

# 8 Landscape and Visual

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# 8 Landscape and Visual

## 8.1 Executive Summary

8.1.1 A landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken for the proposed Bhlairaidh Wind Farm Extension (the Proposed Development) by ASH design + assessment Ltd (ASH), Chartered Landscape Architects, in accordance with best practice guidance including the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition* (GLVIA3) (LI and IEMA, 2013). This has considered the potential landscape effects of the Proposed Development – on landscape character and designated and protected landscapes – and potential visual effects of the Proposed Development - on the visual amenity of receptors present within the landscape, including those in residential areas, on routes and in recreational areas within a 45km study area. The cumulative LVIA (CLVIA) also gives full consideration to the cumulative landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development when considered in addition to other existing and proposed wind farm developments.

8.1.2 The Proposed Development is located adjacent to Bhlairaidh Wind Farm (the Operational Development) which already results in landscape and visual effects and thereby reduces the sensitivity of the landscape and visual resource to additional wind farm development.

### ***Summary of Landscape Effects***

8.1.3 The assessment of potential landscape effects has considered Landscape Character Types (LCTs) identified by NatureScot and designated and protected landscapes, including, in particular, National Scenic Areas (NSAs), Wild Land Areas (WLAs) and Special Landscape Areas (SLAs). There would be no significant landscape effects to any of these areas as a result of the Proposed Development.

### ***Summary of Visual Effects***

8.1.4 The assessment of potential visual effects has considered views from visual receptors at 26 representative viewpoints, in residential areas within 25km of the Proposed Development, and on transport and recreational routes. There would be no significant visual effects for the majority of receptors. However, significant visual effects were found for small number of receptors within a localised area within 9-11km of the Proposed Development, on the eastern side of Loch Ness in the Stratherrick area, on / near the B862 road, (VP 5 ‘Suidhe Viewpoint, B862’, VP 7 ‘B862 south of Foyers’, and from a small number of properties in the vicinity of VP 7 (localised within residential grouping ‘R13’)).

### ***Summary of Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects***

8.1.5 The CLVIA has considered the potential landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development when added to two cumulative baseline scenarios (reflecting the situation as of 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021, as agreed with consultees). Scenario 1 comprises agreed operational / under construction and consented sites; while Scenario 2 comprises agreed operational / under construction, consented and application / appeal sites.

8.1.6 For both scenarios, the CLVIA found that there would be no significant cumulative landscape effects as a result of the Proposed Development and significant cumulative visual effects would be limited to receptors at VP 7 ‘B862 south of Foyers’ and a small number of receptors in the vicinity (localised within residential grouping ‘R13’).

### ***Summary***

8.1.7 Overall, the LVIA has concluded that the Proposed Development would result in no significant landscape effects and a very limited extent of significant visual effects, affecting receptors in localised areas to the east of Loch Ness, along the B862 road, between 9-11km from the Proposed Development. Outwith this area, landscape and visual effects would not be significant.

## 8.2 Introduction

8.2.1 This chapter presents the findings of the LVIA for the Proposed Development. The purpose of the LVIA is to identify and describe potential significant effects which may occur as a result of the Proposed Development to views obtained by those living, working and visiting in the area, and the wider landscape resource. The LVIA has been undertaken by ASH, Chartered Landscape Architects, in accordance with best practice guidance, set out within GLVIA3 (LI and IEMA, 2013). ASH is a registered practice with the Landscape Institute, the Chartered body for professional landscape architects.

8.2.2 Although closely related, landscape and visual effects differ, and are considered separately in this LVIA for clarity and robustness.

8.2.3 The assessment is supported by Volume 3 (Figures 8.1.1 to 8.60.6) and Volume 4 (Appendices 8.1 to 8.9) of the EIA Report (EIAR), as follows:

- Volume 3a: LVIA Figures, including NatureScot Visualisations

Figures 8.1.1-2	Study Areas with ZTV
Figures 8.2.1-2	Designated and Protected Landscapes, with and without ZTV
Figures 8.3.1-2	Map of Relative Wildness and WLAs, with and without ZTV
Figures 8.4.1-3	Landscape Character Types, with and without ZTV and within 25km
Figures 8.5.1-2	Viewpoints with ZTV
Figures 8.6.1-3	Visual Receptors, with and without ZTV and within 25km
Figures 8.7.1-2	Cumulative Sites within 60km Search Area and Cumulative Sites Included within the Assessment
Figures 8.8.1-24	Cumulative ZTVs
Figures 8.9.1-4	Viewpoint 1 – Track to Loch Liath
Figures 8.10.1-4	Viewpoint 2 – Old Bridge, Invermoriston
Figures 8.11.1-4	Viewpoint 3 – Meall Fuar-mhonaidh
Figures 8.12.1-4	Viewpoint 4 – Achtuie Road near Creag Nay
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Figures 8.14.1-4	Viewpoint 6 – Summit by Suidhe Viewpoint, B862
Figures 8.15.1-4	Viewpoint 7 – B862 South of Foyers
Figures 8.16.1-4	Viewpoint 8 – Lochside picnic layby on B852
Figures 8.17.1-4	Viewpoint 9 – Carn na Saobhaidhe
Figures 8.18.1-4	Viewpoint 10 – Great Glen Way near Carn a’ Bhodaich
Figures 8.19.1-4	Viewpoint 11 – Meall Mor, Glen Affric
Figures 8.20.1-4	Viewpoint 12 – Creag Dhubh
Figures 8.21.1-4	Viewpoint 13 – Sgurr nan Conbhairean
Figures 8.22.1-4	Viewpoint 14 – Meall Dubh
Figures 8.23.1-4	Viewpoint 15 – Poll-gormack Hill
Figures 8.24.1-4	Viewpoint 16 – Geal Charn
Figures 8.25.1-4	Viewpoint 17 – B862 south of Dores
Figures 8.26.1-4	Viewpoint 18 – Track near Dun Fhamhair fort
Figures 8.27.1-4	Viewpoint 19 – Path north of Loch Affric
Figures 8.28.1-4	Viewpoint 20 – Path north of Affric Lodge
Figures 8.29.1-4	Viewpoint 21 – Toll Creagach
Figures 8.30.1-4	Viewpoint 22 – Sgurr na Ruaidhe
Figures 8.31.1-4	Viewpoint 23 – An Cabar (Ben Wyvis)
Figures 8.32.1-4	Viewpoint 24 – NCN1 Between Dingwall and Evanton
Figures 8.33.1-4	Viewpoint 25 – Minor road near Tore
Figures 8.34.1-4	Viewpoint 26 – A87 Bun Loyne

- Volume 3b: THC Visualisations

Figures 8.35.1-6	Viewpoint 1 – Track to Loch Liath
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Figures 8.36.1-6	Viewpoint 2 – Old Bridge, Invermoriston
Figures 8.37.1-6	Viewpoint 3 – Meall Fuar-mhonaidh
Figures 8.38.1-6	Viewpoint 4 – Achtuie Road near Creag Nay
Figures 8.39.1-6	Viewpoint 5 – Suidhe Viewpoint, B862
Figures 8.40.1-6	Viewpoint 6 – Summit by Suidhe Viewpoint, B862
Figures 8.41.1-6	Viewpoint 7 – B862 South of Foyers
Figures 8.42.1-6	Viewpoint 8 – Lochside picnic layby on B852
Figures 8.43.1-6	Viewpoint 9 – Carn na Saobhaidhe
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Figures 8.47.1-6	Viewpoint 13 – Sgurr nan Conbhairean
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- Volume 4: LVIA Appendices

Technical Appendix 8.1	Technical Methodologies for Visual Representation
Technical Appendix 8.2	Landscape and Visual Scoping Appraisal
Technical Appendix 8.3	Existing and Proposed Wind Energy Developments within 60km
Technical Appendix 8.4	Assessment of Designated and Protected Landscapes
Technical Appendix 8.5	Assessment of Landscape Character Types
Technical Appendix 8.6	Visual Assessment Tables
Technical Appendix 8.7	Cumulative Landscape Assessment Tables
Technical Appendix 8.8	Cumulative Visual Tables
Technical Appendix 8.9	Appraisal of The Highland Council’s Criteria for the Consideration of Onshore Wind Proposals

### ***Landscape Effects***

- 8.2.4 The character of the landscape relates to the natural processes and human activities that have been at work over time to shape the land to its present form. Factors contributing to landscape character include topography, vegetation cover, sense of space or enclosure and past and present land use. Landscape character and resources are considered to have an importance in their own right and are valued for their intrinsic qualities.
- 8.2.5 Landscape effects may occur when elements of the landscape which contribute to its key characteristics are changed.

### ***Visual Effects***

- 8.2.6 Visual amenity relates to the way in which people visually experience the surrounding landscape.
- 8.2.7 Visual effects may occur through the introduction into established views of new features which modify the existing structure, scale and composition of the view. Visual effects may also occur where existing features in the view are removed or altered.

### ***Cumulative Effects***

- 8.2.8 Cumulative effects may occur where other infrastructure of a similar type would combine with the Proposed Development to form an increased perception of landscape or visual effect. In the context of the Proposed Development, cumulative landscape or visual effects may result where the Proposed Development would lead to an increase in perception or prominence of wind turbines within particular landscapes or views.

### ***Aviation Lighting Effects***

- 8.2.9 Aviation lighting effects may occur where their introduction would contribute to a change in elements of the landscape which contribute to its key characteristics or where they modify the existing structure, scale and composition of the view.
- 8.2.10 As described in paragraph 8.2.30 and Section 8.4, an assessment of visible aviation lighting effects has been scoped out of the assessment, following the agreement from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) that there would be no visible aviation lights on the Proposed Development turbines. Instead, infra-red lights to Ministry of Defence (MoD) specifications would be installed on the nacelles of perimeter turbines, as described in Chapter 15 (Aviation and Radar).

### ***Approach to the Identification of Significant Effects***

- 8.2.11 The judgement of effects significance has been established within this LVIA through professional judgement, complemented by structured methods and criteria to evaluate landscape value, and landscape, visual, and cumulative sensitivity, magnitude, and significance of effect. The assessment has been undertaken and verified by two experienced Landscape Professionals (Chartered Landscape Architects) at ASH, to provide a robust and consistent approach. This approach is consistent with best practice guidance (LI and IEMA, 2013: paragraph 2.23 – 2.26).
- 8.2.12 Landscape and visual effects have been expressed through a four-point scale of negligible, minor, moderate and major. However, it should be noted that these criteria and levels of significance represent points on a continuum. Where required, interim ratings, such as minor-moderate, have been used to indicate the anticipated significance of effect.
- 8.2.13 For the purposes of this assessment, effects with a rating of moderate or greater are considered to be significant in terms of the EIA Regulations.
- 8.2.14 In some circumstances, localised effects have been described, where effects would be localised to part of the visual receptor grouping / route (often a small part) or to only part of the landscape resource.
- 8.2.15 Landscape and visual effects may be both adverse or beneficial and this may depend on an individual's subjective opinion. Wind farms inevitably attract a spectrum of opinion from the public, ranging from adverse to beneficial reactions. However, using the precautionary principle, the LVIA has been carried out based on the assumption that all landscape and visual effects reported as a result of the Proposed Development are adverse.

### ***Scope of Assessment***

- 8.2.16 The LVIA considers all aspects of the Proposed Development during the construction phase and during operation, as described in Chapter 2 (Design Iteration and Proposed Development). It gives consideration to potential effects on the character of the landscape and also the visual amenity of those present within the landscape. It also gives full consideration to the potential effects of the Proposed Development on designated and protected landscapes, and to the cumulative landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development when considered in addition to other existing and proposed wind farm developments.

### ***Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)***

- 8.2.17 As an aid to establishing the scope for the LVIA, a zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) has been produced for the Proposed Development and is presented in Figure 8.1.1 (a larger version is provided as Figure 8.1.2). The ZTV is a computer-generated diagram which uses a terrain model to

indicate areas from which the Proposed Development would be theoretically visible. The ZTV for the Proposed Development has been generated using ESRI ArcGIS software based on a terrain modelled using Ordnance Survey (OS) Terrain 5m DTM data. Detailed technical information on the methods for production of ZTVs is included in Appendix 8.1.

### **Study Area**

8.2.18 In line with current guidance (SNH, 2017d, p12), the study area for the LVIA has been set at 45km radius from the Proposed Development site boundary (the wider study area) (refer to Figure 8.1.1). This is considered to be the maximum distance within which any significant landscape or visual effects may be experienced. However, following initial review and site appraisal, it was identified that the majority of significant effects would be most likely to occur within an area of approximately 25km. A smaller study area of 25km (the detailed study area) has therefore been defined for a more targeted and fine-grained assessment (refer to Figure 8.1.1).

8.2.19 The study areas have been applied as follows:

#### Landscape Assessment

8.2.20 All designated and protected landscapes within the wider study area have been given consideration within the assessment. However, following an initial appraisal, where effects are identified as unlikely, these areas have been scoped out of more detailed assessment (see Appendix 8.2).

8.2.21 Following an initial appraisal of the Proposed Development, it was considered that any potentially significant effects on LCTs would be limited to the detailed study area. For this reason, the detailed assessment of effects on LCTs has been concentrated within this area.

#### Visual Assessment

8.2.22 Within the wider study area, a series of 26 viewpoints (VPs) (refer to Figure 8.5.1) have been selected in consultation with NatureScot and The Highland Council (THC).

8.2.23 In addition to the VP based assessment, a more targeted assessment of potential visual receptors has taken place. This has considered views from routes within the wider study area, including public roads, core paths and other established recreational routes, and views from settlements and residential areas within the detailed study area (refer to Figure 8.6.1).

#### Cumulative Landscape and Visual Assessment (CLVIA)

8.2.24 Sites included in the cumulative baseline scenarios are described in Section 8.6, paragraphs 8.6.46-52.

8.2.25 Following best practice (SNH, 2012, p13), all operational and consented wind farm sites, and those which are the subject of a valid planning application or appeal have been identified within a search area of 60km radius from the Proposed Development, based on the THC dataset (THC, 2021 [online]) and consultation with statutory consultees. These developments are shown on Figure 8.7.1 and listed in Appendix 8.3.

8.2.26 Within this search area, a total of 22 wind farm sites within approximately 45km of the Proposed Development have been identified as most likely to combine with the Proposed Development to result in potential cumulative landscape and visual effects, as presented in Table 8.15 and shown on Figure 8.7.2.

8.2.27 The CLVIA has considered the potential for effects to all designated and protected landscapes and receptors at viewpoints and on routes within the wider study area; and landscape character types, and receptors in residential locations and settlements within the detailed study area, as described under paragraph 8.6.55-8.6.61.

### **Issues Scoped out of the Assessment**

8.2.28 Effects arising from the process of decommissioning the Proposed Development have been scoped out since they are of a similar nature to construction issues, but of a smaller scale and shorter

duration. Where the assessment refers to potential construction effects these are also considered representative of predicted decommissioning effects.

- 8.2.29 Appendix 8.2 provides a summary of visual receptors and landscape areas scoped in and out of the detailed assessment.
- 8.2.30 An assessment of visible aviation lighting effects has been scoped out of the assessment, following the agreement from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) that there would be no visible aviation lights on the Proposed Development turbines. Instead, infra-red lights to Ministry of Defence (MoD) specifications would be installed on the nacelles of perimeter turbines, as described in Chapter 15 (Aviation and Radar).

## 8.3 Policy and Guidelines

- 8.3.1 The assessment has taken account of national, regional and local policy and guidance relating to landscape character and visual amenity relevant to the Proposed Development. This section provides a summary with respect to landscape character and visual amenity.
- 8.3.2 Relevant legislation is described in Chapter 4, relating to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This includes Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act 1989, which relates to the mitigation of landscape and visual effects.

### ***Planning Policy and Guidance***

- 8.3.3 Detailed information on planning policy is contained within the Planning Statement accompanying the application for the Proposed Development and Chapter 4 (Planning Policy). Guidance relating to LVIA methodology and other source documents are referenced in Section 8.5. The following planning policy and guidance documents are relevant to landscape, renewable energy and the areas in the wider study area:

#### **National**

- *Scotland's Third National Planning Framework* (Scottish Government, 2014a), referred to as NPF3;
- *Scottish Planning Policy* (Scottish Government, 2014b, updated 2020), referred to as SPP;
- *Onshore Wind Turbines: Planning Advice* (Scottish Government, 2014 [online]);
- *Planning Advice Note 60: Planning for Natural Heritage* (Scottish Government, 2002, update 2008), referred to as PAN60;
- *Scottish Energy Strategy: The future of energy in Scotland* (Scottish Government, 2017);
- *Renewable Energy and the Natural Heritage: Position Statement* (SNH, 2014c);
- *Wildness in Scotland's Countryside: Policy Statement No. 02/03* (SNH, 2002); and
- *General pre-application and scoping advice for onshore wind farms. Guidance.* (NatureScot, 2020b).

#### **Regional**

- *The Highland-wide Local Development Plan* (THC, 2012), referred to as HwLDP, further discussed below;
- *The Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan* (THC, 2015), referred to as IMFLDP;
- *The West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan* (THC, 2019), referred to as WestPlan;
- *Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2015* (CNPA, 2015), referred to as CNPLDP;
- *Policy 7 Renewable Energy Supplementary Guidance*, CNPLDP (CNPA, 2015);



- *Cairngorm National Park Partnership Plan* (CNPA, 2017); and
- *Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance* (THC, 2017), referred to as OWESG, further discussed below.

The Highland Council Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP)

8.3.4 As the Proposed Development site falls within the THC Planning Authority area, the HwLDP (THC, 2012) forms the key element of spatial planning policy for the Proposed Development.

8.3.5 ‘Policy 61: Landscape’ concerns the protection of landscape qualities. This states that:

- *“New developments should be designed to reflect the landscape characteristics and special qualities identified in the Landscape Character Assessment of the area in which they are proposed. This will include consideration of the appropriate scale, form, pattern and construction materials, as well as the potential cumulative effect of developments where this may be an issue. The Council would wish to encourage those undertaking development to include measures to enhance the landscape characteristics of the area. This will apply particularly where the condition of the landscape characteristics has deteriorated to such an extent that there has been a loss of landscape quality or distinctive sense of place. In the assessment of new developments, the Council will take account of Landscape Character Assessments, Landscape Capacity Studies and its supplementary guidance on Siting and Design and Sustainable Design, together with any other relevant design guidance.”* (THC, 2012)

8.3.6 ‘Policy 57: Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage’ is also of relevance in relation to the protection of designated areas. With respect to areas of national importance, such as NSAs and WLAs, Part 2 of the Policy 57 states:

- *“... we will allow developments that can be shown not to compromise the natural environment, amenity and heritage resource. Where there may be any significant adverse effects, these must be clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance. It must also be shown that the development will support communities in fragile areas who are having difficulties in keeping their population and services”.* (THC, 2012)

8.3.7 With respect to areas of local/regional importance, such as SLAs, Part 1 of Policy 57 states:

- *“...we will allow developments if it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that they will not have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment, amenity and heritage resource.”* (THC, 2012).

The Highland Council Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG)

8.3.8 The OWESG (THC, 2017) provides further guidance on measures to be considered for the design and assessment of onshore wind farms. In relation to landscape and visual amenity, it identifies ten criteria to be used by the Council as a framework and focus for assessing proposals as outlined in Table 8.1.

**Table 8.1 – OWESG Criteria for the Consideration of Onshore Wind Farm Proposals**

Criterion	Threshold <i>“Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:”</i>
<b>Criterion 1. “Relationship between Settlements / Key locations and wider landscape respected.”</b>	<i>“Turbines are not visually prominent in the majority of views within or from settlements / Key Locations or from the majority of its access routes.”</i>

Criterion	Threshold <i>“Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:”</i>
<i>“The extent to which the proposal contributes to perception of settlements or key locations being encircled by wind energy development.”</i>	
<p><b>Criterion 2. “Key Gateway locations and routes are respected.”</b></p> <p><i>“The extent to which the proposal reduces or detracts from the transitional experience of key Gateway Locations and routes.”</i></p>	<i>“Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise detract from landscape characteristics which contribute the distinctive transitional experience found at key gateway locations and routes.”</i>
<p><b>Criterion 3. “Valued natural and cultural landmarks are respected”</b></p> <p><i>“The extent to which the proposal affects the fabric and setting of valued natural and cultural landmarks.”</i></p>	<i>“The development does not, by its presence, diminish the prominence of the landmark or disrupt its relationship to its setting.”</i>
<p><b>Criterion 4. “The amenity of key recreational routes and ways is respected.”</b></p> <p><i>“The extent to which the proposal affects the amenity of key recreational routes and ways (e.g. Core Paths, Munros and Corbetts, Long Distance Routes etc.)”</i></p>	<i>“Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of key routes and ways.”</i>
<p><b>Criterion 5. “The amenity of transport routes is respected.”</b></p> <p><i>“The extent to which the proposal affects the amenity of transport routes (tourist routes as well as rail, ferry routes and local road access).”</i></p>	<i>“Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of transport routes.”</i>
<p><b>Criterion 6. “The existing pattern of Wind Energy Development is respected.”</b></p> <p><i>“The degree to which the proposal fits with the existing pattern of nearby wind energy development, considerations include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Turbine height and proportions,</i></li> <li><i>• density and spacing of turbines within developments,</i></li> <li><i>• density and spacing of developments,</i></li> <li><i>• typical relationship of development to the landscape.</i></li> <li><i>• previously instituted mitigation measures</i></li> </ul>	<i>“The proposal contributes positively to existing pattern or objectives for development in the area.”</i>

Criterion	Threshold
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Planning Authority stated aims for development of area</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>“Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:”</i></p>
<p><b>Criterion 7. “The need for separation between developments and / or clusters is respected.”</b></p> <p><i>“The extent to which the proposal maintains or affects the spaces between existing developments and/ or clusters.”</i></p>	<p><i>“The proposal maintains appropriate and effective separation between developments and / or clusters”</i></p>
<p><b>Criterion 8. “The perception of landscape scale and distance is respected.”</b></p> <p><i>“The extent to which the proposal maintains or affects receptors’ existing perception of landscape scale and distance.”</i></p>	<p><i>“The proposal maintains the apparent landscape scale and / or distance in the receptors’ perception”</i></p>
<p><b>Criterion 9. “Landscape setting of nearby wind energy developments is respected.”</b></p> <p><i>“The extent to which the landscape setting of nearby wind energy developments is affected by the proposal.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Proposal relates well to the existing landscape setting and does not increase the perceived visual prominence of surrounding wind turbines.”</i></p>
<p><b>Criterion 10. “Distinctiveness of Landscape character is respected.”</b></p> <p><i>“The extent to which a proposal affects the distinction between neighbouring landscape character types, in areas where the variety of character is important to the appreciation of the landscape.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Integrity and variety of Landscape Character Areas are maintained.”</i></p>

8.3.9 An analysis of the Proposed Development in relation to these criteria is presented in Appendix 8.9.

8.3.10 The OWESG identifies key views for the Great Glen area as follows (see Appendix 8.9):

- Loch Ness West – *“End-to-end views over Loch Ness looking southwest”*;
- Loch Ness East – *“End-to-end Views over Loch Ness looking northeast”*;
- Urquhart Castle from Loch – *“Water-level views looking up at Castle”*;
- Urquhart Castle Land Based – *“Generally elevated views looking towards the castle from above”*;
- Loch Ness from Urquhart Castle – *“Views primarily towards the Northeast and Urquhart Bay”*;
- Great Glen from Meall Fuar-mhonaidh – *“Principal views are NE and SW up and down the Great Glen”*;
- Loch Tarff ‘Local Hero’ location – *“View over range of LCTs looking West North West”* from *“Passing Place east of Loch Tarff”*;

- A87 Viewpoint above Loch Garry – “Panoramic views, easily accessible by tourists. Across the Great Glen, east to the rolling uplands, west to rugged massifs and sweeping interlocking peaks”; and
- A887T Views West – “sequence of westward views forms a significant transitional experience”.

