

Appendix 7.6, Annex 2 – WLA 37 Analysis of Physical Attributes and Perceptual Responses

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This Annex provides a detailed evaluation of the strength of wild land physical attributes and perceptual responses at each assessment location within WLA 37 and the anticipated magnitude of change at each location in accordance with the criteria in Section 2 of Technical Appendix 7.6: Wild Land Area Assessment – WLA37: Fionaven Ben Hee.

1.1.2 The physical attributes of wild land are identified in Annex 1 of the Policy Statement 02/03 as:

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

1.1.3 The perceptual responses are:

- 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.

1.2 Physical Attributes

Table 1.2.1: Perceived Naturalness (see Figure 3.1 of Technical Appendix 7.6)

Location	Strength of Attribute	Magnitude of Change
Location 1: West of Loch an Fheòir	The landcover comprises rough bog land which is perceived as very natural but nearby coniferous forest shelterbelt plantations reduce the perception of naturalness in the surrounding area. Medium	The Proposed Development would be located on the distant skyline to the south where other wind turbines can already be perceived. This is unlikely to affect the perception of perceived naturalness at the location. Negligible
Location 2: Cnoc an Alaskie	Landcover is dominated by heather and rough grass moorland and lochs perceived as generally natural but some commercial forest plantation to the south in Glen Fiag is less natural in appearance. Medium to High	The Proposed Development would be located on the distant skyline to the south where other wind turbines can already be perceived, at greater distance that existing commercial forest plantation. This is unlikely to affect the perception of perceived naturalness at the location. Negligible

Location	Strength of Attribute	Magnitude of Change
Location 3: East of Merkland Lodge	Rough terrain of rough grass and heather moorland with hags and lochans. Some distant evidence of commercial forest plantation but has limited influence. High	The Proposed Development would be located on the distant skyline to the south, in the context where other wind turbines and commercial forest plantation is already perceived. This is unlikely to affect the perception of perceived naturalness at the location. Negligible
Location 4: Ben Hee (VP5)	Land cover comprises montane species and bare rock and appears generally natural. However, large areas of commercial forest plantation are seen in some surrounding areas to the south, east and north-east decreasing the sense of naturalness in the surrounding landscape. Medium to High	The Proposed Development would be seen in the southern context where existing wind turbines and forest are already perceived. This is considered unlikely to lead to any change in the perceived naturalness of land cover. Negligible

Table 1.2.2: Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts (see Figure 3.1 and 4 of Technical Appendix 7.6)

Location	Strength of Attribute	Magnitude of Change
Location 1: West of Loch an Fheòir	Properties can be seen at Crask around 2km to east, though are small. Two masts are also perceived in the easterly landscape. Wind turbines are seen disntantly on the southern horizon. If built, the consented Creag Riabhach Wind Farm would be a very noticeable feature seen from this location but is not taken account of in the rating. Medium	The Proposed Development turbines would appear on the far southerly skyline in a context where existing turbines can already be perceived. The increased numbers of turbines may be perceptible and may appear slightly closer but would lead to little change to the baseline level of wildness where existing features are already similarly present. Negligible
Location 2: Cnoc an Alaskie	Some wind turbines are perceptible on the southern skyline but are distant. The remains of a rough fence are adjacent to the location but have a sene of abandonment. The consented Creag Riabhach Wind Farm would be visible from this location, likely to be very noticeable but is not taken account of in the rating. Medium to High	The Proposed Development turbines would be perceptible on the southern skyline, mostly limited to blades. They may appear slightly closer than existing turbines and very slightly increase the appearance of built artefacts in the distant southerly context of this location. Low
Location 3: East of Merkland Lodge	Wind turbines can be seen on the skyline to the south but are distant. There are no features in the nearby vicinity. The consented Creag Riabhach Wind Farm would be perceptible in the	The Proposed Development turbines would be perceptible in the far southerly context but would be small, consisting only of blades, where existing turbines are already distantly perceived. This is not anticipated to

Location	Strength of Attribute	Magnitude of Change
	landscape to the east and likely to reduce this attribute strength, but this has not been taken account of in the rating. Medium to High	lead to any change in the baseline attribute level. Negligible
Location 4: Ben Hee (VP5)	A Ordnance Survey trig point is at the location and wind turbines are perceived in the distant landscape to the south. Small, distant properties may also be perceived in this part of the view but there are generally few other features visible. The Creag Riabhach Wind Farm would be perceived from this location in the middle distance to the east, likely to increase prominence of modern artefacts in this part of the view. This is not taken account of in the rating. Medium	The Proposed Development would be seen in the distant southerly context where existing turbines are already present and affect the strength of attribute. These would appear slightly nearer and are anticipated to lead to a slight perceived increase in built artefacts within the context. Low

