

## **TECHNICAL APPENDIX 7.3: ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES**

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## **1. Technical Appendix 7.3: Assessment of Landscape Character Types**

### **1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1 The following Landscape Character Types (LCTs) within the detailed study area (see Technical Appendix 7.2: Landscape and Visual Scoping Appraisal) were identified in the baseline review as potentially experiencing landscape effects as a result of the Proposed Development (as illustrated in Figure 7.3.2: Landscape Character within Detailed Study Area):

- LCT 134: Sweeping Moorland and Flows;
- LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland;
- LCT 138: Lone Mountains;
- LCT 139: Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland;
- LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland;
- LCT 145: Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting; and
- LCT 329: Rounded Mountain Massif.

1.1.2 The above areas are assessed in the following tables, in accordance with criteria outlined in section 7.4 of the EIA Report.

1.1.3 Assessment of Designated and Protected Landscapes is detailed in Technical Appendix 7.4.

## 1.2 Landscape Character Types

**Table 1.2.1: LCT 134: Sweeping Moorland and Flows**

Landscape Baseline	
<b>Description</b>	<p>This LCT comprises two sub-areas within the detailed study area including a small sub-area at the head of Glen Cassley approximately 8 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development (the western sub-area) and a larger sub-area to the north-east of Loch Shin and approximately 7km to the north-east of the Proposed Development (the eastern sub-area). It is characterised by a flat and gently undulating landscape of sweeping moorlands with occasional isolated hills which stand out from the low-lying surrounds, despite their limited height. The landscape has a simple composition with wide and largely uninterrupted skylines and extensive visibility. Lochs and meandering rivers sited in shallow valleys and basins provide some focal features. It also provides a setting for <i>LCT 138: Lone Mountains</i>, which are accentuated by the surrounding expanse of moorland. This is an undeveloped landscape with a strong sense of remoteness. Pockets of improved grazing and forest plantations are present on the outer edges of the LCT and there is occasional influence single track roads and tracks, and from wind farms and transmission lines outside of the LCT. Settlement is sparse, consisting of dispersed crofts and farms concentrated in straths and along the margins. However, there is a long history of settlement in the area, evidenced by occasional ruined buildings field boundaries and drainage channels.</p> <p>It is noted that this LCT is fairly atypical of the description within the detailed study area with a more elevated and undulating character across the western sub-area and extensive areas of coniferous forest across parts of the eastern sub-area.</p>
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	<p>The key characteristics of the Sweeping Moorland and Flows LCT are noted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gently sloping or undulating landform which lies generally below 350 metres.</li> <li>• Occasional isolated hills of limited height form local landmark features.</li> <li>• Lochs and mature, meandering rivers.</li> <li>• Very distinct flora, dominated by sphagnum mosses, produced by the wetness and infertility of the flows.</li> <li>• Areas of peat cuttings and haggings.</li> <li>• Pockets of improved grazing, mainly within the outer fringes of sweeping moorland.</li> <li>• Coniferous forest forming a dominant characteristic within some parts of this landscape character type.</li> <li>• Ribbons of broadleaf woodland occasionally run along the water courses and loch edges.</li> <li>• Very sparsely settled with dispersed crofts, farms and estate buildings largely found on the outer edges of this landscape or near a strath.</li> <li>• Vehicular tracks within parts of the landscape.</li> <li>• Wind farms, transmission lines, the A9 and a network of minor roads are key features within the more modified outer fringes within Caithness.</li> <li>• Long, low and largely uninterrupted skylines offering extensive views across this landscape and result in a feeling of huge space.</li> <li>• Consistent views to the distant Lone Mountains and Rugged Mountain Massif – Caithness &amp; Sutherland.</li> <li>• Great sense of exposure on areas of flat peatland on upland plateau.</li> <li>• A strong sense of remoteness is associated within the largely uninhabited, inaccessible core flows and moorlands of this landscape.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Value</b>	<p>This LCT is valued for its wild character and sense of remoteness, although this is felt mostly within the interior. Within the detailed study area, the LCT is partially within the Foinaven - Ben Hee and Ben Klibreck – Armine Forest Wild Land Areas. A small part of this landscape</p>