8.3.11 The OWESG identifies key routes for the Great Glen as including trunk roads, B roads, and minor roads within the study area, the Great Glen Way (recreational route), and waterways: the Caledonian Canal and Great Glen Canoe Trail. Detail and analysis of these routes in relation to the Proposed Development is presented in Appendix 8.9.

8.3.12 The OWESG also includes a landscape sensitivity appraisal for wind turbine development around the Great Glen. This has been given consideration in the assessment of landscape character (Appendix 8.5) and Cumulative Landscape Assessment (Appendix 8.7) and is summarised in Appendix 8.9.

## 8.4 Consultation

8.4.1 A summary of the relevant LVIA scoping consultation with statutory consultees undertaken is presented in Table 8.2. Full details of consultation responses can be found in Appendices 3.2 (the Scoping Opinion), 3.4 (Gatecheck responses) and 3.5 (further direct consultation).

**Table 8.2 – Scoping Consultation Summary Table**

Consultee & Date	Ref.	Issue Raised	Response / Action Taken
NatureScot (23.08.19)  <i>Scoping Response</i>	1	<u>Glen Affric NSA</u>  Visibility from Glen Affric NSA, particularly from the circular walk around Loch Affric, recognised within the Special Qualities of the NSA. Advice that effects are mitigated by designing out visibility from this path, and that an assessment of impacts of special qualities of the NSA should be included in the LVIA.	Effects on the Glen Affric NSA have been a key consideration in the layout design process (see Section 8.7) and have been assessed within the LVIA (see Appendix 8.4 and VPs 11, 21, 19 and 20 in Appendix 8.6 and 8.8). Visibility from the circular walk around Glen Affric has been designed out.
	2	<u>Wild Land Areas</u>  Potential for significant adverse impacts on the qualities of the Central Highlands WLA associated with aviation lights, which are legally required on turbines over 150m height. Advice that proximity activated lighting could mitigate effects and that a full lighting assessment should be provided, including an assessment of lighting on Wild Land Areas, including lowlight photomontages from the WLA.	Mitigation options to reduce/eliminate potential aviation lighting effects have been explored. Following CAA agreement on infra-red turbine lights (whereby visible turbine lights will not be required), and in consultation with ECU, THC and NatureScot, a lighting assessment has been scoped out of the LVIA.

Consultee & Date	Ref.	Issue Raised	Response / Action Taken
	3	A wild land assessment should be included.	An assessment of effects on wild land has been included in the LVIA, see Appendix 8.4.
	4	<u>Design Principles</u> Reference to NatureScot guidance on siting and design of wind farms. Design coherence with the Operational Development should be a key design principle. Concern expressed regarding size and scale of turbines.	Design coherence with the Operational Development has been taken forward as a key design principle.
	5	<u>Turbine Lighting</u> Advice given relating to scope and methodology of lighting assessment. Encouragement to explore lighting mitigation.	Consultation was conducted to agree scope of lighting assessment, in line with NatureScot (2020b) guidance.  However, a lighting assessment has since been scoped out of the LVIA (see Consultation Ref. 2).
	6	<u>Viewpoints</u> VP 13 Carn Ghluasaid should be relocated to Sgurr nan Conbhairean.  Comments on VPs in Glen Affric NSA.  Toll Creagach VP requested.  Sgurr na Ruaidhe VP requested.	VP 13 has been relocated to the summit of Sgurr nan Conbhairean.  VPs have been explored and amendments/additions made (VP numbers have changed since Scoping). Details are provided in Appendix 8.2. Consultees were subsequently consulted on amendments to VPs.  A VP has been included at the summit of Toll Creagach (see VP 21).  A VP has been included at the summit of Sgurr na Ruaidhe (see VP 22).
	7	Request for at least two low light photomontages to support the turbine lighting assessment, with receptors in NSA and WLA being a key issue. Meal Mor, Glen Affric	Further consultation was conducted to agree visualisations for the turbine lighting assessment,

Consultee & Date	Ref.	Issue Raised	Response / Action Taken
		(Scoping VP 11), Creag Dhubh (Scoping VP 12) and Toll Creagach suggested.	whereby visualisations were agreed from VP 5, VP 10, VP 21 and VP 26.  However, a lighting assessment has since been scoped out of the LVIA (see Consultation Ref. 2), eliminating the need for these visualisations.
THC (23.08.19) <i>Scoping Response</i>	8	Visualisations to THC standards should be provided as part of the EIAR, not separate to it, in an A3 ring bound folder. Separate volumes of visualisations should be prepared to both THC and NatureScot guidance in hard copy.	Visualisations to THC standards (THC 2016) are included in Volume 3b. Visualisations to NatureScot standards (SNH, 2017d) are included in Volume 3a. Visualisations can be provided as hard copies on request.
	9	All elements of the development, including on-site borrow pits, access roads, woodland loss and compensatory planting are to be included in the assessment.	All elements of the Proposed Development are assessed in the LVIA.
	10	Reference to THC dataset and request that consultation be undertaken with ECU on cumulative wind developments which are currently at Scoping Stage, as these may have advanced at the same pace as the Proposed Development.	Sites included in the CLVIA have been agreed in consultation with NatureScot, THC and ECU (emails exchanged in March 2021). Sites highlighted by THC were added to the 60km search figure (see Figure 8.7.1 and Appendix 8.3). Loch Liath (Scoping) excluded from CLVIA, as described in email on 19.03.21.
	11	Request for viewpoints to be agreed with THC and micrositied to avoid intervening screening by vegetation. Request of four further viewpoints from An Cabar (Ben Wyvis); NCN1 – Between Dingwall and Evanton; Central Black Isle (on the road between Tore and Raddery); and A87 / A887 Bun Loyne.	VPs have been agreed with consultees.  Requested VPs have been included in the LVIA (see VPs 23, 24, 24 and 26).  Details are provided in Appendix 8.2.
	12	Request for 45km study area and a detailed assessment of effects undertaken for the whole study area.	A 45km study area has been adopted and a detailed assessment of effects conducted, as described in Appendix

Consultee & Date	Ref.	Issue Raised	Response / Action Taken
			8.2, and set out in further consultation (January 2021).
	13	Request for recreational routes to be assessed, including the national cycle network, long distance trails (Great Glen Way, high and low routes), South Loch Ness Trail, Great Glen Canoe Trail, North Coast 500.	Effects on visual receptors on a range of recreational routes is included in the LVIA, see Appendix 8.2.
	14	Cumulative impact will be a significant material consideration. The study area for cumulative effects should be minimum 30km. Images should be presented in the Panoramic Digital Viewer.	Noted. The scope of the cumulative LVIA is described in 8.2.24-27 and Section 8.6, as well as Appendix 8.2 to focus on potential for significant effects within the 45km study area, where relevant.
	15	Images should be presented in the THC Panoramic Digital Viewer.	Images are presented in the THC Panoramic Digital Viewer.
	16	The SNH 2019 landscape character assessment should be used.	The landscape assessment is based on the areas defined by SNH (2019 [online]).
	17	Request a Wild Land Assessment and an Aviation Lighting Impact Assessment.	See Consultation Ref. 2 and 3.
	18	Request for assessment of the proposal against the criterion in the THC Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance.	This is included in the LVIA, see Section 8.10 and Appendix 8.9.
	19	Request proposal should assess the impacts on landscapes designated at a national and local scale, including impacts on Special Landscape Areas.	The LVIA assesses effects on national and local level designated and protected landscapes, as scoped in Appendix 8.2.
Energy Consents Unit (02.09.21) <i>Scoping Opinion</i>	20	A robust Night Time Assessment with agreed viewpoints is required to consider effects of aviation lighting and how the chosen lighting mitigates effects.	A lighting assessment has been scoped out of the LVIA (see Consultation Ref. 2), as confirmed in further consultation with ECU (July 2021).

Consultee & Date	Ref.	Issue Raised	Response / Action Taken
	21	Final viewpoints are to be agreed with ECU, THC and NatureScot. Additional viewpoints have been suggested by THC and NatureScot.	Viewpoints have been agreed, see further consultation below.

8.4.2 Following the Scoping responses, further consultation was undertaken with NatureScot, THC, and ECU. Additional issues discussed through these channels are summarised below:

- Post-Scoping consultation (October 2019) with NatureScot, THC, and ECU was conducted to propose an updated list of viewpoints, following a review of viewpoints requested by consultees in their consultation responses to the Scoping Report.
  - THC confirmed (24.10.19) they were generally content with viewpoints, subject to micrositing to achieve *“the best possible image of the site”*.
  - NatureScot confirmed (15.10.19) they received figures and would discuss low light visualisations further if turbines are to be fitted with lights.
- Further consultation (June 2020) with NatureScot, THC, and ECU was conducted to confirm proposed LVIA viewpoints following amendments to the Proposed Development layout.
  - NatureScot requested (01.07.20) set of draft wirelines from VPs.
- Further consultation (January to July 2021) with NatureScot, THC, and ECU was conducted to confirm proposed LVIA Viewpoints following amendments to the Proposed Development layout. A set of wirelines, as requested, were also included. Consultation also clarified ASH’s intended approach to study areas and detailed assessment; intended scope of assessment on wildness attributes of WLA 24 and 19; and intended scope of lighting assessment and visualisations (assessing worst-case, whilst mitigation options were explored).
  - Request from THC (01.03.21) for lighting visualisations from VPs 7, 10 and 26 and potential additional viewpoint near Urquhart Bay. These differed to the VPs proposed by ASH (VPs 5, 17, 21).
  - NatureScot (12.03.21) approval of Toll Creagach VP for lighting visualisations and request for real photograph taken 30 minutes before/around sunset/sunrise, as applicable. Further email (19.03.21, 25.03.21, 19.04.21, 14.05.21) and phone (29.03.21) correspondence with SSE, THC, NatureScot, and ECU on methodology for producing the visualisation from VP 21.
  - Proposal from ASH (19.03.21) to produce lighting visualisations from VP 5, VP 10, VP 21 and VP 26, but not from additional viewpoint near Urquhart Bay.
- Further consultation (March 2021) with NatureScot, THC, and ECU was conducted to agree cumulative sites for the CLVIA, including reference to an extract of the THC dataset (THC, 2021 [online]).
  - Request from THC (03.03.21) to include other sites on the 60km cumulative search figure. ASH confirmation (19.03.21) that these will be included in the search figure (see Figure 8.7.1) but not within the CLVIA baseline.
  - Request from NatureScot (12.03.21) to include Loch Liath Wind Farm in the event its application is submitted ahead of the Proposed Development, given that the design compatibility is key for both developments. ASH confirmation (19.03.21) that given its status before the cumulative cut-off date, it will not be included in the LVIA. Also,



confirmation that Lochluichart Extension 2 will be included as per status before cumulative cut-off date.

- Further consultation (July 2021) with Naturescot, THC, and ECU on turbine lighting. SSE confirmed (01.07.21) CAA approval of infra-red turbine lighting, whereby no visible aviation lighting would be installed on turbines.
  - Emails exchanged regarding potential for conditions of consent regarding infra-red lighting, and exclusion of lighting assessment from the LVIA (Naturescot 05.07.21, THC 05.07.21, ECU 05.07.21). Confirmation from ECU (call on 07.07.21, email from SSE on 08.07.21) that a visible lighting assessment will not be completed within the EIAR and SSE would be content with a condition relating to infrared lighting.

## 8.5 Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

8.5.1 The GLVIA3 (LI and IEMA, 2013) methodology for landscape assessment involves an appreciation of the existing landscape resource, the susceptibility of its key components to accept the change proposed, and an understanding of the potential effects which could occur and how these could affect these key components. The potential to mitigate adverse effects should also be considered.

8.5.2 There are five key stages to the assessment:

- Establishment of the baseline;
- Appreciation of the Proposed Development;
- Identification of key receptors;
- Identification of potential effects; and
- Assessment of effect significance.

8.5.3 As described throughout this section, the methodology adopted in this LVIA has also been informed by reference to several other methodological guidance documents and publications (including, but not limited to: SNH, 2012; SNH, 2017d; SNH, 2018; NatureScot, 2020a; NatureScot, 2020b; THC, 2016; Swanwick and LUC, 2002; LI, 2019).

### ***Establishment of the Baseline***

8.5.4 Establishment of the landscape and visual baseline conditions has been undertaken through combination of desk study and site work.

#### **Desk Study**

8.5.5 The following publications and resources have been referred to, to inform an understanding of the baseline:

- Relevant documents described in Section 8.3, including local development plans, supplementary planning guidance and advice notes, and policy statements;
- *The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas* (SNH, 2010);
- *Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas* (Horner + MacLennan et al., 2011);
- *Renewable energy. Wind turbine map* (THC, 2021 [online]);
- *Scottish Landscape Character Types Map and Descriptions* (SNH, 2019 [online]);
- *SNH Map of Relative Wildness* and Attribute Mapping datasets (SNH, Natural Spaces [online]);
- *Wild Land Areas Map and Descriptions 2014* (SNH [online]), in particular *WLA 19. Braeroy-Glenshirra-Creag Meagaidh Wild Land Area* (SNH, 2017a) and *WLA 24. Central Highlands Wild Land Area* (SNH, 2017b);

- *Gardens and Designed Landscapes* (Historic Environmental Scotland [online]);
- OS mapping, aerial photography, and other online mapping resources including Google mapping [online], Bing mapping [online], Street Map [online];
- Other web-based tourism, recreation and information resources; and
- ZTV diagrams generated for this assessment.

#### **Site Work**

- 8.5.6 Site visits were undertaken in May 2019, September 2020 and April 2021 by a team of Chartered Landscape Professionals to verify the landscape and visual receptors identified through desk study, identify any further potential receptors which may be of relevance, and collate information on baseline landscape and visual amenity. Site recording involved the completion of standardised recording forms and annotation of Ordnance Survey plans, supported by a photographic record of views from key receptor locations. True View Visuals augmented reality software was also used to verify visibility on site (see Appendix 8.1 for further details). Viewpoint photography site work was conducted in August to October 2020 and April to June 2021.

#### ***Appreciation of the Proposed Development***

- 8.5.7 Appreciation of the Proposed Development involves the accumulation of a thorough knowledge of the proposal, its nature, scale and location within the baseline landscape and visual amenity context, and any peripheral or ancillary features proposed, as detailed in Chapter 2 (Design Iteration and Proposed Development). Analysis of the proposed activities and changes which would take place leads to an understanding of the potential effects that may occur. To aid this process, ZTVs and wirelines of the Proposed Development have been consulted to inform the potential range of effects. Specialist software which uses augmented reality to show how the Proposed Development may appear within the view has also been consulted. The limitations of these resources are discussed in Appendix 8.1.
- 8.5.8 Visualisations also assist in gaining an understanding of the Proposed Development within the landscape from agreed representative viewpoints. However, as described in SNH (2017d: p22), *“visualisations, whether they are hand drawn sketches, photographs or photomontages, can never exactly match what is experienced in reality. They should, however, provide a representation of the proposal that is accurate enough for the potential impacts to be fully understood”* and *“visualisations in themselves can never provide the full picture in term of potential impacts; they only inform the appraisal process by which judgements are made”*.
- 8.5.9 Visualisations have been produced in line with both SNH (2017d) standards (see Volume 3a, Figures 8.9.1 to 8.34.4) and THC (2016) standards (see Volume 3b, Figures 8.35.1 to 8.60.6). Details relating to the visualisation methodology are contained in Appendix 8.1.

#### ***Identification of Key Receptors***

- 8.5.10 The identification of key landscape and visual receptors is the first step in the analysis of the potential for significant effects to take place.
- Landscape receptors comprise key characteristics or individual features which contribute to the value of the landscape and have the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development. Landscape receptors are identified through analysis of baseline characteristics when considered in relation to the impacts which might result from a development of the type proposed.
  - For there to be a visual effect, there needs to be a viewer. Individuals experiencing views from locations such as buildings, recognised routes and popular viewpoints used by the public have been considered in this assessment. Those experiencing views are referred to as visual receptors.

- 8.5.11 The ZTV was reviewed to aid identification of landscape and visual receptors with the potential to experience effects from the Proposed Development, informed by review of a range of desk resources (see paragraph 8.5.5), and supplemented by ASH's existing knowledge of the study area. Resources listed in paragraph 8.5.5 were used to enhance understanding of the potential receptors, particular reference was made to:
- Relevant documents described in Section 8.3, including local development plans, supplementary planning guidance and advice notes, and policy statements;
  - Citations and descriptions of LCTs and designated and protected landscapes, as outlined in paragraph 8.5.5;
  - OS mapping resources and aerial photography; and
  - Other web-based tourism, recreation and information resources (see list of references in Section 8.12).
- 8.5.12 The identification of key receptors and consequent scoping of the detailed LVIA is described in Appendix 8.2. This included the identification and refinement of representative VPs, and visual receptor locations as well as the scoping of LCTs and protected and designated landscapes to focus the assessment on identifying the potential for significant effects.

### ***Identification of Potential Effects***

- 8.5.13 The assessment process involves the identification of potential effects which could occur as a result of the interaction of the impacts of the Proposed Development with the identified landscape and visual receptors. The assessment takes into account direct effects upon existing landscape elements, features and key characteristics and also indirect effects which could occur secondary to changes affecting another landscape component or area. The ZTV is used as a tool to gauge the extent of potential indirect change, supported by targeted field surveys.
- 8.5.14 Consideration is given to effects on visual receptors that could arise from aspects of the Proposed Development, and how these changes could be accommodated in the existing baseline view. The likely perceived value of a particular view to the viewer is considered, taking into account the nature of the receptor and the potential activity they might be involved in, and factors such as elevation, extent, and key features or attractions which might feature in the view.

### ***Requirements for Mitigation***

- 8.5.15 The assessment and design of the Proposed Development is an iterative design process and requirements for mitigation have been identified throughout to reduce or eliminate potential significant effects, where possible, and informed by guidance such as SNH (2017c) on *Siting and Designing Windfarms in the Landscape*. This has involved design workshops and landscape and visual layout reviews. LVIA constraints have been central in informing this process, alongside other environmental, technical and development specific considerations. The design process is further described in Chapter 2 (Design Iteration and Proposed Development).

### ***Assessment of Residual Effect Significance***

#### **Landscape Assessment**

#### Relative Landscape Value

- 8.5.16 The relative value of the landscape is an important consideration in informing judgement of the significance of effects. Value concerns the perceived importance of the landscape, when considered as a whole and within the context of the study area. Landscape value is established through consideration of the following factors:
- Presence of landscape designations, other inventory or registered landscapes/landscape features, or identified planning constraints;

- The scenic quality of the landscape;
- Perceptual aspects such as wildness or tranquillity;
- Conservation interests such as cultural heritage features or associations, or if the landscape supports notable habitats or species;
- Recreational value; and
- Rarity, either in the national or local context, or if it is considered to be a particularly important example of a specific landscape type.

8.5.17 It should be noted that absence of a designation does not necessarily mean that a landscape or component is not highly valued as factors such as accessibility and local scarcity can render areas of nationally unremarkable quality, highly valuable as a local resource. Criteria for the allocation of perceived landscape value are outlined in Table 8.3.

**Table 8.3 – Landscape Value Criteria**

Landscape Value	Criteria
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The landscape is closely associated with features of international or national importance which are rare within the wider context;</li> <li>• The landscape is of high scenic quality and forms a key part of an important designated landscape or planning constraint; and/or</li> <li>• The landscape is an example of a scarce resource within the local context and is of considerable local importance for its scenic quality, recreational opportunities, or cultural heritage associations.</li> </ul>
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The landscape is associated with features of national or regional importance which are relatively common within the wider context;</li> <li>• The landscape forms part of a designated landscape or is associated with other features of importance but is not rare or distinctive within the local context; and/or</li> <li>• The landscape is one of a number within the local context appreciated for its scenic quality, recreational opportunities, or cultural heritage associations.</li> </ul>
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The landscape characteristics are common within the local and regional context and the landscape is not associated with any particular features or attributes considered to be important; and/or</li> <li>• The landscape is of poor scenic quality and is not appreciated for any recreational or cultural associations.</li> </ul>

Landscape Sensitivity

8.5.18 Landscape sensitivity considers the nature of the landscape and its ability to accommodate development of the type proposed without compromising its key characteristics and components. The appraisal of landscape sensitivity involves consideration of the sensitivity of individual landscape receptors. There are two aspects which are considered when establishing the landscape sensitivity:

- Value: The baseline value of the landscape and the contributory value of individual landscape receptors to the landscape as a whole; and

- Susceptibility to change: The ability of landscape receptors to accommodate development of the type proposed without changing the intrinsic qualities of the landscape as a whole.

8.5.19 Landscape sensitivity has been evaluated with reference to the subject areas above. A three-point scale is used as detailed in Table 8.4.

**Table 8.4 – Landscape Sensitivity Criteria**

Landscape Sensitivity	Criteria
High	A highly valued landscape of particularly distinctive character susceptible to relatively small changes of the type proposed.
Medium	A reasonably valued landscape with a composition and characteristics tolerant of some degree of change of the type proposed.
Low	A relatively unimportant landscape which is potentially tolerant of a large degree of change of the type proposed.

Magnitude of Landscape Change

8.5.20 The next step in the assessment process involves the identification of potential effects which could occur as a result of the interaction of the impacts of the Proposed Development with the identified receptors. The assessment takes into account direct effects upon existing landscape elements, features, and key characteristics and also indirect effects which could occur secondary to changes affecting another landscape component or area. The ZTV is used as a tool to gauge the extent of potential indirect change, supported by targeted field surveys.

8.5.21 Magnitude of change concerns the degree to which the Proposed Development would alter the existing characteristics of the landscape. The appraisal of magnitude involves consideration of the nature and scale of the change which would occur in relation to the identified potential effects and also the duration and potential reversibility of the effect. These changes are then combined to evaluate a magnitude rating for the landscape area as a whole.

8.5.22 Magnitude of landscape change is categorised on a four-point scale detailed in Table 8.5.

**Table 8.5 –Magnitude of Landscape Change Criteria**

Magnitude of Landscape Change	Criteria
High	Notable change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area ranging to a very intensive change over a more limited area.
Medium	Perceptible change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area ranging to a notable change in a localised area.
Low	Virtually imperceptible change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area or perceptible change in a localised area.
Negligible	No discernible change in any landscape characteristics or components.

8.5.23 In recognition of the differing changes that would occur over time, two ratings for magnitude of change have been included: during the construction of the Proposed Development, and during operation.

Assessment of Landscape Effects Significance.

- 8.5.24 Evaluation of the predicted significance of effect has been carried out through analysis of the anticipated magnitude of change in relation to the identified landscape sensitivity and using a degree of professional judgement. The assessment takes into account identified effects upon existing landscape receptors and assesses the extent to which these would be lost or modified, in the context of their importance in determining the existing baseline character.
- 8.5.25 Landscape effect significance has been evaluated using a four-point scale and using the criteria outlined in Table 8.6.