Table 1.2.3: Evidence of Contemporary Land Uses

Location	Strength of Attribute	Magnitude of Change
Location 1: West of Loch an Fheòir	Coniferous forest shelterbelts are present to the east where properties at Crask and occasional movement of traffic give a sense of contemporary land use being present. Distant wind turbines on the southerly skyline also give a sense of wider contemporary land use in the southern landscape. The consented Creag Riabhach Wind Farm, would be very noticeable from this location and would reduce this attribute, but is not taken account of in the rating. Low	The Proposed Development turbines would appear on the far southerly skyline in a context where existing turbines can already be perceived. Given the presence of existing wind turbines in this area and the existing influences of contemporary land use, this is not anticipated to lead to any increase from the baseline attribute levels. Negligible
Location 2: Cnoc an Alaskie	Coniferous forest plantation can be seen to the south in Glen Fiag and distant wind turbines to south give sense of other land use in the farther surrounding landscape. An old fence nearby is suggestive of contemporary or past land use in the closer context but mostly current contemporary land use is not present. The consented Creag Reabhach wind turbines would be very noticeable in this location giving a sense of nearby landuse to the east, but has not been taken account of in the rating.	The Proposed Development turbines would be perceptible on the southern skyline, mostly limited to blades. They may appear slightly closer than existing turbines and may lead to a slightly increased perception of contemporary land use in the southern landscape context, although with the presence of existing land use features at closer proximity, this is considered unlikely to result in a change to the baseline attribute strength.

Location	Strength of Attribute	Magnitude of Change
	Medium	Negligible
Location 3: East of Merkland Lodge	Some contemporary land use is distantly seen to the south around Lairg and Loch Shin but has limited effect on the location. The consented Creag Riabhach wind turbines would be perceptible to the east and would introduce greater sense of contemporary land use but have not been taken account of in the rating.	The Proposed Development would appear as distant blades about the southern skyline where other contemporary land use features are also distantly perceived. This is considered unlikely to increase the baseline attribute level.
	Medium to High	Negligible
Location 4: Ben Hee (VP5)	Extensive areas of commercial forest plantation are present to the south, east and north-east but in other directions little contemporary land use can be perceived.	The Proposed Development would be seen in the southerly context where existing turbines and extensive areas of forest are already perceived, including to the fore and rear ground of the Proposed Development. Whilst this may lead to a perceptibly increased presence of wind farm development in this area, given the extensive areas of commercial forest plantation and wind turbines which are already present, this is not anticipated to lead to a perceived increase in contemporary land use at this location.
	Medium	Negligible

Table 1.2.4: Rugged or Challenging Terrain (see Figure 3.2 of Technical Appendix 7.6)

Location	Strength of Attribute	Magnitude of Change
Location 1: West of Loch an Fheòir	Ground lacks steep terrain but is very boggy and difficult to traverse, taking a long time to travel a relatively short distance.	The Proposed Development would not alter the challenging nature of the terrain.
	Medium	Negligible
Location 2: Cnoc an Alaskie	Terrain is gently sloping but bog and pools make it challenging and time-consuming to traverse requiring careful route planning.	The Proposed Development would not alter the challenging nature of the terrain.
	Medium	Negligible
Location 3: East of Merkland Lodge	Rough bog and hags and some steeper slopes leads to some challenge in traversing the area. Steep slopes and crags perceived in the landscape to the north appear more challenging.	The Proposed Development would not alter the challenging nature of the terrain.
	Medium	Negligible
Location 4: Ben Hee (VP5)	Terrain appears rugged and challenging with steep slopes, crags and a rocky summit.	The Proposed Development would not alter the challenging nature of the terrain.

Location	Strength of Attribute	Magnitude of Change
	High	Negligible

Table 1.2.5: Remoteness and Inaccessibility (see Figure 3.2 of Technical Appendix 7.6)

Location	Strength of Attribute	Magnitude of Change
Location 1: West of Loch an Fheòir	The location is relatively close to the public road but feels more remote due to the difficulty of access and time taken to reach the location. There are no tracks or paths penetrating into the area. Medium to High	The Proposed Development would not lead to any change to this attribute. Negligible
Location 2: Cnoc an Alaskie	The location feels remote from public access and there are no roads or paths although the nearby commercial forest plantation gives some sense of potential accessibility in the wider landscape. Medium to High	The Proposed Development would not lead to any change to this attribute. Negligible
Location 3: East of Merkland Lodge	The location feels remote from public access or development. There are no paths or routes evident and a reasonably long walk over rough terrain is required to reach the location High	The Proposed Development would not lead to any change to this attribute. Negligible
Location 4: Ben Hee (VP5)	The location is remote requiring a difficult cross-country walk although track and a very rough footpath provide access for some of the way. High	The Proposed Development would not lead to any change to this attribute. Negligible