	also falls within the Assynt – Coigach NSA. Landscape value is therefore considered to be <b>High</b>
<b>Assessment of Landscape Effects</b>	
<b>Landscape Receptors</b>	<p>The principal aspects of this LCT which may be affected by the Proposed Development comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long, low and largely uninterrupted skylines offering extensive views across this landscape and result in a feeling of huge space.</li> <li>• Consistent views to the distant Lone Mountains and Rugged Mountain Massif – Caithness &amp; Sutherland.</li> <li>• Great sense of exposure on areas of flat peatland on upland plateau.</li> <li>• A strong sense of remoteness is associated within the largely uninhabited, inaccessible core flows and moorlands of this landscape.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	<p>This is a highly valued landscape with an open and expansive character and wide, uninterrupted skylines which are highly susceptible to change. However, the presence of existing, similar features such as existing wind turbines at the Achany, Rosehall and Lairg Wind Farms locally reduce sensitivity to indirect change.</p> <p>Landscape sensitivity to development of the type proposed is considered to be <b>High</b> although sensitivity to indirect change in the southern landscape is considered to reduce to <b>Medium</b> in some areas.</p>
<b>Potential Effects</b>	<p>Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appearance of turbines could lead to interruption of the skyline creating a new focus within views and affecting sense of enclosure.</li> <li>• Appearance of turbines could interrupt views towards mountains or distract by forming a new visual focus.</li> <li>• The appearance of wind turbines within the surrounding landscape could affect the sense of remoteness.</li> </ul>
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	<p>There would be no direct change to this LCT. However, the ZTV indicates that intervisibility with the LCT would be widespread within the detailed study area, including within the southern half of the smaller western sub-area at the head of Glen Cassley where up to 20 turbines may be intervisible, and throughout much of the larger eastern sub-area to the north-east of Loch Shin. In this sub-area, the number of turbines intervisible would be smaller on lower ground closer to Loch Shin, gradually increasing from 1 to 15 turbines. Up to 20 turbines would be intervisible from around 12 km to the north-east of the Proposed Development. Within these areas, the Proposed Development would appear as turbines on the south-eastern or south-western skyline. From most areas affected, wind turbines are already seen as a feature of the southerly skyline. However, it is likely that the Proposed Development would lead to a perceptible increase in wind turbines as a characteristic of this part of the surrounding landscape, being slightly closer than existing turbines to the western sub-area and slightly increasing the part of the southern skyline occupied by turbines for the eastern sub-area.</p> <p>The perceptible change in characteristics for a localised part of the surrounding context is considered to lead to a <b>Low</b> magnitude of landscape change during construction and operation.</p>
<b>Effect Significance</b>	<p>Whilst intervisibility of the Proposed Development would theoretically affect large areas within this LCT, the presence of extensive areas of coniferous forest is likely to limit this somewhat within the eastern sub-area. Within both sub-areas, the introduction of further turbines on the southerly skyline would not result in a noticeable change in characteristics as wind turbines already characterise this part of the surrounding context reducing sensitivity to further, similar development in this area. However, for the western sub-area, the closer proximity of wind turbines is considered likely to increase the strength of wind farm development as a characteristic of the LCT slightly. Similarly, within closer parts of the eastern sub-area, within around 10 – 12 km of the Proposed Development and outwith</p>

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	<p>forested areas, the increased presence of wind turbines around the southern context may lead to a slightly increased influence of turbines on these parts of the landscape. This may lead to some localised reduction in perceived remoteness within these areas and in some localised areas turbines may form a new visual focus. However, this change is considered insufficient to lead to any change in the key characteristics of expansiveness and exposure and would not affect the prominence of existing mountain focal points which are located more generally to north (e.g. Ben Hee and Ben Hope), east (Kilbreck) and west (Ben More Assynt). In general, it is considered that the key characteristics of this LCT would remain intact and therefore, <b>no significant effects</b> are anticipated.</p> <p>The landscape effect is anticipated to be <b>Minor to Moderate</b> (not significant) for the western sub-area and <b>Minor</b> (not significant) for the eastern sub-area during both construction and operation.</p>
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**Table 1.2.2: LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland**