**Table 8.6 –Landscape Effect Criteria**

<b>Landscape Effect</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
Major <b>(Significant)</b>	The Proposed Development is at considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape and would be a dominant feature, resulting in considerable reduction in scenic quality and large-scale change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.
Moderate <b>(Significant)</b>	The Proposed Development is out of scale with the landscape, or inconsistent with the local pattern and landform and may be locally dominant and/or result in a noticeable reduction in scenic quality and a degree of change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.
Minor	The Proposed Development does not quite fit with the scale, landform or local pattern of the landscape and may be locally intrusive but would result in an inappreciable reduction in scenic quality or change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.
Negligible	The Proposed Development sits well within the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape and would not result in any discernible reduction in scenic quality or change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.

- 8.5.26 As for magnitude of change, two ratings for landscape effect have been included: during the construction of the Proposed Development, and during operation.

**Visual Assessment**

- 8.5.27 The systematic identification of likely effects on potential visual receptors is a two-fold process, giving consideration to how effects may arise from aspects of the Proposed Development, and how these changes may be accommodated in the existing baseline view.
- 8.5.28 Visual receptors and representative viewpoints identified for inclusion in the assessment were visited and key information on the nature, composition and characteristics of the existing view experienced recorded. Consideration is given to the likely perceived value of a particular view to the viewer, taking into account the nature of the receptor and the potential activity they may be involved in, and factors such as elevation, extent and key features or attractions which may feature in the view.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

- 8.5.29 The evaluation of visual sensitivity considers both the perceived value of the existing view and the susceptibility of the visual receptor to change. It is important to note that the judgement of visual sensitivity is considered in relation to an understanding of both the existing view and the Proposed Development and therefore perceived value of the area of change as a part of the view as a whole contributes to the sensitivity evaluation.

8.5.30 Visual sensitivity to the change proposed has been evaluated using a three-point scale as shown in Table 8.7.

**Table 8.7 – Visual Sensitivity Criteria**

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
High	Views from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dwellings and publicly accessible buildings where the changed aspect is an important element in the view and there are no detracting features present; and</li> <li>• recreational routes and locations where the changed aspect is an important element in the view and there are no detracting features present.</li> </ul>
Medium	Views from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dwellings and publicly accessible buildings where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present;</li> <li>• recreational routes and locations where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present;</li> <li>• roads and transport routes where the changed aspect is an important element in the view and there are no detracting features present; and</li> <li>• workplaces where the changed aspect is an important element of the view and there are no detracting features present.</li> </ul>
Low	Views from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dwellings and publicly accessible buildings where the changed aspect is an unimportant element in the view and / or numerous detracting features are present;</li> <li>• recreational routes and locations where the changed aspect is an unimportant element in the view and / or where numerous detracting features are present;</li> <li>• roads and transport routes where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present; and</li> <li>• workplaces where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present.</li> </ul>

Magnitude of Visual Change

8.5.31 Magnitude of visual change concerns the extent to which the existing view would be altered by the Proposed Development. The evaluation of magnitude gives consideration to factors such as the scale or extent of the changes within the view, the extent to which this may alter the composition or focus of the view and the duration and reversibility of these changes. Magnitude of change has been evaluated using a four-point scale, detailed in Table 8.8.

**Table 8.8 – Magnitude of Visual Change Criteria**

<b>Magnitude of Visual Change</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
High	Where the Proposed Development would cause a very noticeable change in the existing view.
Medium	Where the Proposed Development would cause a noticeable change in the existing view.
Low	Where the Proposed Development would cause a perceptible change in the existing view.
Negligible	Where the Proposed Development would cause a largely imperceptible change in the existing view.

Assessment of Visual Effects Significance

8.5.32 The level of visual effect identified concerns the importance of changes resulting from the Proposed Development. Evaluation of the effect and determination of significance is based on consideration of the magnitude of change in relation to sensitivity, taking into account proposed mitigation measures, and is established using professional judgement. The assessment takes into account likely changes to the visual composition, including the extent to which new features would distract or screen existing elements in the view or disrupt the scale, structure or focus of the existing view.

8.5.33 Visual effect significance has been evaluated using a four-point scale, as detailed in Table 8.9.

**Table 8.9 – Visual Effect Criteria**

<b>Visual Effect</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
Major <b>(Significant)</b>	The Proposed Development would become a prominent and very detracting feature and would result in a very noticeable deterioration to an existing highly valued and well composed view.
Moderate <b>(Significant)</b>	The Proposed Development would introduce some detracting features to an existing highly valued view or would be more prominent within a pleasing or less well composed view, resulting in a noticeable deterioration of the quality of view.
Minor	The Proposed Development would form a perceptible but not detracting feature within a pleasing or valued view or would be a prominent feature within a poorly composed view of limited value, resulting in a small deterioration to the existing view.
Negligible	The Proposed Development would form a barely perceptible feature within the existing view and would not result in any discernible deterioration to the view.



## ***Assessment of Residual Cumulative Effect Significance***

### **Cumulative Landscape Assessment**

- 8.5.34 The methodology for the cumulative landscape assessment is based on that described in NatureScot’s guidance *Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments* (SNH, 2012). The assessment considers the potential for combined effects to designated and protected landscapes and LCTs resulting from the addition of the Proposed Development to the cumulative baseline scenario, which may be experienced both from static locations and whilst moving through the landscape (sequentially).
- 8.5.35 The cumulative assessment considers all those LCTs and designated and protected landscapes identified for inclusion in the detailed landscape assessment. However, areas identified as likely to have less than minor effect in the landscape assessment (for the Proposed Development alone) have not been included, as it is not considered that these effects could contribute to a significant cumulative effect.
- 8.5.36 The cumulative landscape assessment has involved five key stages:
- Evaluation of the capacity of the identified landscape to accommodate wind farm development;
  - Identification and analysis of the cumulative baseline scenario;
  - Evaluation of the cumulative landscape sensitivity to change;
  - Evaluation of the potential magnitude of landscape change to the cumulative baseline scenario resulting from the Proposed Development; and
  - Assessment of the potential cumulative landscape effects arising from the addition of the Proposed Development to the cumulative baseline scenario.

### Evaluation of Landscape Capacity

- 8.5.37 NatureScot guidance on cumulative assessment (SNH, 2012) describes the need for an understanding of whether the proposed wind farm crosses the threshold of acceptability for the total number of wind farms in an area. The capacity of the landscape to accommodate multiple wind farms has been evaluated using baseline data collected during the landscape assessment. Consideration has been given to the scenic quality, value and sensitivity to change of the relevant designated / protected area or LCT. Where relevant, the landscape sensitivity study for the Great Glen included within the OWESG has been consulted to inform the evaluation of the cumulative capacity value. The cumulative capacity value considers the landscape without the effect of the existing baseline sites.
- 8.5.38 A cumulative capacity value has been attributed to each area based on a three point scale detailed in Table 8.10.

**Table 8.10 – Cumulative Capacity Value Criteria**

<b>Cumulative Capacity Value</b>	<b>Description</b>
High	The landscape has the potential to accommodate multiple wind farms / wind turbines without significant loss of key characteristics or features.
Medium	The landscape has the potential to accommodate some wind farms / wind turbines but there is the potential for key characteristics or features to be locally dominated or eroded by the presence of wind turbines.

Cumulative Capacity Value	Description
Low	The landscape would have few opportunities for wind farm / wind turbine development which would not dominate or erode key characteristics or features.

#### Identification and Appraisal of the Cumulative Baseline Scenario Landscape Context

8.5.39 Baseline information on operational / under construction, consented and proposed (application and appeal) wind energy developments within the 60km cumulative search area has been collated from the THC dataset (THC, 2021 [online]) and informed by consultation and is illustrated on Figure 8.7.1. The baseline scenario has then been refined to identify those sites considered to have greater potential to result in significant effects in combination with the Proposed Development, as detailed in section 8.6 and shown on Figure 8.7.2.

8.5.40 The cumulative baseline scenario is described for each landscape area and considers wind farms / turbines which affect the landscape both directly and indirectly.

#### Evaluation of the Cumulative Landscape Sensitivity to Change

8.5.41 An evaluation of sensitivity to change has been attributed to each landscape designation / protected area and LCT based on analysis of the cumulative baseline scenario in relation to the identified capacity value of the landscape to accommodate wind farm development. This is based on a three-point scale as detailed in Table 8.11.

**Table 8.11 – Cumulative Landscape Sensitivity Criteria**

Cumulative Landscape Sensitivity	Criteria
High	The baseline wind farm / wind turbine scenario is very close to or achieves the identified capacity of the area resulting in little opportunity for additional development without significant effects occurring.
Medium	The baseline wind farm / wind turbine scenario leaves some opportunity for additional development within the landscape without significant effects resulting.
Low	The baseline wind farm/wind turbine scenario leaves considerable opportunity for additional development within the landscape without significant effects resulting.

#### Identification of the Cumulative Magnitude of Landscape Change

8.5.42 Magnitude of change concerns the degree of change which would occur as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development into the cumulative baseline scenario. This is identified based on the consideration of the potential nature, size, scale and location of the proposed change within the context of the cumulative baseline scenario. The evaluation of the magnitude of change is based on the criteria outlined in the main landscape assessment (see Table 8.5).

#### Assessment of Potential Cumulative Landscape Effects

8.5.43 Assessment of potential cumulative effects is based on analysis of the relationship between the cumulative sensitivity to change and the magnitude of change and is made using a degree of professional judgement. Cumulative effects are assessed as the result of the addition of the

Proposed Development to the cumulative baseline scenario. Cumulative landscape effects are assessed against the scale as detailed in Table 8.12.

**Table 8.12 – Cumulative Landscape Effect Criteria**

Cumulative Landscape Effect	Criteria
Major (Significant)	The addition of the Proposed Development to the cumulative baseline scenario would result in the capacity of the landscape to accommodate wind energy development being overreached and the combined appearance of wind turbines in the landscape becoming a dominant and character defining feature.
Moderate (Significant)	The addition of the Proposed Development to the cumulative baseline scenario would increase the appearance of wind turbines in the landscape to the extent that they may become locally dominant, but the Proposed Development would not exceed the overall capacity of the landscape to accommodate wind energy development.
Minor	The addition of the Proposed Development to the cumulative baseline scenario would add to the appearance of wind turbines in the landscape but would not result in a noticeable change to key landscape characteristics.
Negligible	The addition of the Proposed Development to the cumulative baseline scenario would not result in any discernible increase in the appearance or dominance of wind turbines in the landscape.

#### Cumulative Visual Assessment

- 8.5.44 The methodology for the cumulative visual assessment is based on that described in NatureScot’s guidance *Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments* (SNH, 2012). The assessment considers the potential for combined views of wind developments from receptors at selected receptor locations. Combined views of wind energy development are expressed as either ‘in combination’ (where turbines from different developments would be observable at the same time) or ‘in succession’ (where an observer would be required to turn to experience multiple developments).
- 8.5.45 The assessment also considers the potential for sequential effects experienced from receptors on routes where different wind developments become visible whilst moving through the landscape. Sequential effects may be occasional, frequent or constant.
- 8.5.46 The cumulative visual assessment has involved four key stages:
- Identification and analysis of the cumulative baseline scenario from visual receptor locations;
  - Evaluation of the cumulative visual sensitivity to change;
  - Evaluation of the potential magnitude of visual change to the cumulative baseline scenario resulting from the Proposed Development; and
  - Assessment of the potential cumulative visual effects arising from the introduction of the Proposed Development to the cumulative baseline scenario.

#### Identification and Appraisal of the Cumulative Baseline Scenario Visual Context

- 8.5.47 Analysis of the baseline involves an appreciation of the existing view within the context of the cumulative baseline scenario, which assumes that all wind developments, as detailed in Table 8.16, have been constructed.
- 8.5.48 The identification of the cumulative baseline scenario visual context involves consideration of the scale, location and nature of the cumulative scenario wind developments within the view, the proportion of the view which is occupied by wind turbines and the potential importance of this part of the view to the viewer.

Evaluation of the Cumulative Visual Sensitivity to Change

- 8.5.49 The evaluation of sensitivity to change concerns the nature of the existing view in the context of the cumulative baseline scenario, and the potential for further wind turbines to be accommodated within that view without significantly altering, obstructing or dominating the view. An evaluation of sensitivity to change has been attributed to each receptor based on a three-point scale detailed in Table 8.13.

**Table 8.13 – Cumulative Visual Sensitivity to Change Criteria**

Cumulative Visual Sensitivity to Change	Criteria
High	Where wind energy developments within the cumulative baseline scenario are well accommodated within a valued or well composed view and/or the proposed changed landscape forms an important part of the view.
Medium	Where wind energy developments within the cumulative baseline scenario are present but not prominent in the existing view, and/or the proposed changed landscape forms a less important part of the view.
Low	Where wind energy developments within the cumulative baseline scenario are prominent in an existing view and/or the changed landscape forms an unimportant part of the view.  Where wind energy developments within the cumulative baseline scenario are barely discernible within the view.*

\*A cumulative effect requires the Proposed Development to be seen within a context of at least one other wind farm / turbine. If no cumulative baseline turbines are visible or they are barely discernible, then the sensitivity to cumulative change is considered to be low and both the cumulative magnitude of change and effect would be negligible.

Identification of the Cumulative Magnitude of Visual Change

- 8.5.50 Magnitude of change concerns the measurement of change which would occur as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development into the cumulative baseline scenario. This is identified based on the consideration of the potential nature, size, scale and location of the proposed change within the existing view, and in relation to the existing wind farms / turbines within the view. The evaluation of the magnitude of change is based on the criteria outlined in the main visual assessment methodology (see Table 8.8).

Assessment of Potential Cumulative Visual Effects

- 8.5.51 Assessment of potential cumulative effects is based on analysis of the relationship between the cumulative sensitivity to change and the magnitude of change and is made using a degree of professional judgement. Cumulative effects are assessed as the result of the addition of the

Proposed Development to the cumulative baseline scenario. Cumulative visual effects are assessed against the scale detailed in Table 8.14.

**Table 8.14 – Cumulative Visual Effect Criteria**

Cumulative Visual Effect	Criteria
Major (Significant)	The addition of the Proposed Development to views of the baseline cumulative scenario would result in a very noticeable increase in wind turbines to the extent whereby they would become a dominating or obstructive feature within the view.
Moderate (Significant)	The addition of the Proposed Development to views of the baseline cumulative scenario would result in a noticeable increase in wind turbines to the extent whereby they would become prominent but would not dominate or obstruct the view.
Minor	The addition of the Proposed Development to views of the baseline cumulative scenario would result in a perceptible increase in wind turbines but would not increase the prominence of wind farms/turbines as a feature in the view.
Negligible	The addition of the Proposed Development to views of the baseline cumulative scenario would not result in any discernible increase in the appearance of wind turbines in the view.

### ***Limitations to Assessment***

8.5.52 The LVIA and CLVIA has been subject to the following assumptions and limitations:

- The prominence of the Proposed Development in the landscape and views will vary according to the prevailing weather conditions. The LVIA has been carried out, as is best practice, by assuming the 'worst case' scenario i.e. on a clear, bright day in winter, when neither foreground deciduous foliage nor haze can interfere with the clarity of the view obtained.
- The assessment of operational effects assumes that all disturbed areas not required for the operation of the Proposed Development (temporary construction compounds, excavations for wind turbine foundations and borrow pits) will be successfully reinstated to reflect pre-construction vegetation types and appearance as far as is reasonably practicable.
- ZTVs are used to inform the landscape, visual and cumulative assessments. The limitations and technical specifications for production of ZTVs are included in Appendix 8.1.
- The field assessment of visual effects has been undertaken from public roads, footpaths or open spaces. For residential receptors, assumptions have been made, about the types of rooms and about the types and importance of views from these rooms. For there to be a visual effect, there is the need for a viewer and therefore only buildings that are in use have been considered in the visual assessment.
- A number of existing wind farms are operational or under construction within the wider study area. The baseline for the LVIA considers all existing operational or under construction wind farms, as identified on Figures 8.7.1 and 8.7.2. However, the baseline for the LVIA does not include consented or application /appeal sites, but these are considered within the baseline cumulative scenarios for the CLVIA.

- In line with best practice, the CLVIA considers wind energy sites which are operational and consented and the subject of a current valid planning application or appeal. As agreed with statutory consultees during consultation, sites at scoping stage have not been considered due to the uncertainty as to whether these sites would progress and their likely nature and scale.
- Due to the uncertainty of construction activity timing for the Proposed Development and other such activity, temporary structures, tracks and activity relating to construction have not been considered within the cumulative assessment. The cumulative assessment therefore focuses on the potential effects during operation relating to the main permanent structures (wind turbines).
- Since the number of wind energy development applications made or withdrawn changes frequently, a cumulative cut-off date of 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021 has been applied to the collection of data. All new applications, applications withdrawn, and addendums to current projects taken place since this period have therefore not been considered in this assessment.
- The collation of cumulative sites in the THC dataset (THC, 2021 [online]) within 60km has considered only those wind turbine developments of 50m tip height or greater as it is considered that smaller turbines would be unlikely to result in significant cumulative effects in association with the Proposed Development.

## 8.6 Baseline Conditions

### *Landscape Baseline*

#### **Site Description and Context**

- 8.6.1 The Proposed Development is located to the north-west of Loch Ness and the Great Glen, on an area of high rocky plateau. This open, undulating moorland features several rocky outcrops, small hills, many lochs, lochans, watercourses, areas of bog, tracks, hydroelectric infrastructure, and turbines of the Operational Development. There are also several distinctive summits within the surrounding plateau area, including Meall Fuar-mhonaidh which slopes steeply down to the Great Glen. To the west of the site, this high rocky plateau transitions to a rugged, exposed landscape of large mountains, while to the north and south, the plateau slopes down to the wooded glens of Glen Urquhart and Glen Moriston, and to the north-west, the farmed broad Strathglass valley.
- 8.6.2 The wider study area is characterised by rugged massifs, rounded mountains, and rocky moorland plateaus as well as broad tracts of rolling upland moorland hills, including the Monadhliath mountains to the south-west of the Proposed Development, which transition to higher mountains to the south and east and to the far west.
- 8.6.3 Deep glens, broad sweeping straths and large, linear lochs cut through these upland areas providing communication and transport corridors. These glens and straths are the main focus of settlement which comprises small villages, scattered farms and cottages, and tourist developments. The busy glens and straths provide a contrast to the remote moorlands and upland areas with the sheltered setting resulting in more improved pastureland, with sloping valley-sides often clothed in woodland and commercial forestry. The deep trench of the Great Glen forms the most notable glen within the study area, slicing through the upland landscape from south-west to north-east and accommodating Lochs Lochy, Oich and Ness. To the east, the broader, sweeping Strath Spey separates the Monadhliath from the Cairngorms and forms an important communication and transport corridor. Other notable glens include Glen Shiel, Glen Garry, Glen Moriston, Glen Affric, Glen Cannich, Glen Convinth, Glen Strathfarrar and Glen Urquhart, while Straths include Strathglass, Stratherrick, Strathnairn, and Strathconon.
- 8.6.4 Existing wind farms (operational / under construction sites) are present throughout parts of this landscape, mostly concentrated on the plateau areas to either side of the Great Glen, forming clusters of turbines occasionally seen from the straths and glens but more often forming a feature of the upland landscape. Other structures such as overhead towers, hydro infrastructure and tracks

are also common within some parts of the landscape. Nevertheless, the wider study area features some areas where there are few contemporary features present and impressions of wildness and remoteness are therefore stronger.

### Designated and Protected Landscapes

8.6.5 Landscapes can be ascribed an international, national, regional or local designation that recognises the importance of the landscape for its scenic interest or attractiveness. Areas of landscape may also be protected by planning policy at either a national or regional level. Designated and protected landscapes within the wider study area are shown on Figures 8.2.1 and 8.2.2. An initial high-level appraisal and scoping exercise was undertaken to review all designated and protected landscapes within the wider study area to identify those where there may be potential for significant effects. This exercise is summarised in Appendix 8.2. Those areas identified as having the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development and therefore included in the detailed assessment are listed below.

- Glen Affric NSA;
- WLA 19: Braeroy – Glenshirra – Creag Meagaidh;
- WLA 24: Central Highlands;
- Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA; and
- Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA.

8.6.6 Those areas which have been scoped into the detailed assessment are described below. Detailed baseline descriptions and evaluations of the Key Qualities (identified for WLAs), Special Qualities (identified for NSAs and SLAs) and values of each area is included in Appendix 8.4.

#### National Scenic Areas

8.6.7 National Scenic Area (NSA) is a national, statutory designation and comprises areas that have been designated as having outstanding scenic value in a national context. There are 40 NSAs in Scotland.

8.6.8 As described in SNH (2010), a list of Special Qualities has been defined for each NSA, as being “*the characteristics that individually, or when combined together, make an NSA special in terms of landscape and scenery*”, based on site work conducted in 2007 and 2008.

8.6.9 One NSA has been identified as having potential to be affected by the Proposed Development and has therefore been included in the detailed assessment (Appendix 8.4).

#### *Glen Affric NSA*

8.6.10 Located approximately 11.6km from the Proposed Development, the Glen Affric NSA comprises a range of high conical peaks enclosing a long, narrow and steep-sided valley. The Special Qualities of Glen Affric NSA are summarised in the SNH (2010: p169) report as:

- *“One of the most beautiful glens in Scotland;*
- *A glen of transition, from dense forest to exposed moorland;*
- *A journey into wildness;*
- *The prominence of water;*
- *A glen for all seasons;*
- *A historic and popular route through the Highlands;*
- *Venerable pine forest;*
- *Beautiful Loch Affric; and*
- *The baronial Affric Lodge”.*

### Wild Land Areas

- 8.6.11 Wild Land Areas (WLA) have been defined by NatureScot as those areas comprising the greatest and most extensive areas of wild characteristics within Scotland. Although not a designation, these areas are given protection within the Planning System through SPP (Scottish Government, 2014b, updated 2020).
- 8.6.12 The presence of wildness is based on the presence and strength of four perceptual attributes identified in NatureScot’s Policy Statement ‘Wildness in Scotland’s Countryside’ (SNH, 2002) as follows:
- *“a sense of sanctuary or solitude;*
  - *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.”*
- 8.6.13 Because these responses are very much dependant on an individual’s perceptions, five physical attributes are identified as considered likely to lead to these perceptual responses being present. These are:
- *“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.”*
- 8.6.14 The WLAs have been identified by NatureScot covering the areas where these attributes are considered to be most strongly present using a GIS mapping exercise and site survey (SNH, 2014b and SNH, Natural Spaces [online]). During this process (described in SNH, 2014b), NatureScot produced a composite *“map of relative wildness”* based on the mapping of four physical attributes: *“perceived naturalness”, “rugged or challenging terrain”, “remoteness from public mechanised access”* and *“lack of built modern artefacts”*. This is illustrated in Figures 8.3.1 and 8.3.2 across the wider study area.
- 8.6.15 The NatureScot wildness mapping does not consider the presence of the Operational Development or Beinneun (and Extension) Wind Farm, and only includes Stronelaig Wind Farm as a footprint (not a visual envelope), as noted in Annex 3 of SNH (2014b). The WLA descriptions for the WLAs included in the detailed assessments (SNH, 2017a,b) have also been based on site work conducted between 2013 and 2015<sup>1</sup> before the construction of the Operational Development (2016-17), Beinneun and Extension (2017), and Stronelaig (2017) Wind Farms, although the descriptions, published in September 2018, may give consideration to these sites. Therefore, whilst the wildness mapping and WLA descriptions are key in establishing the WLA baseline, there are limitations to relying solely on these. The presence of these wind developments is considered in the WLA baseline contexts of this LVIA.
- 8.6.16 Two WLAs have been identified as having potential to be affected by the Proposed Development and have therefore been included in the detailed assessment (Appendix 8.4).
- WLA 19: Braeroy – Glenshirra – Creag Meagaidh*
- 8.6.17 Located approximately 17.2km to the south of the Proposed Development, this WLA comprises a range of hills and sweeping uplands to the south of the Corrieyairack Pass, east of the Great Glen

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<sup>1</sup> *The description of WLA 19 (SNH, 2017a) has been based on site work conducted in 2013, 2014 and 2015 while the description of WLA 24 (SNH, 2017b) has been based on site work conducted in 2013 and 2014.*



and north of Glen Spean, including the large mountain mass of Creag Meagaidh. This WLA is entirely within the wider study area. The Key Qualities of WLA 19 are summarised in SNH (2017a) as:

- *“Rounded hills and plateaux that are awe-inspiring in their massive scale and simplicity, whilst geological features and rivers contribute strongly to the sense of naturalness.”*
- *“A strong contrast of experience between the hills and plateaux with the straths, glens and corries, varying in their accessibility, exposure and visibility of human elements.”*
- *“A hidden interior that is simple in landform and land cover, contributing to a perceived ‘emptiness’ and a strong sense of remoteness and sanctuary.”*
- *“Access and recreation focused around the margins, with an interior that is visited by few and possesses a sense of solitude, physical challenge and risk.”*
- *“Long, remote glens that penetrate far into the hills and plateaux: some arresting by virtue of their narrowness and steep side-slopes, and some because of their openness against a surrounding backcloth of towering mountains.”*

#### *WLA 24: Central Highlands*

8.6.18 Located around 10.6km to the west of the Proposed Development, this extensive WLA comprises a mix of large mountains, peatlands and glens. The majority of this WLA is within the wider study area. The Key Qualities of the WLA 24 are described in SNH (2017b) as:

- *“An extensive and awe-inspiring range of large scale, high and rugged mountains.”*
- *“An extensive, remote mountain interior with strong qualities of sanctuary and solitude.”*
- *“Deep glens that have steep, arresting side slopes as well as rivers and waterfalls, with some containing lochs and some revealing human land use.”*
- *“Small and extensive areas of native woodland that contribute to the sense of naturalness and highlight some arresting landscape features.”*

#### Special Landscape Areas

8.6.19 Planning authorities are able to designate particular landscapes considered to be of regional or local importance through the development planning process. Such areas are not considered to be statutory designations but are a material consideration to planning decisions. Within the Highland area, landscapes identified of regional importance are entitled Special Landscape Areas (SLAs).

