible          |

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|--|--------|---|------------|
| Lack of construction or other artefacts  | High   | The Proposed Development would be evident in the eastern context from high ground, typically limited to within 10km from the WLA boundary and occasionally further towards the centre. Apart from a few very small areas, it would only affect areas where the Operational Development is already intervisible and, from all areas south of Glen Cannich would be seen to the rear of existing, closer turbines of Corrimony Wind Farm or the Operational Development. North of Glen Cannich, the Proposed Development would perceptibly increase the surrounding spread of wind turbines but would still always be seen within a context whereby existing wind turbines are intervisible at a similar distance. NatureScot attribute mapping indicates that, despite the lack of inclusion of the Operational Development, almost all areas where the Proposed Development would be intervisible show a lower strength of this attribute. Therefore, the Proposed Development would lead to little perceptible decrease in the strength of this attribute. The vast majority of the WLA would have no intervisibility with the Proposed Development. | Low        |
| Little evidence of contemporary land use | High   | As described for 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' above, the Proposed Development would be evident in the eastern context from high ground but would almost always be seen either to the rear of or adjacent to existing operational wind farms. Whilst there may be a perceptibly increased spread of wind farm development in the south-eastern context from areas north of Glen Cannich, this would appear within a context of other wind farm development and would lead to only a limited increase in the perception of contemporary land use in this context.  | Low        |
| Rugged or challenging terrain            | Low    | The Proposed Development would not affect the challenging nature of the terrain.  | Negligible |
| Remoteness and inaccessibility           | Medium | The Proposed Development would not alter accessibility within the WLA. The appearance of the Proposed Development within the context would be unlikely to increase any sense of accessibility in the wider landscape as it would be seen to the rear of, or adjacent to existing wind farms which already give a sense of accessibility within the part of the landscape context.   | Negligible |



| A sense of sanctuary or solitude   | High        | As described for the attributes 'Lack of construction or other artefacts' and 'Little evidence of contemporary land use', the Proposed Development would be evident in the easterly context to the rear of or adjacent to existing wind farms at similar distance. The increase in development in this part of the context may be perceptible from some areas but would be unlikely to affect the existing sense of sanctuary as the Proposed Development would not appear to move activities or contemporary land use any closer to the WLA. No discernible change is therefore anticipated to this perceptual response.  | Negligible          |
|--|-------------|--|---------------------|
| Risk or anxiety  | Low         | It is unlikely that the Proposed Development would affect any sense of risk or anxiety.  | Negligible          |
| Arresting or inspiring qualities / sense of awe                                | High        | As described under the attribute 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts', from all parts of the WLA to the south of Glen Cannich where the Proposed Development would be intervisible it would be seen to the rear of existing turbines. It would therefore be unlikely to affect any arresting qualities. Whilst it may be seen to increase the spread of wind turbines within the south-east context from areas north of Glen Cannich and would therefore create a greater focus in views the presence of existing wind turbines in this part of the context is likely to limit the effect whilst the more arresting qualities are currently more associated with the unaffected glens and more westerly mountain views. | Low                 |
| Physically challenging   | Medium      | The Proposed Development would not lead to any change to the physically challenging nature of the topography or the sense of physical challenge that is perceived.   | Negligible          |
| Assessment of Effects on Key Qualities   |             |  |                     |
| Key Quality  | Sensitivity | Potential Effects  | Magnitude of Change |
| An extensive and awe-inspiring range of large scale, high and rugged mountains | Medium      | The Proposed Development would be seen outwith the WLA and the mountainous context in an area where existing wind turbines are already present. The influence of these existing wind farms is recognised in the Key Quality whilst the mountains are appreciated in other areas and when viewing other directions. The Proposed Development is unlikely to alter the appreciation of the mountains or the associated qualities of risk, awe, ruggedness and naturalness or lack of built artefacts and contemporary land use associated with the mountain areas to any greater degree than existing wind farm sites.   | Negligible          |

