
TECHNICAL APPENDIX 7.5 – WILD LAND AREA ASSESSMENT – WILD LAND AREA 34: REAY – CASSLEY

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 NatureScot (previously Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)) Policy Statement No 02/03 'Wildness in Scotland's Countryside' (Policy Statement 02/03)) recognises the concept of wild land or wildness as land that is sensitive to any form of development and provides psychological benefit to those seeking more challenging forms of outdoor recreation. It notes that this type of land is scarce in national terms and has declined in extent over the past few decades. It aims to safeguard the character of these landscapes and protect them from inappropriate development or land use change.

1.1.2 Within the context of this policy, NatureScot have identified 42 Wild Land Areas (WLAs) considered to represent the most significant areas of wild land character in Scotland. These areas are considered as being of national importance.

1.1.3 WLAs do not constitute designated landscapes but are recognised within the Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). The SPP identifies WLAs as a Group 2 constraint (Areas of Significant Protection), for inclusion in Spatial Frameworks for Onshore Wind Farms¹. Such areas are recognised as requiring significant protection from onshore wind farm development, although wind farms may be appropriate in some circumstances. The SPP states that further consideration is required to demonstrate that any significant effects can be substantially overcome by siting, design or other mitigation.

1.1.4 This assessment considers the potential effects of the Proposed Development on WLA 34: Reay – Cassley. The purpose of the assessment is to analyse the strength of the wild land attributes which contribute to the values of this WLA, the degree to which the Proposed Development may affect these attributes and the resultant effect on the WLA Key Qualities and the WLA overall. The assessment has been undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects, ASH design + assessment Ltd (ASH) and is supplementary to the Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) (Chapter 7 of the EIAR Volume 1).

1.2 Wild Land Background

1.2.1 Annex 1 of Policy Statement 02/03 identifies five physical attributes which contribute to the experience of wildness and identification of wild land:

- A high degree of perceived naturalness in the setting, especially in its vegetation cover and wildlife, and in the natural processes affecting the land;
- The lack of any modern artefacts or structures;
- Little evidence of contemporary human uses of the land;
- Landform which is rugged, or otherwise physically challenging; and
- Remoteness and/or inaccessibility.

1.2.2 In addition, four perceptual responses are identified as being evoked by those experiencing wild land:

- A sense of sanctuary or solitude;

¹ Scottish Government, Scottish Planning Policy, (2014), Table 1: Group 2 (Areas of significant protection).

- Risk or, for some visitors, a sense of awe or anxiety, depending on the individual's emotional response to the setting;
- Perceptions that the landscape has arresting or inspiring qualities; and
- Fulfilment from the physical challenge required to penetrate into these places.

1.2.3 Explanation of the physical attributes and perceptual responses are provided by NatureScot² as detailed in Table 1.2.1:

Table 1.2.1: Explanation of Physical Attributes and Perceptual Responses

Physical Attribute	Explanation
Perceived naturalness	Within WLAs vegetation cover is primarily composed of natural or semi-natural habitats (which may not be, ecologically, in the best condition). Catchment systems and other geomorphological processes are largely unmodified. The term 'perceived naturalness' reflects that some may consider the vegetation cover to be more 'natural and unmanaged' than they are in fact (for example, managed heather moorland).
Lack of construction or other artefacts	There is no or very limited evidence of contemporary buildings, structures or engineering works within WLAs although their presence outwith may be discerned. Older artefacts (for example, shielings and cleared settlements) and small scale features (for example, fences and stalkers paths) may be evident.
Evidence of contemporary land uses	Within WLAs no or very limited evidence of more intensive land use, but their presence outwith may be discerned. Extensive grazing and management for field sports may be evident (for example, muirburn, grazing pressure and use of ATVs).
Rugged or challenging terrain	Within WLAs, land that has extensive rough terrain or extensive boglands, which is difficult to traverse.
Remoteness and inaccessibility	Within WLAs, land that is distant from public motorised access (the nearest public road, ferry landing or railway station), taking account of the distance, barriers to travel (for example, lochs, rivers and cliffs), and ease of travel on foot / bicycle.
Perceptual Response	Explanation
Sense of sanctuary or solitude	The perception of separation from the 'modern world', isolation or distance from disturbance, that engenders feelings of respite or tranquillity, that enables a focus on the natural / semi-natural setting.
Risk, a sense of awe or anxiety	The perception of hazard that arises from being self-reliant in remote settings of large scale, whose rugged natural character and isolation from assistance (if required) engenders respect.
Arresting or inspiring qualities	An aesthetic reaction to the natural / semi-natural setting, often associated with the 'classic' high, steep and jagged mountains juxtaposed with deep lochs or seas, but can also be prompted by other superlative compositions such as the large scale simplicity of rounded massif, or the seemingly infinite expanse of open peatland or seas.

² Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas: Technical Guidance, Annex 1 (NatureScot, 2020)

Physical Attribute	Explanation
Fulfilment from Physical Challenge	The satisfaction and sense of accomplishment that arises from the physical effort required to traverse these settings, tackling their scale, topography, ground and weather conditions.

NatureScot’s Mapping Scotland’s Wildness and Wild Land Project

- 1.2.4 In 2014, NatureScot (then SNH) completed a two phase mapping project to identify areas where the highest degree of wildness is experienced in Scotland and which could be classed as wild land. The two phases to the project comprised:
- Phase 1: Desk- based mapping exercises leading to the production of a Map of Relative Wildness for Scotland; and
 - Phase 2: Identification of WLAs where the highest degree of wildness was found to be experienced.

Map of Relative Wildness

- 1.2.5 The Map of Relative Wildness attempts to indicate relative wildness throughout Scotland and shows the degree of wildness considered to be present on a continuum from Low through to High at a 25 m resolution. This has been compiled through the combined mapping of four individual attributes giving equal weighting to each as follows:

- Perceived naturalness;
- Rugged or challenging terrain;
- Remoteness from public mechanised access; and
- Lack of built modern artefacts.

- 1.2.6 The Map of Relative Wildness and associated Attribute Mapping have been developed as a desk exercise using GIS software to interrogate and classify a number of datasets leading to an impression of the intensity of each of the physical attributes across Scotland. Whilst this is considered to give a good general impression of the strength of each of the attributes and the potential for the overall degree of wildness in a particular area, there are a number of limitations with this process:

- The analysis is limited to information included in the digital datasets analysed and features which are not mapped, have therefore not been considered;
- Digital datasets can only depict a particular situation at one point in time and any changes taken place since the production of the dataset can therefore not be considered. Therefore, the analysis of ‘Absence of Modern Artefacts’ considered only wind farms built and mapped at that time. Those consented at the time of production were considered only as footprints and those built or consented since the production of the mapping in 2014 are not considered at all (changes which have occurred to the baseline since 2014 are discussed in paragraphs 3.2.5 to 3.2.11); and
- The perceptual qualities of wild land which lead to its appreciation cannot be accurately mapped by the analysis of physical attributes. Policy Statement 02/03 states, *“The appreciation of wildness is a matter of an individual’s experience, and their perceptions and preferences for landscapes of this kind. Wildness cannot be captured and measured, but it can be experienced and interpreted by people in*

many different ways.”³ Therefore, the strong presence of the physical attributes can only suggest that the perceptual attributes would be likely to be present. Confirmation of the degree in which the perceptual attributes are present can only be made by site visit and objective analysis. Policy Statement 02/03 states that “to identify wild land... all of the perceptual attributes should be identifiable to some degree.”⁴

Wild Land Areas

- 1.2.7 NatureScot have identified and mapped 42 WLAs throughout Scotland. These WLAs represent the areas considered to have the highest degree and extent of wild land, meriting safeguarding in the National interest.
- 1.2.8 The identification of WLAs involved a review of the Map of Relative Wildness using the Jenks Natural Breaks Optimisation method which divides the data into distinct classes by seeking to reduce the variance within each class and maximise the variance between them. A ‘Jenks 8’ classification (8 classes) was chosen for analysis of the Map of Relative Wildness data. Review of the Jenks 8 classification informed selection of areas for consideration as WLAs, requiring a sufficient area of contiguous coverage of Jenks 8 Classes 7 and 8, surrounded by a broader expanse of Jenks 8 Classes 5 and 6.
- 1.2.9 Identification of the defined WLAs was informed by the following guidelines:
- The areas identified contain around 650 ha+ of Jenks 8 Classes 8 and 7. Areas of wild land will consist of these Classes, with the inclusion of Class 6 and Class 5 where these are part of and contribute to the wild land block as a whole, reflecting that wildness strengthens as you move into or across an area.
 - Account is taken of changes since the baseline data underpinning the Map of Relative Wildness was undertaken, in particular the approval and / or construction of significant developments such as wind farms.
 - Areas can encompass features detracting from wildness (such as isolated estate buildings), but their effect should be localised with relatively limited impact on the wider sense of wildness that can be experienced across the wild land area.
 - Limited areas of lower Jenks Classes may be included within a wild land area where they occur as an isolated feature, interrupt simple boundaries, or fragment otherwise contiguous blocks of wild land (examples include transmission lines and railway lines).
- 1.2.10 NatureScot have produced a suite of WLA Descriptions and identified Key Qualities for each of the 42 WLAs.

2. Methodology

2.1 Guidance

- 2.1.1 The assessment of effects on the WLA has been based on NatureScot 2020 Guidance ‘Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas: Technical Guidance’ (the NatureScot Guidance) supported by a desk based analysis of the Proposed Development in relation to the Map

³ NatureScot, Wildness in Scotland’s Countryside: Policy Statement 02/03, (2002), paragraph 3.

⁴ SNH, Policy Statement 02/03, Annex, paragraph 9.

of Relative Wildness and associated attribute mapping. Appraisal of the baseline wild land situation and the contribution of individual wild land attributes to the wild land Key Qualities has been undertaken using a methodology and criteria adapted from the 2007 NatureScot (then SNH) Guidance Note⁵ (the 2007 Guidance). Consideration has also been given to the methods for landscape assessment outlined in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual assessment (Third Edition) GLVIA3⁶

2.2 Structure

2.2.1 The NatureScot Guidance advocates a five step approach to the assessment of effects on the WLA broadly in line with GLVIA3:

- Step 1: Define the study area and the scope of the assessment;
- Step 2: Verify the WLA Baseline;
- Step 3: Assess the sensitivity of the WLA qualities;
- Step 4: Assess the magnitude of the effects; and
- Step 5: Judge the significance of the effects.

Step 1: Define the Study Area and Scope of the Assessment

2.2.2 The NatureScot Guidance notes that the study area for the WLA assessment should reflect the extent of the likely significant effects on the WLA, including any cumulative effects. As the Reay - Cassley WLA (WLA 34), is almost entirely within the 40 km study area for the LVIA, it is considered appropriate to consider the whole WLA within the WLA assessment. However, the assessment focusses on the area within 25 km of the Proposed Development within which all potential intervisibility is located.

2.2.3 The WLA assessment considers the effects of the Proposed Development on:

- The physical and perceptual attributes of the wild land;
- The key qualities of the WLA; and
- The contribution of the effects on the overall integrity of the WLA.

Step 2: Establish the Baseline

2.2.4 Establishment of the baseline involves confirmation of the existing wild land qualities of the study area and their contribution to the WLA. This has involved consideration of the degree to which the physical and perceptual attributes of wild land and the identified WLA Key Qualities vary across the WLA and has been established using a combination of desk-based study and site survey. Appraisal of the baseline has considered changes which have occurred directly and indirectly since the 2014 mapping exercises have taken place and WLA descriptions have been produced and anticipated changes to the baseline in the form of consented development.

⁵ NatureScot, Assessing the Impacts on Wild Land, Interim Guidance Note, (2007).

⁶ Landscape Institute & Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition, (Routledge, 2013).

Desk Studies

2.2.5 Desk study has involved review and consideration of the following documents and resources:

- The Map of Relative Wildness and associated attribute mapping from the Mapping Scotland's Wildness project;
- The 'Non-Technical Description of the Methodology'⁷ for the Mapping Scotland's Wildness project;
- NatureScot (then SNH) Advice to Government⁸;
- NatureScot (then SNH) Description of WLA 34: Reay – Cassley; and
- ZTVs for the consented Braemore, Lairg 2 and Creag Riabhach Wind Farms which were not taken into account in the original mapping exercise.

Site Survey

2.2.6 Site survey has been undertaken to verify the findings of the desk-based studies. To obtain a baseline understanding of the site, visits were undertaken by a team of two Chartered Landscape Professionals from ASH, between 20th – 26th October 2020. Locations within the WLA were visited and evaluated using a standardised form. Site appraisal considered the strength of the physical and perceptual attributes at each location visited and the degree to which the identified WLA Key Qualities were found to be present.

Criteria for the Evaluation of Physical Attributes and Perceptual Responses

2.2.7 The criteria outlined within the 2007 Guidance were used as a basis for identifying the strength of physical attributes, as detailed in Table 2.2.1.

Table 2.2.1: Physical Attributes – Strength of Attribute

Physical Attribute	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Perceived naturalness	Area perceived as generally natural	Majority of area perceived as generally natural.	Some of area perceived as generally natural.	Area is not perceived as generally natural.
Lack of construction or other artefacts	No or minimal perceptible evidence of artefacts	Some artefacts visible but are not prominent.	Some artefacts visible and are prominent.	Several artefacts clearly visible and are prominent.
Evidence of contemporary land uses	Contemporary land use not apparent	Some contemporary land use apparent though not significantly detracting.	Some contemporary land use apparent and locally detracting.	Contemporary land use apparent and detracting.

⁷ SNH, SNH's Mapping of Scotland's Wildness and Wild Land: Non-technical Description of the Methodology, (June 2014).

⁸ SNH, Core Areas of Wild Land 2013 Map: Scottish Natural Heritage's Advice to Government, (June 2014)

Physical Attribute	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Rugged or challenging terrain	Rough, tough terrain. Steep ground requiring an appreciable level of fitness to traverse and sturdy footwear. Navigation across this terrain requires high degree of skill.	Appreciable skill in navigation required including in poor visibility, requiring a degree of accuracy. Rough terrain with some steep ground and requiring a degree of fitness and sturdy footwear.	Some rough areas but terrain easy to cross. Only slightly strenuous. Navigation reasonably straight forward with landforms or tracks providing relatively easier to cross terrain.	Easily traversed terrain requiring no navigation skill.
Remoteness and inaccessibility	No roads, tracks or paths. Not key routes available for crossing area.	Some route availability through landform, but no roads, tracks or paths in area.	Few tracks or paths available to traverse area but wider area still relatively inaccessible.	Close to public roads with easily accessed network of paths or tracks.