1.3 Perceptual Responses

Table 1.3.1: – Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude

Location	Strength of Attribute	Magnitude of Change
Location 1: West of Loch an Fheòir	A sense of civilisation can be perceived in occasional traffic on the nearby road which can heard as well as seen, and buildings at Crask. There is a lonely feel to the location, but also a sense of exposure to view in the wide, open terrain. This response may be affected by the proximity of the Creag Reabhach Wind Farm. However, this has not been given account in the rating. Medium	The Proposed Development would be relatively distant to this location, seen in the context of other wind turbines on the southern skyline with other features nearby creating a distraction and sense of people in the landscape. The potential for the Proposed Development to alter the strength of this response is therefore considered unlikely. Negligible

Location	Strength of Attribute	Magnitude of Change
Location 2: Cnoc an Alaskie	This location feels lonely and far from developed areas. This quality may be affected by the consented Creag Riachach Wind Farm, which may increase the sense of nearby contemporary land use. However, this has not been given account in the rating. High	The Proposed Development may lead to a slightly increased sense of contemporary land use and built features in the southern context. However, it would distant and would be sited beyond other areas of human influence such as commercial forestry planting at Fiag. It is considered unlikely to result in any perceptible reduction in the sense of loneliness that is experienced at this location. Negligible
Location 3: East of Merkland Lodge	The location feels remote from other people and from developed areas and there is a strong sense of solitude. If the consented Creag Riabhach Wind Farm was built, this quality may be reduced slightly as there would be a perception of more activity in the nearby landscape. However, this is not taken account of in the rating. High	The Proposed Development would be present in the far distant context to the south but mostly limited to blades only, which would have limited perceptibility at this distance. Whilst this may slightly increase the perceptibility of artefacts in the surrounding context, it would be very distant and considered unlikely to lead to any change in the sense of solitude that exists. Negligible
Location 4: Ben Hee (VP5)	Although other land use is perceptible, the sense of elevation leads to the location feeling far from developed areas. However, as a Corbett summit, the area is more likely to be visited by greater numbers of people which is likely to affect sense of solitude slightly. Medium to High	The Proposed Development would perceptibly increase the presence of wind turbines in the southern context, but within an area where existing influence of human land use is already present. The sense of distance from others is unlikely to be noticeably altered by the Proposed Development altered. Negligible

Table 1.3.2: – Risk, a Sense of Awe or Anxiety

Location	Strength of Attribute	Magnitude of Change
Location 1: West of Loch an Fheòir	The expansive terrain, bog and stream crossings gives some sense of risk and awe although there is a sense of civilisation being relatively near. Medium	The Proposed Development would be unlikely to alter the sense of risk or awe experienced from this location. Negligible
Location 2: Cnoc an Alaskie	The sense of loneliness and the deep bogs and pools give some perception of risk which may be enhanced in certain weather conditions. Medium	The Proposed Development would be unlikely to alter the sense of risk or awe experienced from this location. Negligible

Location	Strength of Attribute	Magnitude of Change
Location 3: East of Merkland Lodge	Generally limited sense of risk but there is a lonely quality of the location and a sense of being far from help. Steeper slopes and crags in the landscape to the north suggest some possible sense of risk. Medium	The Proposed Development would be unlikely to alter the sense of risk or awe experienced from this location. Negligible
Location 4: Ben Hee (VP5)	Sense of elevation and steep surrounding slopes and crags gives high levels of perceived risk and awe. High	The Proposed Development would be unlikely to alter the sense of risk or awe experienced from this location. Negligible