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|---|---|--|------------|
| An extensive, remote mountain interior with strong qualities of sanctuary and solitude  | High  | The Proposed Development would be intervisible with very few areas in the interior and typically only from areas where the Operational Development turbines are already evident. Additional intervisibility would only occur in a few very small areas where it would be very distant and minimal as only a very small number of turbines. This is likely to lead to a barely discernible change to the experience of the remote interior. | Negligible |
| Deep glens that have steep, arresting side slopes as well as rivers and waterfalls, with some containing lochs and some revealing human land use. | High  | The Proposed Development would generally not be intervisible with glen areas with only limited intervisibility experienced from side slopes of Glen Affric where few turbines would be seen to the rear of the Operational Development (see VPs 19 and 20).  | Negligible |
| Small and extensive areas of native woodland that contribute to the sense of naturalness and highlight some arresting landscape features          | Medium  | The Proposed Development would not alter any areas of woodland.  | Negligible |
| <b>Assessment of Landscape Effects</b>  |   |  |            |
| <b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>  | This is a highly valued landscape and although existing wind farm development is already evident within the context from some elevated parts of the WLA, the wild land attributes are generally sensitive to new development.<br>Landscape sensitivity is considered to be <b>high</b> .  |  |            |
| <b>Magnitude of Change</b>  | <p>The Proposed Development would be intervisible from ridges and mountain summits and higher facing slopes of the WLA towards its eastern edge, generally limited to areas within 10km of the eastern boundary, with occasional small areas affected beyond this distance. Apart from a few very small areas, it would only affect areas where the Operational Development is already intervisible. From all areas south of Glen Cannich the Proposed Development turbines would be seen to the rear of existing, closer turbines of Corrimony Wind Farm or the Operational Development (see VPs 11, 12, 13 and 21). North of Glen Cannich, the Proposed Development would perceptibly increase the surrounding spread of wind turbines but would always be seen within a context whereby existing wind turbines are intervisible at a similar distance and in a similar location (see VP 22). The vast majority of the WLA would have no intervisibility with the Proposed Development and there would be no intervisibility within the remote glens and very little intervisibility with the more remote mountainous interior.</p> <p>The limited degree of intervisibility and context of existing wind turbines which already affect the sense of wildness is anticipated to lead to a Low magnitude of change to the attributes 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts', 'Little Evidence of Contemporary Land Use' and 'Arresting or Inspiring Qualities', but a Negligible magnitude of change for all Key Qualities.</p> <p>Magnitude of change is therefore considered to be <b>locally low</b> within 10km of the Proposed Development, confined to areas to the north of Glen Cannich, but generally <b>negligible</b>.</p> |  |            |
| <b>Effect Significance</b>  | The Proposed Development would affect relatively limited areas of the WLA and would almost always be seen within the context of the Operational   |  |            |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>Development turbines, outwith the WLA and in the easterly / south-easterly context where wind turbines are a recognised feature of the landscape. In areas to the south of Glen Cannich where the Proposed Development would be seen to the rear of the Operational Development turbines, no noticeable changes to wild land attributes or the strength of wildness are anticipated. In areas to the north of Glen Cannich the increased numbers of turbines in the south-eastern landscape context would be likely to be perceptible, and may lead to marginally increased sense of modern artefacts and contemporary land use in this context. However, this would still be largely limited to areas where existing turbines already influence these qualities and therefore the potential to decrease the sense of wildness is limited.</p> <p>A <b>locally minor</b> (not significant) effect during construction and operation is anticipated to be localised to areas north of Glen Cannich with which the Proposed Development would be intervisible. In all other areas the effect during construction and operation would be <b>negligible</b>.</p> <p>As the Proposed Development would lead to no greater influence on the relationship with mountainous core area than existing wind farms and would be unlikely to affect the glen areas no perceptible effect is anticipated to any of the Key Qualities.</p> <p>The integrity of the WLA would therefore remain unaffected.</p> |
|--|---|