2.2.8 Policy Statement 02/03 required all of the perceptual responses to be present in order to identify true wild land. The 2007 Guidance therefore advocates a method whereby perceptual responses are identified as being either 'present' or 'not present'. However, in order to more accurately reflect the strength of these responses and their influence on the degree of wildness, where these have been identified as being 'present', this has been broken down into three separate categories as detailed in Table 2.2.2:

Table 2.2.2: Perceptual Responses – Strength of Response

Perceptual Response	High	Medium	Low	Not Present
Sense of sanctuary or solitude	Landscape experience provides intense perceptions of sanctuary or solitude and impression of being a long way from developed areas.	Perception of sanctuary or solitude likely to be obtained from most areas but some localised influence of human activity from neighbouring areas.	Perception of sanctuary or solitude may be obtained in some localised pockets but generally not present.	Landscape experience provides very little if any sense of sanctuary or solitude.
Risk, a sense of awe or anxiety	Landscape perceived as having a high degree of potential risk with a level of skill required to maintain safety.	Landscape perceived as having a degree of potential risk in some areas. There may be some cliffs or steep drops in	Generally likely to be only a small degree of perceived risk limited to steep slopes, rugged terrain or bog in some areas	No or very little degree of perceived risk.

Perceptual Response	High	Medium	Low	Not Present
	Steep cliffs, drops and very rugged terrain are likely to be dominant and risk may be intensified by extreme weather, ice or snow.	some areas or expanses of difficult bog but this is unlikely to be the dominant terrain.	which can be easily avoided.	
Arresting or inspiring qualities	Landscape experience arouses intense arresting or inspiring impressions. Landscape perceived as being highly dramatic and very extensive with a high degree of 'naturalness'.	Landscape experience arouses inspiring or arresting impressions in some areas. Landscape likely to exhibit dramatic or extensive views from some areas with large areas of perceived naturalness.	Landscape generally perceived as having limited arresting or inspiring qualities but some impressive or attractive views may be obtained from some parts.	Landscape perceived as having very little or no arresting or inspiring qualities.
Fulfilment from Physical Challenge	Terrain appears complex, rugged or very boggy and difficult to navigate without high degree of skill, or a substantial walk from public roads or paths, leading to a high degree of exertion and physical challenge.	Terrain appears fairly rugged with some steep areas, rock outcrops and summits or bogs requiring a level of skill to navigate leading to a moderate degree of exertion and physical challenge.	Some physical challenge required to access land although terrain is relatively unchallenging with tracks and paths present and only a few steep slopes, boggy areas or areas of rough topography which are easy to avoid.	Little or no physical challenge required to access area.

2.2.9 In order to obtain a robust picture of the strength of the various physical attributes and perceptual responses throughout the WLA, an analysis has been undertaken using the above criteria from a range of locations. Both the locations visited and the journeys undertaken to reach the named locations have been considered in arriving at the conclusions made.

2.2.10 Using the information obtained through analysis at each of the locations, a review has then been undertaken for each of the physical attributes and perceptual responses across WLA 34 as a whole.

Strength of Wildness

- 2.2.11 Based on the strength identified for each of the above criteria an evaluation of strength of wildness has been applied ranging from Low to High as detailed in Table 2.2.3. The individual evaluations at each location have been considered in combination with the information obtained from the desk-based exercises to provide an evaluation of the baseline strength of wildness across WLA 34 as a whole.

Table 2.2.3: Strength of Wildness Ratings

Rating	Description
High	The area has an overriding sense of wildness. It is large scale and remote with little evidence of human influence on the landscape and strong impressions of isolation. It is likely to be difficult to access with a rugged and challenging terrain, inspiring qualities with a considerable sense of awe or risk.
Medium	The area has a generally dominating sense of wildness. It is likely to be large scale and fairly remote although locally influenced by some human interventions or neighbouring land uses. There is likely to be some rugged or challenging terrain with impressive or dramatic views from some areas and a general sense of isolation.
Low	The area has the qualities of wild land but is influenced by human interventions such as tracks, paths and forestry which will be locally dominating. There will be some difficult terrain with a limited degree of risk, but tracks and paths may provide easier routes through the landscape. A sense of solitude or isolation is likely to be experienced in some areas and there may be some expansive or impressive views.

Step 3: Assess the Sensitivity of the Study Area

- 2.2.12 GLVIA recognises that landscape sensitivity is derived from a combination of two factors:
- Landscape value; and
 - Susceptibility to change.
- 2.2.13 Given its identification as a WLA, the value of the landscape is recognised as being high. However, susceptibility may change across the WLA depending on the strength of wildness and the degree to which the Key Qualities may be present.
- 2.2.14 Sensitivity has been evaluated for each of the Key Qualities rated on a three point scale. This is transcribed across the WLA area dependant on the degree to which these qualities are present. The criteria for sensitivity are defined in Table 2.2.4.

Table 2.2.4: Sensitivity Criteria

Rating	Description
High	The WLA Key Quality is strongly present and a highly valued aspect of the WLA assessment location and is very susceptible to change of the type proposed.
Medium	The WLA Key Quality is present and a valued aspect of the WLA assessment location but has lower susceptibility to change of the type proposed.
Low	The WLA Key Quality is less strongly present and a less valued aspect of the WLA assessment location and/or has limited susceptibility to change of the type proposed.

Step 4: Assess the Magnitude of the Effects

- 2.2.15 Step 4 has involved evaluation of the magnitude of change to each of the physical attributes and perceptual responses which would result from the construction of the Proposed Development. This has fed into a conclusion of the magnitude of effect for each WLA Key Quality across WLA 34 as a whole.
- 2.2.16 Criteria used for the evaluation of magnitude of change to attributes and key qualities are detailed in Table 2.2.5.

Table 2.2.5: Magnitude of Change Criteria

Rating	Physical Attributes and Perceptual Responses	WLA Key Qualities
High	Total loss or alteration to physical attribute / perceptual response.	Alteration to wild land attributes would cause a notable change in the presence of the Key Quality over an extensive area ranging to a very intensive change over a more limited area.
Medium	Partial loss or alteration to physical attribute / perceptual response.	Alteration to wild land attributes would cause a perceptible change in the presence of the Key Quality over an extensive area ranging to notable change in a localised area.
Low	Minor loss or alteration to physical attribute / perceptual response resulting in a change to the baseline.	Alteration to wild land attributes would cause a perceptible change in the presence of the Key Quality in a localised area.
Negligible	Very minor or no loss to the baseline physical attribute / perceptual response. The introduction of the Proposed Development does not change the baseline assessment.	Alteration to wild land attributes would cause a virtually imperceptible, or no discernible change in the presence of the Key Quality.

Step 5: Judge the Significance of the Effects

- 2.2.17 A final judgement of potential significance of effect has been applied based on the identified values for magnitude of effect for each WLA Key Quality against the sensitivity value, taking in to account the strength of wildness across the WLA. Explanation of the effects ratings is described in Table 2.2.6:

Table 2.2.6: Significance of Effects Criteria

Rating	Description
Major	The Proposed Development would result in total or substantial loss of wild land attributes which contribute a WLA Key Quality and would result in sufficient reduction of strength of wildness for an area of high wildness to be reduced to low wildness.
Moderate	The Proposed Development would result in a partial loss of wild land attributes which contribute to a WLA Key Quality and/or would result in sufficient reduction of strength of wildness for an area of high wildness to

Rating	Description
	be reduced to medium wildness or an area of medium wildness to be reduced to low wildness.
Minor	The Proposed Development would result in localised effects to wild land attributes and WLA Key Qualities but would not be sufficient to result in a reduction of the overall strength of wildness value or a material change in the WLA Key Quality.
Negligible	The Proposed Development would result in no discernible effect to the strength of wildness or WLA Key qualities

- 2.2.18 The NatureScot Guidance states that, “Where effects are identified that result in a material change in the experience of any of the wild land qualities, this is considered to be significant.” For the purposes of this assessment, this is considered to include effects rated as Moderate or greater.

3. Baseline

3.1 Description of WLA 34 – Reay - Cassley

- 3.1.1 The Reay - Cassley WLA, within which the Proposed Development is situated, comprises one of the larger WLAs identified by NatureScot, covering a tract of land of 560 km² stretching across west-central Sutherland. Situated between Inchnadamph and Loch Shin and stretching north-west as far as Laxford Bridge, it is broadly characterised by a central core of high, mountain summits which include the notable Munro summits of Ben More Assynt and Conival, an extensive complex landscape of cnocan and lochs to the north of these, and stretches of undulating moorland ridges to the south, lying to either side of Glen Cassley.
- 3.1.2 The limits of the WLA are loosely defined by the influence of minor rural roads and western and northern edges, and extensive forest plantations to the south and east.
- 3.1.3 The WLA is uninhabited though there are a few settlements and scattered crofting communities around its outer boundary in some areas. It is generally accessible by only a few rural tracks and paths though routes up the higher mountains are popular with walkers. However, there are a number of hydroelectric features including dams, intakes, above ground pipelines and tracks, in particular, focussed at Duchally, at the head of Glencassley, but also at Corrykinloch and Maldie Burn at Loch Glendubh. A surfaced private road leads into the features at Duchally from Corrykinloch. Although mostly outside the boundary of the WLA, these features have wider influence on the character of surrounding areas within the WLA.
- 3.1.4 Existing wind farms are present to the south of the WLA, the closest being the cluster of turbines comprising Achany and Rosehall Wind Farms which are immediately adjacent to the south-east tip of the WLA. These turbines are intervisible with southern parts of the WLA with the greatest area of influence across the undulating ridge areas to either side of Glen Cassley for around 5 -10km. These sites are also intervisible with, although have less direct influence on, other elevated areas further away, including Ben More Assynt, where more distant sites including Lairg, Beinn Tharsuinn, Kilbraur and Gordonbush may also be perceptible. The construction of consented sites at Creag Riabhach, Lairg 2 and Braemore would lead to further influence of turbines on some parts of the WLA, as discussed further in paragraphs 3.3.53.2.5 to 3.2.11.

WLA 34: Sub-Areas

3.1.5 In order to aid the assessment and the description and understanding of effects, the WLA has been loosely divided into three sub-areas:

- The Central Core: The central, mountainous area stretching northwards from Black Rock and Meall an Aonaich to encompass Ben More Assynt and Beinn Leòid, and the remote coastline of Loch Glencoul, as far as the head of Loch Glendhu;
- The Northern Arm: From Loch Glencoul, extending north-west for around 15 km, an expansive area of cnocan and lochans contained by the rural A894 and A838 roads;
- The Lobster Claw: The southern part of the WLA which takes the shape of a lobster claw, encompassing the long rolling moorland ridges to the east and west of Glen Cassley (referred to where necessary as ‘the Eastern Lobster Claw’ and ‘the Western Lobster Claw’).

WLA Key Qualities

3.1.6 The WLA Key Qualities identified by SNH are:

- **A range of large, irregular, rocky mountains with steep, arresting slopes and a variety of lochs and lochans, possessing a strong sense of naturalness, remoteness and sanctuary:**
 - This WLA quality highlights the sense of awe created by the massive proportions of the mountains, emphasised by the arresting qualities high vertical rock faces, glen slopes, waterfalls and scree slopes, highlighted by the open, horizontal composition of adjacent glen floors, cnocan, lochs and lochans;
 - The rugged form, predominance of exposed rock and distinct geological features, as well as the presence of native woodland in some parts all contribute to a perception of naturalness;
 - The physically challenging nature of the terrain is seen as contributing to a perception of high risk, and the addition of the physical barrier created by the many lochs increases a sense of remoteness; and
 - The limited human presence, despite the large number of visitors to the area, is seen as leading to a sense of sanctuary and solitude.
- **An awe-inspiring, broad scale expanse of cnocan in which there is a complex pattern of features at a local level that contribute to the sense of naturalness and sanctuary:**
 - This WLA quality highlights the contrast between this extensive cnocan landscape and the prominent mountains which can be seen in the distance, contributing to the arresting qualities of both landforms;
 - The rugged and intricate landform interspersed with lochans, bogs, burns and occasional woodlands and waterfalls is seen to amplify a sense of naturalness;
 - The limitation of human elements to the margins of the WLA leads to a general absence of human artefacts and evidence of contemporary land use within the cnocan giving perceptions of sanctuary and solitude and remoteness which, due to the complex landform, may be felt in locations which are not physically very remote from artefacts or routes;

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- The consistent landcover and absence of human artefacts makes it difficult to perceive scale, making the area appear more extensive.
 - **A variety of spaces created by irregular landforms in which there is perceived naturalness, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude:**
 - This WLA quality highlights the ruggedness and sense of naturalness created by the complexity of landform from high mountain tops to low-lying peatland;
 - It emphasises the shielding role of landform within corries and basins which helps to create a sense of seclusion and sanctuary and solitude and, where steep slopes occur, a sense of awe;
 - **Extensive, elevated peatland slopes whose simplicity and openness contribute to a perception of awe, whilst highlighting the qualities of adjacent mountains:**
 - This WLA quality highlights arresting qualities engendered by the vast scale and the sense of openness and exposure across the elevated peatland slopes;
 - The variation of topography and land cover at a local level with lochans, bogs, peat hags, burns and rock outcrops makes it physically challenging to cross increases sense of naturalness and, in combination with the sense of openness and exposure, is considered to increase a perception of risk;
 - The simplicity of land cover and landform is seen to increase the perception of scale and extent;
 - The WLA description acknowledges the presence of human artefacts and contemporary land use around the edges of the open WLA including hydroelectric features at Duchally and commercial forestry plantations around the outer edges of the WLA which are seen to reduce the wild land qualities and perceived extent of the area.

3.2 Desk Study

Map of Relative Wildness

- 3.2.1 The Map of Relative Wildness (see Figure 1 of this Technical Appendix) shows the greatest extent of highest wildness to be mostly across the Central Core, particularly through the central part of this area and towards the north, mostly focussed around the more rugged parts of the landscape and steeper slopes and corries. Higher wildness is indicated across the Western Lobster Claw, and through small areas of the Eastern Lobster Claw, though this area is generally indicated to be of moderate to lower wildness. Lower wildness generally is indicated close to Glen Cassley including at the head of the glen into the Central Core, where hydroelectric features and tracks are shown to be present on the Ordnance Survey mapping. Moderate to high wildness is shown in the Northern Arm, although this area is split into two parts by an area of lower wildness associated with a track and hydro features of the Maldie Burn hydro. A fairly extensive area of high wildness is indicated in the north-western part of the Northern Arm, in the centre away from the public roads which surround this part of the WLA.

Jenks 8 Analysis

- 3.2.2 Analysis of the WLA in relation to the Jenks 8 classification (see Figure 2 of this Technical Appendix) shows that areas of Jenks Classes 7 and 8 (the two highest classes which are required to be present in sufficient expanse in order for the WLA to be identified) are present in all parts of the WLA. However, the vast majority of coverage by these classes

is found within the Central Core area. This central area of highest identified wildness is surrounded by a solid expanse of Classes 5 and 6 with only very small areas around the edge where tracks or side valleys intrude, being Class 4 and rarely Classes 3 or 2.