Table 1.3.3: – Arresting or Inspiring Qualities

Location	Strength of Attribute	Magnitude of Change
Location 1: West of Loch an Fheòir	The surrounding landscape appears vast and expansive leading to some arresting or inspiring qualities. Medium	The Proposed Development would appear within the southerly context, on the horizon within a context of existing wind turbines. There would be a perceptible increase in turbines which may also appear slightly closer which may form a slightly increased focus of wind turbines within this part of the context. Low
Location 2: Cnoc an Alaskie	There are impressive views towards mountains to the west and north and a sense of an extensive landscape in these directions which leads to some arresting or inspiring qualities. Medium	The Proposed Development would appear within the southerly context, on the horizon within a context of existing wind turbines. There would be a perceptible increased in turbines which may also appear slightly closer which may form a slightly increased focus of wind turbines within this part of the context and could slightly reduce perceived scale and distance. Low
Location 3: East of Merkland Lodge	The surrounding landscape appears extensive, especially to the south, evoking some arresting and inspiring qualities. Medium to High	The Proposed Development turbines would be distant in the southerly context, featuring as blades with limited perceptibility. This is not anticipated to lead to any loss of arresting and inspiring qualities. Negligible
Location 4: Ben Hee (VP5)	Expansive, elevated views, and surrounding mountains seen to north and west give strong arresting and inspiring qualities.	The Proposed Development turbines would appear within the southerly view where existing turbines and contemporary land use is present but would bring turbines perceptible closer. However, the expansive and arresting views would still be

Location	Strength of Attribute	Magnitude of Change
	High	experience and would be unaffected to north and west where the undeveloped mountainous landscapes are present. Low

Table 1.3.4: – Fulfilment from Physical Challenge

Location	Strength of Attribute	Magnitude of Change
Location 1: West of Loch an Fheòir	Terrain is not steep but very difficult to cross due to the extensive areas of bog, watercourses, lochs and pools, leading more effort being required to travel short distances. Medium	There would be no change to the experience of physical challenge in accessing this location and the surrounding area. Negligible
Location 2: Cnoc an Alaskie	The terrain is gently sloping but difficult to traverse and navigate due to the bog, pools, watercourses and lochs. This leads to some sense of fulfilment and challenge although this is less pronounced than on more rugged terrain as there is less sense of achievement then when reaching landmarks or peaks. Medium	There would be no change to the experience of physical challenge in accessing this location and the surrounding area. Negligible
Location 3: East of Merkland Lodge	Remote location requires navigation across rough terrain with some steeper slopes and areas of peat hag. Steeper and more rugged terrain to the north increases the sense of physical challenge in the surrounding area. Medium to High	There would be no change to the experience of physical challenge in accessing this location. Negligible
Location 4: Ben Hee (VP5)	A steep and challenging walk to the location with a clear sense of destination and arrival leads to strong perception of fulfilment of physical challenge. High	There would be no change to the experience of physical challenge in accessing this location. Negligible

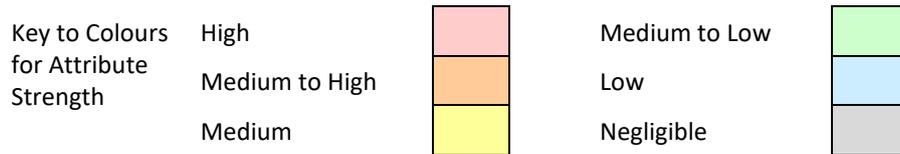
1.4 Summary of Results

1.4.1 Table 1.4.1 and Table 1.4.2 provide a summary of the strength of physical attributes and perceptual responses, and the magnitude of change at each of the assessment locations visited.

Physical Attributes

Table 1.4.1: Summary of Strength of Physical Attribute and Magnitude of Change at Assessment Locations

Location	1		2		3		4	
Attribute	Strength	Magnitude	Strength	Magnitude	Strength	Magnitude	Strength	Magnitude
Perceived Naturalness	M	N	M/H	N	H	N	M/H	N
Lack of construction or other artefacts	M	N	M/H	L	M/H	N	M	L
Evidence of contemporary land uses	L	N	M	N	M/H	N	M	N
Rugged or challenging terrain	M	N	M	N	M	N	H	N
Remoteness and inaccessibility	M/H	N	M/H	N	H	N	H	N



Perceptual Responses

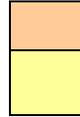
Table 1.4.2: Summary of Strength of Perceptual Responses and Magnitude of Change at Assessment Locations

Location	1		2		3		4	
Attribute	Strength	Magnitude	Strength	Magnitude	Strength	Magnitude	Strength	Magnitude
Sense of Sanctuary or Solitude	M	N	H	N	H	N	M/H	N
Risk, a Sense of Awe or Anxiety	M	N	M	N	M	N	H	N
Arresting or Inspiring Qualities	M	L	M	L	M/H	N	H	L
Fulfilment from Physical Challenge	M	N	M	N	M/H	N	H	N



Key to Colours
for Attribute
Strength

Medium to High
Medium



Low
Negligible