### 1.3 Local Context

**Table 1.3.1: Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA**

| Landscape Baseline  |   |  |                     |
|---|---|--|---------------------|
| <b>Description</b>  | This SLA, located 1.9 km from the Proposed Development, surrounds and includes Loch Ness and surrounding areas, from Lochend in the north to Fort Augustus in the south. It is characterised by the strongly linear landform of the Great Glen fault, which contains the large waterbody of Loch Ness. The steep, wooded loch sides contrast with the horizontal expanse of water. To the east, the landscape consists of a mosaic of undulating moorland, tracts of woodland and smaller lochs, including Loch Duntelchaig. This creates a contrast to the scale and simplicity of the Great Glen. A number of rivers and burns cut into the steep slopes and flow into Loch Ness. Settlements are found by the mouths of these these rivers, the largest of these being Fort Augustus, Invermoriston and Drumnadrochit. The human scale of these settlements is juxtaposed against the vast extent of open water and dramatic linear landform. A number of historic features are found along the shores, and create focal points in the landscape. One of these is Urquhart Castle, which sits on a headland protruding into the loch on the western side. The scale of the landscape is difficult to perceive due to a lack of size indicators, although elevated viewpoints reveal the glen within its context as a landscape of elevated plateaux and hills. |  |                     |
| <b>Landscape Value</b>  | This is a highly valued landscape, which is appreciated for its scenic qualities and historical features by tourists and visitors, on both a national and international level. It is representative of the dramatic landform of the Great Glen as a whole and its recognition as an SLA gives it a generally <b>high</b> landscape value.   |  |                     |
| Assessment of Effects on Special Qualities  |   |  |                     |
| Special Quality   | Sensitivity   | Potential Effects  | Magnitude of Change |
| The Dramatic Great Glen, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The striking profile of the glen, seen from either end, the water and elevated viewpoints on loch-side ridges and hill tops;</li> </ul> | High  | The Proposed Development would not affect the landform of the glen. It would be experienced from localised parts of the SLA, particularly the more elevated open locations, such as upper eastern slopes (VPs 5, 6, 17) and western sides (VP 3) of Loch Ness, and some lower locations (VP 8), although woodland largely screens views here. It would largely appear in the context of the Operational Development and other wind development, but from some elevated viewpoints on loch-side ridges and hill tops, may nevertheless draw visual attention to its location on the skyline. This change would be minimal and localised and would not affect appreciation of the striking trench-like landform and dramatic linear landscape. | Negligible-low      |

|  |        |   |                |
|--|--------|---|----------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steep-sided slopes, incised by watercourses with woodland and forest and an open smooth moorland skyline ridge;</li> <li>The contrast between northern and southern loch-side in relation to access, activity and settlement;</li> <li>Distinctive views of grand proportions and long vistas along Loch Ness;</li> <li>Atmospheric mists and low clouds;</li> <li>Urquhart Castle and Foyers former British Aluminium Factory, prominent focal points along the loch;</li> <li>Experience of the striking 'v' shape of the glen, the simple line, large scale and great expanse of the loch and difficulty perceiving scale of the landscape due to lack of scale indicators, as well as the experience of the SLA from the B852, B851, and A82, Great Glen Way and Caledonian Canal; and</li> </ul> | High   | There would be theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from some of the steep-sided slopes on the eastern side of the glen (VP 17), usually higher slopes as lower slopes tend to be wooded. This may add to existing turbines on the open smooth moorland skyline from some areas, but usually seen alongside Operational Development turbines, so would not represent a change to this landscape characteristic. Some new areas of visibility may be experienced from open lower slopes, potentially leading to a slightly increased effect along the skyline in some localised areas.   | Negligible-low |
|  | Medium | The Proposed Development is unlikely to affect the strong contrast between these areas. Where visible, it would be associated with the more developed northern side of the loch.  | Negligible     |
|  | High   | Although there is some theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from localised areas along the loch side, due to screening by landform and woodland it would be largely imperceptible when viewed from the shoreline of Loch Ness, apart from glimpsed views from more open locations such as at VP 8, where it would be barely perceptible in the context of the Operational Development. Views would be similar from the loch itself, and would not change vistas along the loch.   | Negligible     |
|  | Low    | The Proposed Development would be unlikely to affect any appreciation of the landscape relating to weather conditions.  | Negligible     |
|  | High   | The Proposed Development would not be visible from any part of Urquhart Castle or the former British Aluminium Factory at Foyers and is unlikely to feature negatively within the context of any views towards these features, as illustrated in VPs 8, 4 and 17.   | Negligible     |
|  | High   | The Proposed Development would not alter the striking 'v' shape of the glen, the simple line, large scale or great expanse of the loch.<br>In some views however, it would add further scale indicators to the landscape, adjacent to the Operational Development turbines which may alter the perception of scale within the landscape. Turbines would frequently sit within a dip in the landform alongside existing turbines so the appreciation of the large scale and expanse of the loch would still remain.<br>Visual effects on routes in the SLA are included in Appendix 8.7, which highlights localised but non-significant effects on the Great Glen Way, and non-significant effects for other routes. | Low            |