- 3.2.3 Class 8 is virtually absent from the Northern Arm. However, there is a fairly extensive area of Class 7, though this appears more fractal, reflecting the more intricate topography of this section. The majority of this area is comprised of Classes 5 and 6 with lower classes around the fringes near to the roads and within a few areas where tracks and other small isolated features are present intruding into and across the area.
- 3.2.4 The Lobster Claw shows smaller patches of predominantly Class 7 but also some small areas of Class 8. However, the Western Lobster Claw shows a larger area of contiguous Class 7 and 8, which is more fragmented in the Eastern Lobster Claw. The majority of the Western Lobster Claw is comprised of Class 6 with Classes 4 and 5 generally limited to the edges. In general, this section appears to have a greater and more classical pattern of wildness than the Eastern Lobster Claw with a single core of higher wildness surrounded by decreasing classifications towards the boundary. The Eastern Lobster Claw shows a more patchy pattern of wildness, with a greater proportion of Class 5, containing several separate areas of Class 6 which in turn accommodate a number of small areas of Class 7 and very small areas of Class 8. Areas of Class 7 in the Eastern Lobster Claw are isolated and typically of no more than 1 km².

Changes to the Baseline

- 3.2.5 No significant changes to the baseline have been identified since the Map of Relative Wildness has been undertaken. However, it is noted there are a number of consented wind farms within the close vicinity of WLA 34 which may potentially increase the influence of wind turbines on the WLA to some degree if constructed. Whilst these effects have been considered in the WLA assessment, they have not been given regard to in ratings and conclusions because they do not affect the current baseline. The Proposed Development is considered in addition to these sites in the Technical Appendix 7.8: Cumulative Landscape Assessment.
- 3.2.6 ZTVs for the consented sites within 10 km of the WLA have been produced and overlaid on the Map of Relative Wildness Jenks 8 interpretation and Lack of Modern Artefacts attribute mapping (the attribute under which wind farms have been considered in the Mapping Scotland's Wildness exercise) to ascertain how these developments may affect the baseline if constructed (see Figures 5 - 8 of this Technical Appendix).

Braemore Wind Farm

- 3.2.7 The consented Braemore Wind Farm would be located approximately 5 km to the south of the Eastern Lobster Claw and consisting of 18 turbines up to 126 m to tip. The ZTV (see Figure 6 of this Technical Appendix) shows that this development would be visible from limited southern parts of the WLA, mostly contained within the eastern side of the Western Lobster Claw, alongside Glen Cassley. Limited ZTV coverage is also shown over high ground of the Eastern Lobster Claw and summits of the Central Core, although in this area, visibility is around 17 km away. The ZTV suggests that, apart from a few very small areas, Braemore would largely be seen in areas where Achany and Rosehall are already seen and where the level of the attribute 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' is low or moderate. As it would be situated on the far side of this existing cluster and would almost always be seen in combination with and through the existing turbines, it is

considered that, if constructed, Braemore would have a very limited effect on the wild land baseline.

Creag Riabhach

3.2.8 The consented Creag Riabhach Wind Farm would be located approximately 10 km to the north-east of the Eastern Lobster Claw, comprised of 22 turbines up to 125m in height. The ZTV (see Figure 7 of this Technical Appendix) indicates fairly widespread theoretical visibility of this wind farm throughout the Eastern Lobster Claw and across high ground in the Central Core. Although somewhat more distant than existing wind farms, if built, this would affect a new part of the surrounding context and currently unaffected parts of the WLA.

3.2.9 Comparison of the ZTV with the 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' attribute mapping (see Figure 7 of this Technical Appendix) indicates that most areas covered by the ZTV in the Eastern Lobster Claw show a lower to moderate strength of the attribute. A higher strength is shown in some small affected parts of the Central Core but these areas are small and over 17 km from the consented wind farm. Overall it is considered that, should this development be constructed, it may slightly reduce the strength of this attribute in some areas but would lead to little perceptible change in the relative wildness and attribute mapping. However, as a consented, but not constructed site, whilst this development has been considered in the assessment, it has not been taken into account in the analysis of baseline wildness.

Lairg 2

3.2.10 The consented Lairg 2 Wind Farm, comprised of 13 turbines to 180 m to tip, would be located approximately 8 km to the south-east of the Eastern Lobster Claw to the south of the existing Lairg Wind Farm (3 turbines of 100 m to tip). The ZTV (see Figure 8 of this Technical Appendix) indicates that there would be theoretical intervisibility with parts of the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw and high ground and facing slopes within the Central Core. Virtually all intervisibility would take place within areas where one or more of Achany, Rosehall or Lairg are already intervisible.

3.2.11 Comparison of the ZTV with the 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' attribute mapping (see Figure 8 of this Technical Appendix) indicates that that majority of areas covered by the ZTV are considered to have lower or moderate strength of the attribute. One area of around 3.5km² with a high strength of attribute would gain intervisibility of this development at the northern end of the Eastern Lobster Claw although this is over 23 km from the consented wind farm. It is considered that this may lead to some alteration in the baseline level of this attribute in this small area if the consented site were built. However, whilst this development has been considered in the assessment, it has not been taken into account in the analysis of baseline wildness.

3.3 Site Survey

3.3.1 Seven locations were evaluated for strength of physical and perceptual attributes as well as the degree to which identified WLA Key Qualities were considered to be present. These included two viewpoints (VPs) identified for the visual assessment and five locations within the Central Core and Lobster Claw areas which were visited separately. No locations have been included in the Northern Arm because the ZTV indicates that there

would be no intervisibility with the Proposed Development in this area. The seven locations are shown on Figure 1 of this Technical Appendix and comprise:

- Location 1: Allt Bad an t-Sagairt, accessed from Glencassley Castle (Eastern Lobster Claw);
- Location 2: Càrn na Ceàrdaich, accessed from Glenmuick (Western Lobster Claw);
- Location 3: East of Cnoc Glas na Crionaiche, accessed from Corrykinloch, via the private road to Duchally Weir;
- Location 4: North of Allt a' Chnaip Ghiubhais, accessed from Corrykinloch via Duchally Weir;
- Location 5: Above Loch na Sròine Cuime, accessed via Location 4;
- Location 6: Ben More Assynt, accessed from Inchnadamph (VP10); and
- Location 7: Meall an Aonaich, accessed the A837 near Benmore Lodge (VP21).

3.3.2 Representative photographs from each location are presented in Annex 1.

Physical Attributes

3.3.3 Analysis of the physical attributes for the above seven locations is presented in Annex 2 and summarised below.

Perceived Naturalness

3.3.4 The NatureScot attribute map for 'Perceived Naturalness' (see Figure 3.1 of this Technical Appendix) suggests that WLA 34 has a variable moderate to high strength of perceived naturalness. Higher strength of this attribute is indicated across the higher mountain summits and some loch areas of the Central Core, a fairly extensive area of elevated plateau at the northern end of the Western Lobster Claw and smaller patches of plateau and corrie areas mostly to the south and east of the Eastern Lobster Claw. The Northern Arm is indicated to have a moderate degree of perceived naturalness.

3.3.5 Site Survey has identified that perceived naturalness is likely to be somewhat greater than indicated by the mapping, being generally High at all of the locations visited, with a moorland landcover of rough grassland and heather throughout the WLA, frequently broken into deeply hagged peat. There is a greater preponderance of bare rock in the central core and small lochans are a feature throughout. The appearance of forest plantation around the edges of the WLA and some improved grassland in Glen Cassley, reduces the strength of the attribute locally, particularly within the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw areas, as perceived when accessing Locations 1, 2 and 3, and parts of the Central Core which are closer to Glen Cassley, as was experienced on the approach to Location 4, and can be seen from Location 7 (Meall an Aonaich). However, with the exception of Location 7, the attribute strength generally increases when moving towards the centre of all areas as the lower ground moves further out of the view and the near-ground landcover becomes more dominant.

Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts

3.3.6 The NatureScot attribute map for 'Lack of Built Artefacts' (see Figure 3.1 of this Technical Appendix) shows a fairly widespread influence of built artefacts across the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw with the attribute strength mostly being moderate, and higher areas limited to a few corries and parts of the plateaux. More extensive areas of higher strength are shown in the Central Core, mostly in the corries and valleys between the

mountain summits. A large area of higher attribute strength is also shown within the centre of the Northern Arm, reducing towards the WLA boundary.

- 3.3.7 Site Survey mostly upheld the results of the mapping for this attribute. Visible constructed artefacts were found to be fairly prevalent across the parts of the WLA visited, although in many cases their influence was localised. Within the eastern and western lobster claw, visibility of features in Glen Cassley is evident on facing slopes, but diminishes when moving up onto the plateau, as experienced when accessing Locations 1 and 2. From higher areas, such as Location 2 and some areas above Location 3, there is greater visibility of existing wind turbines at Achany and Rosehall to the south, a wood pole electricity line and mast at the northern end of the Eastern Lobster Claw, and other features around Loch Shin and beyond (from the Eastern Lobster Claw only). This decreases when moving further north and west within the Western Lobster Claw. However, in the Eastern Lobster Claw only some of the low lying corries have a true lack of influence from built artefacts, even though these features are often distant and small. The met mast for the Proposed Development is one feature which is present in part of this area, although it is recognised that this is a temporary feature. In general, there is a greater sense of lack of development when looking out towards the west and north-west from the Lobster Claw area.
- 3.3.8 Within the Central Core, to the east of Ben More Assynt towards Locations 4 and 5, the influence of features at Duchally Hydro is greater, particularly aqueduct pipelines, the Duchally Weir and Power Station. The more enclosed views from these locations, directed by topography, leads to these features appearing more noticeable. However, when moving further north and west, at and beyond Location 5 they become less obvious with a greater absence of artefacts through the north of the Central Core.
- 3.3.9 From the mountain summits of the Central Core, represented by Locations 6 and 7, the elevation gives greater visibility of constructed features and developed areas to the east and south-east, such as the surrounding wind development schemes and the Duchally hydro structures. However, these areas, particularly Location 6 (Ben More Assynt), also give a greater understanding of the extent of the area which is undeveloped, in particular to the west and north.
- 3.3.10 Overall, although there are locations within the WLA where a complete absence of artefacts can be found, away from the north Central Core these are often localised, within corries, dips and hollows. Most areas are affected to some degree by some form of built development, but this is usually not dominating beyond 1-2km from the WLA boundary. Therefore, the attribute level remains generally Medium rising to Medium to High at Location 5 and anticipated to rise further when moving beyond this location to the north and west.

Evidence of Contemporary Land Uses

- 3.3.11 There is no NatureScot attribute map for evidence of contemporary land uses. However, this is broadly covered by the maps for 'Perceived Naturalness' and to some extent 'Lack of Built Artefacts' (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2 of this Technical Appendix). As described in paragraphs 3.3.4 and 3.3.6, both perceived naturalness and lack of built artefacts vary from a moderate strength to areas of higher strength. This suggests that there is likely to be some evidence of contemporary land use both within the WLA (as demonstrated by areas of lower perceived naturalness) and with the surrounding area (within the context of built artefacts which are present).

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- 3.3.12 Site survey has found a generally Medium influence of contemporary land uses, for the lower elevation locations other than for Location 5 where this attribute is considered to be Medium to High. This is considered to broadly reflect what is construed when combining the outputs of the two mapping exercises. However, from the mountain summit areas this attribute was considered Medium to Low from Location 6 and Low for Location 7 due to the prevalence of commercial forest plantation which is seen from these locations to the south and east, as well as the broader visibility of land use features such as wind turbines and hydro features at Duchally. However, very little contemporary land use was evident in the northerly and westerly context from these locations and it is considered that the position of these peaks on the south-easternmost edge of the mountainous area contributes to the reduced presence of this attribute with a greater strength likely on peaks further north and west.
- 3.3.13 From lower elevation, the forest, hydro and wind turbine elements, also have some influence on the Lobster Claw areas and the south-east of the Central Core. This is greater on the Eastern Lobster Claw (experienced when accessing Location 3) where the topography, which is mostly a simple hump-backed ridge, results in there being few areas where adjacent forest is not apparent, leading to an increased awareness of being on a narrow strip of upland between two more managed low lying areas. Central areas within the broader, flatter ridge of the Western Lobster Claw, as represented by location 2 are less influenced by the adjacent forest and have a greater connection to the mountain landscape to the north, although it is likely that more southern parts of this area would be more affected by the adjacent Glen Oykel forest area.
- 3.3.14 Evidence of contemporary land use was felt likely to decrease when moving north and west of Location 5 once the hydro features become obscured from the view, and when moving further into the mountainous area, away from the southern and easternmost peaks which would help to obscure the forested landscapes to the east and south.

Rugged or Challenging Terrain

- 3.3.15 The NatureScot attribute map for 'Rugged or Challenging Terrain' (see Figure 3.2 of this Technical Appendix) suggests that areas with the highest degree of ruggedness are present in the western half of the Central Core, comprising the mountain areas and steep slopes at the head of Loch Glencoul. Both parts of the Lobster Claw are shown to have a low attribute strength whilst in the Northern Arm the attribute strength is mostly moderate to high with localised areas of lower strength.
- 3.3.16 Site survey has found that the terrain is generally more challenging than suggested by the mapping which does not take into account the difficulty of crossing boglands and localised steep terrain, particularly found on the plateaux summits of the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw which are characterised by challenging bog and frequent small lochans. The site survey identified a Medium rating for Location 1, on the edge of the Eastern Lobster Claw plateau, rising to Medium to High for Locations 2 and 3 on the higher, flatter bogland of the Lobster Claw.
- 3.3.17 A rough track provides access to Locations 4 and 5 but the terrain away from the track is complex and difficult with nearby mountain slopes influencing the appearance of challenge. This is considered to be Medium to High at Location 4 and High at Location 5 where the ground becomes increasingly complex on the edge of the mountain landscape. The most challenging terrain is found on the summits and ridges of the mountains in the Central Core, as indicated by a High rating for Locations 6 and 7.

Remoteness and Inaccessibility

- 3.3.18 The SNH attribute map for 'Remoteness from Roads' (see Figure 3.2 of this Technical Appendix), shows the Central Core to be the most remote although areas around the periphery have a lower attribute strength. A high strength of attribute is also shown in the Western Lobster Claw and along the west side of the Eastern Lobster Claw where rivers and lochs create a barrier to access. A generally lower strength of attribute is shown in the northern arm, rising to moderate in the centre of this area, though an area of higher attribute strength is shown in the south of this area, nearer the Central Core.
- 3.3.19 Site survey has found remoteness to be broadly in accordance with the mapping, with a High level of remoteness identified for the two peaks in the Central Core, Locations 6 and 7, though lower areas to the west of these peaks were considered less remote due to the accessibility by track or path. This was identified as Low at Location 4, accessible along a rough track, and Medium at Location 5 which requires a longer walk along a less defined path. Within the Western Lobster Claw, a Medium – High attribute level at Location 2 is considered to be generally representative of this area which is difficult to access due to lack of easy crossing points of the River Cassley. Within the Eastern Lobster Claw, slightly easier accessibility from the Glen Cassley Road and Duchally Hydro private road leads to a Medium to Low attribute strength at Location 1 and Medium at Location 3 which, requires a more difficult walk across hagged bog-land.