Landscape Baseline	
<b>Description</b>	The Proposed Development would be located within this LCT, which is the most common landscape type within the detailed study area and occurs extensively across Caithness and Sutherland. It is characterised by broad hills with rounded summits, rising from rolling moorland and reaching heights of mostly 400 - 500m AOD. The terrain varies between swathes of subtly rolling hills and moorland through central areas, more prominent coastal hills and occasional more pronounced hills featuring patches of scree and crags. Hills are divided by straths and often cut into by narrower glens. Heather moorland forms the predominant land cover and woodland is scarce, limited to areas of coniferous forest on lower hill slopes and within glens, and occasional broadleaf woodland in more inaccessible locations such as crags and narrower glens. There is limited settlement, comprised of widely dispersed crofts, farms and occasional estate buildings on lower slopes but the LCT provides an important setting and backdrop to adjacent strath and coastal lands. Hydro infrastructure is present in parts of this area, including at the head of Glen Cassley, in the form of weirs, above ground aqueducts and associated tracks. Wind farm development is also present within this LCT, usually associated with the more subtly undulating and lower hills set within the interior of the uplands. Elsewhere, a sense of wild character can be experienced in the more remote and less modified parts of the LCT.
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	The key characteristics of the Rounded Hills Caithness and Sutherland LCT are noted as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rolling hills forming broad, subtly rounded summits but with some more pronounced hills also occurring, these often featuring steeper slopes along the coast or where truncated by deep glens.</li> <li>• Hills cut by numerous narrow burns and small lochans lie within dips, corries and on plateau summits.</li> <li>• Predominantly dense heather ground cover and moorland grasses, but also some areas of bog.</li> <li>• Fragments of broadleaf woodland in inaccessible locations.</li> <li>• Scarcely settled with a largely uninhabited interior and widely scattered crofts and farms on lower slopes adjoining straths and farmed landscapes.</li> <li>• Narrow glens and lower hill slopes often rich in archaeology with features such as standing stones, brochs and medieval townships.</li> <li>• Wind farms located in more accessible and generally lower rolling hills, either close to extensive forestry or the high voltage transmission line aligned broadly parallel to the south-east Sutherland coast (hydro infrastructure is also present in some areas although not mentioned specifically as a key characteristic).</li> <li>• Convex character of hill slopes limiting distant visibility and views of the hill tops when travelling through the landscape.</li> <li>• Views into the interior of the hills very restricted.</li> <li>• Strong sense of wild character can be experienced within the more remote and little modified parts of this landscape.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Value</b>	This LCT is widespread within the detailed study area and the wider Caithness and Sutherland area. It falls within a number of protected and designated areas including: the Ben Klibreck – Armine Forest and Reay – Cassley WLA; and the Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire, Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth, and Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLAs. The LCT is valued for its wild characteristics and as a backdrop to straths and coastal areas.  As this LCT covers a very extensive and variable area, landscape value is considered to be generally <b>Medium</b> but may be locally <b>High</b> where it forms an important component of designated or protected areas or an important backdrop for local communities.