|   |   |   |                   |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prominent landmark of Meall Fuar-mhonaidh and role as a vantage point.</li> </ul>  | <p>High</p>   | <p>The Proposed Development would appear in the immediate context to the west from Meall Fuar-mhonaidh in front of Operational Development turbines (see VP 3). Although it would be larger and closer than the Operational Development, it would cluster built features in one part of the view and would not affect the appreciation of the Great Glen. The Proposed Development would also not affect the focal point landmark and setting of Meall Fuar-mhonaidh when seen from other parts of the SLA (see in particular VPs 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 17).</p> | <p>Low-medium</p> |
| <p>Contrasting Intimate Plateau, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intimate mix of landscape elements of changing visual interest</li> </ul>  | <p>High</p>   | <p>There would be some theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from the intimate plateau at Duntelchaig. While it may be perceptible, it is considered unlikely to change the perception of foreground elements and changing patterns and experiences within this area.</p>  | <p>Negligible</p> |
| <p>Historic Landscape, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achculin depopulated township;</li> <li>Intensive prehistoric activity associated with Loch Duntelchaig, Loch Ashie and Loch Ruthven; and</li> <li>The Caledonian Canal and Abbey within Fort Augustus.</li> </ul> | <p>High</p>   | <p>There would be no intervisibility of the Proposed Development from Achculin.</p>   | <p>Negligible</p> |
|   | <p>Medium</p>   | <p>At over 20km the Proposed Development would be distant from this area, and would have very little perceptibility.</p>  | <p>Negligible</p> |
|   | <p>Medium</p>   | <p>There would be no intervisibility with Fort Augustus.</p>  | <p>Negligible</p> |
| <p><b>Assessment of Landscape Effects</b></p>   |   |   |                   |
| <p><b>Landscape Sensitivity</b></p>   | <p>This is a valued landscape, as recognised by its designated status. The expansive vistas obtained from elevated areas and across open waters, and the intimate scale of the loch-shore areas, are susceptible to change of the type proposed. Landscape sensitivity to change of the type proposed is therefore considered to be <b>high</b>.</p>  |   |                   |
| <p><b>Magnitude of Change</b></p>   | <p>There would be no direct change to this landscape. Indirect change in terms of intervisibility with the Proposed Development would occur on upper slopes and along the ridgeline on the eastern side of the glen (see VPs 5, 6 and 17) and to the west of the glen along the ridgeline including Meall Fuar-mhonaidh (see VP 3). There would be limited intervisibility with lower slopes and loch shore areas (see VP 8) and local woodland cover is likely to result in the Proposed Development being barely perceptible from these areas. On the western side of the glen, along the ridgeline near Meall Fuar-mhonaidh and some parts of the Great Glen Way, the Proposed Development would be seen in the immediate context to the west, and would appear closer and more prominent. Along the eastern ridgeline, the Proposed Development would be quite noticeable on the western skyline from some locations, usually appearing</p> |   |                   |

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
|                                   | <p>in front of or adjacent to the Operational Development turbines. It would most often be seen in the context of the Operational Development and therefore in a part of the context already affected by wind turbines, although in some areas intervisibility would be extended to lower slopes. There would be some intervisibility with the Proposed Development from the Loch Duntelchaig plateau, usually from upper slopes where not screened by local woodland and forest.</p> <p>Taking into account likely intervisibility with Meall Fuar-mhonaidh and the Great Glen Way, but relatively limited magnitude of change to other Special Qualities, the overall magnitude of change for the SLA is considered to be <b>locally low-medium</b> for open elevated areas of the SLA and <b>negligible</b> elsewhere.</p>   |
| <p><b>Effect Significance</b></p> | <p>Effects on this SLA would be indirect, resulting from the appearance of wind turbines on the skyline to the west. No perceptible effect on the SLA is anticipated in relation to intervisibility with lower slopes and shoreline areas of Loch Ness due to the limited ZTV coverage and wooded context. The Proposed Development would be relatively noticeable from some higher areas east and west of Loch Ness, including the Suidhe viewpoint and nearby summit (VPs 5 and 6), and elevated areas south of Dores (VP 17), seen next to the Operational Development.</p> <p>There would be no effects on two of the three Special Qualities of this SLA: the <i>“Contrasting Intimate Plateau”</i> and <i>“Historic Landscape”</i>.</p> <p>Some small changes to four aspects of <i>“The Dramatic Great Glen”</i> Special Quality may however be anticipated, relating to localised effects on the more open and elevated areas of the SLA. It may draw further visual attention to its location on skylines from elevated viewpoints but would not affect the appreciation of the <i>“striking profile of the glen”</i>; it may add to existing turbines interrupting the <i>“open smooth moorland skyline ridge”</i>; and it may add further scale indicators to the landscape and affect views from the Great Glen Way. However, given the presence of the Operational Development turbines which already contribute visual foci, interrupt the skyline and provide scale indicators, there would not be a notable change to the appreciation of the <i>“Dramatic Great Glen”</i> and its Special Qualities.</p> <p>Views from Meall Fuar-mhonaidh (VP 3) would be affected but this would have a small effect on <i>“the role of Meall Fuar-mhonaidh as a vantage point”</i> which is part of the <i>“Dramatic Great Glen”</i> Special Quality. The Proposed Development would not be seen in the direction of the Great Glen, and this would not affect the appreciation of Meall Fuar-mhonaidh as a landmark in the Great Glen.</p> <p>There would be localised non-significant effects from some parts of the Great Glen Way from where the Proposed Development would be noticeable immediately to the west, which may have an impact on the <i>“experience of the SLA from the B852, B851, and A82, Great Glen Way and Caledonian Canal”</i> which is also a Special Quality. The Proposed Development would usually be seen in the context of Operational Development turbines and other wind developments in the wider landscape context.</p> <p>When taking account of the contribution of these effects and Special Qualities on the SLA as a whole, the landscape effect is considered to be <b>locally minor</b> for open elevated areas of the SLA during construction and operation and <b>negligible elsewhere</b> (not significant). The integrity of the SLA would not be affected.</p> |