Perceptual Responses

- 3.3.20 The site analysis of the perceptual responses found that these were generally present at all the locations visited to some extent but were not all fully present at all points within the WLA during the journey to access these locations.
- 3.3.21 'Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude' was found to be present at all the locations but is considered lowest (Medium to Low rating) at Location 6 (Ben More Assynt) due to the popularity of this location for walkers.
- 3.3.22 'Risk, a Sense of Awe or Anxiety' is the response usually of lowest strength at all Locations visited. Limited presence (Low rating) of this was felt at location 4, due to the adjacent track, and within the Eastern Lobster Claw at Locations 1 and 3, where this was limited to a sense of loneliness or possible risk amongst peat hags. This was similarly felt in the Western Lobster Claw at Location 2, although the more difficult accessibility and deeper hags and caverns in the peat were considered to increase the sense of isolation and risk slightly to Medium. In contrast, a High degree of risk and awe was identified for the mountain-top Locations 6 and 7, considered to be broadly representative of this response throughout the mountains of the Central Core.
- 3.3.23 A limited presence (Low Rating) of 'Arresting or Inspiring Qualities' was felt at Location 1 which is a fairly enclosed location, relatively easy to access from Glen Cassley. It is likely that other, similar corrie locations in the Eastern Lobster Claw would reflect this and this attribute was only considered to have a slightly higher presence at location 3 where a slightly more open view was obtained. However, all the other areas visited within the Central Core and Western Lobster Claw were considered to have High presence of this response.
- 3.3.24 The difficult terrain and general lack of easy accessibility was considered to evoke a Medium or High level of the perceptual response 'Fulfilment of Physical Challenge' in all

locations but with the highest level experienced on the mountain tops of the Central Core.

WLA Strength of Wildness

- 3.3.25 In general, the site survey has identified that the variable wildness across the site is broadly consistent with the Map of Relative Wildness although there is some variation when the site experience is taken into account. The desk and site survey have identified that, of the areas visited, highest strength of wildness occurs in the Central Core and northern parts of the Western Lobster Claw. Although mapping shows small areas of higher wildness in the Eastern Lobster Claw, on site it was felt that these areas did not reflect such a high degree of wildness due to their constrained size. In these areas, the lack of influence of artefacts and contemporary land use is the prevailing factor in increasing the level of relative wildness in the mapping. However, the scale of these areas is such that there is an awareness of nearby features and activities which, if moving through the landscape, will only recently have gone out of view, with an expectation that they will soon become visible again. The constrained nature of these areas is also considered to limit the presence of the perceptual responses, 'Risk, a Sense of Awe or Anxiety' and 'Arresting or Inspiring Qualities', and the lack of evident steep terrain is considered to lead to reduced presence of the perceptual response 'Fulfilment from Physical Challenge' than other areas.
- 3.3.26 The mountain Locations 6 (Ben More Assynt) and 7 (Meall an Aonaich) were found to have the accumulated highest presence of perceptual responses. However, the appearance of modern artefacts and contemporary land uses from these locations (particularly large areas of forest plantation to the east and south) reduces the true sense of wildness that is experienced. However, the context to the west and north-west of these locations shows little if any contemporary land use or modern artefacts. As such, it is often the slightly lower locations amongst the peaks which are sheltered from views towards the south and east which have the greatest strength of wildness. This is largely reflected in the Jenks 8 analysis where the peaks and summits show a lower classification of wildness, but is not so apparent in the Map of Relative Wildness. This is also evidenced to some extent by the variability of wildness between Location 4 (North of Allt a' Chnair Ghiubhais) and 5 (Above Loch na Sròine Cuime). At Location 4 where the prevailing orientation of the view is southerly and easterly the hydro features at Duchally and wind turbines at Achany and Rosehall are more noticeable and decrease the sense of wildness, whilst at Location 5, with a more northerly aspect to the view and hydro features screened, a higher sense of wildness is experienced. Although this is localised in this location due to hydro features being screened by the local landform, there is awareness that when moving to north and west, this is likely to become the predominant situation with a sense of development being left behind. The perception of wildness between locations 4 and 5 is also affected by increased accessibility. It is relatively easy to access Location 4 via a rough hydro track but this route deteriorates to a rough and difficult to navigate ATV path towards Location 5.
- 3.3.27 South and east of the mountain area, in the Lobster Claw, the higher degree of wildness is experienced where there is a visual connection to the mountainous landscape of the Central Core. As such, there is usually a higher sense of wildness on the upland plateau of the Western Lobster Claw than that of the Eastern Lobster Claw where the mountainous areas appear more disconnected. From many parts of the Eastern Lobster Claw, hydro features at Duchally, the associated wood pole overhead line which crosses

the neck of the Eastern Lobster Claw or small areas of forest planation within Glen Cassley intervene in the view towards the mountains contributing to this sense of disconnect. By contrast, in the Western Lobster Claw, there are no features which interrupt the view towards the mountains and from highest areas the mountain landscape can be seen to extend far to the north with no or very little contemporary land use or features present.

3.3.28 Overall it is considered that throughout the areas visited, when considering both the location and the journey to the location, there is a strong sense of the main wild land area stretching out to the north and west, with a much lower sense of wildness experienced generally towards the east and south. For all of the locations visited, there was a sense of being only on the edge of the WLA, although for some locations, such as Location 3 in the Western Lobster Claw, Location 5 in the Central Core and the mountain summit areas, Locations 6 and 7, the wilder seeming landscapes to the north and west were more influential.

3.3.29 Strength of wildness is considered to be **High**, in the Central Core, mostly to the west and north of the Ben More Assynt ridge, and locally to the south and east of this, where views to the east and south are more obscured, such as deep corries amongst the peaks. This drops to **Medium to High** around the peaks of the eastern edge and other parts of the Central Core, where some artefacts or contemporary land use in neighbouring areas can be perceived but are not prominent, and also within the central area of the Western Lobster Claw, where there is a strong connection to the mountains and the flatter plateau leads to Glen Cassley and Glen Oykel being out of view. Strength of wildness is considered to be **Medium** in localised parts of the Eastern Lobster Claw, where there is no or little influence of built artefacts or contemporary land use but size of area is limited. The strength of wildness is more generally considered to be **Low** around the outer edges of the WLA, mostly within 1 to 2km of the boundary where the influences of contemporary land use such as commercial forest plantations, and built artefacts are greater. This includes areas in the Lobster Claw and Central Core around Glen Cassley. A **Low** strength of wildness is also considered to be present more generally across the Eastern Lobster Claw where the narrowness of the ridge of land can be felt and where artefacts and contemporary land uses create a sense of disconnect between other parts of the WLA.

WLA Key Qualities

3.3.30 Table 3.3.1 summarises the baseline analysis of the WLA Key Qualities from each of the four locations visited during the site survey:

Table 3.3.1: WLA Key Qualities – Baseline Analysis

Key Quality Location	A range of large, irregular, rocky mountains with steep, arresting slopes and a variety of lochs and lochans, possessing a strong sense of naturalness, remoteness and sanctuary	An awe-inspiring, broad scale expanse of cnocan in which there is a complex pattern of features at a local level that contribute to the sense of naturalness and sanctuary	A variety of spaces created by irregular landforms in which there is perceived naturalness, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude	Extensive, elevated peatland slopes whose simplicity and openness contribute to a perception of awe, whilst highlighting the qualities of adjacent mountains
Location 1: Allt Bad an t-Sagairt	Not present.	Not present.	Partially present. The landform lacks variety in this area but there is a sense of enclosure within the shallow corrie leading to some sense of solitude and perceived naturalness.	Partially present. The local area lacks the vast scale and openness as it is set within a corrie and there is little influence of adjacent mountain areas. However, the location shows the simplicity of land cover and topography and localised variation described.
Location 2: Càrn na Ceàrdaich	Partially present. The mountains to the north appear dramatic and inspiring with rugged and challenging slopes but are clearly separate to this location. Therefore, perceptive responses such as solitude, though present, do not arise in relation to the mountain landscape.	Not present.	Partially present. The landscape lacks variety consisting of fairly even slopes but there is some localised diversity where haggging occurs.	Present. This location exhibits the qualities of an upland, extensive peatland area with simple landcover and topography and is seen in contrast, and as a setting to the adjacent mountains. The greatest extent is seen to the north whereas to the east and south-east some contemporary features such as existing wind farms and forested areas limit the perceived extent.

<p style="text-align: center;">Key Quality</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Location</p>	<p>A range of large, irregular, rocky mountains with steep, arresting slopes and a variety of lochs and lochans, possessing a strong sense of naturalness, remoteness and sanctuary</p>	<p>An awe-inspiring, broad scale expanse of cnocan in which there is a complex pattern of features at a local level that contribute to the sense of naturalness and sanctuary</p>	<p>A variety of spaces created by irregular landforms in which there is perceived naturalness, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude</p>	<p>Extensive, elevated peatland slopes whose simplicity and openness contribute to a perception of awe, whilst highlighting the qualities of adjacent mountains</p>
<p>Location 3: East of Cnoc Glas na Crionaiche</p>	<p>Not present. (Although there is some appreciation of the mountainous landscape lying adjacent when accessing this location from the north).</p>	<p>Not present.</p>	<p>Partially present. The landform lacks variety in this area although there is some sense of enclosure and solitude within the corrie which is in contrast to the exposure of the broad ridge leading to this location and a sense of perceived naturalness.</p>	<p>Present. The location within the corrie is somewhat enclosed but greater sense of expansiveness and appreciation of the peatlands as a setting to the mountains is experienced when accessing this location. However, on this relatively narrow piece of land, an awareness of nearby land use such as commercial forest plantation is usually present and limits perception of landscape scale and resultant arresting qualities.</p>
<p>Location 4: North of Allt a' Chnaip Ghiubhais</p>	<p>Present. There is a sense of moving into the mountainous landscape in this location with mountains adjacent to the west and appearing to extend to the north though an adjacent track reduces remoteness locally.</p>	<p>Not present.</p>	<p>Present. The landscape is rugged with a sense of seclusion within the localised dip of the adjacent small loch and exposed elevation when moving away from the loch. The mountains adjacent give a perception of awe although the nearby rough track reduces the perception of solitude to some degree.</p>	<p>Present. The open peatland landscape is seen stretching out to south and east but appears less remote and extensive with less sense of awe or risk due to other land use and development also visible in this direction such as forest plantations in Glen Cassley, existing wind turbines at Achany and Rosehall and an</p>

Key Quality Location	A range of large, irregular, rocky mountains with steep, arresting slopes and a variety of lochs and lochans, possessing a strong sense of naturalness, remoteness and sanctuary	An awe-inspiring, broad scale expanse of cnocan in which there is a complex pattern of features at a local level that contribute to the sense of naturalness and sanctuary	A variety of spaces created by irregular landforms in which there is perceived naturalness, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude	Extensive, elevated peatland slopes whose simplicity and openness contribute to a perception of awe, whilst highlighting the qualities of adjacent mountains
				overhead line crossing the ridge from Duchally weir.
Location 5: Above Loch na Sròine Cuime	Present. There is a sense of being on the edge of the mountain landscape in this location with steep, rocky slopes and lochs present. An ATV track increases accessibility but has only localised influence on perceptions of naturalness, remoteness and sanctuary. However, these senses are also tempered somewhat by the Duchally weir and a surface pipeline which are frequently seen enroute to the location and from surrounding areas.	Partially present. There is a sense of being on the edge of the Cnocan landscape with a rocky knolls present and a very complex terrain. However, the expanse of this type of landscape is not strongly perceived here.	Present. There is a great deal of irregularity in the landscape in this location which enhances perceived naturalness and sanctuary and solitude, although these senses are slightly affected by the appearance of the Duchally hydro features seen on the approach to the location.	Partially present. Open peatland slopes are perceived on the opposite side of the valley and hills to the north, east and south-east but feel more external to the location.
Location 6: Ben More Assynt (VP10)	Present Mountains stretch out far to the south, east and west. The attributes / responses of naturalness, awe-inspiring and arresting qualities, ruggedness and challenging terrain are all present. The popularity of this location leads to a less strong	Partially present. The cnocan landscape is seen to the north-west as part of the surrounding vista and its uninhabited and rugged nature contributes to arresting qualities experienced from this location. However, the indirect association with this landscape	Present. The irregular landform is very apparent from this location with a strong sense of ruggedness, naturalness and awe. The popularity of this summit means a sense of solitude is not experienced strongly here but can be	Present. Although not within the peatlands, these can be seen stretching extensively to north and east, and to a lesser extent to south-east contributing to the sense of awe and naturalness experienced although large areas of forest

Key Quality Location	A range of large, irregular, rocky mountains with steep, arresting slopes and a variety of lochs and lochans, possessing a strong sense of naturalness, remoteness and sanctuary	An awe-inspiring, broad scale expanse of cnocan in which there is a complex pattern of features at a local level that contribute to the sense of naturalness and sanctuary	A variety of spaces created by irregular landforms in which there is perceived naturalness, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude	Extensive, elevated peatland slopes whose simplicity and openness contribute to a perception of awe, whilst highlighting the qualities of adjacent mountains
	sense of solitude though this is perceived as present in the surrounding landscape.	means other attributes recognised in the Key Quality are not experienced directly.	perceived as present in the surrounding landscape.	plantation which intersperse the peatlands reduce this to some degree.
Location 7: Meall an Aonaich (VP23)	Present. The mountain landscape is seen to the west and north-west and to some degree the south although there is a sense of being on the very edge in this location. The impressions of ruggedness and naturalness can be seen when looking toward the mountain areas and the perceptual responses of solitude and awe are also largely present.	Not present.	Present. Variety in the landscape is evident, particularly to the west where rugged peaks and corries can be perceived and there is a sense of naturalness and awe, but this is less present to the south and east where commercial forest plantation is present.	Present. The peatland slopes can be seen to the north and east but are interrupted by modern artefacts and contemporary land use such as wind turbines at Rosehall and Achany (and more distantly) forest areas and features of the Duchally hydro. This reduces their apparent extent.

4. Assessment of Effects

4.1 Wild Land Sensitivity

- 4.1.1 The sensitivity of each WLA Key Quality has been evaluated at each of the assessment locations in accordance with the criteria in Table 2.2.4. The sensitivity appraisal is summarised in Table 4.1.1.

Table 4.1.1: WLA Key Qualities - Sensitivity

Key Quality Location	A range of large, irregular, rocky mountains with steep, arresting slopes and a variety of lochs and lochans, possessing a strong sense of naturalness, remoteness and sanctuary	An awe-inspiring, broad scale expanse of cnocan in which there is a complex pattern of features at a local level that contribute to the sense of naturalness and sanctuary	A variety of spaces created by irregular landforms in which there is perceived naturalness, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude	Extensive, elevated peatland slopes whose simplicity and openness contribute to a perception of awe, whilst highlighting the qualities of adjacent mountains
Location 1: Allt Bad an t-Sagairt	Low The WLA Key Quality is considered to be Not Present.	Low The WLA Key Quality is considered to be Not Present.	Medium The WLA Key Quality is only partially present and is considered to be only partially susceptible to change as development of the type proposed would not alter the landform, although could affect some of the sense of naturalness or solitude depending on location.	Medium The simplicity of the landform is susceptible to change but some of the key aspects of the WLA Key Quality are lacking and therefore it is only partially present.,.
Location 2: Càrn na Ceàrdaich	Medium The WLA Key Quality is only partially present but contributes to a sense of wildness in this location and this association is considered susceptible to change.	Low The WLA Key Quality is considered to be Not Present.	Low The WLA Key Quality is partially present but not a valued aspect of the landscape in this location and considered to be less susceptible to change.	High The WLA Key Quality is present as a valued aspect of this landscape and is considered susceptible to change.
Location 3: East of Cnoc Glas na Crionaiche	Low The WLA Key Quality is considered to be Not Present though there is some limited relationship in the wider area.	Low The WLA Key Quality is considered to be Not Present.	Medium The WLA is partially present and there is some degree of susceptibility to change in terms of sense of solitude and naturalness.	High The WLA Key Quality is present. Though some of the key aspects are lacking, the simplicity of the landform is very susceptible to change.