<b>Assessment of Landscape Effects</b>	
<b>Landscape Receptors</b>	<p>The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the proposed development comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rolling hills forming broad, subtly rounded summits and some more pronounced hills.</li> <li>• Scarcely settled with a largely uninhabited interior and widely scattered crofts and farms on lower slopes adjoining straths and farmed landscapes.</li> <li>• Wind farms located in more accessible and generally lower rolling hills, either close to extensive forestry or the high voltage transmission line aligned broadly parallel to the south-east Sutherland coast.</li> <li>• Convex character of hill slopes limiting distant visibility and views of the hill tops when travelling through the landscape.</li> <li>• Views into the interior of the hills very restricted.</li> <li>• Strong sense of wild character experienced within the more remote and little modified parts of the landscape.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	<p>This is a highly valued landscape in some areas although wind farm development or other localised features such as hydro development, already forms a key characteristic within other parts. The character of broad, convex hill slopes which limit extensive visibility, theoretically reduces susceptibility to change although areas where remote and wild characteristics predominate susceptibility is greater. Landscape sensitivity is therefore considered to be variable, being <b>Low</b> within areas already strongly characterised by wind development, <b>Medium</b> where there is a closer association with settlement and communities, and also in some areas where coniferous forest plantation has more influence on character, and <b>High</b> in areas where wild land characteristics predominate.</p>
<b>Potential Effects</b>	<p>Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wind turbines, as large vertical structures within the LCT, have the potential to diminish subtle variations in the landscape and could distract from the prominence of more pronounced hills;</li> <li>• Turbines and associated tracks and substation within the LCT have the potential to alter the existing patterns of the landscape including the existing pattern of wind farms and balance of developed and undeveloped areas;</li> <li>• Appearance of turbines within the LCT may form new focal points, within views towards the interior or distant areas, affecting sense of space and scale; and</li> <li>• Direct presence of turbines, tracks and substation within the LCT and appearance of turbines within the surrounds may affect sense of wild character.</li> </ul>
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	<p>The Proposed Development would be entirely within this LCT including 20 turbines, new access tracks and hardstanding, substation, LiDAR position and temporary infrastructure and borrow-pits during construction. The ZTV indicates that indirect change in the form of intervisibility would be widespread within the local area around the Proposed Development, principally focussed to the east and west of Glen Cassley within around 5 – 6km of the Proposed Development, and also within a predominantly forested area to the south of Strath Oykel and the Kyle of Sutherland. More scattered intervisibility is indicated within parts of the LCT beyond these areas on facing slopes and summits to the east of Lairg and south-west of Strath Oykel. Within the majority of areas potentially affected, existing turbines of the Achany, Rosehall and Lairg Wind Farms are already intervisible. However, some new areas of intervisibility would occur, most notably within an area in the northernmost half of the Proposed Development area and up to approximately 5km to the east and north-west, other smaller areas on both sides of Glen Cassley, and also some smaller areas around Strath Mulzie to the south-west of Strath Oykel.</p> <p>Magnitude of change would be variable, anticipated to be High within areas directly affected and to north, east and west of the more northerly turbines within around 2km of the Proposed Development and Medium within other areas.</p>

<p><b>Effect Significance</b></p>	<p>Effects on this LCT would be both direct, due to the introduction of new infrastructure, and indirect, due to the appearance of new features within the surrounding context.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would lead to an increase in wind turbine development within parts of this LCT. This would be most noticeable within the Proposed Development site where wind turbines and tracks would become a more directly defining characteristic of the landscape. Within the northern half of the Proposed Development site, to the north of Càrn nam Bò Maola, there is no influence from existing wind turbines and therefore the effect would be most pronounced in this area. The increased influence of wind turbines as a feature in the landscape would also extend up to around 8km of the Proposed Development, and would affect qualities of wildness in very localised areas up to 10km to the west of Glen Cassley, but diminishing in effect with distance. However, within the southern range of this area of influence, the effect on landscape characteristics would be less noticeable because of the existing influence of wind turbines at Achany and Rosehall Wind Farms, and also to some extent Lairg Wind Farm, which reduce sensitivity. Beyond this distance, intervisibility would be intermittent and even where other wind turbines are not already visible, is considered unlikely to be sufficient to lead to any noticeable degree of change to landscape characteristics.</p> <p>During construction, there would be an increase in activity within the localised part of the LCT occupied by the Proposed Development. This would interrupt the existing remote qualities but is not anticipated to lead to a greater degree of landscape effect than the operational development.</p> <p>A <b>Moderate</b> (significant) effect on landscape character is anticipated during construction and operation, in and around the Proposed Development and within the surrounding context up to around 8km from the Proposed Development and locally up to 10km to the west of Glen Cassley, but this would be limited to areas to the north of Aonach a' Choire Bhuig and Strath Grudie on the east side of Glen Cassley, and Beinn an Rosail Beag to the west of Glen Cassley where the influence of existing wind turbines is reduced. In this area, it is considered that the Proposed Development would form a new focus within the landscape to a sufficient degree to influence landscape character, likely to increase the role of wind turbines as a characteristic of the landscape and/or affect the sense of remoteness and wild character (see Technical Appendix 7.5: Wild Land Area Assessment – Wild Land Area 34: Reay – Cassley). The effect would locally increase to <b>Major</b> (significant) within the immediate confines of the Proposed Development at its northern end within Coire Buidhe where the wind turbines would become the main character defining feature of the landscape. However, beyond this localised area, it is considered that, the location and scale of the turbines would not appear out of scale with or diminish the topographical features of the landscape.</p> <p>Beyond these areas, the Proposed Development may continue to form a focus within some views and locally affect the sense of remoteness and wildness. However, it is considered unlikely to be sufficiently noticeable to alter any of the key characteristics of the LCT. In these areas, the effect would range from <b>Minor to Minor – Moderate</b> (not significant) and <b>Negligible</b> in areas where there would be little or no intervisibility.</p>
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**Table 1.2.3: LCT 138: Lone Mountains**