**Table 1.3.2: Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA**

| Landscape Baseline  |   |   |                     |
|---|---|---|---------------------|
| <b>Description</b>  | This SLA, located 10.7km from the Proposed Development, extends from Glen Carron, upper Strathconon, and Gleann Meinich in the north, to Glen Elchaig and the watershed between Loch Mullardoch and Glen Affric in the south. It comprises a range of remote hills that are massive in scale, cut by long winding glens, which together result in a sequence of open and enclosed landscapes. At higher altitudes, land cover consists of montane heaths, grasses, and mosses, while the valley floors support semi-natural broadleaf woodland, often found along the edges of watercourses, as well as remnants of Caledonian pinewood, interspersed with wetland and grassland. Its inaccessible nature and the lack of human artefacts gives this area a strong wild land character, although settlement clusters can be found near roads and the railway which cuts through the north-western part of this SLA. The presence of hydroelectric schemes and associated buildings and infrastructure also provide evidence for the human influence on this landscape and may locally reduce the sense of wildness in some parts. |   |                     |
| <b>Landscape Value</b>  | This is a regionally valued landscape, which is appreciated for its scenic qualities by tourists and visitors. It also overlaps with WLA 24: Central Highlands. It is therefore considered to have a <b>high</b> Landscape Value.   |   |                     |
| Assessment of Effects on Special Qualities  |   |   |                     |
| Special Quality   | Sensitivity   | Potential Effects   | Magnitude of Change |
| Grand Mountain Ridges, Long Glens and Wide Strath, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A series of grand, high mountain ridges, separated by long, sinuous, steep-sided glens which form a landscape of immense scale;</li> </ul> | High  | The Proposed Development would be visible from some high mountain ridges in the south-east of this SLA (such as VPs 11 and 21 on the southern edge of the SLA, and VP 22 further north) as well as some interior elevated areas of the SLA around Loch Monar. From elevated locations such as these, it would not affect the perception of these grand high mountain ridges but it may slightly affect the perception of scale, through the addition of slightly larger structures in the landscape, seen adjacent to slightly smaller turbines of the Operational Development turbines and other wind development in the wider landscape. This would be a marginal change perceptible from localised elevated locations. | Low                 |



|  |        |  |            |
|--|--------|--|------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contrast between the bare, dramatic scenery of the ridges and upper glens and the more tranquil and intimate strath and glen floors;</li> </ul>   | Medium | The Proposed Development would not affect the experience of contrast between ridges/glens and strath/glens of the SLA and surrounding, since it would be introduced into a distant landscape where wind development is an existing feature. Whilst visible from some of the ridges and upper slopes (particularly in the eastern part, north of Glen Strathfarrar, see VP 22; and north of Glen Cannich) it would not be seen from the strath and glen floors.   | Negligible |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinctive sequential changes when travelling along the glens, reflecting a transition from lowland strath to mountain interior;</li> </ul>  | Medium | The Proposed Development would not be theoretically visible from the glen floors, and would be unlikely to affect the experience of traveling along the glens.   | Negligible |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An intimate sequential travelling experience on the A890 through Strathcarron; and</li> </ul>   | Low    | The Proposed Development would not be theoretically visible from the A890 and would not alter the experience of travelling along this road.  | Negligible |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contrasting deep, steep-sided glens and wide, wooded straths.</li> </ul>  | Medium | The Proposed Development would not be theoretically visible from the glen and strath floors.   | Negligible |
| <p>Wildness and Remoteness, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very strong sense of wildness and remoteness, associated with the lack of access points, sparse network of rough isolated paths/tracks and spectacular summit views over vast expanses of moorland;.</li> <li>• The mountain interior and upper reaches of the glens are out of sight of public roads and remote from habitation;</li> </ul> | High   | The Proposed Development would increase the perception of man-made features from elevated locations in areas north of Glen Cannich and may very slightly diminish the sense of wildness within views over vast expanses of moorland. However, the context of other wind development in the landscape would reduce these localised effects. There would be no effect on the perception of access or travel through the SLA. For an assessment of effects on wild land within the Central Highlands WLA, which overlaps with large parts of this SLA, see Table 1.2.3. | Low        |
|  | Medium | The Proposed Development would be theoretically visible from some summits within the mountain interior and on some upper glen slopes, but would not alter the perception of remoteness from development, given distance and presence of other wind development adjacent to the Proposed Development and in the wider landscape. It would not change the experience from public roads or inhabited locations in the SLA.  | Negligible |