Location 4: North of Allt a' Chnaip Ghiubhais	High The WLA Key Quality is present and a valued aspect of the location which is susceptible to change.	Low The WLA Key Quality is considered to be Not Present.	High The WLA Key Quality is present and is considered susceptible to change.	Medium to High The WLA Key Quality is present, but is considered slightly less susceptible to change due to the existing constructed features which can be seen from this location.
Location 5: Above Loch na Sròine Cuime	High The WLA Key Quality is present and a valued aspect of the location which is susceptible to change.	Low The WLA Key Quality is partially present but a less valued aspect of the location and therefore less susceptible to change.	High The WLA Key Quality is present and is considered susceptible to change.	Medium The WLA Key Quality is only partially present but is considered susceptible to change.
Location 6: Ben More Assynt (VP10)	High The WLA Key Quality is present and a valued aspect of the location which is susceptible to change.	Medium The WLA Key Quality is partially present but in this location is not highly valued for it's distinctive qualities and therefore less susceptible to change.	High The WLA Key Quality is present and is considered susceptible to change.	Medium to High The WLA Key Quality is present to some degree and a fairly valued aspect from this location.
Location 7: Meall an Aonaich (VP23)	High The WLA Key Quality is present and a valued aspect of the location which is susceptible to change.	Low The WLA Key Quality is considered to be Not Present.	Medium The WLA Key Quality is present but is not as highly valued from this location and therefore less susceptible to change.	Medium to High The WLA Key Quality is present, and a valued aspect of this location, though susceptibility is slightly reduced by the existing features and land use which interrupt it's extensiveness.

4.1.2 WLA-wide sensitivity for each of the WLA Key Qualities is summarised as follows:

A range of large, irregular, rocky mountains with steep, arresting slopes and a variety of lochs and lochans, possessing a strong sense of naturalness, remoteness and sanctuary

4.1.3 This WLA Key Quality is most strongly present and therefore most sensitive in the mountainous landscapes of the Central Core, where sensitivity is considered to be High. Around the mountains, where the WLA Special Quality is less dominant, the sensitivity to change decreases but where connectivity is strong and the mountainous landscape is more influential, sensitivity ranges between Medium and High. This includes central and northern parts of the Western Lobster Claw, and potentially some higher parts of the eastern Lobster Claw. Elsewhere in the Eastern Lobster Claw sensitivity for this Key Quality is Low, where the mountain landscape is either not visible, or where the connection to the mountain landscape is interrupted by development or contemporary land use. Nevertheless, some of these areas are susceptible to further disconnection by new development and in these areas, sensitivity is considered to be Medium.

An awe-inspiring, broad scale expanse of cnocan in which there is a complex pattern of features at a local level that contribute to the sense of naturalness and sanctuary

4.1.4 This Key Quality is primarily limited to the Northern Arm and north Central Core therefore these are the areas where sensitivity is highest. On the highest peaks of the Central Core, although the cnocan landscape can be perceived within the setting, the sensitivity for the Key Quality is considered to be Low because the wild land characteristics cited in the WLA Special Quality are not a specifically valued aspect of the location. However, this may rise to Medium or even High for the more northern peaks where the relationship is more direct and the cnocan provide a valued, undeveloped setting to the mountains. The Key Quality is not present in the Lobster Claw and sensitivity therefore Low.

A variety of spaces created by irregular landforms in which there is perceived naturalness, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude

4.1.5 This Key Quality is to some extent present across the whole WLA although most notably so in and around the mountains of the Central Core. Sensitivity is considered to be High amongst the mountains where the rugged terrain predominates but lower in the Lobster Claw areas. Within the shallow corries of the eastern Lobster Claw where there is a sense of enclosure, sensitivity is considered to be Medium. However, on the more open tops of the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw sensitivity is Low as the terrain is smoother and the WLA Key Quality is less obviously present. The more open and smoother Meall an Aonaich on the edge of the range of peaks is considered to have a Medium sensitivity spatial is less present and a less valued aspect of this location.

Extensive, elevated peatland slopes whose simplicity and openness contribute to a perception of awe, whilst highlighting the qualities of adjacent mountains

4.1.6 High sensitivity for this WLA Key Quality is identified in the Lobster Claw area where the open peatlands are the dominant characteristic of the landform, though locally this is reduced to medium where the landform is more enclosed and the sense of awe and relationship to the adjacent mountains is not experienced. A Medium to High sensitivity is considered to be present in east of the Central Core, where the relationship with the open peatlands is a key contributor to the sense of awe that is obtained. This is reduced

to Medium in lower areas within in the mountains which have a less close association with the open peatland slopes and Low for areas where there is no visual connection to these areas, including the more westerly parts of the Central Core and the Northern Arm.

4.2 Magnitude of Change

Physical and Perceptual Attributes

4.2.1 Evaluation of magnitude of change to physical attributes and perceptual responses for each of the locations is included in Annex 2 and summarised below.

Physical Attributes

4.2.2 The magnitude of change for the majority of physical attributes at the majority of locations is anticipated to be Negligible or Low as change relating to the Proposed Development would be indirect and therefore, whilst it would be apparent within the south or south-easterly landscape context, it would not very noticeably alter the physical qualities which are directly influential on the assessment location. The exception are those locations closest to the Proposed Development, chiefly Location 1 (Allt Bad an t-Sagairt) which is within the Proposed Development footprint, Location 2 (Càrn na Ceàrdaich) on the opposite side of Glen Cassley to the Proposed Development, and to some extent, Location 7 (Meall an Aonaich), representative of the closest mountain summits to the north-west.

4.2.3 The most notable change to physical attributes would occur at Location 1, where direct change resulting from the introduction of turbines, tracks, hardstanding and borrow pits (if used) would lead to a High magnitude of change on 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' and Evidence of Contemporary Land Uses' and a Medium magnitude of change on all other physical attributes.

4.2.4 Beyond the confines of the Proposed Development, at Locations 2 – 7, the absence of direct change on the fabric of the landscape from the Proposed Development would lead to a Negligible magnitude of change to the attributes 'Perceived Naturalness', 'Rugged or Challenging Terrain' and 'Remoteness and Inaccessibility'. However, at some locations change would occur to the attributes 'Lack of Construction or other Artefacts' and 'Evidence of Contemporary Land Uses' which are more dependent on what takes place in the surrounding landscape. A Medium to High magnitude is anticipated for these attributes at Location 2 as the Proposed Development would be more noticeable to the east, bringing activities and structures closer than existing wind turbines within the context. A Low to Medium magnitude is also anticipated for 'Lack of Construction or other Artefacts' at Location 7 where wind turbines would also appear closer (although existing turbines are already present within this part of the context). However, this is not anticipated to extend to the attribute 'Evidence of Contemporary Land uses' for this location, because existing contemporary land use including commercial forest plantations and existing wind farm activity is already very apparent.

4.2.5 At Locations 4 and 6, the Proposed Development would form a new feature within the surrounding context. However, it would appear more distant and smaller within the context where existing features are already apparent and is considered to lead to a Low magnitude of change for both attributes.

4.2.6 At Locations 3 and 5, the Proposed Development would be perceptible only as tips or blades. This is considered unlikely to very noticeably alter the baseline of these attributes.

When approaching both locations, existing features already have similar influence on these attributes, although locally, at the location, these features may not be visible. It is considered that, when moving through the landscape local to both areas, there would be an awareness of features and activities affecting the context to a similar degree, and therefore the addition of the Proposed Development would not create a very noticeable level of change. The magnitude would be Low for 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' at Location 3 and Negligible, for other attributes at both locations.

- 4.2.7 When viewing the assessment locations as representative of the wider magnitude of change on the WLA, the greatest degree of change for all physical attributes would be in and around the Proposed Development within the Eastern Lobster Claw (as represented by Location 1) and, to the attributes 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' and 'Evidence of Contemporary Land Uses', on the opposite side of Glen Cassley in the Western Lobster Claw, where the Proposed Development would be seen more noticeably within the easterly context (represented by Location 2). Within these areas, magnitude of change would be High or Medium. Moving further to the north in the Western Lobster Claw, and into the Central Core (as represented by Location 4 and Location 5), the degree of change to 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' and 'Evidence of Contemporary Land Uses' would decrease, more likely to be Medium or Low, as the Proposed Development would become smaller and less noticeable within a wider context, would be seen more to the south-east than east, within a setting of existing wind turbines, and would affect areas where the baseline attribute strength is more influenced by existing features of Duchally hydro and upper Glen Cassley. Moving further northwards within the Central Core the reduced perceptibility of the Proposed Development in relation to the existing hydroelectric features is considered more likely to lead to a magnitude of change for these attributes of Low or Negligible.
- 4.2.8 Although greater intervisibility with the Proposed Development is obtained from more elevated ground (represented by Locations 6 and 7), the degree of change is not anticipated to increase in consequence, because a wider extent of existing artefacts and contemporary land use also becomes more influential in the south-easterly and easterly context from these areas.
- 4.2.9 Further north in the Eastern Lobster Claw (represented by Location 3), beyond the initial sphere of influence of about 5-6km from the Proposed Development, change is anticipated to be usually no greater than Low and generally Negligible, as there is already an awareness of existing artefacts and contemporary land use, even though this may not always be visible within localised parts of the landscape.
- 4.2.10 Magnitude of change within the wider context of the Central Core and Northern Arm, would be Negligible, due to distance and limited perceptibility.

Perceptual Responses

- 4.2.11 Potential change to perceptual responses would be largely limited to the responses: 'Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude' and 'Arresting or Inspiring Qualities'. No change is anticipated to the response 'Risk, a Sense of Awe or Anxiety' for any locations, as the Proposed Development is considered either too far from assessment locations to offer an increased sense of reassurance of nearby human contact or safety, or would affect areas where an equal or similar sense of proximity to other people is already perceived. Any perceptible change to the response 'Fulfilment from Physical Challenge', would be

limited to Location 1 where the introduction of site tracks may change the sense of accessibility and landscape scale.

- 4.2.12 The magnitude of change relating to the physical attributes ‘Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts’ and ‘Evidence of Contemporary Land Uses’ would give a degree of change to the attribute ‘Arresting or Inspiring Qualities’, at locations where expansive views of the easterly and south-easterly landscape contribute to the strength of this response. This is anticipated to give a magnitude of change of Medium to for Location 2, Low to Medium for Location 7 and Low for Locations 4 and 6. The magnitude is not considered to be High at any of these locations because the views towards the more mountainous north or westerly landscapes which are considered to contribute more to this response (particularly from the mountain summits) would be unaffected. From all these locations, existing wind turbines and other features are already present to some degree in the south-easterly context. The minimal contribution of the southern or south-westerly view to the strength of this response at Locations 3 and 5 is considered to lead to a Negligible magnitude of change for these locations.
- 4.2.13 For the perceptual response, ‘Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude’ a Medium to High magnitude of change is anticipated at Location 1 where there would be direct introduction of turbines and tracks and associated increase in contemporary land use and accessibility in the surrounding area. However, moving away from the Proposed Development, the increased influence of contemporary land use in the nearby landscape is anticipated to lead to a Low magnitude of change to this response for Locations 2 and 7. Whilst the Proposed Development would lead to an increase in perceived active land use and people within part of the landscape context, it is considered that the sense of sanctuary and solitude would continue to be strongly present, due the challenging nature of access to these locations and continued sense of space and distance between these areas and other peopled landscapes.
- 4.2.14 Magnitude of change to ‘Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude’ is considered to be Negligible for all other locations which would feel distant from the Proposed Development with visibility or awareness of other closer activities or features, likely to have greater influence. This is particularly the case at Locations 3, 4 and 5 in, relation to features of the Duchally hydro.
- 4.2.15 Overall, the magnitude of change for perceptual responses at the assessment locations is considered to give a broadly accurate representation for areas where the Proposed Development would either directly or closely affect the WLA (Location 1) or would be theoretically visible within the WLA (Locations 2 – 7). There would be the greatest degree of change to these qualities in and around the Proposed Development site within around 1-2km of turbine locations, affecting ‘Sense of sanctuary or solitude’, ‘Arresting or inspiring qualities’ and ‘Fulfilment from Physical Challenge’. Within this area, some of these perceptual attributes may be less likely to be fully experienced by some people although for others, they may continue to be at least partially present as the site would continue to appear remote from more overtly managed landscapes and public roads with a sense of elevation and visual connection to other less managed or developed landscapes. A Medium to High magnitude of change may occur to ‘Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude’ in the more northerly part of the site where the existing Achany and Rosehall turbines are not visible but lower baseline levels of the other perceptual responses would limit the magnitude of change to Medium or Low. Further south, the existing turbines would reduce the baseline levels of these responses, but the effect on the baseline of the

existing Achany turbines would result in a lower magnitude of change of Medium, Low or even Negligible at the most southerly point.

- 4.2.16 Within the wider context, the greatest potential for change across the WLA would be likely to be to the responses 'Arresting or Inspiring Qualities' and 'Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude'. However, for 'Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude' this is more likely to affect areas closer to the Proposed Development where a potential proximity to people or activities would be more likely to be felt. Magnitude of change may be Medium within localised parts of the Eastern Lobster Claw at closer proximity to the east or north of the Proposed Development, and is anticipated to be Low within the easterly parts of the Western Lobster Claw, the south Central Core and small localised locations within the southern part of the Eastern Lobster Claw, where features and access routes at closer proximity than the Proposed Development are not strongly perceived.
- 4.2.17 Change to the response 'Arresting or Inspiring Qualities' would be experienced more extensively within the Western Lobster Claw, into the south-eastern part of the Central Core where extensive south-easterly views are experienced. However, change to this response would recede with distance and elevation as the Proposed Development started to become a smaller feature within a more expansive view, seen in association with existing developed or managed landscapes to the south-east whilst existing arresting qualities are perceived as being more associated with landscapes to the north and west. A Medium magnitude of change for this quality is anticipated through the Western Lobster Claw in areas where the Proposed Development would be more noticeable, gradually reducing to Low through the south-eastern part of the Central Core and into the more elevated landscapes around Ben More Assynt where the northern and westerly landscape becomes more influential on the baseline presence of this response. A Low magnitude is anticipated generally through the Eastern Lobster Claw (beyond the confines of the immediate site) where the focus of the more arresting views is more to the north, east and west.
- 4.2.18 The magnitude of change more generally across the Central Core and northern arm would be Negligible due to the very limited perceptibility beyond the south-eastern edge of the Central Core.