Landscape Baseline	
<b>Description</b>	<p>This LCT comprises a small area in the north-eastern part of the study area accommodating the mountain of Ben Klibreck, 18.1km from the nearest turbine.</p> <p>It is described as individual steep-sided mountains with distinctive profiles, isolated within large expanses of lower-lying open moorland and forming dominant focal points. Land cover of the mountains is limited to sparse dwarf vegetation with extensive areas of bare rock present in crags, escarpments boulderfields and scree. Numerous watercourses tumble down the steep mountain slopes and narrow glens where broadleaf scrub is sometimes present. The mountain landscapes are largely uninhabited with few man-made features but provide a focus for hill-walkers, with their isolated positioning within the low-lying moorland resulting in extensive panoramic views.</p>
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	<p>The key characteristics of the Lone Mountains LCT are noted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual mountains forming landmarks seen widely and at considerable distance across expansive lower-lying Sweeping Moorland and Flows (LCT 134) and Cnocan – Caithness &amp; Sutherland (LCT 137 – outwith the detailed study area).</li> <li>• Mountains possess a distinctive profile, usually comprising steep, sweeping, concave slopes, making them look quite elegant and graceful.</li> <li>• Height of mountains varies, but even the smaller mountains can appear high because of their isolation, steep-sided profiles and when seen in juxtaposition with lower-lying Sweeping Moorland and Flows.</li> <li>• Peaks generally topped by exposed rock and sparse dwarf vegetation which gradually merges into the moorland surrounds.</li> <li>• Ribbons of broadleaf scrub woodland associated with the many water courses that tumble down steep glens.</li> <li>• Largely uninhabited, creating a distinct sense of remoteness, although some of its peaks attract significant numbers of hill walkers, especially during the summer months.</li> <li>• Peaks offer extensive views of the surrounding area including the distinctive watery landscapes of the Flows.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Value</b>	<p>Within the detailed study area, this LCT falls within WLA 35 (Ben Klibreck - Armine Forest) and the Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire SLA. This LCT is highly valued within the local and wider area for its role as a focal point and its unique association to the character of Caithness and Sutherland within the Scotland-wide context. Landscape value is therefore considered to be <b>High</b>.</p>
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
<b>Landscape Receptors</b>	<p>The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the proposed development comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual mountains forming landmarks, seen widely and at considerable distance across expansive lower-lying landscapes.</li> <li>• Largely uninhabited, creating a distinct sense of remoteness, although some of its peaks attract significant numbers of hill walkers.</li> <li>• Peaks offer extensive views of the surrounding area including the distinctive watery landscapes of the Flows.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	<p>This is a highly valued landscape and its remote qualities and role as a focal point and importance as a vantage for elevated views are susceptible to change of the type proposed.</p> <p>Landscape sensitivity to development of the type proposed is considered to be <b>High</b>.</p>

<b>Potential Effects</b>	<p>Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turbines within the surrounding landscape may form a new focus, intruding into views towards lone mountains, or distracting from the lone mountains as a focal point, thereby affecting the appreciation of the LCT within the wider context.</li> <li>• The appearance of the turbines within the wider landscape context may distract from sense of remoteness.</li> <li>• Turbines may appear within extensive views from mountain peaks forming a distracting feature and/or reducing perceived remoteness or sense of distance and scale.</li> </ul>
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	<p>There would be no direct change to this LCT. Indirect change would be limited to intervisibility of the Proposed Development, at considerable distance. The ZTV suggests that potential intervisibility would be limited to relatively small areas on facing slopes, the summit of the mountain and surrounding peaks. Turbines would appear slightly closer than existing turbines and would slightly extend the part of the context affected. This is anticipated to lead to a perceptible change in views from some individual locations. The potential intrusion of the Proposed Development into views towards the LCT would be limited to areas to the south-west of the Proposed Development where Ben Klibreck does not generally form a very noticeable or distinct feature in the view, although this may affect views from a small number of distant peaks.</p> <p>Magnitude of change is considered to be <b>Low</b> during construction and operation.</p>
<b>Effect Significance</b>	<p>Potential effects on this LCT would be indirect, resulting in the appearance of the Proposed Development within the landscape context to the south-west. This is a part of the landscape where wind turbines are already present. The Proposed Development may lead to a small increase in numbers of turbines present within this part of the context, and would slightly increase the part of the context accommodating wind development for the localised areas affected. Within these areas, this may slightly reduce the sense of remoteness from this type of development within the very wide expansive setting. However, this effect would be localised to the higher slopes.</p> <p>The landscape effect is anticipated to be <b>Minor</b> during both construction and operation (not significant).</p>