8.6.20 Two SLAs within the wider study area have been identified for inclusion within the detailed assessment in Appendix 8.4.

#### *Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA*

8.6.21 This SLA, situated approximately 1.9km to the east of the Proposed Development, covers that part of the Great Glen which encloses Loch Ness. It includes the bounding hill slopes on the loch’s western and eastern shores, the prominent hill Meall Fuar-mhonaidh on the loch’s western side and the elevated interior moorland and agricultural plateau to the east of Loch Ness which contains Lochs Ashie, Duntelchaig, and Ruthven. The Special Qualities of this SLA are described in Horner + MacLennan et al. (2011) under the following headings:

- *“The Dramatic Great Glen”*; and
- *“Historic Landscape”*.

#### *Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA*

8.6.22 This SLA is situated north-east of the Great Glen, approximately 10.7km from the Proposed Development, and comprises a range of large, remote hills, cut by long winding glens. The Special Qualities of this SLA are described in Horner + MacLennan et al. (2011) under the following headings:

- “Grand Mountain Ridges, Long Glens and Wide Strath”; and
- “Wildness and Remoteness”.

#### **Landscape Character Types**

- 8.6.23 NatureScot in conjunction with partner Councils, has undertaken detailed review and classification of various landscape areas and types of Scotland. This study has recently been updated to identify numbered Landscape Character Types (LCTs) on a consistent basis across Scotland (SNH, 2019 [online]). Twelve individual LCTs are identified within the detailed study area.
- 8.6.24 An initial scoping exercise was undertaken to review all LCTs within the detailed study area to identify those where there may be potential for significant effects. This exercise is summarised in Appendix 8.2. Those identified as having the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development and therefore included in the detailed assessment include.
- LCT 220: Rugged Massif – Inverness;
  - LCT 221: Rolling Uplands – Inverness;
  - LCT 222: Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness;
  - LCT 224: Farmed and Wooded Foothills;
  - LCT 225: Broad Steep-Sided Glen;
  - LCT 226: Wooded Glen – Inverness;
  - LCT 227: Farmed Strath – Inverness;
  - LCT 230: Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Inverness; and
  - LCT 236: Smooth Moorland Ridges.
- 8.6.25 Detailed baseline description of these LCTs is included in Appendix 8.5 including descriptions of key characteristics and appraisal of landscape value.

#### **Visual Baseline**

- 8.6.26 As described in paragraphs 8.6.1-8.6.4, the wider study area is characterised by extensive areas of upland which are segmented by deep valleys containing the majority of settlement and transportation routes. As a result, views from properties, roads, and tourism developments, obtained by the largest numbers of people, are usually contained within, or directed along, these valleys. These vary between relatively intimate views enclosed by woodland or across pasture, open views across water, and long funnelled views up or down the valleys, often along the lengths of the long, linear lochs. Surrounding hills typically provide a backdrop and horizon line to these views, although may often be filtered by forest or woodland from the major routes.
- 8.6.27 Visual receptor locations within the wider study area are shown on Figure 8.6.1. Key areas of settlement include the city of Inverness and several villages and towns in the vicinity to its north-west; several villages within the Great Glen including Dores, Drumnadrochit, Foyers, Invermoriston, Fort Augustus, Invergarry, and Laggan; and in the south and south-west of the wider study area, the villages of Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge, Dalwhinnie, Newtonmore, and town of Kingussie. Smaller scattered settlements and dispersed properties are also found within glens and straths. Further scattered properties are scattered throughout straths and glens, with some on elevated valley slopes as well on valley floors, and a few isolated lodge properties set deeper into the hills.
- 8.6.28 From upland areas, more expansive and elevated views are obtained both overlooking the settled glens and across the upland plateaux and summits of surrounding mountains. Because of the difference in relief between the major glens and mountains, settled areas are often not a noticeable feature of these elevated views which feature layers of hills and mountains receding into the distance. A number of popular mountain summits are present including various Munros (mountains over 3,000 ft) and Corbetts (mountains over 2,500 ft). There are also various mapped longer distance

walking routes through the upland glens and across the plateaux, such as the Great Glen Way, as shown on Figure 8.6.1.

- 8.6.29 Existing wind farms (operational / under construction sites) are already a noticeable feature within many views throughout the study area both from within the straths and glens, where they typically skyline above the surrounding hills, and particularly in upland views due to the locations of existing sites on the higher ground. Other structures such as overhead towers, hydro infrastructure and tracks are also common within some views.

### **Potential Visual Receptors**

#### Interpretation of the ZTV

- 8.6.30 The ZTV (see Figure 8.6.2) shows that theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development would be mainly concentrated on upland areas, facing slopes and mountain summits and ridges, as well as some lower valley slopes, spread mostly within 25km. Beyond this 25km area, more distant visibility is indicated in lower elevations to the north-east around the Black Isle and east of Inverness, as well as some hilltops and facing slopes in various directions. Visual receptors are therefore largely those situated in elevated areas, such as at hill summits and on recreational routes, as well as some in more settled areas in lower elevations, in properties or on transport and recreational routes.
- 8.6.31 To the south and south-west of the Proposed Development, visibility from elevated areas is indicated from slopes on the southern side of Glen Moriston and summits, including Meall Dubh, as well as elevated tracks in this area. Immediately south of the Proposed Development, theoretical visibility is also shown on tracks and sections of the A82 near Invermoriston. Other views from lower elevations in the Great Glen are limited. South of Fort Augustus, on the other side of the Great Glen, there is some visibility on summits including Poll-gormack Hill, Carn a' Chuilinn and Glas Charn and on north-facing slopes and elevated tracks in this area.
- 8.6.32 To the east and south-east of the Proposed Development, there is relatively extensive theoretical visibility on the western side of the Great Glen, for example at the summit of Meal Fuar-mhonaidh, as well as the eastern side of the Great Glen, particularly within 15-25km of the Proposed Development. Here, visibility extends along the ridgeline east of Loch Ness, as well as in settled parts of Stratherrick along the B862 road and tracks in the area. Further east, visibility extends across elevated areas of the Monadhliath Mountains, including summits of Carn na Saobhaidhe and Geal Charn. Visibility is more limited to the north-east of the Proposed Development, around Does, Drumashie Moor and Strathnairn, where a smaller number of turbines would be theoretically visible in more distant views.
- 8.6.33 Further north-east, towards the settled areas of Inverness and the Black Isle, and several roads and tracks in the area, theoretical visibility is indicated but this would be distant.
- 8.6.34 To the north of the Proposed Development, there is some theoretical visibility in Glen Coiltie, on some of the upper south-facing slopes north of Glen Urquhart and settled areas north of Drumnadrochit, as well as further north along the Great Glen Way near Caiplich. More distant visibility to the north is found in elevated areas north-west of Beauly.
- 8.6.35 To the north-west of the Proposed Development, potential visibility is shown to mostly cover the higher ground between the straths and glens, as well as some visibility from the upper slopes in Glen Affric and Glen Cannich.
- 8.6.36 This appreciation of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development has informed an initial understanding of visual receptors in the wider study area and the scope of the detailed visual assessment, as discussed in this section and detailed in Appendix 8.2, which summarises the findings of an initial high level appraisal that has shaped the detailed LVIA.

### Representative Viewpoints (VPs)

- 8.6.37 Twenty-six VPs have been selected throughout the wider study area to represent the range of views which would be obtained of the Proposed Development. Viewpoints selected are all within areas shown to have theoretical visibility by the ZTV. The selection of VPs has been an iterative process in consultation with statutory consultees, in particular with NatureScot and THC. A greater number of VPs were considered than those included in the final list. Details of those formally considered and the rationale for those selected and excluded is included in Appendix 8.2. Grid coordinates for agreed VPs are contained within Appendix 8.1 and shown on visualisations presented in Volume 3a, Figures 8.9.2 to 8.34.4 (provided to NatureScot standards: SNH, 2017d) and in Volume 3b, Figures 8.35.1 to 8.60.6 (provided to THC standards: THC, 2016).
- 8.6.38 The selected and agreed list of VPs are provided in Table 8.15 and shown on Figure 8.5.1. A larger version of the viewpoints plan is included as Figure 8.5.2.

**Table 8.15 – Viewpoints**

Ref	Name	Reason for Selection
VP 1	Track to Loch Liath	Illustrative of open, very close-proximity view, from track on the site.
VP 2	Old Bridge, Invermoriston	Representative of close-proximity views from Invermoriston, taken from Old Bridge.
VP 3	Meall Fuar-mhonaidh	Illustrative of elevated views from popular local hill summit on the north-western side of Loch Ness, within Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA.
VP 4	Achtuie Road near Creag Nay	Illustrative of new visibility, representative of elevated views from public road and several elevated properties above Drumnadrochit
VP 5	Suidhe Viewpoint, B862	Illustrative of elevated view from roadside Viewpoint marked on OS maps, on General Wade's military road, within Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA.
VP 6	Summit by Suidhe Viewpoint, B862	Illustrative of elevated view from popular summit near Suidhe Viewpoint carpark.
VP 7	B862 south of Foyers	Illustrative of views from the B862 road opposite the site.
VP 8	Lochside picnic layby on B852	Illustrative of worst-case low-level views from shores of Loch Ness, on B-road, within Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA.
VP 9	Carn na Saobhaidhe	Illustrative of elevated views from popular Corbett summit on southern side of Loch Ness.
VP 10	Great Glen Way near Carn a' Bhodaich	Illustrative of elevated views from the Great Glen Way.
VP11	Meall Mor, Glen Affric	Illustrative of elevated views from local high point within Central Highlands WLA, on northern boundary of the Glen

Ref	Name	Reason for Selection
		Affric NSA and southern boundary of the Monar and Mullardoch SLA.
VP 12	Creag Dhubh	Illustrative of elevated view from hilltop within WLA, with views north across Glen Affric NSA.
VP 13	Sgurr nan Conbhairean	Illustrative of elevated view from popular Munro summit within Moidart, Morar and Glenshiel SLA and Central Highlands WLA; and on the edge of the Glen Affric NSA.
VP 14	Meall Dubh	Illustrative of elevated view from Corbett path, by Millennium Wind Farm.
VP 15	Poll-gormack Hill	Illustrative of elevated mid-range views from summit within Braeroy-Glenshirra-Creag Meagadh WLA, with views across the Corrieyarrick Pass.
VP 16	Geal Charn	Illustrative of elevated views from Munro summit, on western boundary of CNP and near the boundary of the Monadhliath WLA.
VP 17	B862 south of Dores	Illustrative of elevated view across Loch Ness from minor B-road, within Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA.
VP 18	Track near Dun Fhamhair fort	Illustrative of longer range views from walking route near Beauly.
VP 19	Path north of Loch Affric	Illustrative of worst-case low-level views from mountain track to the north of Loch Affric, near junction with core path, situated within Glen Affric NSA and Central Highlands WLA. No views from circular Core Path around Loch Affric, but very small area of theoretical visibility on this nearby route.
VP 20	Path north of Affric Lodge	Illustrative of elevated point on path north of Affric Lodge, on slopes of Am Meallan hill, within the Central Highlands WLA and Glen Affric NSA.
VP 21	Toll Creagach	Illustrative of elevated views from a Munro on the edge of the Glen Affric NSA and Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA, within the Central Highlands WLA.
VP 22	Sgurr na Ruaidhe	Illustrative of elevated views from a Munro within the Glen Strathfarrar group of hills and views over the Glen Strathfarrar NSA. It is also located within the Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA and Central Highlands WLA.
VP 23	An Cabar (Ben Wyvis)	Illustrative of distant elevated views from hill top located in Rhiddoroch-Beinn Dearg-Ben Wyvis WLA and Ben Wyvis SLA

Ref	Name	Reason for Selection
VP 24	NCN1 Between Dingwall and Evanton	Illustrative of distant views from national cycle route in coastal location.
VP 25	Minor road near Tore	Illustrative of distant views from rural settled area.
VP 26	A87 Bun Loyne	Illustrative of elevated views from layby by A road near Bun Loyne, Glen Moriston

8.6.39 Baseline view descriptions for visual receptors at these VPs are included in Appendix 8.6.

#### Residential Locations and Settlements

8.6.40 The visual assessment of receptors in residential locations and settlements has been limited to those where the ZTV for the detailed study area (Figure 8.6.3) indicates potential for effect. However, the potential for views of construction activity and site access has also been considered. The rationale for the inclusion or exclusion of residential locations from the detailed assessment is included in Appendix 8.2.

8.6.41 The detailed study area is characterised by small settlements and scattered individual rural properties. Of the small settlements, there would be no view of the Proposed Development from Kiltarlity, Laggan, Invergarry, Fort Augustus, or Foyers. From other scattered properties, there may be limited visibility of the Proposed Development, but due to context and distance, visual significant effects would be unlikely. These areas are therefore scoped out of the detailed assessment.

8.6.42 The ZTV (Figure 8.6.3) indicates that the majority of established settlements and rural properties within the detailed study area would not receive any visibility of the Proposed Development. The following residential locations and settlements within the detailed study area are included in the detailed assessment, as shown on Figure 8.6.3:

- Settlement of Invermoriston (R1) and scattered rural settlement along Glen Moriston (R2, R3);
- Scattered rural settlement to the north of Drumnadrochit (R4);
- Scattered rural settlement to the south-east of Kiltarlity, around Cragganvallis (R5);
- Settlement of Dores (R6) and nearby properties south of Dores (R7); and
- Scattered rural settlement to the east of Loch Ness (R8-15), including along Stratherrick.

#### Routes

8.6.43 The visual assessment of receptors on routes has been limited to those where the ZTV for the wider study area (Figure 8.6.2) indicates potential for effect. The rationale for the inclusion or exclusion of routes from the detailed assessment is included in Appendix 8.2.

8.6.44 Routes considered in the assessment include public roads and other public transport routes, Core Paths, routes included in the 'Scottish Hill Tracks' book (Scotways, 2011) and other mapped and established, locally promoted walking routes, as shown on Figure 8.6.1. As for residential receptors, the ZTV (see Figure 8.6.2) shows the majority of routes as unlikely to receive views of the Proposed Development, and so several have been scoped out of the detailed assessment, see Appendix 8.2. The following routes within the wider study area are included in the detailed assessment, as shown on Figure 8.6.2:

- A82 (Inverness to Spean Bridge/Roybridge);
- A833 (near Balchraggan to Drumnadrochit);
- A887 (Invermoriston to Bun Loyne);

- A87 (Invergarry to Loch Duich);
- B862 (Fort Augustus to Inverness), and relevant sections of the National Cycle Route 78;
- Core Path IN05.11 (Dog Falls to Comar);
- Core Path IN12.04 (Kindrummond to Dirr Wood);
- Core Path IN12.05 (Drumashie Moor);
- Core Path IN12.06 (Drumashie to Cuillard);
- Core Path IN13.02 (Cnoc a Bhuachaille);
- Core Path IN16.16 (Fort Augustus to Glen Moriston by old drove road) and SHT 260a and 260b (Fort Augustus to Achlain or Torgyle Bridge (Glen Moriston));
- Core Path IN17.01 (Fair Haired Lad’s Pass);
- Core Path IN18.01 and 18.02 (Dalcataig circuit and Invermoriston Falls circuit), assessed as part of Invermoriston settlement (R1);
- Core Path IN22.03 (Clansman Hotel to Abriachan);
- Core Path IN25.01 (Dell Lodge – Foyers), assessed as part of residential grouping R13;
- Core Path IN25.02 (Garthbeg to Errogie, south side of Loch Mhor);
- Scottish Hill Tracks (SHT) 231 and 235 (Tomatin to Whitebridge and Laggan to Whitebridge);
- SHT 236a (Laggan to Whitebridge);
- SHT 268 (Glen Affric to Loch Mullardoch Dam by the Allt Toll Easa); and
- The Great Glen Way, upper and lower routes, including sections of C1060 (Dunain-Blackfold-Abriachan Road).

8.6.45 Detailed descriptions of the baseline views from viewpoints, residential areas and routes included in the assessment are provided in Appendix 8.6.

### ***Cumulative Baseline***

#### **Sites included in the Cumulative Baseline Scenarios**

- 8.6.46 Within 60km of the Proposed Development, the THC dataset (THC, 2021 [online]) shows there to be several existing (operational / under construction) wind developments, and a number of proposed (consented, application / appeal and scoping) wind developments. An extract of this dataset, which was “up to date to 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021”, is illustrated on Figure 8.7.1 and detailed in Appendix 8.3.
- 8.6.47 An initial appraisal of these sites in relation to the Proposed Development suggested that the potential for significant cumulative effects would be most likely to occur in relation to the Proposed Development seen in combination with sites around the Great Glen and Monadhliath. Therefore, the CLVIA has focused on sites within and around this area. A group of sites to the north of the Proposed Development have also been included, due to their proximity to viewpoints and visual receptors on the northern periphery of the wider study area.
- 8.6.48 Sites at scoping stage have not been considered due to the uncertainty as to whether these sites would progress and their likely nature and scale. In addition, only those developments of 50m tip height or greater have been included as it is considered that smaller turbines would be unlikely to result in significant cumulative effects in association with the Proposed Development. Single turbines outside of 5km from the Proposed Development have also been excluded for the same reason.
- 8.6.49 The 22 wind farms selected for inclusion in the CLVIA were agreed during consultation with NatureScot and THC (refer to section 8.4) and are detailed in Table 8.1.6 and shown on Figure 8.7.2.

This information presents data updated by ASH and SSE, and some details differ slightly to the data presented on Figure 8.7.1, which illustrates an extract of the THC dataset (THC, 2021 [online]).

8.6.50 The number of wind farm applications made or withdrawn changes frequently. Therefore, in order to inform the cumulative baseline scenario a cut-off date of the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021 has been used. All new applications, applications withdrawn or refused and addendums to current projects taken place since the cut-off date have therefore not been considered in this assessment.

8.6.51 The CLVIA assumes two cumulative baseline scenarios whereby all (or some) of these wind farms would be operational within the landscape and assesses effects resulting from the potential addition of the Proposed Development. These scenarios, as indicated in Table 8.16, are:

- Scenario 1: All **operational / under construction and consented** cumulative baseline sites would be operational within the landscape; and
- Scenario 2: All **operational / under construction, consented and application / appeal** cumulative baseline sites would be operational within the landscape.

8.6.52 These scenarios both differ from the LVIA baseline, where only the operational / under construction sites are present within the landscape.

**Table 8.16 – Cumulative Baseline Sites included in the CLVIA**

Site Name	No. of Turbines	Turbine Dimensions			Location and Distance from Proposed Development (from closest turbines)	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
		Hub Height (m)	Rotor Dia. (m)	Tip Height (m)			
<b>Operational / Under Construction Sites</b>							
Beinneun Wind Farm	25	80	104	133.5	19.6km to the south-west	•	•
Beinneun Wind Farm Extension	7	80	113	136	19.9km to the south-west	•	•
Bhlaraidh Wind Farm (the Operational Development)	32	69 / 76.5	112 / 117	125 / 135	0.4km to the west	•	•
Corriegarth Wind Farm	23	80	80	120	17.1km to the south-east	•	•
Corriemoillie Wind Farm	17	73.5	103	125	43.9km to the north	•	•
Corrimony Wind Farm	5	59	82	100	4.3km to the north-west	•	•



Site Name	No. of Turbines	Turbine Dimensions			Location and Distance from Proposed Development (from closest turbines)	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
		Hub Height (m)	Rotor Dia. (m)	Tip Height (m)			
Dunmaglass Wind Farm	33	80	90	120	21.5km to the east	●	●
Fairburn Wind Farm	20	60	80	100	29.6km to the north	●	●
Farr Wind Farm	40	60	82	101	31.4km to the north-east	●	●
Glen Kyllachy Wind Farm	20	70	80	110	31.1km to the north-east	●	●
Lochluichart Wind Farm and Extension	23	68.5	113	125	43.6km to the north	●	●
Millennium Wind Farm	26	70/87	76	115/125	15.1km to the south-west	●	●
Moy Wind Farm	20	75	100	125	40km to the north-east	●	●
Stronelaig Wind Farm	66	69/76.5	112/117	125/135	17.7km to the south-east	●	●
<b>Consented Sites</b>							
Aberarder Wind Farm	12	70	100	130	23.1km to the east	●	●
Dell Wind Farm	14	65/80	101	115.5/130.5	16.8km to the south-east	●	●
Lochluichart Wind Farm Extension 2	5	76	114	133	46.7km to the north	●	●
Millennium South Wind Farm	10	80	104	132	16.0km to the south-west	●	●

Site Name	No. of Turbines	Turbine Dimensions			Location and Distance from Proposed Development (from closest turbines)	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
		Hub Height (m)	Rotor Dia. (m)	Tip Height (m)			
<b>Application / Appeal Sites</b>							
Cloiche Wind Farm	36	80.9	138	149.9	17.3km to the south-east		●
Corriegarth 2 Wind Farm	18	83.4	133	149.9	16.5km to the south-east		●
Glenshero Wind Farm	39	76.5	117	135	21.9km to the south-east		●
Kirkan Wind Farm	17	100	150	175	44.5km to the north		●

#### Analysis of the Cumulative ZTVs

8.6.53 Cumulative ZTVs showing the theoretical visibility of the wind developments included within CLVIA have been produced and overlaid with the ZTV of the Proposed Development to identify areas of combined and sequential visibility (see Figures 8.8.1 to 8.8.24). Whilst these ZTVs are important for informing the cumulative assessment (see Section 8.9), they also aid in our understanding of the baseline cumulative scenario.