WLA Key Qualities

- 4.2.19 Magnitude of change on WLA Key Qualities is discussed in Table 4.2.1 to Table 4.2.4 below:

Table 4.2.1: Magnitude of Change to WLA Key Quality: A range of large, irregular, rocky mountains with steep, arresting slopes and a variety of lochs and lochans, possessing a strong sense of naturalness, remoteness and sanctuary

Location	Description of Change
Location 1: Allt Bad an t-Sagairt	The WLA Key Quality is considered to be Not Present at this location.
Location 2: Càrn na Ceàrdaich	The Proposed Development would be present in the easterly context but would not affect the mountainous landscape to the north or the connection between the location and this landscape. Whilst a Medium magnitude of change is anticipated to the perceptual responses of 'Arresting or Inspiring Qualities' and a Low magnitude is anticipated to 'Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude', which contribute to this WLA Key Quality, this relates to changes

Location	Description of Change
	to the easterly context. The Proposed Development could slightly distract focus from the mountain landscape in this location but would not lead to any change in appreciation of its arresting qualities.
Location 3: East of Cnoc Glas na Crionaiche	The WLA Key Quality is not present at the location although is experienced en-route to the location. A Negligible effect is anticipated in relation to the Proposed Development for the physical attributes of 'Perceived Naturalness' and 'Remoteness and Inaccessibility' which contribute to the WLA Key Quality and for all the perceptual responses. The appreciation of the mountain landscape and connection to this landscape would not be altered.
Location 4: North of Allt a' Chnaip Ghiubhais	This location is considered to be on the edge of the mountain landscape which extends to north and west. The Proposed Development would be present within the south-easterly landscape, therefore generally not affecting appreciation of the more mountainous landscape though reducing the proximity to wind turbines within this part of the context. A Negligible magnitude of change is anticipated to the physical attributes 'Perceived Naturalness' and 'Remoteness and Inaccessibility' and also the perceptual responses 'Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude' and Risk, a Sense of Awe or Anxiety' which contribute the WLA Key Quality. A Low magnitude of change is anticipated to the perceptual response 'Arresting or Inspiring Qualities'. The arresting appearance of the mountains, and sense of naturalness, challenge and solitude would remain unchanged although there could be a small influence on the role of the glens and surrounding moorland as a setting to the mountains.
Location 5: Above Loch na Sròine Cuime	There would be limited perceptibility of the Proposed Development to the south-east from this location with the orientation of the landscape tending more towards views to north and east in nearby areas where more open views to the south-east are obtained and existing hydroelectric features are more noticeable in the view. Magnitude of change to all physical attributes and perceptual responses which contribute to the WLA Key Special Quality is considered to be Negligible and therefore the WLA Key Quality is considered likely to remain unchanged.
Location 6: Ben More Assynt (VP10)	The Proposed Development would be present within the south-easterly landscape context where views are open across the more low-lying landscapes and feature the existing Achany and Rosehall and Lairg Wind Farms, and other more distant sites as well as contemporary land use such as forest, and scattered settlement. This would lead to a Low magnitude of change for the perceptual response 'Arresting or Inspiring Qualities' and could lead to a small perceived reduction in the scale of the surrounding landscape setting of the glens and undeveloped moorland but the more notable arresting qualities relating to the extensive mountainous landscapes experienced to north and west, the rugged sense of naturalness, risk and sense of solitude would remain unchanged.
Location 7: Meall an Aonaich (VP23)	The Proposed Development would be present within the south-easterly landscape context where views are open across the more low-lying landscapes and feature the existing Achany, Rosehall and Lairg wind farms, and other more distant sites as well as contemporary land use such as forest, and scattered settlement. This would lead to a Low to Medium magnitude of change to the perceptual response 'Arresting or Inspiring Qualities' and a Low magnitude of change to the perceptual response 'Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude' which is anticipated to lead some reduction in the scale of the surrounding landscape setting of undeveloped moorland. However, this location is situated at the southern extremity of the

Location	Description of Change
	mountain landscape and the connection to the more extensive mountainous area and sense of naturalness is experienced more to the north and west associated with Ben More Assynt and Breabag. These areas would appear unchanged from this location.
Magnitude of Change	
<p>This WLA Key Quality recognises the attributes 'Perceived Naturalness', 'Rugged or Challenging Terrain' and 'Remoteness and Inaccessibility', and the perceptual responses 'Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude', 'Risk, a Sense of Awe or Anxiety' and 'Arresting or Inspiring Qualities'. There would be no direct change to the mountainous landscapes leading to no discernible change in the qualities of rugged naturalness, risk and challenge and the arresting qualities and sense of awe which are directly associated with these areas. Potential change to this WLA Key Quality would be associated with change within the setting of the surrounding moorland and glen floor areas. The Proposed Development would be located at the furthest south-east point of the WLA and from the elevated areas towards the southern and eastern edge of the mountain area would be seen within a setting where other wind turbines and contemporary land use is already perceived, though it would appear closer within this context. This could lead to a small perceived reduction in the scale of the setting of undeveloped landscapes leading to some limited influence on the perceptual response of 'Arresting or Inspiring Qualities'. However, this quality would remain strongly present due to the arresting mountain views to north and west. From some limited areas on the plateau of the Western Lobster Claw the proximity of the Proposed Development to the east could also form some degree of distraction from the mountain landscape to the north. However, this would be very limited because, due to the rounded nature of the topography, there are very few areas on the plateau where the mountains are both visible and influential and the Proposed Development would also be seen. Due to the position of the Proposed Development at the most south-easterly extremity of the WLA, there would be very few areas other than within the site itself, that the Proposed Development would interrupt views towards the mountains.</p> <p>The vast majority of mountainous areas and areas where the mountains are important and influential within the WLA would not be intervisible with the Proposed Development and would therefore not be affected at all.</p> <p>Magnitude of change to the perception of this Key Quality is anticipated as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low in the most south-easterly fringe of the Central Core and localised areas transitioning into the Western Lobster Claw where a perceived reduction in the scale of the surrounding undeveloped moorland setting may be perceived. • Negligible in all other areas. 	

Table 4.2.2: Magnitude of Change to WLA Key Quality: An awe-inspiring, broad scale expanse of cnochan in which there is a complex pattern of features at a local level that contribute to the sense of naturalness and sanctuary

Location	Description of Change
Location 1: Allt Bad an t-Sagairt	The WLA Key Quality is considered to be Not Present at this location.
Location 2: Càrn na Ceàrdaich	The WLA Key Quality is considered to be Not Present at this location.

Location	Description of Change
Location 3: East of Cnoc Glas na Crionaiche	The WLA Key Quality is considered to be Not Present at this location.
Location 4: North of Allt a' Chnaip Ghiubhais	The WLA Key Quality is considered to be Not Present at this location.
Location 5: Above Loch na Sròine Cuime	The Proposed Development would have a limited perceptibility from this location in the south-easterly context with local landform providing a more immediate focus and existing hydroelectric features when moving within the local landform to locations where a clearer view is obtained. Consequently, a Negligible magnitude of change is predicted for all physical attributes and perceptual responses. The cnocan landscape is more focussed towards the northwest of this location and therefore no noticeable change is anticipated to any aspect of the WLA Key Quality.
Location 6: Ben More Assynt (VP10)	The Proposed Development would feature in the south-easterly context of this location, seen in combination with, but closer than existing wind turbines. The cnocan landscapes perceived from this location are predominantly to the north, contributing to the surrounding undeveloped setting. As such, although a Low magnitude of changes is anticipated to the attributes 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' and 'Evidence of Contemporary Land Use' and the perceptual response 'Arresting or Inspiring Qualities', these attributes are not considered to be directly contributory to the Key Quality from this location and therefore would not contribute to a change to the presence of the Key Quality.
Location 7: Meall an Aonaich (VP23)	The WLA Key Quality is considered to be Not Present at this location.
Magnitude of Change	
<p>The Cnocan landscapes are principally located within the Northern Arm and the northern part of the Central Core, areas which generally do not have any theoretical intervisibility with the Proposed Development. From some of the peaks or transitional areas on the northern part of the Ben More Assynt massif, the cnocan landscape contributes to the sense of wildness experienced in terms of an undeveloped setting in a similar manner to the moorland plateau landscapes within which the Proposed Development would be located. Whilst there would be a perceptible change to this setting for these locations as a result of the Proposed Development, this is considered unlikely to lead to any perceptible change on any of the attributes or responses which contribute to the WLA Key Quality.</p> <p>Magnitude of change to the perception of this Key Quality is anticipated as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negligible for all areas. 	

Table 4.2.3: Magnitude of Change to WLA Key Quality: A variety of spaces created by irregular landforms in which there is perceived naturalness, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude

Location	Description of Change
Location 1: Allt Bad an t-Sagairt	The WLA Key Quality is partially present in this location with a sense of enclosure in the corrie giving some degree of solitude and perceived naturalness. The Proposed Development in this location is anticipated to give a Medium - High magnitude of change to the perceptual response of 'Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude' and a Medium magnitude of change to the physical attributes 'Perceived Naturalness' and 'Rugged or Challenging Terrain' which contribute to this WLA Key Quality.
Location 2: Càrn na Ceàrdaich	The WLA Key Quality is not strongly expressed in this location. Of the physical attributes and perceptual responses which contribute to this WLA Key Quality, a Negligible magnitude of change is anticipated to the physical attributes 'Perceived Naturalness' and 'Rugged or Challenging Terrain', and the perceptual response 'Risk, a Sense of Awe or Anxiety', and a Low magnitude of change is anticipated to the perceptual response of 'Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude'. However, this is due to the anticipated proximity of human activities in the nearby landscape (leading to a Medium to High magnitude of change on both 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' and Evidence of Contemporary Land Use') and is considered unlikely lead to noticeable change to the WLA Key Quality due to the lack of topographical diversity in this location.
Location 3: East of Cnoc Glas na Crionaiche	The Proposed Development would lead to limited change in this location. Of the physical attributes which contribute to this WLA Key Quality, a Negligible magnitude of change is anticipated to 'Perceived Naturalness' and 'Rugged or Challenging Terrain'. A Negligible magnitude of change is anticipated for all perceptual responses including 'Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude'. The Proposed Development would be more visible when approaching this location, leading to a higher change to the physical attributes 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' and Evidence of Contemporary Land Use' than is experienced at the location. However, this would not affect the sense of contrast between the open ridge and enclosure of the broad corrie within which the assessment location is situated.
Location 4: North of Allt a' Chnaip Ghiubhais	The Proposed Development would be present within the south-eastern context from this location but is considered to have a Negligible magnitude of change on the physical attributes 'Perceived Naturalness' and 'Rugged and Challenging Terrain' and the perceptual responses 'Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude' and 'Risk, a Sense of Awe or Anxiety' which contribute to it. The reduced proximity of the Proposed Development in comparison with existing development affecting the same part of the context could lead to a slightly reduction in the expansive landscape to the south east, but this is not considered sufficient to lead to a change in the experience of spatial diversity as it would still appear far way but would not encroach into areas of spatial containment.
Location 5: Above Loch na Sròine Cuime	There is a sense of spatial containment amongst the local landform in this location and the limited perceptibility of the Proposed Development is considered unlikely to encroach upon this. The magnitude of change for all attributes in this location is Negligible and no change is anticipated to the WLA Key Quality.

Location	Description of Change
<p>Location 6: Ben More Assynt (VP10)</p>	<p>This is an open and expansive location of rugged landform and the WLA Key Quality is considered to be strongly present. The Proposed Development would form a feature of the south-eastern landscape context, seen in combination with existing more distant turbines. Magnitude of change to physical attributes which contribute to the WLA Key Quality: 'Perceived Naturalness' and 'Rugged or Challenging Terrain' is considered to be Negligible as is the magnitude for the perceptible response 'Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude'. The Proposed Development would appear slightly closer than existing turbines which may be perceived to reduce the extent of the surrounding undeveloped setting to the mountains. However, change is not anticipated to be sufficient to alter the sense of variety and experience relating to the topography in this location. It would not affect the more enclosed locations created by the rugged landform whilst the elevated expansive experience from the summit would remain.</p>
<p>Location 7: Meall an Aonaich (VP23)</p>	<p>This is an open and expansive location with rugged landform evident in the surrounding landscape. The Proposed Development would be present in the south-eastern landscape context, seen in combination with existing more distant turbines. Magnitude of change to 'Perceived Naturalness' and 'Rugged or Challenging Terrain' is considered to be Negligible. However, a magnitude of change of Low to Medium to 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' and Low to 'Evidence of Contemporary Land Uses' would lead to a Low magnitude of change for the perceptible response 'Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude'. The Proposed Development would appear closer than existing turbines and, although features already affect this part of the context, it would reduce the extent of the undeveloped setting to this location. However, the sense of exposure would remain and as would the relationship with the more rugged landscapes to the north where greater topographical variety is perceived.</p>
<p>Magnitude of Change</p>	
<p>This WLA Key Quality recognises the physical attributes 'Perceived Naturalness' and 'Rugged or Challenging Terrain' and the perceptual attributes 'Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude' and 'Risk, a Sense of Awe or Anxiety'. It is also influenced by the attributes 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' and 'Evidence of Contemporary Land Uses'. The WLA Key Quality is most well expressed within the rugged landscapes of the Central Core. Within these areas, whilst the Proposed Development would be perceived as a feature within the south-eastern context from some parts, and may influence a perception of the scale of the surrounding lower-lying setting to the landscape, it would not alter the spatial relationship of enclosure and exposure which is felt within the landform, being only perceived within the more open and exposed areas where existing development of contemporary land use is already a feature. The ruggedness, perceived naturalness and sense of solitude within the enclosed parts of the landscape would not be affected.</p> <p>Closer to the Proposed Development, and within the footprint of the Proposed Development, the WLA Key Quality is considered to be only partially present, as the landform is less diverse. However, the introduction of the Proposed Development and intervisibility at close proximity into some of the shallow rounded corries or depressions of the Eastern Lobster Claw (such as Corrie Buidhe and Loch Sgeireach) would locally reduce the sense of solitude which may affect the variety of experience between enclosure and exposure. However, in the Western Lobster Claw, although change to sense of solitude may be experienced from some areas, this is not anticipated to noticeably affect the WLA Special Quality, which is not truly present due to lack of ruggedness and spatial diversity in the topography.</p> <p>Magnitude of change to the perception of this Key Quality is anticipated as follows:</p>	

Location	Description of Change
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium in very localised secluded areas in and around the Proposed Development site and within the Eastern Lobster Claw up to around 5km from the Proposed Development where the sense of solitude would be affected, but where the rugged and diverse qualities of the landform are less pronounced; • Negligible in all other areas.