**Table 1.2.4: LCT 139: Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland**

Landscape Baseline	
<b>Description</b>	This LCT comprises two separate areas within the detailed study area located approximately 10.8km to the north-west of the Proposed Development (the Ben More Assynt sub-area) and 15km to the south (the Freewater-Glencalvie sub-area (also including a small disconnected area above Strathcarron)). It is characterised by high mountains with a rugged and predominantly irregular and complex form and massive scale. The mountains are defined by areas of sheer scree slopes, narrow bare rock ridges, crags and defined summit peaks with their scale and ruggedness enhanced by the adjacent deeply indented fjord-like coastline, glens and lochs which cut into the massif. Quartzite screes on the sheer south-west flanks of Fionaven and Arkle and the upper slopes of Ben More Assynt give these mountains a characteristically pale grey colour.
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	<p>The key characteristics of the Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness &amp; Sutherland LCT are noted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mountains with very steep slopes which are often covered in scree and commonly feature narrow rocky ridges, buttresses, crags and pronounced peaks.</li> <li>• High, generally lying above 800m.</li> <li>• Different geology associated with each mountain group influencing their character.</li> <li>• Deeply indented sea lochs of Lochs Glendhu and Glencoul and a number of sheer sided glens, cut into the mountains of north-west Sutherland, generally orientated on long north-west to south-east fault lines.</li> <li>• Dark, narrow lochs within some of the north-west Sutherland mountain glens.</li> <li>• Mountain peaks form landmarks, rising above the interlocking mass of lower slopes and distinguished by their height, distinctive and recognisable profile.</li> <li>• Largely uninhabited and difficult to access. The small number of settlements and roads which do exist tend to be located at the edges of this character type and at the intersection of a strath or loch.</li> <li>• Interior of this landscape is mainly visited by hill walkers and deer stalkers.</li> <li>• Limited visibility within the glens which lie between or at the foot of these mountains, due to their steepness of slope and immense size.</li> <li>• Extensive views of the surrounding landscape and an exhilarating experience of openness and exposure from mountain ridges and summits.</li> <li>• Natural unmodified character of the high mountains, with their remoteness, ruggedness, and difficulty of access, creating a strong wild character.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Value</b>	This LCT is appreciated for its scenic qualities and wild, rugged character. Within the detailed study area, the Ben More Assynt sub-area falls partially within the Assynt – Coigach NSA and also partly within WLA 34 (Reay – Cassley) and WLA 37 (Foinaven – Ben Hee) whilst the Freewater - Glencalvie sub-area falls within WLA 29 (Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis) and the Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA. Landscape value is considered to be <b>High</b> .
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
<b>Landscape Receptors</b>	<p>The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the proposed development comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mountain peaks form landmarks, rising above the interlocking mass of lower slopes and distinguished by their height, distinctive and recognisable profile.</li> <li>• Extensive views of the surrounding landscape and an exhilarating experience of openness and exposure from mountain ridges and summits.</li> <li>• Natural unmodified character of the high mountains, with their remoteness, ruggedness, and difficulty of access, creating a strong wild character.</li> </ul>