8.6.54 These ZTVs demonstrate that the wind developments in the cumulative baseline scenarios have relatively widespread visibility of wind turbines, a number of which are also large-scale turbines. Visibility of these is largely focused towards the north and north-east of the wider study area. All the wind developments included within the cumulative baseline scenario show some level of theoretical visibility from most of the prominent hilltops within the wider study area. The cumulative developments also form several distinct clusters within the wider study area with similar extents of theoretical visibility:

- The ZTVs for Beinneun and Beinneun Extension (operational), Millennium (operational) and Millennium South (consented) Wind Farms show theoretical visibility limited to the west of the wider study area over the higher hills and mountain tops but with intervisibility within Glenmoriston, Glen Garry and parts of the Great Glen including Fort Augustus.
- The ZTVs for Stronelaig (operational), Dell (consented), Glenshero (application) and Cloiche (application) Wind Farms show theoretical visibility mainly in the south-east and in elevated areas throughout the wider study area, particularly on elevated ridges and summits west of the Great Glen.
- Corriegarth (operational) and Corriegarth 2 (application) Wind Farms are theoretically visible within the eastern part of the detailed study area, including parts of Stratherrick and the uplands to the east but also show some intervisibility within parts of the Great Glen, including upper western slopes, and elevated ridges and summits to the west.
- Dunmaglass (operational) and Aberarder (consented) Wind Farms show theoretical visibility mainly within the east of the wider study area, as well as elevated areas throughout the study

area and the western slopes of the Great Glen. There is also some intervisibility to the north near the Black Isle and Moray Firth.

- Glen Kyllachy and Farr Wind Farms (both operational) show theoretical visibility limited to the north-east of the wider study area, around Strathnairn and Drummoissie and Beaully Firth but with some intervisibility from hill summits to the west and parts of the Great Glen.
- Lochluichart, Lochluichart Extension and Corriemoillie (all operational), Lochluichart Extension II (consented) and Kirkan (application) Wind Farms show theoretical visibility limited to the north of the wider study area in elevated areas and south of Beaully Firth and in upland areas to the east of the Great Glen.

### **Cumulative Receptors**

8.6.55 Receptors identified for inclusion in the CLVIA are described in detail in Appendix 8.7 and Appendix 8.8. These have been selected through analysis of the cumulative ZTVs and review of the main landscape and visual assessment for the Proposed Development alone. As described in Appendix 8.2, the CLVIA has been limited to those receptors where the cumulative ZTV indicates that the Proposed Development would have combined and / or sequential visibility with another cumulative development.

8.6.56 Because the focus of the CLVIA is on potential significant effects, areas or receptors which were identified as experiencing less than a minor landscape or visual effect as a result of the Proposed Development alone (see Appendices 8.4, 8.5 and 8.6) have been scoped out of the CLVIA as it is considered that these individual effects would not contribute to a significant cumulative effect.

### Cumulative Landscape Receptors

#### *Landscape Character Types (LCTs)*

8.6.57 Five LCTs within the detailed study area have been included in the cumulative landscape assessment. Descriptions of the cumulative baseline scenario context experienced from these LCTs are provided in Appendix 8.7. These LCTs are:

- LCT 221 - Rolling Uplands – Inverness;
- LCT 222 – Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness;
- LCT 225 – Broad Steep-Sided Glen;
- LCT 227 – Farmed Strath – Inverness; and
- LCT 236 – Smooth Moorland Ridges.

#### *Designated and Protected Landscapes*

8.6.58 Three areas within the wider study area have been included in the cumulative landscape assessment. Descriptions of the cumulative baseline scenarios experienced from these areas are provided in Appendix 8.7. These areas are:

- WLA 19: Braeroy – Glenshirra - Creag Meagaidh;
- WLA 24: Central Highlands; and
- Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA.

### Cumulative Visual Receptors

#### *Cumulative Viewpoints*

8.6.59 Ten VPs within the wider study area have been included in the cumulative visual assessment. Descriptions of the cumulative baseline views that would be experienced by receptors in these locations are provided in Appendix 8.8. These viewpoints are:

- VP 1: Track to Loch Liath (see Figures 8.9.1 to 8.9.4);
- VP 2: Old Bridge, Invermoriston (see Figures 8.10.1 to 8.10.4);
- VP 3: Meall Fuar-mhonaidh (see Figures 8.11.1 to 8.11.4);
- VP 5: Suidhe Viewpoint, B862 (see Figures 8.13.1 to 8.13.4);
- VP 6: Summit by Suidhe Viewpoint, B862 (see Figures 8.14.1 to 8.14.4);
- VP 7: B862 south of Foyers (see Figures 8.15.1 to 8.15.4);
- VP 10: Great Glen Way near Carn a' Bhodaich (see Figures 8.18.1 to 8.18.4);
- VP 15: Poll-gormack Hill (see Figures 8.23.1 to 8.23.4);
- VP 17: B862 south of Dores (see Figures 8.25.1 to 8.25.4); and
- VP 26: A87 Bun Loyne (see Figures 8.34.1 to 8.34.4).

#### *Residential Locations and Settlements*

8.6.60 Six groupings within the detailed study area have been included in the cumulative visual assessment. Descriptions of the cumulative baseline views that would be experienced by receptors in these locations are provided in Appendix 8.8. These locations are:

- R5 (Properties around Cragganvallie);
- R7 (Properties south of Dores);
- R9 (Easter and Wester Aberchalder and Migovie);
- R12 (Garthbeg, Corriegarth Lodge and nearby properties);
- R13 (A range of properties in the vicinity of the B862 minor public road in the area near Whitebridge); and
- R14 (Knockie Estate Cottages and properties in vicinity including Knockie Lodge Hotel).

#### *Routes*

8.6.61 Seven routes within the wider study area have been included in the cumulative visual assessment. Descriptions of the cumulative baseline views that would be experienced by receptors on these routes are provided in Appendix 8.8. These routes are:

- A87;
- B862;
- Core Path IN12.04 (Kindrummond to Dirr Wood);
- Core Path IN13.02 (Cnoc a Bhuachaille);
- Core Path IN22.03 (Clansman Hotel to Abriachan);
- Core Path IN25.02 (Garthbeg to Errogie, south side of Loch Mhor); and
- Great Glen Way.

## 8.7 Standard Mitigation

### **Mitigation during Construction**

8.7.1 Landscape and visual mitigation measures relating to the construction and successful reinstatement of disturbed ground associated with the Proposed Development will be managed through good practice and construction management (see Sections 15 of the Outline CEMP in Appendix 2.1). This relates to the successful landscape reinstatement of areas disturbed during the construction of the

Proposed Development including compounds, working areas and borrow pits, which is important in minimising the degree of landscape effect. For example, the formation of smooth gradients to tie into adjacent undisturbed areas and the use of best practice techniques for the handling and reinstatement of soil and peat will assist in the successful reinstatement of disturbed areas and minimise landscape and visual effects resulting from the permanent features of the Proposed Development.

#### **Embedded Design Mitigation**

- 8.7.2 Landscape and visual mitigation measures relating to the operation of the Proposed Development have been incorporated into the design of the scheme. The design of the Proposed Development has gone through numerous iterations since this site was first explored for development in 2019, as described in Chapter 2 (Design Iteration and Proposed Development) and the Design and Access Statement. The siting and design of turbines and associated tracks and other infrastructure has resulted from a constraints exercise which included consideration of potential impacts from an LVIA perspective. Potential for landscape effects and effects on sensitive views have been central to the iteration of layouts and site layout options were reviewed from a range of key locations in order to avoid effects from sensitive locations (e.g. Loch Affric circular route), minimise effects from other locations as far as possible (e.g. Meal fuar-mhoniadh, Suidhe Viewpoint and slopes and shores of Loch Ness), and maintain a balanced layout which avoids the appearance of turbines which are inconsistent in elevation or visual spread. This involved the removal and adjustment of a number of turbines. The final layout presented is considered to be the optimum layout in minimising landscape and visual effects, whilst balancing effects on other areas of environmental constraint and achieving the required technical performance.
- 8.7.3 This siting and design process has also been influenced by national and local policy and/or guidance from NatureScot, THC and other consultees, as is referenced where relevant in the EIAR. This includes the *Siting and Designing Windfarms in the Landscape* (SNH, 2017). Further discussions through consultations with consultees also informed the final design.
- 8.7.4 To mitigate the potential effects of visible aviation lighting, it has been agreed in consultation with the CAA, that there would be no visible lights on the Proposed Development turbines. Instead, infra-red lights to Ministry of Defence specifications would be installed on the nacelles of perimeter turbines, as described in Chapter 15 (Aviation and Radar).

#### **Mitigation during Decommissioning**

- 8.7.5 Landscape and visual mitigation measures associated with decommissioning of the Proposed Development would be agreed with statutory consultees as part of the decommissioning plan. Where the detailed assessment refers to the predicted significance of residual construction effects these are also considered to be representative of potential decommissioning effects.

## **8.8 Residual Effects**

### ***Residual Effects on Landscape Receptors***

- 8.8.1 The extent to which the Proposed Development would affect the existing landscape varies depending on the individual components of the project and the ability of the existing landscape to accommodate these various components.
- 8.8.2 The detailed assessment of effects on LCTs and designated / protected landscapes is provided in Appendices 8.4 and 8.5. This section provides a summary of effects, in accordance with the effects criteria outlined in Section 8.5. Effects on LCTs are discussed first, as these conclusions form the basis for the understanding of effects on designated and protected landscapes.

### **Assessment of Residual Effects on Landscape Character Types**

- 8.8.3 Nine out of twelve LCTs in the detailed study area were identified for inclusion within the detailed assessment. The detailed assessment of effects on these LCTs is included in Appendix 8.5. These effects are summarised in the following paragraphs with an emphasis on potential significant effects.

8.8.4 Figure 8.4.3 illustrates LCTs with the Proposed Development ZTV within the detailed study area.

Effects likely to be Significant

8.8.5 The landscape assessment did not identify any significant landscape effects upon landscape character types (refer to Appendix 8.5).

Effects likely to be Not Significant

*Minor-Moderate Landscape Effects*

8.8.6 A **locally minor-moderate** (not significant) landscape effect has been identified for the LCT within which the Proposed Development would be located: LCT 222 (Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness), see Table 1.2.3 of Appendix 8.5. These localised effects would be anticipated for the area containing, and immediately surrounding, the Proposed Development site itself, as well as areas typically to its north and north-east, where the proposed turbines would be a noticeable addition to the landscape, experienced with the Operational Development turbines. Wind turbines are an established feature of this LCT, and are experienced in the surrounding landscape, thereby reducing sensitivity somewhat to further development. Nevertheless, the Proposed Development turbines and associated infrastructure would increase the developed footprint and result in these areas becoming more strongly characterised by wind turbines. This would increase the prominence of this feature in the landscape and may have some potential to alter the perception of scale and distance within parts of the LCT and increase evidence of active land use and obvious human artefacts. Given the presence of wind development in this LCT and adjacent landscapes, these localised effects would not change the intrinsic character of the LCT or scenic quality but it may become locally intrusive and experienced as larger in scale than other vertical elements in the local area. Effects within other parts of this LCT are discussed in paragraphs 8.8.8.

*Minor Landscape Effects*

8.8.7 **Locally minor** (not significant) landscape effects have been identified for three LCTs / parts of LCTs situated to the east and south of the Proposed Development. These localised effects are anticipated to affect parts of LCT 221 (Rolling Uplands – Inverness), LCT 225 (Broad Steep-Sided Glen) and LCT 227 (Farmed Strath – Inverness). For these LCTs, localised effects would affect open, elevated often north-west facing slopes of LCT 221; small parts of LCT 225, most notably from elevated, open, eastern shores; and parts of the Stratherrick area of LCT 227. The Proposed Development would lead to perceptible localised changes whereby turbines would become more prominent features within the landscape from localised elevated areas, but largely experienced in the context of the Operational Development and other notable wind developments in both the immediate and wider context. This may affect the expansive views and perception of focal features from parts of LCT 221; and alter the perception of undeveloped uplands from limited parts of LCT 225 and LCT 227. Given the limited nature of intervisibility, context with other wind developments, and presence of settled areas nearby, the localised level of effect associated with the Proposed Development would result in an inappreciable change to the intrinsic landscape character of these LCTs.

8.8.8 **Minor** (not significant) landscape effects are also anticipated for LCT 236<sup>2</sup> (Smooth Moorland Ridges), and the majority of LCT 222 (Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness), outwith the area discussed in paragraph 8.8.6 as experiencing localised effects. This includes the area north of Glen Urquhart and more distant parts to the west of the site. For LCT 236 and the majority of LCT 222, the Proposed Development would lead to a perceptible intensification of wind development in the wider context, but would be experienced in the context of the Operational Development and other notable wind developments in both the immediate and wider context. The perceived change to intrinsic landscape characteristics of these areas would be inappreciable given the relative dominance of other wind developments that would be experienced with the Proposed Development.

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<sup>2</sup> Unlike other LCTs in this assessment, the **Minor** effect on LCT 236 is not described as a 'localised' effect since the area of this LCT within the detailed study area is affected more consistently than other areas assessed, so the effect can be generalised across the area more readily.

#### *Negligible-Minor Landscape Effects*

- 8.8.9 **Locally negligible-minor** (not significant) landscape effects have been identified for two LCTs / parts of LCTs located to the east and south-west of the Proposed Development. These localised effects are anticipated to affect parts of LCT 224 (Farmed and Wooded Foothills), and the Glen Moriston part of LCT 226 (Wooded Glen - Inverness). For these areas, the Proposed Development would marginally increase the perception of wind turbines in the landscape, but in the context of the Operational Development whereby the landscape character of the area would not be affected.

#### *Negligible Landscape Effects*

- 8.8.10 All remaining LCTs or parts of LCTs would experience **negligible** (not significant) landscape effects from the Proposed Development as it is considered that any potential intervisibility would lead to imperceptible changes to landscape characteristics and scenic quality. This relates to LCT 220 (Rugged Massif - Inverness) and LCT 230 (Interlocking Sweeping Peaks - Inverness); as well as the majority of LCT 221 (Rocky Uplands – Inverness), LCT 224 (Farmed and Wooded Foothills), LCT 225 (Broad Steep-Sided Glen), LCT 226 (Wooded Glen - Inverness) and LCT 227 (Farmed Strath - Inverness).

#### **Assessment of Residual Effects on Designated and Protected Landscapes**

- 8.8.11 The detailed assessment of effects on designated and protected landscapes in the wider study area is included in Appendix 8.4. These effects are summarised in the following paragraphs with an emphasis on potential significant effects.
- 8.8.12 Figures 8.2.2 illustrates landscape areas with the Proposed Development ZTV, while Figure 8.3.2 shows Wild Land Areas, the Map of Relative Wildness and the Proposed Development ZTV.

#### National Scenic Areas (NSAs)

- 8.8.13 One out of three NSAs within the wider study area was identified for inclusion within the detailed assessment. No significant effects were identified for Glen Affric NSA.

#### *Glen Affric NSA*

- 8.8.14 The ZTV indicates intervisibility with the Proposed Development from upper slopes and summits particularly on the northern side of the glen, where it would be perceptible in the context of the Operational Development. It would be more perceptible from elevated north-eastern parts of the NSA (such as VPs 21 and 11) and visibility would decrease in the western part of the NSA, where turbines would be barely perceptible behind the Operational Development (see VPs 19 and 20) and in the context of other wind development. From low-lying parts of the NSA, it would not be experienced at all.
- 8.8.15 Therefore, for open, elevated parts of the NSA, there may be a very marginal increase in the perceived influence of wind development, but this would not affect the majority of Special Qualities, where a negligible magnitude of effect would occur. A negligible-low magnitude of change would be anticipated for those Special Qualities relating to the appreciation of dramatic mountains (noted under “*One of the most beautiful glens in Scotland*” Special Quality); and the sense of remoteness associated with the general absence of man-made features (noted under “*A journey into wildness*” Special Quality).
- 8.8.16 Effects on this NSA would be indirect, resulting from the experience of the Proposed Development turbines within the wider context, most frequently seen in the context of the Operational Development and /or other wind farms in the wider landscape. Although the Proposed Development may slightly increase the perceived dominance of wind development in the wider visual context of this landscape, this would not change the Special Qualities or characteristics of the NSA. The effect significance is therefore considered to be **negligible** (not significant) during construction and operation.

#### Wild Land Areas (WLAs)

- 8.8.17 Two out of six WLAs within the wider study area were identified for inclusion within the detailed assessment. No significant effects were identified for either of these WLAs.

8.8.18 Limitations relating to the NatureScot baseline wildness mapping and descriptions of WLAs is described in paragraph 8.6.15 and Appendix 8.4, whereby these baseline sources appear to pre-date the Operational Development and other wind farms in the wider context. The assessment of potential effects takes into account the presence of these wind developments in the baseline context.

*WLA 19: Braeroy – Glenshirra – Creag Meagaidh*

8.8.19 The Proposed Development would affect very small parts of the WLA, at considerable distance and where a context of existing wind farm development is usually already perceived. There would be limited intervisibility of the Proposed Development within the WLA comprising an area of facing slopes in the north-west corner of the WLA at a distance of 17km to 22km and a few higher summit areas to either side of Glen Roy and around Creag Meagaidh towards the south of the WLA. From many of these areas, the Proposed Development would be evident in the mid to far distance adjacent to the Operational Development. Whilst the increased numbers of turbines may be perceptible in this distant part of the setting, the presence of closer wind turbines seen from most of the areas affected is anticipated to lead to very little perceptible change to wild land attributes and perceptual responses.

8.8.20 Magnitude of change is anticipated to be locally Low for the WLA attribute “*Lack of construction or other artefacts*” localised to slopes and summits to the north of Glen Roy within around 22km of the Proposed Development, but negligible for all areas beyond this distance. Magnitude of change is anticipated to be negligible for all other WLA attributes and WLA Key Qualities.

8.8.21 Therefore, a **locally minor** effect (not significant) is assessed, limited to a very localised area of the WLA on the summits and facing slopes of mountains within 22km of the Proposed Development. The effect on the WLA as a whole is anticipated to be **negligible**. There would be no perceptual degree of effect to any of the WLA Key Qualities and the integrity of the WLA would not be affected.

*WLA 24: Central Highlands*

8.8.22 The Proposed Development would affect relatively limited areas of this WLA, whereby it would be intervisible from ridges and mountain summits and higher facing slopes towards its eastern edge, generally limited to areas within 10km of the eastern boundary, with occasional small areas affected beyond this distance. Apart from a few very small areas, it would almost always be seen within the context of the Operational Development turbines, outwith the WLA and in the easterly / south-easterly context where wind turbines are a recognised feature of the landscape.

8.8.23 In areas to the south of Glen Cannich, the Proposed Development turbines would be seen to the rear of closer turbines of Corrimony Wind Farm or the Operational Development (see VPs 11, 12, 13 and 21), and no noticeable changes to wild land attributes or the strength of wildness are anticipated.

8.8.24 In areas north of Glen Cannich, the Proposed Development would perceptibly increase the surrounding spread of wind turbines in the south-eastern landscape context and may lead to a marginally increased sense of modern artefacts and contemporary land use in this context. However, this would still be largely limited to areas where existing wind turbines are intervisible at a similar distance and in a similar location (see VP 22) and already influence these qualities. Therefore, the potential to decrease the sense of wildness is limited.

8.8.25 The vast majority of the WLA would have no intervisibility with the Proposed Development and there would be no intervisibility within the remote glens and very little intervisibility with the more remote mountainous interior.

8.8.26 The limited degree of intervisibility and context of existing wind turbines which already affect the sense of wildness is anticipated to lead to a locally low magnitude of change to the WLA attributes “*Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts*”, “*Little Evidence of Contemporary Land Use*” and “*Arresting or Inspiring Qualities*”, localised within 10km of the Proposed Development, confined to areas north of Glen Cannich. There would be a negligible magnitude of change for all WLA Key Qualities.

8.8.27 Therefore, a **locally minor** effect (not significant) is assessed, limited to areas north of Glen Cannich within which the Proposed Development would be intervisible. In all other areas, the effect would



be **negligible**. As the Proposed Development would lead to no greater influence on the relationship with the mountainous core area than existing wind farms and would be unlikely to affect the glen areas, no perceptible effect is anticipated to any of the WLA Key Qualities. The integrity of the WLA would therefore remain unaffected.

#### Special Landscape Areas (SLAs)

- 8.8.28 Two out of six SLAs within the wider study area were identified for inclusion within the detailed assessment. No significant effects were identified for either of these SLAs.

#### *Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA*

- 8.8.29 Effects on this SLA would be indirect, resulting from the appearance of the Proposed Development turbines on the skyline to the west. No perceptible effect on the SLA is anticipated in relation to intervisibility with lower slopes and shoreline areas of Loch Ness due to the limited ZTV coverage and wooded context. The Proposed Development would be relatively noticeable from elevated areas on the eastern side of the glen (see VPs 5, 6 and 17) and west of the glen along the ridgeline, including Meall Fuar-mhonaidth (VP 3) and parts of the Great Glen Way north of Invermoriston. Although noticeable from these open, elevated areas, it would be experienced in the context of the Operational Development and other wind turbines in the wider landscape.

- 8.8.30 There would be no effect on two of the three Special Qualities of this SLA: the “*Contrasting Intimate Plateau*” and “*Historic Landscape*”. Some small changes to four aspects of “*The Dramatic Great Glen*” Special Quality may however be anticipated, relating to minimal, localised effects on the more open and elevated areas of the SLA:

- From “*some elevated viewpoints on loch-side ridges and hill tops*”, where experienced with other wind development, the Proposed Development may draw further visual attention to its location on the skyline. This would be minimal (a negligible-low magnitude of change) and localised.
- The Proposed Development turbines would add to existing turbines interrupting the “*open smooth moorland skyline ridge*” but given that these would largely be seen alongside Operational Development turbines, this would represent a minimal change to this landscape characteristic (a negligible-low magnitude of change).
- From some areas, the Proposed Development would be perceived to add further scale indicators to the landscape which may slightly alter the perception of scale within the landscape and affect views from parts of the Great Glen Way. These changes (a low magnitude of change) would be limited by the presence of the Operational Development and confined to localised views.
- Views from the prominent landmark and vantage point Meall Fuar-mhonaidth (VP 3) would be affected by the Proposed Development in the immediate context to its west, leading to a small change (low-medium magnitude of change) to “*the role of Meall Fuar-mhonaidth as a vantage point*”. It would be larger and closer than the Operational Development, but this would not notably affect the appreciation of the Great Glen or the perception of Meall Fuar-Mhonaidth as a prominent landmark in the Great Glen, when experienced from other locations.

- 8.8.31 Effects would be limited by the presence of the Operational Development and other wind development in the landscape.

- 8.8.32 Therefore, a **locally minor** (not significant) landscape effect was identified for open, elevated areas of this SLA and **negligible** effects elsewhere. The integrity of the SLA would not be affected.

#### *Strathconon and Mullardoch SLA*

- 8.8.33 Effects on this SLA would be indirect, resulting from the appearance of the Proposed Development turbines within the wider landscape context to the south-east. These would be experienced in the

context of other wind farms in the wider landscape, as well as the Operational Development in the majority of views.