Table 4.2.4: Magnitude of Change to WLA Key Quality: Extensive, elevated peatland slopes whose simplicity and openness contribute to a perception of awe, whilst highlighting the qualities of adjacent mountains

Location	Description of Change
Location 1: Allt Bad an t-Sagairt	The Proposed Development would directly affect and characterise this location. Magnitude of change to the physical attributes which contribute to it is anticipated to be Medium for 'Perceived Naturalness' and 'Rugged or Challenging Terrain'. A Negligible magnitude of change is anticipated to the perceptual response 'Risk a Sense of Awe or Anxiety' and a Low magnitude is anticipated to 'Arresting or Inspiring Qualities' due to the low baseline levels of these attributes in the location which is relatively enclosed and which result in the WLA Key Quality being only partially present. Magnitude of change to 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' which also influences the WLA Key Quality would be High.
Location 2: Càrn na Ceàrdaich	The Proposed Development would appear in the easterly context to this location, leading to a Medium to High magnitude of change on the physical attribute 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' which is contributory to it and an associated Medium magnitude of change to the perceptual response, 'Arresting or Inspiring Qualities'. Due to the absence of direct change, a Negligible magnitude of change on physical attributes 'Perceived Naturalness' and 'Rugged or Challenging Terrain' is anticipated as well as to the perceptual response 'Risk Sense of Awe or Anxiety'. The prominence of the Proposed Development in the easterly context may lead to a perceived reduction in the scale of the open peatland although the sense of expansiveness would remain.
Location 3: East of Cnoc Glas na Crionaiche	The Proposed Development would appear as tips in the southern context, appearing similar to existing turbines which appear at intervals from surrounding areas, although from higher ground would appear closer. A Low magnitude of change is anticipated to the physical attributes 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' although changes to other physical attributes and all perceptual responses would be Negligible. When seen from this location the Proposed Development would have a minimal change. From limited areas of higher ground en-route to the location it would appear to reduce the extent of the peatland area slightly, but in a context where existing features are already seen to terminate its extent.
Location 4: North of Allt a' Chnaip Ghiubhais	The Proposed Development would be seen in the south-easterly context, closer to but in the same area as existing turbines leading to a Low magnitude of change to the physical attribute 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' and Negligible magnitude of change to 'Perceived Naturalness' and 'Rugged or Challenging Terrain'. This is predicted to lead to a Low magnitude of change to the perceptual response 'Arresting or Inspiring Qualities'. The sense of expansiveness and distance would remain in this location where there is already an awareness of other, closer development associated with the Duchally hydro scheme.

Location	Description of Change
Location 5: Above Loch na Sròine Cuime	The Proposed Development would appear as tips in the south-easterly context from this location although when moving through the landscape closer land form and hydro features are usually more the focus of the view (although hydro features are screened from the location itself). A Negligible magnitude of change is anticipated for all physical and perceptual attributes at this location and the sense of open peatland which is perceived more contextually than directly at this location and more particularly to the north and east is unlikely to be affected.
Location 6: Ben More Assynt (VP10)	The Proposed Development would form a feature of the south-eastern context, in a similar area to existing Rosehall and Achany turbines, but appearing slightly larger and closer. This may lead to a perception of the surrounding setting of lower lying and undeveloped peatland being slightly reduced in scale although this would still appear expansive in other directions particularly to north-east where a greater expanse of peatland is already perceived. A Low magnitude of change to the physical attribute 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' at this location would lead to a Low magnitude of change to the perceptual response 'Arresting or Inspiring Qualities' which are largely based on the more expansive elevated mountain views to north and west in this location.
Location 7: Meall an Aonaich (VP23)	The Proposed Development would form a feature of the south-eastern context, appearing in a similar area to existing Rosehall, Achany and Lairg turbines, but closer and somewhat more noticeable. This may lead to a perception of the surrounding setting of lower lying and undeveloped peatland being slightly reduced in scale although this would still appear expansive in other directions particularly to north-east where a greater expanse of peatland is already perceived. This would lead to a Low to Medium magnitude of change to the physical attribute 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' and perceptual response 'Arresting or Inspiring Qualities'.
Magnitude of Change	
<p>This WLA Key Quality recognises the physical attributes 'Perceived Naturalness' and 'Rugged or Challenging Terrain' and the perceptual attributes 'Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude' and 'Risk, a Sense of Awe or Anxiety'. It is also influenced by the attributes 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' and 'Evidence of Contemporary Land Uses'.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would be situated within the elevated peatland part of the WLA thereby leading to a direct change. However, it would be located in an area where influence of existing wind turbines at Achany and Rosehall, and to some extent Lairg Wind Farm occurs. In the northern part of the site in Coire Buidhe, there is no intervisibility with existing turbines and this reflects other similar hollows and corries found in the Eastern Lobster Claw. However, the WLA Key Quality is less pronounced in these areas as the containment results in arresting qualities and the relationship with the adjacent mountains being reduced. More elevated areas around the site obtain a closer connection to the mountain landscapes but also allow greater views to surrounding features and contemporary land use areas to the south, east and west. The direct introduction of the Proposed Development to Coire Buidhe would lead to a medium or high degree of change to some of the physical attributes within this part of the site which may reduce the presence of the WLA Key Quality. However, generally when moving through other parts of the Eastern Lobster Claw, the Proposed Development would have limited visibility within the hollows, which are less affected by current development, and would be more noticeable from higher ground where existing development already reduces the perceived scale of the landscape. Therefore, although the Proposed Development may appear closer than existing features, potentially slightly reducing the perceived extent of the peatland plateau, the degree of change would be</p>	

Location	Description of Change
	<p>limited, as this area is already perceived as having a limited extent due to the other wind farms and contemporary land use that is seen when moving through it.</p> <p>More widely within the WLA, the Proposed Development would be perceived from other elevated areas, in the Western Lobster Claw and Central Core, in the east or south-eastern landscape context. As a general rule, this part of the context is almost always seen to have a more reduced extent than other directions due to the appearance of the existing wind turbines, and other contemporary land use. However, the Proposed Development may lead to a perceptible decrease in the extent of the peatland landscape in this direction.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the expansive nature of the open peatland landscape would remain in other areas, particularly in the context of highlighting the qualities of the adjacent mountains which are located to the north and west of these areas. Beyond the footprint and immediate surrounds of the Proposed Development no discernible change is anticipated to the sense of physical challenge, risk or naturalness.</p> <p>Magnitude of change to the perception of this Key Quality is anticipated as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium in localised parts of the Eastern Lobster Claw up to around 5 - 6km and across the upper eastern part of the Western Lobster Claw where the Proposed Development may be very noticeable and where other existing features are not already very noticeable. • Low within the south-eastern part of the Central Core including high ground, summits and slopes where the Proposed Development would be seen in the south-easterly context in combination with existing wind turbines and contemporary land use but where the wider open peatlands to the north-east and east would remain unaffected. • Low within lower areas of the south-eastern part of the Central Core where the Proposed Development would appear in the south-east context, appearing closer than existing turbines, but where features of the Duchally hydro scheme (including weirs, intake structures, aqueduct pipelines, tracks and an overhead line) are experienced within the local setting. • Low within the northern part of the Eastern Lobster Claw, where the Proposed Development would be occasionally seen in the southerly context but where existing features and contemporary land use in Glen Cassley, around Loch Shin, and existing turbines at Achany and Rosehall already create a precedent for development in the surroundings and reduce the perceived scale of the landscape.

4.3 Mitigation Measures

4.3.1 Potential mitigation measures which may be considered to help minimise significant effects on wild land areas are described in Box 1 of the NatureScot Guidance. These include the following recommendations:

- Rationalise the spatial extent or scale of proposal or parts of the proposal;
- Sensitive siting of components;
- A high standard of design; and
- A high standard of restoration.

4.3.2 The potential for effects on WLA 34 has been a consideration throughout the design process for the Proposed Development, with the aim of minimising the extent of effects as far as possible. The full design process is described in the Technical Appendix 2.1: Design Statement and can be summarised in relation to the WLA as follows:

- The design iterations for the Proposed Development have resulted in the turbine footprint being pushed as far south as possible, to the periphery of the WLA to minimise the extent and range of intervisibility and maximise the distance between

the proposed turbines and the Central Core and the north of the Western Lobster Claw where the greatest extent of higher wildness is considered to be present.

- The retention of the turbines at the southern tip of the WLA is also considered to create a closer connection with the existing Achany and Rosehall wind farms which already lead to a clear limit to the extent of the WLA in this area, and ensures that virtually all parts of the WLA, other than the area directly affected and a small area to the east of the turbines would retain the connection to the greater body of the WLA to north and west.
- The development of the turbine layout has aimed to minimise the presence of turbines on higher ground and maintain a cohesive grouping of turbines to minimise the visual envelope of the Proposed Development across the WLA as far as possible and the appearance of turbine spread or outlier turbines.
- The height of the proposed turbine has been reduced to under 150m in order to avoid the effects of visible aviation lighting on the WLA
- The use of existing infrastructure has been considered where possible, to minimise the need for new tracks to be built.
- The location of tracks and permanent ancillary features such as the substation and welfare facilities has been given careful consideration in relation to the topography of the site, to minimise their visual extent.
- A high standard of reinstatement is proposed for temporary areas and borrow pits as described in the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Technical Appendix 3.1) and the Design Statement (Technical Appendix 2.1), and would be implemented and monitored to ensure success as detailed in the Outline Habitat Management Plan (Technical Appendix 8.10).

4.4 Significance of Effects

Effects on Key Qualities

- 4.4.1 The Proposed Development would affect WLA34 in two ways: directly due to the introduction of turbines and associated infrastructure within the south-eastern extremity of the WLA; and indirectly, in relation to intervisibility across other parts of the WLA.
- 4.4.2 The Proposed Development would be located at the southern end of the Eastern Lobster Claw, close to the edge of the WLA. Most areas around the southern part of the site are very influenced by the existing wind turbines of Achany and Rosehall Wind Farms which lie to the south which have a considerable effect on this part of the WLA by way of introducing modern artefacts and contemporary land use within the setting, reducing the perceptions of sanctuary and solitude and risk. However, there is an awareness of being on the edge of a more extensive area of wildness to the north and north-west with arresting views towards the mountains from more elevated areas. The Proposed Development would effectively extend this area of existing wind farm influence further to the north by around 7km thereby slightly extending the effects which already occur and reducing the relative proximity of wind farm development within the wider WLA. Consequently, the area of direct influence of wind turbines would be moved into the edge of the WLA, the experience of being on the edge of the greater WLA would be shifted slightly further northwards and wind turbines would become more noticeable to different degrees within some eastern parts of the Western Lobster Claw and south-east Central Core.

- 4.4.3 The northern part of the site would be located within a shallow corrie, Coire Buidhe, where there is no intervisibility with existing modern artefacts (other than the site anemometer mast, which is recognised to be a temporary feature). However, this relatively small area is fairly easy to access from Glencassley and therefore there is an awareness of the proximity of other managed landscapes and a sense of being close to the edge of the WLA. Nevertheless, the most noticeable change to physical attributes would occur within this and other similar surrounding hollows and corries in the Eastern Lobster Claw where the landscape would become more defined by wind turbines or these may become a more noticeable feature of the nearby context where currently they are not visible. This would lead to some change on the WLA Key Qualities: *“Extensive, elevated peatland slopes whose simplicity and openness contribute to a perception of awe, whilst highlighting the qualities of adjacent mountains,”* and *“A variety of spaces created by irregular landforms in which there is perceived naturalness, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude.”* Within much of the development footprint, the WLA Key Quality *“Extensive, elevated peatland slopes...”* is already less strongly experienced because of a combination of limited arresting qualities within the lower and more enclosed areas such as Coire Buidhe, and proximity of existing wind turbines from the higher areas, whilst the WLA Key Quality *“A variety of spaces created by irregular landforms...”* is only partially present, being more strongly experienced within the Central Core. The magnitude of change on both WLA Key Qualities is therefore anticipated to be Medium, mostly limited to within around 2km of the Proposed Development where the more direct effects would occur, and but also within limited, localised corries and hollows not otherwise affected by existing development within 5-6km. Whilst this may result in these Key Qualities being less likely to be experienced within the immediate confines of the Proposed Development, beyond this area, the sense of expansiveness, naturalness and locally experienced solitude would still be perceived in connection with the northerly and westerly landscape and therefore it is considered that the WLA Key Qualities whilst being reduced in localised areas, would continue to be present.. The areas affected would become similar to existing areas on the southern edge of the Eastern Lobster Claw which are currently affected by the Achany and Rosehall wind farms, with the sense of being on the edge of the WLA with arresting views and a sense of expansiveness retained in the north-westerly context.
- 4.4.4 The WLA Key Quality, *“Extensive, elevated peatland slopes...”* is considered to have a Medium – High sensitivity in this area and therefore a locally significant effect is anticipated to occur in this area, largely within 2km of the Proposed Development, but locally within some limited areas where the existing wind turbines are less noticeable in the landscape, up to 5-6km from the Proposed Development. This would include a very small area near the edge of the WLA to the east of the Proposed Development where the proposed turbines would interrupt the connection to the north-western landscapes. The WLA Key Quality, *“A variety of spaces created by irregular landforms...”* is considered to have a Medium sensitivity in this area. However, given the highly localised nature of the effect on a WLA Key Quality which is experienced to a much greater degree elsewhere in the WLA, it is considered that the effect on this WLA Key Quality would be not significant.
- 4.4.5 In areas of the Eastern Lobster Claw Beyond around 5-6km, magnitude of change for these Key Qualities would be Low because the Proposed Development would only be perceptible from a few localised areas in the southern context where existing turbines are usually already perceived and where the strength of physical and perceptual attributes which contribute to the WLA Key Quality are lower. In these areas the WLA Key

Qualities would continue to be well expressed, and the effect on these areas is therefore anticipated to be not significant.

- 4.4.6 Within the Western Lobster Claw and parts and the southern Central Core, the Proposed Development would be perceived in the easterly and south-easterly context, with the changes to the attributes and perceptual responses likely to be experienced more on the upper parts of the plateau where existing features and contemporary land use in Glen Cassley are less apparent. Further north into lower lying parts of the south-east Central Core, the Proposed Development would become a smaller feature within the wide expanse and would be less noticeable, seen in combination with existing turbines to the south-east though bringing wind turbines perceptibly closer.
- 4.4.7 The appearance of the Proposed Development across parts of the Western Lobster Claw would lead to a Medium magnitude of effect in these areas on the WLA Key Quality, *“Extensive, elevated peatland slopes whose simplicity and openness contribute to a perception of awe, whilst highlighting the qualities of adjacent mountains”*. This WLA Key Quality is considered to have a High sensitivity to change in this area and a localised significant effect is therefore anticipated on some small parts of the eastern upper plateau. However, this would recede in significance when moving northwards as the Proposed Development would become more distant and seen in a south-easterly rather than easterly direction, more in association with contemporary land use within Glen Cassley and the existing wind farm development which already reduces the perceived extent of the undeveloped peatlands in this direction. The significant effect to this WLA Key Quality is anticipated to be localised to areas on the high plateau, where existing contemporary land use and features in Glen Cassley are not visible and would extend up to around 8km and locally to 10km, transitioning gradually between a significant and not significant effect. Beyond this range it is considered that, whilst the Proposed Development may form a feature in some views, it would not overcome the sense of naturalness, expansiveness, arresting and inspiring qualities and solitude that are experienced in relation to the open peatland landscape due to the closer connection of these areas to the landscapes to north, east and west. The effect at this distance would therefore be not significant. In all areas of the Western Lobster Claw the association with the open peatland landscapes to the north and north-east would remain and therefore the WLA Key Quality would continue to be well expressed, despite the potential significant effect in some localised areas.
- 4.4.8 Within the areas of lower sloping plateau lying at the head of Glen Cassley and east of Ben More Assynt, a Low magnitude of change is anticipated to the WLA Key Quality, *“Extensive, elevated peatland slopes...”* because the Proposed Development would be relatively small within the context, seen towards the existing wind turbines of Achany and Rosehall and experienced within a context where existing modern artefacts, and access tracks associated with the Duchally hydro scheme and other contemporary land use in Glen Cassley, affect the baseline attributes and perceptual responses that contribute to the WLA Key Quality. In this area, the Proposed Development is only anticipated to lead to minor changes to baseline attributes and/or perceptual responses and it is considered that there would be no material change to the sense of expansiveness or arresting qualities which are more often experienced to the west and north. Sensitivity is considered to be Medium to High for this Key Quality in this location, but when taking the predicted magnitude into account the effect on the WLA Key Quality is anticipated to be not significant in this area.