|   |  |   |                   |
|---|--|---|-------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive areas of hill slopes and summits dominated by native vegetation, including remnants of Caledonian pinewood; and</li> <li>• Physically challenging mountain terrain which is difficult to access, popular with hill walkers.</li> </ul> | <p>Low</p>   | <p>The Proposed Development would not have an impact on the pattern of vegetation and is unlikely to affect any appreciation of the landscape relating to the presence of native vegetation.</p>      | <p>Negligible</p> |
|   | <p>Low</p>   | <p>The Proposed Development would not have an impact on the challenging terrain or difficulty of access, and is unlikely to affect any appreciation of the landscape relating to these qualities.</p> | <p>Negligible</p> |
| <p><b>Assessment of Landscape Effects</b></p>   |  |   |                   |
| <p><b>Landscape Sensitivity</b></p>   | <p>This is a regionally highly valued landscape, which is appreciated for its dramatic scenery and sense of remoteness, which make it highly susceptible to change. However, sensitivity is locally reduced in some of the more enclosed and wooded straths, and in the north-west in Glen Carron which feels more developed due to the presence of the A890 and the railway. Landscape sensitivity to change of the type proposed is therefore considered to be <b>medium-high</b>.</p>   |   |                   |
| <p><b>Magnitude of Change</b></p>   | <p>There would be no direct change to this landscape. The Proposed Development would be theoretically visible from summits and upper slopes particularly along the east-west oriented ridgelines north of Glen Cannich and north of Glen Strathfarrar (see VP 22), mainly in the eastern part of the SLA with visibility decreasing considerably when travelling west. The majority of the SLA would not experience visibility of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Where visible, it would be seen to the south-west, adjacent or in front of the Operational Development, often increasing the horizontal field of view and appearing slightly taller and more prominent. However, a number of other wind farms are also visible on the skyline in the direction of the Proposed Development. The increased number of turbines within the landscape may result in a perceptible ranging to noticeable change.</p> <p>Taking into account negligible or low magnitude of change to Special Qualities, the overall magnitude of change for the NSA is considered to be <b>negligible-low</b> during construction and operation.</p> |   |                   |

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| <p><b>Effect Significance</b></p> | <p>Effects on this SLA would be indirect, resulting from the appearance of turbines within the wider landscape context to the south-east. These would be experienced in the context of other wind farms in the wider landscape, as well as the Operational Development in the majority of views. The Proposed Development would be relatively noticeable from summits and along the ridgelines north of Glen Cannich and Glen Strathfarrar, while no perceptible effect is anticipated in relation to intervisibility with glen and strath floors, illustrated by the lack of ZTV coverage. Although the Proposed Development may increase the perceived dominance of wind development in the wider visual context of this landscape, this is considered unlikely to have a significant impact on the Special Qualities or characteristics of the SLA. There may be some small localised changes to the perception of scale from <i>“Grand Mountain Ridges”</i> and the localised increased perception of man-made structures in the landscape, slightly reducing the sense of <i>“Wildness and Remoteness”</i>.</p> <p>When taking into account the contribution of these effects and Special Qualities on the SLA as a whole, the landscape effect is therefore considered to be <b>locally negligible-minor</b> for elevated eastern areas of the SLA and <b>negligible</b> elsewhere (not significant) during construction and operation.</p> <p>The integrity of the SLA would not be affected.</p> |
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