8.8.34 The majority of the SLA would not experience intervisibility with the Proposed Development but it would be relatively noticeable from summits and ridgelines in the south-east of the SLA (such as VPs 11, 21 and 22) as well as some interior elevated areas. From these localised elevated locations, there may be a slight increase in perception of turbines. This would not have a significant effect on the Special Qualities or characteristics of the SLA, but there may be some small, localised changes (low magnitude of change) to the two Special Qualities of the SLA, slightly affecting the perception of scale from “*Grand Mountain Ridges*” and sense of “*Wildness and Remoteness*” due to the increased presence of man-made structures in the landscape. Effects would be limited by the presence of the Operational Development and other wind development in the landscape.

8.8.35 Therefore, a **locally negligible-minor** (not significant) landscape effect was assessed for elevated eastern areas of this SLA and **negligible** effects elsewhere. The integrity of the SLA would not be affected.

### Summary of Landscape Effects

8.8.36 A summary of the effects on LCTs and designated and protected landscapes is outlined in Table 8.17 below. This refers to all landscape areas considered in the LVIA, as described in Appendix 8.2, including those scoped out of detailed assessment (shown in grey text).

**Table 8.17 – Summary of Residual Effects on LCTs and Designated and Protected Landscapes**

Landscape Areas	Potential Effect							
	Not Significant					Significant		
	Scoped Out of the Detailed Assessment	Negligible	Negligible - Minor	Minor	Minor - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Major	Major
<b>Landscape Character Types (LCTs)</b>								
LCT 220: Rugged Massif – Inverness		●						
LCT 221: Rolling Uplands – Inverness		●		L				
LCT 222: Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness				●	L			
LCT 224: Farmed and Wooded Foothills		●	L					
LCT 225: Broad Steep-Sided Glen		●		L				
LCT 226: Wooded Glen – Inverness		●	L					
LCT 227: Farmed Strath – Inverness		●		L				
LCT 229: Enclosed Farmland	●							
LCT 230: Interlocking Sweeping Peaks - Inverness		●						
LCT 235: Broad Forested Strath	●							
LCT 236: Smooth Moorland Ridges				●				
LCT 237: Rocky Moorland - Lochaber	●							
<b>Designated and Protected Landscapes</b>								
<b>National Parks</b>								
The Cairngorms National Park	●							

Landscape Areas	Potential Effect							
	Not Significant					Significant		
	Scoped Out of the Detailed Assessment	Negligible	Negligible - Minor	Minor	Minor - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Major	Major
<b>National Scenic Areas (NSAs)</b>								
Kintail NSA	●							
Glen Affric NSA		●						
Glen Strathfarrar NSA	●							
<b>Wild Land Areas (WLAs)</b>								
WLA 14: Rannoch – Nevis – Mamores – Alder	●							
WLA 18: Kinlochhourn – Konydart - Morar	●							
WLA 19: Braeroy – Glenshirra – Creag Meagaidh		●		L				
WLA 20: Monadhliath	●							
WLA 24: Central Highlands		●		L				
WLA 29: Rhiddoroch – Beinn Dearg – Ben Wyvis	●							
<b>Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDLs)</b>								
Achnacarry GDL	●							
Aldourie Castle GDL	●							
Beaufort Castle GDL	●							
Brahan GDL	●							
Castle Leod GDL	●							
Culloden House GDL	●							
Dochfour GDL	●							
Fairburn GDL	●							
Leys Castle GDL	●							
Rosehaugh GDL	●							
Tomnahurich Cemetery GDL	●							
The Spa Gardens, Strathpeffer GDL	●							
<b>Special Landscape Areas (SLAs)</b>								
Ben Alder, Laggan and Glen Banchor SLA	●							
Ben Wyvis SLA	●							
Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA	●							
Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA		●		L				
Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA	●							
Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA		●	L					

L – denotes that the effect would be localised to only part of the landscape resource.

### ***Residual Effects on Visual Receptors***

8.8.37 The detailed assessment of effects on views from VPs, Settlements and Routes is presented in Appendix 8.6 which includes an analysis of the visual receptor sensitivity and magnitude of change resulting from the Proposed Development. This section provides a summary of effects, in

accordance with the effects criteria outlined in Section 8.5, with an emphasis on potential significant effects.

### Viewpoints

- 8.8.38 Of the representative VPs selected for inclusion within the visual assessment (see Figures 8.5.1 and 8.5.2), the majority have been identified as likely to have no significant effect to the view. Effects are summarised below.

#### Effects likely to be Significant

- 8.8.39 Potential significant effects have been identified for receptors at two of the 26 VPs, both located within approximately 11km of the Proposed Development, on the eastern side of Loch Ness at points on the B862 road:

- VP 5 – Suidhe Viewpoint, B862; and
- VP 7 – B862 south of Foyers.

#### *VP 5 – Suidhe Viewpoint, B862*

- 8.8.40 This VP is an elevated roadside layby, marked as a ‘viewpoint’ on OS maps, with an information board, located off the B862. This B-road is also part of General Wade’s Military Road. This VP is illustrative of views from this elevated stopping point, situated within Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA, but is not representative of views from the length of B862, since views from the road itself vary along different sections, and the majority of the route does not experience as elevated and panoramic views as at this VP.

- 8.8.41 Existing views are open, elevated and panoramic, with main views perceived to be oriented north-east over Loch Ness, towards wide forested glens and the B862 visible winding into the distance. This north-easterly view is also the visual focus on an information board at this viewpoint, that labels key features within the view, including Meall Fuar-mhonaidh, the Great Glen and Loch Ness, Inverness and the Moray Firth, Loch Knockie, Tom na Crioich, Loch Mhor and Beinn Sgurrach. It also draws attention to the old military road / B862 and “*traces of human activity*” that are present including hut circles, townships, sheilings as well as forestry plantations, reservoirs for hydro-electricity and wind turbines. Wind turbines of Corriegarth and Dunmaglass Wind Farms are visible to the north-east, while the Operational Development turbines are visible in side views to the north-west, on the skyline. To the east-north-east, the landform is craggier and rockier in contrast to the expansive broad valley of Stratherrick and the Great Glen. Sensitivity to change is considered to be medium, whereby, from this recreational location, some detracting features are present and the changed aspect may be perceived as a less important element in the overall view.

- 8.8.42 For receptors at this VP, the Proposed Development turbines would be noticeable in side views on the skyline to the north-west, adjacent to the Operational Development, extending the horizontal and vertical field of view occupied by turbines, whereby the larger scale turbines and wind farm extent would be noticeable. The nearest theoretically visible Proposed Development turbine would be around 10.86km away.

- 8.8.43 Therefore, a medium magnitude of change to the view is considered to lead to a **moderate** (significant) visual effect, during both construction and operation.

#### *VP 7 – B862 south of Foyers*

- 8.8.44 This VP is illustrative of views from the section of the B862 road in this vicinity. It is not representative of views from the length of the B862, since views from the road itself vary along different sections. Views from this VP also differ somewhat to views from nearby properties, in terms of the perceived ‘main’ view, elevation and degree of openness or screening from trees.

- 8.8.45 Existing views are open, extending over moorland and farmland and across nearby areas of woodland and hills to the east. Turbine tips of Corriegarth and Dunmaglass Wind Farms are perceptible to the north-east and east and the Operational Development turbines are visible to the north-east on the skyline. For receptors travelling along this section of road, the Operational Development would feature in side views. Sensitivity to change is considered to be low, whereby,

from this road, some detracting features are present and the changed aspect may be perceived as a less important element in the overall view.

- 8.8.46 For receptors at this VP, the Proposed Development turbines would be noticeable in side views on the skyline, seen adjacent to the Operational Development turbines, extending the vertical and horizontal field of view occupied by turbines, whereby the larger scale turbines and wind farm extent would be noticeable. The nearest theoretically visible Proposed Development turbine would be around 9.63 km away.
- 8.8.47 Therefore, a medium-high magnitude of change to the view is considered to lead to a **moderate** (significant) visual effect, during both construction and operation.

Effects likely to be Not Significant

*Minor-Moderate Visual Effects*

- 8.8.48 **Minor-moderate** (not significant) visual effects are anticipated for receptors at three of the 26 VPs during construction and operation. These VPs comprise:

- VP 3 – Meall Fuar-mhonaidh;
- VP 6 – Summit by Suidhe Viewpoint, B862; and
- VP 17 – B862 south of Dores.

- 8.8.49 These comprise elevated VPs located to the north-east and south-west of the Proposed Development, either near to the B862 on the eastern side of Loch Ness (VPs 6 and 17), or the popular hill summit of Meall Fuar-monaidh, west of Loch Ness (VP 3). These VPs are between approximately 5km and 22km from the Proposed Development. From these locations, receptors would see the Proposed Development as a feature within near to mid-range open, elevated, wide and expansive views that extend over Loch Ness and along the Great Glen.

- 8.8.50 From all VPs, wind developments are a notable feature in various parts of the view. From VPs 3 and 17, this includes the Operational Development which is visible on the skyline. From VP 6, the Operational Development is not visible, so the Proposed Development turbines would form a new feature in this part of the panoramic view.

- 8.8.51 For VPs 3 and 17, it is recognised that the Proposed Development would make a noticeable or fairly noticeable addition to the view, but when considered in relation to the Operational Development, which forms a notable feature within these elevated, expansive views, this is not considered to lead to a noticeable deterioration to the quality of the overall view from these VPs or the visual amenity of the visual receptors which they represent. The visual effect is therefore considered to be not significant.

- 8.8.52 The exception is VP 6 which does not have a view of the Operational Development. However, given the presence of several wind developments in other directions; the relatively small part of the overall panoramic view that would be affected by the Proposed Development (the majority of which would be screened by landform); this effect is not considered significant. The experience of a receptor travelling towards this location along the path from the B862 is also taken into account, whereby they would experience the Operational Development from large parts of the path, but upon arriving at this high point, it would be screened. Therefore, although not visible at this VP, it informs the receptors visual experience of this setting.

*Minor Visual Effects*

- 8.8.53 **Minor** (not significant) visual effects are anticipated for receptors at five of the 26 VPs during construction and operation. These VPs comprise:

- VP 1 – Track to Loch Liath;
- VP 2 – Old Bridge, Invermoriston;
- VP 10 – Great Glen way near Carn a’ Bhodaich;
- VP 15 – Poll-gormack Hill; and

- VP 26 – A87 Bun Loyne.
- 8.8.54 These VPs illustrate close-range views approximately 4km from the Proposed Development (VPs 1 and 2) as well as more distant views (VPs 10, 15, 26) between approximately 20-23km away. Views vary for receptors in these locations, who would experience the Proposed Development in different contexts and to different extents.
- 8.8.55 In some views, sensitivity to change would be low (VPs 1, 15 and 26) given the notable presence of the wind turbines and other built features in views, while for others it would be medium (VP 10) or high (VP 2) sensitivity, influenced by the lack of detracting features or their presence in the far distance, as well as the relative importance of different directions of the view to the receptor. In some views, the Proposed Development would be seen as tips on the skyline in main views (VP 2) or as full turbines and tips with the Operational Development turbines (VP 1, 10, 15, 26), increasing the vertical and horizontal extent of turbines from some (VPs 10, 15, 26). Magnitude of change would therefore range between negligible-low (VP 2), to low (VP 1, 10), to low-medium (VP 26) and medium (VP 15).
- 8.8.56 Although sensitivity and magnitude of change differs at these VPs, as described in Appendix 8.6, from receptors at these VPs, the Proposed Development is anticipated to be associated with a small deterioration to the existing view.
 

*Negligible-Minor Visual Effects*
- 8.8.57 **Negligible-minor** (not significant) visual effects are anticipated for receptors at seven of the 26 VPs during construction and operation. These VPs comprise:
  - VP 4 – Achtuie Road near Creag Nay;
  - VP 9 – Carn na Saobhaidhe;
  - VP 11 – Meall Mor, Glen Affric;
  - VP 14 – Meall Dubh;
  - VP 18 – Track near Dun Fhamhair Fort;
  - VP 21 – Toll Creagach; and
  - VP 22 – Sgurr na Ruadhe.
- 8.8.58 As described in Appendix 8.6, these effects would relate to various factors, including the perception of the Proposed Development at distance; screening from landform or other features; its relationship to the turbines of the Operational Development, other wind developments, and other built features within the visual setting; and its place occupying a relatively small proportion of the overall view; and visual sensitivity of the receptor.
 

*Negligible Visual Effects*
- 8.8.59 **Negligible** (not significant) visual effects are anticipated for receptors at nine of the 26 VPs during construction and operation. These VPs comprise
  - VP 8 – Lochside picnic layby on B852;
  - VP 12 – Creag Dhubh;
  - VP 13 – Sgurr nan Conbhairean;
  - VP 16 – Geal Charn;
  - VP 19 – Path north of Lodge Affric;
  - VP 20 – Path north of Affric Lodge;
  - VP 23 – An Cabar (Ben Wyvis);
  - VP 24 – NCN1 Between Dingwall and Evanton; and

- VP 25 – Minor road near Tore.
- 8.8.60 As described in Appendix 8.6, these effects – where the Proposed Development turbines would form a barely discernible feature within the existing view – would occur due to lack of perceptibility when seen at considerable distance; screening from landform or other features; and /or its relationship to the turbines of the Operational Development, other wind developments, and other built features within the visual setting; and visual sensitivity of the receptor.

#### **Residential Locations and Settlements**

- 8.8.61 Fifteen residential locations and settlements within the detailed study area have been included in the detailed assessment (see Figure 8.6.3), being settlements, residential properties or groups of properties where the potential for views of the Proposed Development was identified. As described in Appendix 8.6, visual effects have been identified as being not significant for the majority of receptors in these locations, but locally significant for a few receptors in one grouping. Effects are summarised below.

#### Effects likely to be Significant

- 8.8.62 Potential for localised significant effects have been identified for a small number of receptors in one residential grouping.

*R13 - A range of properties on or in the vicinity of the B862 minor public road in the area near Whitebridge*

- 8.8.63 This grouping includes several properties in the ZTV between Gorthleck to the north, through Whitebridge and down to Knockie Estate, located between approximately 9 to 11km from the Proposed Development, to its south-east, along a section of the B862 road in Stratherrick. VP 7 is located on the B862 south of Foyers, within this grouping of properties. As described in Appendix 8.6, orientations and views are mixed; some are fully or partially enclosed, and some are more open, including the Operational Development on the skyline and wind turbines of other developments in other directions (including Corriegarth, Dunmaglass, and Millennium). As this grouping covers a number of different properties, a range of visual effects have been assessed as a result of the Proposed Development. For the majority of receptors in R13, visual effects would not be significant (ranging between **negligible, minor and minor-moderate**) and are discussed below rather than in this section.

- 8.8.64 For a very small number of properties in R13 (est. 4-6 properties), where receptors have open outlooks to the north-west, a **localised moderate** (significant) visual effect is anticipated. For these receptors, the Proposed Development turbines would be a noticeable addition to main, oblique or side, valued views on the skyline. In these views, the Operational Development turbines are either fully screened or are barely perceptible due to screening from landform or forestry. From some locations, turbines of Corriegarth Wind Farm are noticeable in rear views, but from a few others, no other wind development is perceptible. The receptors with potential to experience these localised significant effects are located in a handful of properties on or near the B867 road, just south of VP 7 and in open settings to the north and north-east of Tom a’Mhullaich, where visual sensitivity for these few receptors is considered medium-high and a medium magnitude of change is expected.

#### Effects likely to be Not Significant

##### *Minor-Moderate Visual Effects*

- 8.8.65 **Minor-moderate** (not significant) visual effects are anticipated for receptors in two groupings (R7, R12) and part of one grouping (R13), while **locally minor-moderate** (not significant) visual effects are anticipated for a few receptors in one grouping (R14), during construction and operation. These groupings are all located to the east of Loch Ness: in elevated locations south of Dores to the north-east of the Proposed Development (R7); and to the south-east of the Proposed Development, in and around Stratherrick, along and near the B862 road (R12, R13, part of R14). For these receptors, the Proposed Development would be noticeable in main, oblique, or side views, in front and adjacent to the Operational Development turbines, visibly larger in scale and extending turbines along the skyline.

### *Minor Visual Effects*

- 8.8.66 **Minor** (not significant) visual effects are anticipated for receptors in one grouping (R9) and part of one grouping (R13), while **locally minor** (not significant) visual effects are anticipated for a few receptors in one grouping (R5), all during construction and operation. These receptors are situated near VP 10 to the north-east of the Proposed Development, approximately 19km away at its closest (R5); and in Stratherrick to the east and south-east of the Proposed Development near the southern end of Loch Mhor (R9) and near the B862 between Gorthleck and Knockie Estate (R13). Whilst views and orientations differ amongst these receptors, it is anticipated that the Proposed Development would be perceptible in open side, main and oblique views on the skyline, partially screened, but seen with the Operational Development. For receptors in R5, views from many properties would be screened by vegetation, so this effect relates to those with open views to the south-west.

### *Negligible-Minor Visual Effects*

- 8.8.67 **Negligible-minor** (not significant) visual effects are anticipated for receptors in three groupings (R4, R8, R11), while **locally negligible-minor** (not significant) visual effects are anticipated for a few receptors in one grouping (R6), all during construction and operation. These receptors are located north-east of the Proposed Development on elevated slopes north of Drumnadrochit, near VP 4 (R4) and within and south of Dores (R6); and east of the Proposed Development at the north of Loch Mhor in Stratherrick (R8) and near Loch Ruthven (R11). Whilst views and orientations differ amongst these receptors, it is anticipated that the Proposed Development would be somewhat perceptible as tips in elevated, main views on the skyline, largely screened or barely perceptible in relatively distant views. For receptors in R6 (Dores and nearby properties), the majority of views would be screened, so this effect is localised to receptors with open views onto the loch and glen slopes.

### *Negligible Visual Effects*

- 8.8.68 **Negligible** (not significant) visual effects are anticipated for receptors in all other groupings (R1, R2, R3, R10, R15) and parts of groupings (R5, R6, R10, R13, R14), during construction and operation. For these receptors, the Proposed Development turbines would be likely to be barely perceptible within the existing view.

### **Routes**

- 8.8.69 Eighteen routes / route groupings within the wider study area have been included in the detailed assessment (see Figures 8.6.2 and 8.6.3), comprising roads and recreational routes such as core paths, long distance routes and Scottish Hill Tracks. Effects are summarised below.

#### Effects likely to be Significant

- 8.8.70 The visual assessment did not identify any significant visual effects upon receptors on routes.

#### Effects likely to be Not Significant

### *Minor-Moderate Visual Effects*

- 8.8.71 **Locally minor-moderate** (not significant) visual effects are anticipated for receptors on parts of two routes (Core Path IN12.04 and the Great Glen Way), during construction and operation.
- 8.8.72 Core Path IN12.04: Kindrummond to Dirr Wood is an elevated route situated to the east of VP 17 on the eastern slopes of the Great Glen which runs between the B862 and through Dirr Woods. Open, elevated views near the B862 on this route are anticipated to be broadly similar to those from VP 17, where these localised visual effects are anticipated. Here, the Proposed Development would be noticeable on the skyline in front of the Operational Development, seen looking across Loch Ness. For other parts of this route, trees of Dirr Woods are likely to screen views, and effects would not be significant.
- 8.8.73 The Great Glen Way is a long distance route between Fort William and Inverness with some sections branching into high and low level options. Views along the route vary but from some short, elevated sections, higher visual effects would be anticipated, although not considered to be significant. From part of the high level route to the north of Invermoriston (between Invermoriston and the watercourse Allt Saigh, including near the 'Viewcatcher' sculpture), the Proposed Development



would be noticeable in side and oblique views, on the skyline, in close proximity, in front of and next to the Operational Development. Several hubs would be visible and appear larger than the Operational Development turbines and would extend the horizontal field of view occupied by turbines. The Proposed Development would also be visible from a stretch of the Great Glen Way and C1060 minor road near VP 10, but in considerably more distant views, seen on the skyline with the Operational Development. Visual effects here would be less than the section north of Invermoriston, but neither would be considered to be significant given the presence of the Operational Development turbines in the same part of the overall view, where there would not be an overall noticeable deterioration to the quality of the view. The visual experience of receptors travelling along the Great Glen Way would not be significantly affected given the relatively short sections of route affected and the overall experience of other parts of the visual context, which do occasionally feature wind developments at varying distances. From the majority of the route, the Proposed Development would be screened by landform and / or trees or would be barely perceptible.

*Minor Visual Effects*

- 8.8.74 **Minor** (not significant) visual effects are anticipated for receptors on two routes (B862 and Core Path IN25.02) and **locally minor** (not significant) visual effects for receptors on short sections of three routes (A87, Core Path IN13.02 and IN22.03) during both construction and operation. These roads and recreational routes are situated to the east of Loch Ness (B862, Core Path IN25.02), in Glen Moriston (A87) and near Drumnadrochit (Core Paths IN13.02 and IN22.03).
- 8.8.75 For receptors on the B862, although views vary along the road, the visual effect has been averaged along the route given the frequency of the effect and an anticipation of receptors perceptions of the road as a whole. There are sections where receptors would have no view of the Proposed Development, but where visible, it would be perceived to lead to a small deterioration to the existing view. In some sections, it would be prominent in side or oblique views alongside the Operational Development, and in others it would be perceptible where other wind development is less notable. VPs 5, 7 and 17 illustrate a selection of views along this road where the Proposed Development would be at its most notable and where visual effects would be higher than on other sections of the route. The route assessment also considers the experience of a receptor travelling along the route, rather than stationary when at a viewpoint or roadside layby.
- 8.8.76 For receptors on the Core Path IN25.02 and short sections of the A87, Core Paths IN13.02 and IN22.03, the Proposed Development would be perceptible with the Operational Development, but larger in scale and in most views, slightly extending the horizontal extent occupied by turbines. Other wind developments would also be visible in different parts of these views, to varying degrees.
- 8.8.77 During construction only, a **locally minor** (not significant) visual effect would also be experienced by receptors on a short section of the A887. This would relate to construction activity and traffic around the site entrance to the Proposed (and Operational) Development, seen from a short length of this route, and in the short-term.

*Negligible-Minor Visual Effects*

- 8.8.78 **Locally negligible-minor** (not significant) visual effects are anticipated for receptors on parts of four routes (Core Paths IN12.05 and IN12.06; SHTs 236a and 268) during construction and operation. These routes are situated to the north-east of Dores (Core Paths IN12.05 and 12.06), to the south of Fort Augustus on the Corrievarick Pass (SHT 236a) and north of Glen Affric (SHT IN12.06). Receptors on these routes would see the Proposed Development in distant views, with the Operational Development and several other wind developments. Whilst the Proposed Development turbines would be visible, their addition to the view would be considered perceptible but would not result in any discernible deterioration to the view.

*Negligible Visual Effects*

- 8.8.79 **Negligible** (not significant) visual effects are anticipated for receptors on all other routes (A82, A833, Core Paths IN05.11, IN16.16/ SHT 260a and 260b, IN17.01, SHTs 231 and 235) and the majority of other routes (A887, A87, Core Paths IN12.04, IN12.05, IN12.06, IN13.02, IN22.03, SHTs 236a and 268 and the Great Glen Way) during both construction and operation. For these receptors on these

routes/parts of these routes, the Proposed Development turbines would be likely to be barely perceptible within the existing view.