- 4.4.9 From elevated areas in the southern-eastern part of the Central Core, a wider expanse of the surrounding landscape is revealed. Whilst this shows the context of surrounding low-lying, undeveloped peatland setting it also reveals a greater expanse of surrounding developed areas and contemporary land use, which gives an understanding of the extent of the undeveloped areas. From these areas, the Proposed Development would be seen in the south-east context, but usually in areas where existing wind turbines and other contemporary land use are already perceived and limit the apparent extent of the undeveloped landscape. This includes areas of forest plantation, improved grasslands, settlement, tracks and hydroelectric features. From the more southerly peaks (such as Location 7 (Meall an Aonaich), greater expanses of forest plantation are seen whilst from more northerly summits of the south Central Core (such as Location 6 (Ben More Assynt), the Proposed Development would be seen more in combination with existing wind turbines. The reduced proximity of the Proposed Development in comparison to existing turbines would slightly reduce the extent of the peatland setting perceived in the south-easterly direction. However, because of the existing wind turbines, the more extensive peatland setting is generally seen to the east and north-east. This change to the setting is anticipated to lead to a Low magnitude of change to the WLA Key Qualities, *“Extensive, elevated peatland slopes whose simplicity and openness contribute to a perception of awe, whilst highlighting the qualities of adjacent mountains,”* and *“A range of large, irregular, rocky mountains with steep, arresting slopes and a variety of lochs and lochans, possessing a strong sense of naturalness, remoteness and sanctuary,”* in these areas.
- 4.4.10 Sensitivity of the south-easterly Central Core is considered to be High for the WLA Key Quality, *“Extensive, elevated peatland slopes...”* and Medium to High for the WLA Key Quality, *“A range of large, irregular, rocky mountains...”*. However, the Low magnitude of change is not considered to result in a significant effect to these WLA Key Qualities in this area as it is not considered to result in a material change. As such, there would be no significant effect to the WLA Key Quality *“A range of large, irregular, rocky mountains...”*.
- 4.4.11 All potential significant and not significant effects would be limited to parts of the WLA where intervisibility of the Proposed Development would be obtained and beyond a distance of around 15-17km no discernible level of effect is anticipated to any of the WLA Key Qualities.
- 4.4.12 No discernible changes are anticipated the WLA Key Quality, *“An awe-inspiring, broad scale expanse of cnocan in which there is a complex pattern of features at a local level that contribute to the sense of naturalness and sanctuary”*.

Effects on Strength of Wildness

- 4.4.13 Within the immediate site boundary and within a relatively limited distance of around 2km, significant effects to the Key Quality of *“Extensive, elevated peatland slopes...”* and localised effects to *“A variety of spaces created by irregular landforms...”* are anticipated to lead to a **Moderate to Major** (significant) effect to the strength of wildness in these areas. However, beyond these areas, where the physical attributes and perceptual responses which contribute to these WLA Key Qualities would continue to be well-expressed in relation to the northern, eastern and western landscape context, but the Proposed Development would reduce the extent of these in the south, south-easterly or easterly context, a localised **Moderate** (significant) effect to the strength of wildness is predicted. This is anticipated only within relatively discrete parts of the Eastern Lobster Claw up to 5-6km, and the Western Lobster Claw up to 8-10km from the Proposed Development, affecting localised parts of the plateaux above the immediate confines of

Glen Cassley where the influence of existing contemporary land use is less prevalent. In these areas, whilst the Proposed Development would comprise a sometimes noticeable new grouping of modern artefacts and a greater sense of contemporary land use in the south or south-easterly context, the greater connection to the WLA is experienced to the north and west where the more extensive landscape of rugged mountains and extensive moorlands is perceived. This connection would be unaffected by the Proposed Development.

- 4.4.14 In other parts of the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw areas, the Proposed Development would be either not visible, or would be more distant or peripheral in a setting where the greater sense of wildness is experienced to the north and west. This is anticipated to lead to a localised **Minor** (not significant) effect on strength of wildness.
- 4.4.15 In the south-east Central Core, the Proposed Development would usually be seen in a context of the existing wind turbines. In the most southerly parts of this area, there is the potential for this to be a noticeable new feature in localised areas. However, the prevalence of contemporary land use such as forestry in the southerly and south-easterly context of these areas affects the baseline strength of wildness within the context that the Proposed Development would be situated. Effects on the WLA Key Qualities “*Extensive, elevated peatland slopes...*” and “*A range of large, irregular, rocky mountains...*” are predicted to be not significant in these areas. This is because the Proposed Development would be a smaller and more distant feature, peripheral to the main experience of wildness which is more apparent to the north and west and perceived either from lower areas (at the head of Glen Cassley and east of Ben More Assynt) where existing features of Duchally hydro scheme and within Glen Cassley reduce the baseline strength of wildness, or from elevated areas where the extent of wild land in the south-easterly context is already seen to be limited. A **Minor** (not significant) effect is therefore anticipated in parts of the Central Core within 15-17km in areas where intervisibility with the Proposed Development would occur. This could rise to **Minor to Moderate** (not significant) very locally in more secluded areas to towards the south of the Central Core. However, in the vast majority of the Central Core, in particular, the more isolated locations off the highest peaks where the orientation of the landscape is predominantly to north and east and the highest strength of wildness occurs, there would be either no effect from the Proposed Development or a **Negligible** effect where the Proposed Development would appear distant in the southern context beyond 17km.
- 4.4.16 Overall, potential significant effects would be localised, affecting only relatively small parts of the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw, and largely in areas which already feel peripheral to the more extensive WLA. The effect is predicted to be not significant within the Central Core and there would be no effect on strength of wildness in the large Northern Arm area. With the exception of very limited parts towards the north of the Western Lobster Claw, significant effects would usually occur in areas where the existing strength of wildness is already lower due to the influence of existing artefacts and contemporary land use in the surrounding context.

Integrity of the WLA

- 4.4.17 Consideration of the potential effects on the integrity of WLA comprises a review against the following factors:
- Potential for change to the Jenks 8 Interpretation of the Map of Relative Wildness:

- The identification of the area as a WLA is based on the presence and extent of Jenks 8 classifications of relative wildness; principally Classes 7 and 8, as detailed in paragraphs 2.2.8 and 2.2.9. Consideration is given to how the Proposed Development may change the Jenks 8 Classifications across the WLA, and particularly the highest Classes which have led to the identification of the WLA in this area.
- Potential change to the presence of physical attributes, perceptual responses and WLA Key Qualities:
 - As detailed in Policy Statement 02/03, the presence of the physical attributes and perceptual responses is necessary for the identification of wild land. If the presence of these attributes / responses and the WLA Key Qualities to which they contribute were substantially lost, this would be considered to contribute to a loss of integrity for the WLA.

Jenks 8 Mapping Interpretation

- 4.4.18 Analysis of the ZTV in relation to the Jenks 8 interpretation of the Map of Relative Wildness (see Figure 4 of this Technical Appendix) shows that small areas of Jenks Class 7 would be affected by intervisibility with the Proposed Development in the Eastern Lobster Claw (including within the immediate site boundary), the Western Lobster Claw and Central Core. Very small areas of Jenks Class 8 are also shown to be affected within the Western Lobster Claw and Central Core. The assessment of WLA Key Qualities and strength of wildness has identified that there would be potentially localised significant effects within the Eastern Lobster Claw up to 5-6km from the Proposed Development and in the Western Lobster Claw up to 8-10km from the Proposed Development. It is reasonable to assume that within these areas, this could result in the Jenks Classification being reduced. This could potentially result in the loss of a small proportion of Jenks Class 7 which is present in these areas, and a very small area of the Jenks Class 8 which is present in the Western Lobster Claw. There is also potential for a reduction in other Classes, with the eastern part of the Western Lobster Claw potentially comprising a greater proportion of Classes 4 or 5, rather than Class 6. Nevertheless, a large proportion of Classes 6 and 7 and a small proportion of Class 8 would be anticipated to remain in this area.
- 4.4.19 In the Eastern Lobster Claw, although areas of Class 7 are shown to be present, site survey found that these were not generally representative of as high a strength of wildness, as the small scale limited the degree to which the physical attributes and perceptual responses were found to be present. As such, the potential change to these areas is considered to be of lesser significance.
- 4.4.20 The highest proportion of the highest strength wildness is located in the Central Core, indicated by large areas of Jenks Classes 7 and 8. The ZTV (see Figure 4 of this Technical Appendix) indicates that the Proposed Development would be intervisible with a small proportion of the Class 7 area, mostly located on the eastern side slopes of Ben More Assynt and parts of the Braebag ridge. Only extremely minimal fringes of Class 8 would be theoretically affected. The areas of Class 7 and very marginal Class 8 areas are all already similarly affected by the existing turbines of Achany, Rosehall and Lairg wind farms (see Figure 5 of this Technical Appendix) and the Proposed Development would add very little additional intervisibility. This is reflected in a mostly lower strength of the attribute 'Absence of Modern Artefacts' in these areas (see Figure 3.1 of this Technical Appendix). Review of the attribute mapping on Figures 3.1 and 3.2 of this Technical

Appendix (which is combined in equal weighting to produce the Map of Relative Wildness) indicates that the higher strength of wildness in these areas is likely to be as a result of the higher indications of perceived naturalness, remoteness from roads and ruggedness which would not be affected by the Proposed Development. The addition of the Proposed Development in this context would therefore not be anticipated to make a very noticeable change to the Map of Relative Wildness or the Jenks 8 interpretation of this.

Physical Attributes, Perceptual Responses and WLA Key Qualities

- 4.4.21 Taking account of the significant effects to the WLA discussed in paragraphs 4.4.13 to 4.4.16 it is considered that the vast majority of the WLA would remain unaffected or little affected by the Proposed Development. There would be a limited area within around 2km of the Proposed Development where the more direct effect of the Proposed Development would lead to some of the physical attributes and perceptual responses necessary for the identification of wild land being less likely to be experienced. There may also be a very small area to the east of the Proposed Development at the far southern tip of the Eastern Lobster Claw where the sense of connection to the wider WLA to the north-west would be reduced. In these areas, the WLA Key Quality of “*Extensive, elevated peatland slopes...*” is generally less pronounced, because of the proximity of the existing Achany wind turbines and the sense of containment in some areas which limits the presence of the arresting qualities associated with this WLA. However, some further reduction in the extent to which this would be experienced would be anticipated. In other parts of the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw, although localised significant effects may be predicted in relation to the Proposed Development within the southern and south-eastern context, it is considered that physical attributes and perceptual responses would still remain present because of the closer relationship and connection to the unaffected northern and western landscapes where these qualities are more readily experienced. As such, the WLA Special Qualities would also continue to be experienced in these areas, though may be slightly reduced in strength within localised parts of the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw.

Overall Conclusions on Integrity

- 4.4.22 Overall, large expanses of Jenks Classes 7 and 8 (the two highest classes which are required to be present in sufficient expanse in order for the WLA to be identified), would remain present within WLA 34, comprising all areas within the Northern Arm, virtually all areas within the Central Core, and the majority of areas in the Western Lobster Claw. Whilst there would be a reduction in the strength of wildness in parts of the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw which would be likely to lead to reduced Jenks classifications, the assumed retention of large areas of Class 6 and 7 in the Western Lobster Claw in areas which would not be affected by the Proposed Development, alongside predicted and existing areas of Classes 5 and 6 in the Eastern and Western Lobster Claws would still meet the criteria which would be considered likely to result in the majority of these areas being identified for inclusion within the WLA (see paragraph 1.2.9). Although some of the physical and perceptual attributes of wild land may be less likely to be experienced within and close to the Proposed Development site, this comprises a very minimal and peripheral part of the WLA overall where the WLA Key Qualities are only partially present. Beyond the close confines of the Proposed Development, although very localised significant effects may occur, all the attributes and WLA Key Qualities which are currently

present would continue to be experienced. It is therefore concluded that the integrity of the WLA overall would be preserved.

4.5 Conclusion

4.5.1 The WLA Assessment has identified that locally significant effects would occur to one of the WLA Key Qualities as follows:

- Localised significant effects to the Key Quality: *“Extensive, elevated peatland slopes whose simplicity and openness contribute to a perception of awe, whilst highlighting the qualities of adjacent mountains,”* within the Eastern Lobster Claw up to around 5-6km from the Proposed Development, and within the Western Lobster Claw up to around 8km and locally to 10km.

4.5.2 A consequential significant effect on the strength of wildness of the WLA is anticipated in these localised parts of the WLA, being **Moderate - Major** within 2km of the Proposed Development and **Moderate** in localised areas up to 5-6km from the Proposed Development within the Eastern Lobster Claw, and up to 8-10km from the Proposed Development within the Western Lobster Claw. This would be limited to relatively small areas of the plateaux above the immediate confines of Glen Cassley where the influence of contemporary land use is less prevalent. There would be a **Minor** (not significant) effect across other parts of the Lobster Claw and south-east Central Core in areas intervisible with the Proposed Development up to a distance of 15-17km. Effects in all other areas would be **Negligible**.

4.5.3 The objectives of the design and layout process (as detailed in Section 4.3) have led to the Proposed Development being situated at the far southern tip of the WLA where existing wind turbines and forest areas already limit its perceived extent, thereby enabling the connection between the vast majority of the southern part of the WLA and the mountainous landscapes to the north and west, where the greater extent of wild land is already perceived to be retained. Within the southern tip, around the more immediate confines of the Proposed Development (up to around 2km) and within a very small area to the east of the Proposed Development some of the physical and perceptual attributes of wild land may be less likely to be experienced. However, this would be a very minimal and peripheral part of the WLA overall where the WLA Key Qualities are only partially present. Beyond the close confines of the Proposed Development, whilst localised significant effects may occur to the WLA Key Quality, *“Extensive, elevated peatland slopes...”* it is considered that all of the physical attributes and perceptual qualities which are required to establish the presence of wild land would remain due to the continued association with the main body of the WLA to the north and west. All of the WLA Key Qualities would therefore continue to be well expressed within the WLA. Therefore, despite the potential reduction in the portrayal of some attributes and key qualities within a small peripheral area, it is concluded that the integrity of WLA 34 would be retained.