**Summary of Visual Effects**

8.8.80 A summary of the effects on visual receptors is outlined in Table 8.18.

**Table 8.18 – Summary of Residual Effects on Visual Receptors**

Visual Receptor Location	Potential Effect						All effect ratings are the same during construction as they are during operation, apart from for receptors in one location, noted in this column.
	Not Significant			Significant			
	Negligible	Negligible - Minor	Minor	Minor - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Major	
<b>Viewpoints</b>							
VP 1			•				
VP 2			•				
VP 3				•			
VP 4		•					
VP 5					•		
VP 6				•			
VP 7					•		
VP 8	•						
VP 9		•					
VP 10			•				
VP 11		•					
VP 12	•						
VP 13	•						
VP 14		•					
VP 15			•				
VP 16	•						
VP 17				•			
VP 18		•					
VP 19	•						
VP 20	•						
VP 21		•					
VP 22		•					
VP 23	•						
VP 24	•						
VP 25	•						
VP 26			•				
<b>Residential Locations and Settlements</b>							
R1	•						
R2	•						
R3	•						
R4		•					

Visual Receptor Location	Potential Effect						
	Not Significant				Significant		
	Negligible	Negligible - Minor	Minor	Minor - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Major	Major
R5	•		L				
R6	•	L					
R7				•			
R8		•					
R9			•				
R10	•						
R11		•					
R12				•			
R13	•		•	•	L		
R14	•			L			
R15	•						
Receptors in other residential locations that have been scoped out of the detailed assessment	•						
Routes							
A82	•						
A833	•						
A887	•		L *				* during construction only
A87	•		L				
B862			•				
Core Path IN05.11	•						
Core Path IN12.04	•			L			
Core Path IN12.05	•	L					
Core Path IN12.06	•	L					
Core Path IN13.02	•		L				
Core Path IN16.16/ SHT 260a and SHT 260b	•						
Core Path IN17.01	•						
Core Path IN22.03	•		L				
Core Path IN25.02			•				
SHTs 231 and 235	•						
SHT 236a	•	L					
SHT 268	•	L					
Great Glen Way	•			L			
Receptors on other routes that have been	•						

All effect ratings are the same during construction as they are during operation, apart from for receptors in one location, noted in this column.

Visual Receptor Location	Potential Effect						All effect ratings are the same during construction as they are during operation, apart from for receptors in one location, noted in this column.
	Not Significant			Significant			
	Negligible	Negligible - Minor	Minor	Minor - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Major	
scoped out of the detailed assessment							

L – denotes that the effect would be localised to only part of the visual receptor grouping/route.

## 8.9 Cumulative Assessment

8.9.1 The cumulative landscape and visual assessment (CLVIA) considers the predicted cumulative effects resulting from the addition of the Proposed Development to two cumulative baseline scenarios, defined in Section 8.6. Wind developments relevant to both scenarios are illustrated on Figure 8.7.2 and detailed assessments are included in Appendices 8.7 and 8.8. Where an explicit reference is not made to Scenario 1 or 2, it can be assumed that the statement relates to both scenarios.

8.9.2 Cumulative ZTVs showing the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development and those of the cumulative developments included within the assessment have been produced to identify areas of combined and sequential visibility (see Figures 8.8.1 to 8.8.24).

### **Cumulative Landscape Effects Evaluation**

8.9.3 The detailed cumulative assessment of LCTs and designated and protected landscapes is presented in Appendix 8.7. The following section provides a summary of the results and key issues highlighted by the assessment.

#### **Landscape Character Types (LCTs)**

##### Cumulative Effects likely to be Significant

8.9.4 The addition of the Proposed Development to the cumulative baseline scenarios is not anticipated to lead to any significant cumulative effects for LCTs.

##### Cumulative Effects likely to be Not Significant

8.9.5 All cumulative landscape effects on LCTs are anticipated to be not significant. This is largely due to the position of the Proposed Development adjacent to the Operational Development as well as the clustering of several cumulative baseline scenario developments, as described in paragraphs 8.6.54. This includes, as illustrated on Figure 8.7.2, the groupings of:

- Millennium (operational), Millennium South (consented), Beinneun and Beinneun Extension (both operational) Wind Farms;
- Stronelaig (operational), Dell (consented), Glenshero (application) and Cloiche (application) Wind Farms;
- Corriegarth (operational) and Corriegarth 2 (application) Wind Farms;
- Dunmaglass (operational) and Aberarder (consented) Wind Farms;
- Glen Kyllachy and Farr (both operational) Wind Farms; and

- Lochluichart, Lochluichart Extension and Corriemoillie (all operational), Lochluichart Extension II (consented) and Kirkan (application) Wind Farms.
- 8.9.6 Whilst experienced in a different context from various LCTs, these developments would often be perceived as cohesive clusters, with the Proposed Development and the Operational Development together forming a further cohesive grouping. The pattern of wind development within the cumulative baseline scenarios would be experienced from several areas in the wider study area (see Figures 8.8.1 and 8.8.3) and the addition of the Proposed Development alongside the Operational Development would often lead to only a perceptible or barely perceptible increased influence of wind development leading to a negligible or low magnitude of change on landscape characteristics for most LCTs.

*Minor Cumulative Landscape Effects*

- 8.9.7 **Minor** (not significant) cumulative landscape effects have been identified for two LCTs (LCT 222: Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness and LCT 236: Smooth Moorland Ridges), while **locally minor** (not significant) cumulative landscape effects have been identified for parts of three LCTs (LCT 221: Rolling Uplands Inverness, LCT 225: Broad Steep-Sided Glen, and LCT 227: Farmed Strath – Inverness), all for both cumulative baseline scenarios. For these areas, the addition of the Proposed Development to the cumulative baseline scenarios would add to the appearance of wind turbines in the landscape but would not result in a noticeable change to key landscape characteristics.

*Negligible Cumulative Landscape Effects*

- 8.9.8 **Negligible** (not significant) cumulative landscape effects have been identified for the majority of three LCTs (LCT 221: Rolling Uplands – Inverness, LCT 225: Broad Steep-Sided Glen, and LCT 227: Farmed Strath – Inverness), all for both cumulative baseline scenarios. For the majority of these LCTs, the addition of the Proposed Development to the cumulative baseline scenarios would not result in any discernible increase in the appearance or dominance of wind turbines in the landscape.

**Designated and Protected Landscapes**

Cumulative Effects likely to be Significant

- 8.9.9 The addition of the Proposed Development to the cumulative baseline scenarios is not anticipated to lead to any significant cumulative effects for designated and protected landscapes.

Cumulative Effects likely to be Not Significant

*Wild Land Areas (WLAs)*

- 8.9.10 For both cumulative baseline scenarios, cumulative landscape effects on WLA 19: Braeroey – Glenshirra – Creag Meagaidh are predicted to be **locally minor** (not significant) for summits and facing slopes of mountains within 22km of the Proposed Development and **negligible** for the WLA as a whole. The Proposed Development may lead to some limited but perceptible changes (a locally low magnitude) to the “*Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts*” Key Quality, but there would be a negligible magnitude of change for all other Key Qualities. The integrity of the WLA would not be affected.

- 8.9.11 For both cumulative baseline scenarios, cumulative landscape effects on WLA 24: Central Highlands are predicted to be **locally minor** (not significant) for areas north of Glen Cannich and **negligible** elsewhere. The Proposed Development may lead to some limited but perceptible changes (locally low magnitude) to the “*Arresting or Inspiring Qualities*”, “*Little Evidence of Contemporary Land Use*” and “*Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts*” Key Qualities. There would be a negligible magnitude of change for all other Key Qualities. The integrity of the WLA would not be affected.

*Special Landscape Areas (SLAs)*

- 8.9.12 For both cumulative baseline scenarios, cumulative landscape effects on the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA are predicted to be **locally minor** (not significant) for open elevated areas of the SLA and **negligible** elsewhere. The Proposed Development may lead to some limited but perceptible changes to aspects of “*The Dramatic Great Glen*” Special Quality, but there would be no effects on the other Special Qualities. The integrity of the SLA would not be affected.

### Summary of Cumulative Landscape Effects

8.9.13 Table 8.19 provides a summary of predicted cumulative landscape effects on those LCTs and designated and protected landscapes included in the CLVIA.

**Table 8.19 – Summary of Cumulative Landscape Effects**

Landscape Areas included in the CLVIA	Potential Cumulative Landscape Effect (for Scenarios 1 and 2)						
	Not Significant				Significant		
	Negligible	Negligible - Minor	Minor	Minor - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Major	Major
<b>Landscape Character Types (LCTs)</b>							
LCT 221: Rolling Uplands – Inverness	●		L				
LCT 222: Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness			●				
LCT 225: Broad Steep-Sided Glen	●		L				
LCT 227: Farmed Strath – Inverness	●		L				
LCT 236: Smooth Moorland Ridges			●				
<b>Designated and Protected Landscapes</b>							
WLA 19: Braeroy – Glenshirra – Creag Meagaidh	●		L				
WLA 24: Central Highlands	●		L				
Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA	●		L				

### Cumulative Visual Effects Evaluation

8.9.14 The detailed cumulative assessment of visual receptors is presented in Appendix 8.8. The following section provides a summary of the results and key issues highlighted by the assessment, focussing on potential significant effects.

#### Viewpoints

8.9.15 Of the representative VPs selected for inclusion within the CLVIA, the majority have been identified as likely to have no significant effect to the view. Effects are summarised below.

#### Cumulative Effects likely to be Significant

8.9.16 When considered in relation to both cumulative baseline scenarios, the addition of the Proposed Development is anticipated to result in a significant cumulative visual effect for receptors at one VP, described below.

#### *VP 7 – B862 south of Foyers*

8.9.17 Considering cumulative baseline scenario 2, the main difference from this VP between the LVIA and CLVIA would be the addition of Corriegarth 2 Wind Farm (application) to views. In this context, the Proposed Development turbines would be noticeable in side views on skyline, seen adjacent to the Operational Development turbines, extending the vertical and horizontal field of view occupied by turbines. In a separate part of the view, turbines of Corriegarth and Dunmaglass Wind Farms (operational) would be visible to the east, with the prominent Corriegarth 2 Wind Farm (application) turbines. The Proposed Development turbines would appear of a relative, if not smaller, scale than Corriegarth 2 Wind Farm (application) turbines, but would be introduced to a side view from the

road. The introduction of the Proposed Development would result in a noticeable increase in wind turbines, where they would become prominent but would not dominate the overall view.

- 8.9.18 This is considered to lead to a medium-high magnitude of change and a **moderate** (significant) cumulative visual effect for both cumulative baseline scenarios 1 and 2, considering the presence of operational, consented and application sites.

Cumulative Effects likely to be Not Significant

*Minor-Moderate Cumulative Visual Effects*

- 8.9.19 **Minor-moderate** (not significant) cumulative visual effects have been identified for receptors at four VPs for both cumulative baseline scenarios:

- VP 3 – Meall Fuar-mhonaidh
- VP 5 – Suidhe Viewpoint, B862
- VP 6 – Summit by Suidhe Viewpoint, B862
- VP 17 – B862 south of Dores

- 8.9.20 Within the context of the baseline cumulative scenarios, receptors at these elevated VPs, located on / near the B862 (VPs 5, 6, 17) and on the hill summit of Meall Fuar-mhonaidh (VP 3) would experience the Proposed Development as a noticeable feature in views. In this setting, the addition of the Proposed Development would lead to a perceptible increase in the prominence of wind turbines as a feature in the view, but not to the degree that it would be considered a significant effect, given the relative balance of other wind developments in the visual context.

*Minor Cumulative Visual Effects*

- 8.9.21 **Minor** (not significant) cumulative visual effects have been identified for receptors at four VPs for both cumulative baseline scenarios:

- VP 1 – Track to Loch Liath
- VP 10 – Great Glen Way near Carn a’ Bhodaich
- VP 15 – Poll-gormack Hill
- VP 26 – A87 Bun Loyne

- 8.9.22 For receptors at these VPs, the addition of the Proposed Development to the cumulative baseline scenarios would result in a perceptible increase in wind turbines but would not increase the prominence of wind turbines as a feature in the view.

*Negligible Cumulative Visual Effects*

- 8.9.23 **Negligible** (not significant) cumulative visual effects have been identified for receptors at one VP: VP 2 – Old Bridge, Invermoriston for both cumulative baseline scenarios. Here, the addition of the Proposed Development to the cumulative baseline scenarios would not result in any discernible increase in the appearance of wind turbines in the view.

**Residential Locations and Settlements**

- 8.9.24 For the residential locations and settlements selected for inclusion within the CLVIA, cumulative visual effects for both cumulative baseline scenarios have been identified as being not significant for the majority of receptors in these locations, but locally significant for a few receptors in one grouping. Effects are summarised below.

Cumulative Effects likely to be Significant

- 8.9.25 When considered in relation to both cumulative baseline scenarios, the addition of the Proposed Development is anticipated to result in a localised significant cumulative visual effect for a small number of receptors in one residential grouping, described below.

*R13 - A range of properties on or in the vicinity of the B862 minor public road in the area near Whitebridge*

8.9.26 For receptors in a very small number of properties in R13 (est. 4-6 properties), where receptors have open outlooks to the north-west, a **localised moderate** (significant) cumulative visual effect is anticipated for both cumulative baseline scenarios 1 and 2, considering the presence of operational, consented and application sites. For these receptors, the Proposed Development would be noticeable in main, oblique or side, valued views on the skyline, where hubs and blades would be seen and where the Operational Development is largely imperceptible or fully screened due to landform and / or trees. From some locations (more northern properties near VP 7), other wind developments in the cumulative baseline scenarios would be visible, such as Corriegarth (operational) and Corriegarth 2 (application) which would be noticeable in rear views. From other properties, experiencing a localised significant effect, no other wind development would be perceptible and the Proposed Development would introduce wind turbines into the view.

8.9.27 For the majority of receptors in R13, cumulative visual effects would not be significant and are discussed below, where relevant.

#### Cumulative Effects likely to be Not Significant

##### *Minor-Moderate Cumulative Visual Effects*

8.9.28 **Minor-moderate** (not significant) cumulative visual effects are anticipated for receptors in two groupings (R7, R12) and part of one grouping (R13), while **locally minor-moderate** (not significant) cumulative visual effects are anticipated for a few receptors in one grouping (R14), all for both cumulative baseline scenarios. For these receptors, the addition of the Proposed Development to these scenarios would lead to a perceptible increase in the prominence of wind turbines as a feature in the view, but not to the degree that it would be considered a significant effect, particularly given the relative balance of other wind developments in the visual context from R12, R13 and R14.

##### *Minor Cumulative Visual Effects*

8.9.29 **Minor** (not significant) cumulative visual effects are anticipated for receptors in one grouping (R9) and part of one grouping (R13), while **locally minor** (not significant) cumulative visual effects are anticipated for a few receptors in one grouping (R5), all for both cumulative baseline scenarios. For these receptors, the addition of the Proposed Development to these scenarios would lead to a perceptible increase in wind turbines but would not increase the prominence of wind turbines as a feature in the view.

##### *Negligible Cumulative Visual Effects*

8.9.30 **Negligible** (not significant) cumulative visual effects are anticipated for receptors in parts of three groupings (R5, R13, R14), for both cumulative baseline scenarios. For these receptors, the Proposed Development would not result in any discernible increase in the appearance of wind turbines in the view.

#### **Routes**

8.9.31 The cumulative assessment of views from routes has considered the potential for increased prominence of wind turbines in combined views and sequentially when travelling along the route. Effects are summarised below.

#### Cumulative Effects likely to be Significant

8.9.32 The addition of the Proposed Development to the cumulative baseline scenarios is not anticipated to lead to any significant cumulative effects for receptors on routes.

#### Cumulative Effects likely to be Not Significant

##### *Minor-Moderate Cumulative Visual Effects*

8.9.33 **Minor-moderate** (not significant) cumulative visual effects are anticipated for receptors on two routes (B862 and Core Path IN25.02), while **locally minor-moderate** (not significant) cumulative



visual effects are anticipated for receptors on short sections of two routes (Core Path IN12.04 and the Great Glen Way) for both cumulative baseline scenarios. For these receptors, the addition of the Proposed Development to these scenarios would lead to a perceptible increase in the prominence of wind turbines as a feature in the view along part of these routes, but not to the degree that it would be considered a significant effect, particularly given the relative balance of other wind developments in the visual context.

*Minor Cumulative Visual Effects*

8.9.34 **Locally minor** (not significant) cumulative visual effects are anticipated for receptors on short sections of three routes (A87, Core Path IN13.02 and IN22.03) for both cumulative baseline scenarios. For receptors on sections of these routes, the addition of the Proposed Development to these scenarios would lead to a perceptible increase in wind turbines but would not increase the prominence of wind turbines as a feature in the view.

*Negligible Cumulative Visual Effects*

8.9.35 **Negligible** (not significant) cumulative visual effects are anticipated for receptors on the majority of five routes (A87, Core Paths IN12.04, IN13.02, IN22.03 and the Great Glen Way), for both cumulative baseline scenarios. For receptors on parts of these routes, the Proposed Development would not result in any discernible increase in the appearance of wind turbines in the view.

**Summary of Cumulative Visual Effects**

8.9.36 Table 8.20 provides a summary of predicted cumulative visual effects on those visual receptors included in the CLVIA.

**Table 8.20 – Summary of Cumulative Visual Effects**

Visual Receptor Location included in the CLVIA	Potential Cumulative Visual Effect (for Scenarios 1 and 2)						
	Not Significant				Significant		
	Negligible	Negligible - Minor	Minor	Minor - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Major	Major
<b>Viewpoints</b>							
VP 1			•				
VP 2	•						
VP 3				•			
VP 5				•			
VP 6				•			
VP 7					•		
VP 10			•				
VP 15			•				
VP 17				•			
VP 26			•				
<b>Residential Locations and Settlements</b>							
R5	•		L				
R7				•			
R9			•				

Visual Receptor Location included in the CLVIA	Potential Cumulative Visual Effect (for Scenarios 1 and 2)						
	Not Significant				Significant		
	Negligible	Negligible - Minor	Minor	Minor - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Major	Major
R12				•			
R13	•		•	•	L		
R14	•			L			
<b>Routes</b>							
A87	•		L				
B862				•			
Core Path IN12.04	•			L			
Core Path IN13.02	•		L				
Core Path IN22.03	•		L				
Core Path IN25.02				•			
Great Glen Way	•			L			

## 8.10 Review of the Proposed Development in Relation to the THC OWESG Criteria

8.10.1 A review of the Proposed Development in relation to the criteria for onshore wind farm developments from the THC OWESG is detailed in Appendix 8.9. The key points are summarised in Table 8.21 below.

**Table 8.21 – Summary of Analysis of THC Criteria for the Consideration of Onshore Wind Farm Proposals**

Criteria	Summary of Analysis
<p><b>Criterion 1. “Relationship between Settlements / Key locations and wider landscape respected.”</b></p> <p>(Threshold: “Turbines are not visually prominent in the majority of views within or from settlements / key locations or from the majority of its access routes.”)</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would not be visible from the majority of the main settlements within the study area.</p> <p>Where visible from residential areas, very few significant visual effects are anticipated, limited to localised significant visual effects for receptors in a small number of scattered properties to the east of Loch Ness (within grouping R13).</p> <p>From most ‘key’ locations highlighted in the OWESG (Key Views, Key Routes and Gateways), there would be no effect or very minimal visual effects. For receptors at a few ‘key’ OWESG locations, visual effects are anticipated, but these would not be significant and many would be localised and minimal. These would include from the Great Glen from Meall Fuar-mhonaidh; the B862 Stratherrick (for the route as a whole), the A887 T Glen Moriston,</p>

Criteria	Summary of Analysis
	<p>the C1060 (Dunain-Blackfold-Abriachan) minor road, the C1072 (Abriachan-Foxhole) road, the Great Glen Way and the A87 above Loch Loyne.</p> <p>Given this analysis, and findings of the LVIA, it is therefore concluded that the threshold for this criterion would not be exceeded by the Proposed Development.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 2. “Key Gateway locations and routes are respected.”</b></p> <p>(Threshold: “Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise detract from landscape characteristics which contribute the distinctive transitional experience found at key gateway locations and routes.”)</p>	<p>Receptors at the majority of OWESG Key Gateway locations and routes would not be affected by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>There would be some degree of visual effects on receptors on a small number of Key Routes, but these would not be significant. These include the B862 Stratherrick (as a whole), the A887 T Glen Moriston, the C1060 (Dunain – lackfold – Abriachan) minor road, the C1072 (Abriachan – Foxhole) minor road and the Great Glen Way. Significant visual effects would be anticipated for receptors at points on the B862 Stratherrick (at VP 5 and 7), but these would be specific to these localised points and effects on the overall visual experience of the route would not be significant.</p> <p>Some degree of visual effect is anticipated for receptors at one of the Key Gateways (A87 – above Loch Loyne), where effects would not be significant.</p> <p>Given this analysis, and findings of the LVIA, it is therefore concluded that the threshold for this criterion would not be exceeded by the Proposed Development.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 3. “Valued natural and cultural landmarks are respected”</b></p> <p>(Threshold: “The development does not, by its presence, diminish the prominence of the landmark or disrupt its relationship to its setting.”)</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would not diminish the prominence or disrupt the setting to any natural or cultural heritage landmarks. Key natural and cultural landmarks within the Great Glen (such as Urquhart Castle viewed from Loch Ness or land based viewpoints; Meall Fuar-mhonaidh viewed from the Great Glen; and the Great Glen viewed from Meall Fuar-mhonaidh) would not be affected. There would be no significant effects to the setting of any cultural heritage sites (see Chapter 7).</p> <p>Given this analysis, and findings of the LVIA, it is therefore concluded that the threshold for this criterion would not be exceeded by the Proposed Development.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 4. “The amenity of key recreational routes and ways is respected.”</b></p> <p>(Threshold: “Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would not lead to any significant effects on receptors on any of the recreational OWESG Key Routes.</p> <p>Visual effects are anticipated for receptors on the Great Glen Way (which also overlaps the C1060 Dunain – Blackfold – Abriachan minor road) but these would not be significant. Effects would be localised (in particular to the section north-east of Invermoriston and open parts of the C1060 road near VP 1) and the Proposed Development would be seen with the Operational Development.</p>

Criteria	Summary of Analysis
<i>the visual appeal of key routes and ways.”)</i>	Given this analysis, and findings of the LVIA, it is therefore concluded that the threshold for this criterion would not be exceeded by the Proposed Development.
<p><b>Criterion 5. “The amenity of transport routes is respected.”</b></p> <p>(Threshold: “<i>Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of transport routes.”)</i>)</p>	<p>Receptors on the majority of OWESG Key Routes would not be affected by the Proposed Development. There would be some degree of visual effect on a small number of the Key Routes, such as the B862 Stratherrick (for the route as a whole), the A887 T Glen Moriston, the C1060 (Dunain – Blackfold – Abriachan) minor road and the C1072 (Abriachan – Foxhole) minor road A87 but these effects would not be significant and effects would be localised.</p> <p>Given this analysis, and findings of the LVIA, it is therefore concluded that the threshold for this criterion would not be exceeded by the Proposed Development.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 6. “The existing pattern of Wind Energy Development is respected.”</b></p> <p>(Threshold: “<i>The proposal contributes positively to existing pattern or objectives for development in the area.”)</i>)</p>	<p>This criterion cites the following considerations to be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Turbine height and proportions,</i></li> <li>▪ <i>density and spacing of turbines within developments,</i></li> <li>▪ <i>density and spacing of developments,</i></li> <li>▪ <i>typical relationship of development to the landscape.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>previously instituted mitigation measures</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Planning Authority stated aims for development of area”</i></li> </ul> <p>Given its location adjacent to the Operational Development, set back into the interior of the upland plateau area, the Proposed Development would maintain the existing distribution of wind farm groupings within the landscape and reflect the pattern of existing wind development clusters, particularly when viewed from the Great Glen where the existing influence of wind farms to the west of Loch Ness comprises turbines of the Operational Development seen on the skyline.</p> <p>The spacing of the turbines within the Proposed Development would be largely similar to those of the Operational Development, and other wind developments and has been designed to achieve a balanced and compact layout, which minimises overlapping/stacking from key views, such as VPs 3 and 5.</p> <p>From several locations, the scale of the Proposed Development turbines would be perceived to be similar to those of the Operational Development (such as those illustrated from VPs 1, 11, 14, 21) and other wind development in the landscape context. From some locations, the scale difference would be perceptible, to varying degrees, and often in a context where other wind</p>

Criteria	Summary of Analysis
	<p>developments of varying scales would be experienced within the landscape and visual context.</p> <p>Therefore, whilst from some locations, a scale difference between the existing and proposed turbines may be perceptible, on balance the scheme fits within the existing development pattern and is perceived to be a cohesive design from the majority of locations.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that the threshold for this criterion would not be exceeded, as it is considered that the Proposed Development forms a well-located wind farm site which enables the generation of renewable energy with the minimum of significant landscape and visual effects. The Proposed Development respects the pattern of existing development with the Rolling Moorland Plateau – Inverness LCT (OWESG LCA LN10) and the objectives laid out for this area, as well as previously instituted mitigation measures for the Operational Development.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 7. “The need for separation between developments and / or clusters is respected.”</b></p> <p>(Threshold: “The proposal maintains appropriate and effective separation between developments and / or clusters”)</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would be located adjacent to the Operational Development and would appear as a cohesive grouping with these existing turbines. Both would be set back within the interior of an upland plateau of rocky moorland and would maintain a strong landscape buffer between the nearest existing wind development of Corrimony, to the north. The existing pattern of development clusters and open spaces would therefore be maintained, particularly when seen from the Great Glen area, as well as other parts of the landscape.</p> <p>Given this analysis, and findings of the LVIA, it is therefore concluded that the threshold for this criterion would not be exceeded by the Proposed Development.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 8. “The perception of landscape scale and distance is respected.”</b></p> <p>(Threshold: “The proposal maintains the apparent landscape scale and / or distance in the receptors’ perception”)</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would be formed of slightly larger turbines than those of the Operational Development, to which it would be adjacent. This difference in scale may be perceived from a relatively small number of VPs and landscape areas close to the Proposed Development, and from some VPs the larger turbines may appear to bring turbines slightly closer to the viewer. This may slightly reduce a perceived scale of the landscape in some locations which would contribute to landscape and visual effects. However, it would not affect the overriding perception of expansive scale within the landscape and would be only a small contributory factor to any of the limited non-significant effects which are experienced. This effect would not be experienced from any of the Key Views, Key Routes as a whole or Gateways. Localised significant visual effects would be anticipated for points on the B862, however.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that the threshold for this criterion would not be exceeded by the Proposed Development because the</p>

Criteria	Summary of Analysis
	apparent landscape scale and distance perceived by receptors is likely to be maintained.
<p><b>Criterion 9. “Landscape setting of nearby wind energy developments is respected.”</b></p> <p>(Threshold: “Proposal relates well to the existing landscape setting and does not increase the perceived visual prominence of surrounding wind turbines.”)</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would be located adjacent to the Operational Development and within the interior of the upland plateau area which limits the extent of visibility. It is considered that this would not adversely affect the setting of the Operational Development as it would form a cohesive group with this existing wind farms when seen from almost all locations and would generally not lead to any significant increase in landscape and visual effect, other than from a few positions.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would not encroach on any other existing wind energy developments and would therefore not be detrimental to the setting of these.</p> <p>Overall, it is considered that the threshold for this criterion would not be exceeded because the design and layout of the Proposed Development respects the original design objectives of the Operational Development and does not adversely affect the setting of any other site.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 10. “Distinctiveness of Landscape character is respected.”</b></p> <p>(Threshold: “Integrity and variety of Landscape Character Areas are maintained.”)</p>	<p>The Proposed Development is anticipated to lead to some localised effects on landscape character, none of which would be significant.</p> <p>These localised effects would occur within adjacent, nearby or similar upland LCTs where existing wind energy development is already a characteristic of parts of the landscape and the wider effect on these LCTs is therefore considered to be not significant. Surrounding LCTs would also not be significantly affected and the complexity and variety of landscape character experienced within the study area would therefore be retained.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that the threshold for this criterion would not be exceeded by the Proposed Development.</p>

## 8.11 Summary

### **Key Steps**

- 8.11.1 This LVIA has been undertaken in line with GLVIA3 (LI and IEMA, 2013) methodology for landscape and visual assessment. This involves an appreciation of the existing receptors, their sensitivity to the change proposed, and an understanding of the potential effects which could occur and how these could affect receptors. The LVIA has been undertaken and verified by Chartered Landscape Professionals to provide a robust and consistent approach.
- 8.11.2 There are five key stages to the assessment:
- establishment of the baseline;
  - appreciation of the Proposed Development;
  - identification of key landscape and visual receptors;

- identification of potential landscape and visual effects; and
- assessment of the significance of the landscape and visual residual effects.

8.11.3 Detailed methodology for the assessment is included in section 8.5.

### ***Key Baseline Conditions***

- 8.11.4 The Proposed Development is located on an area of high rocky plateau to the north-west of Loch Ness and the Great Glen. This open, undulating moorland features several rocky outcrops, small hills, many small waterbodies and watercourses, tracks, hydroelectric infrastructure and turbines of the Operational Development. There are also several distinctive summits, including Meall Fuar-mhonaidh which slopes steeply down to the Great Glen. To the west of the site, this high rocky plateau transitions to a rugged, exposed landscape of large mountains, while to the north and south, the plateau slopes down to the wooded glens of Glen Urquhart and Glen Moriston, and to the north-west, the farmed broad Strathglass valley.
- 8.11.5 The wider study area is characterised by rugged massifs, rounded mountains and rocky moorland plateaus as well as broad tracts of rolling upland moorland hills, including the Monadhliath mountains to the south-west of the Proposed Development, which transition to higher mountains to the south and east and to the far west.
- 8.11.6 Deep glens, broad sweeping straths, and large, linear lochs cut through these upland areas providing communication and transport corridors. These glens and straths are the main focus of settlement which comprises small villages, scattered farms and cottages, and tourist developments. The busy glens and straths provide a contrast to the remote moorlands and upland areas with the sheltered setting resulting in more improved pastureland, with sloping valley-sides often clothed in woodland and commercial forestry. The deep trench of the Great Glen forms the most notable glen within the study area, slicing through the upland landscape from south-west to north-east and accommodating Lochs Lochy, Oich, and Ness.
- 8.11.7 Existing wind farms, overhead line structures, hydro infrastructure, tracks and other man-made features are frequently present within this landscape, mostly concentrated on the plateau areas to either side of the Great Glen, forming clusters of turbines occasionally seen from the straths and glens but more often forming a feature of the upland landscape. Nevertheless, the wider study area features some areas where there are few contemporary features present and impressions of wildness and remoteness are therefore stronger.

### ***Summary of Landscape Effects***

- 8.11.8 All effects to landscape character, designated and protected landscapes resulting from the Proposed Development would not be significant. This is largely due to the proximity of the Proposed Development adjacent to the Operational Development and context of other existing wind developments in the landscape which provides a precedent in most areas for the types of effects which would be experienced.

### ***Summary of Visual Effects***

- 8.11.9 The majority of visual effects anticipated to result from the Proposed Development would not be significant, including on receptors at viewpoints, in settlements and properties and on routes. This is generally due to the natural screening provided by the surrounding landform and the proximity of the Proposed Development to the Operational Development which would be seen together in most views. The presence of the Operational Development and other existing wind developments often reduces the sensitivity of the part of the view affected, and also reduces the perceptibility of changes that would result from the Proposed Development.
- 8.11.10 There would be no significant visual effects for the majority of receptors but some significant visual effects would be anticipated for a small number of receptors within a localised area, during construction and operation. These would be limited to changes for:
- Receptors at VP 5 – Suidhe Viewpoint, B862;

- Receptors at VP 7 – B862 south of Foyers; and
  - Receptors in a small number of properties (est. 4-6 properties) in the vicinity of VP 7, near the B862 road (localised within residential grouping R13).
- 8.11.11 These receptors are largely contained within 9-11km of the Proposed Development, on the eastern side of Loch Ness in the Stratherrick area, on / near the B862 road.

***Summary of Cumulative Effects***

- 8.11.12 The cumulative LVIA (CLVIA) has concluded that no significant cumulative landscape effects have been identified when considering the addition of the Proposed Development to the cumulative baseline scenarios (existing and proposed wind farm sites). This would mainly be related to the position of the Proposed Development adjacent to the Operational Development and context of other cumulative wind developments in the landscape, such that the addition of the Proposed Development would be unlikely to significantly increase the perceived prominence of wind turbines as a feature of the landscape.
- 8.11.13 The CLVIA has identified that the addition of the Proposed Development to the cumulative baseline scenarios would result in a significant cumulative visual effect to receptors at VP 7 – B862 south of Foyers; and for a small number of receptors in the vicinity (localised within residential grouping R13). From these locations, the Proposed Development would appear larger and more prominent than the cumulative developments leading to an increased prominence of wind turbines within part of the overall view. All other cumulative effects to viewpoints, routes, and residential receptors would be not significant.

***Conclusions on THC OWESG Criteria***

- 8.11.14 The analysis of the THC criteria for the consideration of onshore wind farm proposals as detailed in Appendix 8.9, has concluded that although some significant effects would occur to localised parts of the landscape and visual resource, the location, design and layout of the Proposed Development is not anticipated to result in the threshold for any of the ten THC criteria being exceeded.
- 8.11.15 The Proposed Development is therefore considered to be in broad conformity with THC’s criteria for the consideration of onshore wind farm proposals.



**Table 8.22 – Summary of Landscape Effects**

\* Landscape and visual mitigation relates to the design evolution and iterations, encompassing identification of a site, turbine location, turbine selection and design. As such an assessment 'likely effects' without mitigation is not applicable. N/A is therefore noted for all 'Likely Effects' for LVIA.

Landscape Area	Significance of Likely Effect *		Mitigation Measure	Significance of Residual Effect	
	Significance	Beneficial/ Adverse		Significance	Beneficial/ Adverse
Construction and Operation					
Landscape Character Types (LCTs)					
LCT 220 – Rugged Massif - Inverness	N/A	N/A	Site location, turbine location and turbine selection	Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
LCT 221 – Rolling Uplands – Inverness	N/A	N/A	Site location, turbine location and turbine selection	Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
LCT 222 – Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness	N/A	N/A	Site location, turbine location and turbine selection	Locally minor-moderate, elsewhere minor (not significant)	Adverse
LCT 224 - Farmed and Wooded Foothills	N/A	N/A	Site location, turbine location and turbine selection	Locally negligible-low, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
LCT 225 – Broad Steep-Sided Glen	N/A	N/A	Site location, turbine location and turbine selection	Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
LCT 226 – Wooded Glen – Inverness	N/A	N/A	Site location, turbine location and turbine selection	Locally negligible-minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
LCT 227 – Farmed Strath - Inverness	N/A	N/A	Site location, turbine location and turbine selection	Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
LCT 230 – Interlocking Sweeping Peaks - Inverness	N/A	N/A	Site location, turbine location and turbine selection	Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
LCT 236 – Smooth Moorland Ridges	N/A	N/A	Site location, turbine location and turbine selection	Minor (not significant)	Adverse

Landscape Area	Significance of Likely Effect *		Mitigation Measure	Significance of Residual Effect	
	Significance	Beneficial/ Adverse		Significance	Beneficial/ Adverse
Designated and Protected Landscapes					
Glen Affric NSA	N/A	N/A	Site location, turbine location and turbine selection	Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
WLA 19 – Braeroy – Glenshirra – Creag Meagaidh	N/A	N/A	Site location, turbine location and turbine selection	Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
WLA 24 – Central Highlands	N/A	N/A	Site location, turbine location and turbine selection	Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA	N/A	N/A	Site location, turbine location and turbine selection	Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA	N/A	N/A	Site location, turbine location and turbine selection	Locally negligible-minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
All other areas scoped out of the detailed assessment	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not significant	Adverse
Decommissioning					
Decommissioning effects have been scoped out of the LVIA.					

**Table 8.23 – Summary of Visual Effects**

\* Landscape and visual mitigation relates to the design evolution and iterations, encompassing identification of a site, turbine location, turbine selection and design. As such an assessment ‘likely effects’ without mitigation is not applicable. N/A is therefore noted for all ‘Likely Effects’ for LVIA.

Visual Receptor Location	Significance of Likely Effect *		Mitigation Measure	Significance of Residual Effect	
	Significance	Beneficial/ Adverse		Significance	Beneficial/ Adverse
Construction					
A887	N/A	N/A	Site location, turbine location and turbine selection	Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
For all other visual receptor locations, the significance of effects would be as per operational effects.					
Operation					
Viewpoints					
VP 1 – Track to Loch Liath	N/A	N/A	Site location, turbine location and turbine selection	Minor (not significant)	Adverse
VP 2 – Old Bridge, Invermoriston	N/A	N/A		Minor (not significant)	Adverse
VP 3 – Meall Fuar-mhonaidh	N/A	N/A		Minor-moderate (not significant)	Adverse
VP 4 – Achtuie Road near Creag Nay	N/A	N/A		Negligible-minor (not significant)	Adverse
VP 5 – Suidhe Viewpoint – B862	N/A	N/A		<b>Moderate (significant)</b>	Adverse
VP 6 – Summit by Suidhe Viewpoint, B862	N/A	N/A		Minor-moderate (not significant)	Adverse
VP 7 – B862 south of Foyers	N/A	N/A		<b>Moderate (significant)</b>	Adverse
VP 8 – Lochside picnic layby on B852	N/A	N/A		Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
VP 9 – Carn na Saobhaidhe	N/A	N/A		Negligible-minor (not significant)	Adverse
VP 10 – Great Glen Way near Carn a’ Bhodaich	N/A	N/A		Minor (not significant)	Adverse
VP 11 – Meall Mor, Glen Affric	N/A	N/A		Negligible-minor (not significant)	Adverse

Visual Receptor Location	Significance of Likely Effect *		Mitigation Measure	Significance of Residual Effect	
	Significance	Beneficial/ Adverse		Significance	Beneficial/ Adverse
VP 12 – Creag Dhubh	N/A	N/A		Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
VP 13 – Sgurr nan Conbhairean	N/A	N/A		Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
VP 14 – Meall Dubh	N/A	N/A		Negligible-minor (not significant)	Adverse
VP 15 – Poll-gormack Hill	N/A	N/A		Minor (not significant)	Adverse
VP 16 – Geal Charn	N/A	N/A		Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
VP 17 – B862 south of Dores	N/A	N/A		Minor-moderate (not significant)	Adverse
VP 18 – Track near Dun Flamhair fort	N/A	N/A		Negligible-minor (not significant)	Adverse
VP 19 – Path north of Loch Affric	N/A	N/A		Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
VP 20 – Path north of Affric Lodge	N/A	N/A		Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
VP 21 – Toll Creagach	N/A	N/A		Negligible-minor (not significant)	Adverse
VP 22 – Sgurr na Ruaidhe	N/A	N/A		Negligible-minor (not significant)	Adverse
VP 23 – An Cabar (Ben Wyvis)	N/A	N/A		Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
VP 24 - NCN1 Between Dingwall and Evanton	N/A	N/A		Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
VP 25 - Minor road near Tore	N/A	N/A		Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
VP 26 - A87 Bun Loyne	N/A	N/A		Minor (not significant)	Adverse
<b>Residential Locations and Settlements</b>					
R1 - Invermoriston	N/A	N/A	Site location, turbine location and turbine selection	Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
R2 - Bhlaraidh	N/A	N/A		Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
R3 – Torgyle Bridge and Dalchreichart	N/A	N/A		Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
R4 – North of Drumnadrochit	N/A	N/A		Negligible-minor (not significant)	Adverse
R5 – Properties around Cragganvallie	N/A	N/A		Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
R6 – Dores and nearby lochside properties	N/A	N/A		Locally negligible-minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse

Visual Receptor Location	Significance of Likely Effect *		Mitigation Measure	Significance of Residual Effect	
	Significance	Beneficial/ Adverse		Significance	Beneficial/ Adverse
R7 - Properties south of Dores	N/A	N/A		Minor-moderate (not significant)	Adverse
R8 – Farraline and Ballindalloch	N/A	N/A		Negligible-minor (not significant)	Adverse
R9 – Easter and Wester Aberchalder and Migovie	N/A	N/A		Minor (not significant)	Adverse
R10 – Properties north-west of B862 between Errogie and Lochbranside	N/A	N/A		Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
R11 – Properties near Loch Ruthven	N/A	N/A		Negligible-minor (not significant)	Adverse
R12 – Gartbeg, Corriegarth Lodge and nearby properties	N/A	N/A		Minor-moderate (not significant)	Adverse
R13 – A range of properties on or in the vicinity of the B862 minor public road in the area near Whitebridge	N/A	N/A		Ranges from negligible through minor, minor-moderate to <b>locally moderate (locally significant)</b>	Adverse
R14 – Knockie Estate Cottages, and properties in the vicinity including Knockie Lodge Hotel	N/A	N/A		Locally minor-moderate, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
R15 – Keepers House, Glendoe Lodge, and nearby buildings	N/A	N/A		Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
<b>Routes</b>					
A82	N/A	N/A	Site location, turbine location and turbine selection	Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
A833	N/A	N/A		Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
A887	N/A	N/A		Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
A87	N/A	N/A		Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
B862	N/A	N/A		Minor (not significant)	Adverse
Core Path IN05.11 - Dog Falls to Comar	N/A	N/A		Negligible (not significant)	Adverse

Visual Receptor Location	Significance of Likely Effect *		Mitigation Measure	Significance of Residual Effect	
	Significance	Beneficial/ Adverse		Significance	Beneficial/ Adverse
Core Path IN12.04 - Kindrummond to Dirr Wood	N/A	N/A		Locally minor-moderate, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
Core Path IN12.05 - Drumashie Moor	N/A	N/A		Locally negligible-minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
Core Path IN12.06 - Drumashie to Cullaird	N/A	N/A		Locally negligible-minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
Core Path IN13.02 - Cnoc a Bhuachaille	N/A	N/A		Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
Core Path IN16.16 - Fort Augustus to Glen Moriston by old drove road / SHT 260a and SHT 260b - Fort Augustus to Achlain or Torgyle Bridge (Glen Moriston)	N/A	N/A		Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
Core Path IN17.01 - Fair Haired Lad's Pass	N/A	N/A		Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
Core Path IN22.03 - Clansman Hotel to Abriachan	N/A	N/A		Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
Core Path IN25.02 - Garthbeg to Errogie, south side of Loch Mhor	N/A	N/A		Minor (not significant)	Adverse
SHTs 231 and 235 - Tomatin to Whitebridge and Laggan to Whitebridge	N/A	N/A		Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
SHT 236 - Laggan to Whitebridge	N/A	N/A		Locally negligible-minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
SHT 268 - Glen Affric to Loch Mullardoch Dam by the Allt Toll Easa	N/A	N/A		Locally negligible-minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
Great Glen Way	N/A	N/A		Locally minor-moderate, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse

Visual Receptor Location	Significance of Likely Effect *		Mitigation Measure	Significance of Residual Effect	
	Significance	Beneficial/ Adverse		Significance	Beneficial/ Adverse
All other visual receptors scoped out of the detailed assessment.	N/A	N/A		Not significant	Adverse
Decommissioning					
Decommissioning effects have been scoped out of the LVIA.					

**Table 8.24 – Summary of Cumulative Landscape Effects**

Landscape Area	Effect	Cumulative Developments	Significance of Cumulative Effect	
			Significance	Beneficial/ Adverse
<b>Landscape Character Types (LCTs)</b>				
LCT 221 – Rolling Uplands - Inverness	Cumulative landscape effects	Sites included in the CLVIA, as described in Appendix 8.7.	Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
LCT 222 – Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness			Minor (not significant)	Adverse
LCT 225 – Broad Steep-Sided Glen			Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
LCT 227 – Farmed Strath - Inverness			Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
LCT 236 – Smooth Moorland Ridges			Minor (not significant)	Adverse
<b>Designated and Protected Landscapes</b>				
Wild Land Area (WLA) 19 – Braeroy, Glenshirra – Creag Meagaidh	Cumulative landscape effects	Sites included in the CLVIA, as described in Appendix 8.7.	Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
Wild Land Area (WLA) 24 – Central Highlands			Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA			Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
All other landscape areas scoped out of the detailed assessment.			Not significant	Adverse



**Table 8.25 – Summary of Cumulative Visual Effects**

Visual Receptor Location	Effect	Cumulative Developments	Significance of Cumulative Effect	
			Significance	Beneficial/ Adverse
<b>Viewpoints</b>				
VP 1 – Track to Loch Liath	Cumulative visual effects	Sites included in the CLVIA, as described in Appendix 8.8.	Minor (not significant)	Adverse
VP 2 – Old Bridge, Invermoriston			Negligible (not significant)	Adverse
VP 3 – Meall Fuar-mhonaidh			Minor-moderate (not significant)	Adverse
VP 5 – Suidhe Viewpoint, B862			Minor-moderate (not significant)	Adverse
VP 6 – Summit by Suidhe Viewpoint, B862			Minor-moderate (not significant)	Adverse
VP 7 – B862 south of Foyers			<b>Moderate (significant)</b>	Adverse
VP 10 – Great Glen Way near Carn a’ Bhodaich			Minor (not significant)	Adverse
VP 15 – Poll-gormack Hill			Minor (not significant)	Adverse
VP 17 – B862 south of Dores			Minor-moderate (not significant)	Adverse
VP 26 – A87 Bun Loyne			Minor (not significant)	Adverse
<b>Residential Locations and Settlements</b>				
R5 – Properties around Cragganvallie	Cumulative visual effects	Sites included in the CLVIA, as described in Appendix 8.8.	Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
R7 – Properties south of Dores			Minor-moderate (not significant)	Adverse
R9 – Easter and Wester Aberchalder and Migovie			Minor (not significant)	Adverse
R12 – Garthbeg, Corriegarth Lodge and nearby properties			Minor-moderate (not significant)	Adverse
R13 - A range of properties in the vicinity of the B862 minor public road in the area near Whitebridge			Ranges from negligible through minor, minor - moderate (not significant) to <b>locally moderate (locally significant)</b>	Adverse
R14 - Knockie Estate Cottages and properties in vicinity including Knockie Lodge Hotel			Locally minor-moderate, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse

Visual Receptor Location	Effect	Cumulative Developments	Significance of Cumulative Effect	
			Significance	Beneficial/ Adverse
Routes				
A87	Cumulative visual effects	Sites included in the CLVIA, as described in Appendix 8.8.	Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
B862			Minor-moderate (not significant)	Adverse
Core Path IN12.04 - Kindrummond to Dirr Wood			Locally minor-moderate, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
Core Path IN13.02 - Cnoc a Bhuachaille			Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
Core Path IN22.03 - Clansman Hotel to Abriachan			Locally minor, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
Core Path IN25.02 - Garthbeg to Errogie, south side of Loch Mhor			Minor-moderate (not significant)	Adverse
Great Glen Way			Locally minor-moderate, elsewhere negligible (not significant)	Adverse
All other visual receptors scoped out of the detailed assessment			Not significant	Adverse

## 8.12 References

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