<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	This is a highly valued upland landscape and its qualities of remoteness and elevated open views make it very susceptible to change of the type proposed. Landscape sensitivity is therefore considered to be <b>High</b> .
<b>Potential Effects</b>	<p>Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turbines within the surrounding landscape may form a new focus, intruding into views towards mountain peaks, or distracting from views towards mountains affecting their role as a landmark.</li> <li>• Turbines may appear within extensive views from mountain ridges and summits forming a distracting feature.</li> <li>• The appearance of the turbines within the wider landscape context may affect the sense of wild character.</li> </ul>
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	<p>There would be no direct change to this LCT. Indirect change would be in the form of intervisibility with turbines and potentially tracks in the surrounding landscape context. The ZTV indicates that intervisibility may be experienced on high summits and facing slopes of both sub-areas although most lower areas and slopes and summits beyond the initial ridges and peaks which define the edge of the LCT would not be affected. For the Ben More Assynt sub-area, the Proposed Development would appear to the south-east and south of summits of Ben More Assynt, Meall an Aonaich and Braebeg, Ben Leòid and other surrounding peaks. Within almost all of these areas existing wind turbines at Achany, Rosehall and Lairg are already visible although the Proposed Development would be closer to the LCT than these sites. For the Freewater – Glencalvie sub area, the Proposed Development would appear within the northern context of the LCT in the mid to far distance. For most of these areas within the detailed study area, this comprises a part of the context where wind turbines already form an existing feature although some small areas would gain intervisibility with wind turbines within the wider context as a result of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Magnitude of change is anticipated to range between <b>Medium</b> in areas closest to the Proposed Development around Ben More Assynt and Meall an Aonaich and <b>Low</b> elsewhere within the Ben More Assynt sub-area and would be <b>Low</b> within the Freewater – Glencalvie sub-area.</p>
<b>Effect Significance</b>	<p>Within the Ben More Assynt sub-area, the Proposed Development would move wind turbines closer to the LCT. In areas around Ben Hee and Braebeg, it is likely that this would have an inappreciable effect on the landscape character, as the proposed development would be sited in a part of the context where wind turbines are already present and, due to the distance involved, it would not be noticeably more influential than existing turbines on the character of the nearby mountain landscape. Around Ben More Assynt and Meall an Aonaich area, although the Proposed Development would be seen within the context of existing turbines, it would bring wind turbines noticeably closer to the LCT. This is anticipated to lead to a greater influence of wind turbines on this part of the LCT which would be likely to affect the sense of wild character, reducing the perception of distance between the mountains and the developed landscape. However, this is a very small part of the LCT overall and one that is already influenced by outside development, meaning that sensitivity to additional development is slightly reduced. The Proposed Development would also affect the characteristic of extensive views by appearing within these views. However, whilst this may lead to some localised significant visual effects, it is not anticipated to lead to a significant effect on landscape character as the sense of elevation and extensive visibility across the eastern landscape would still exist. It would also locally affect views towards the mountains but as this would be very localised, this is not considered to constitute a significant effect.</p> <p>Within the Freewater – Glencalvie sub-area, the Proposed Development may form a feature within elevated views in some areas. However, it would usually be seen within a context where existing turbines are already present and would therefore not noticeably alter the key characteristics of the LCT. In the small areas where existing turbines are not already intervisible, the appearance of the Proposed Development would reflect other</p>

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	<p>nearby parts of the landscape where turbines are already visible and would therefore appear unexceptional within the context and would not form a new characteristic.</p> <p>The resultant effect on the landscape character of the Ben More Assynt sub-area during construction and operation is anticipated to be <b>Minor</b> (not significant) within around 15km of the Proposed Development around Ben More Assynt, rising to a <i>localised</i> <b>Minor to Moderate</b> (not significant) effect at the closest point around Meall an Aonaich. The landscape effect would be <b>Negligible</b> elsewhere in this sub-area.</p> <p>The effect on the landscape character of the Freewater – Glencalvie sub-area is anticipated to be <b>Negligible</b> during construction and operation.</p>
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**Table 1.2.5: LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland**

<b>Landscape Baseline</b>	
<b>Description</b>	<p>Within the detailed study area, this LCT is located in Glen Cassley, approximately 1.5km from the closest turbines, Strath Oykel and Kyle of Sutherland (the Kyle) from 4km to 20km away, Strath Fleet 13.5km away, Strath Carron around 13km away and the lower end of Strath Tirry 8.3 km from the Proposed Development. It is comprised of linear straths, usually featuring a river or loch with varying degree of enclosure: some from deeply incised troughs whilst others such as Strath Tirry are broader and more open. Strath floors are predominantly under pasture, occasionally featuring areas of wetland and woodland. Varying proportions of semi-improved and rough grazing interspersed with mixed woodlands, forest plantation and occasional croft lands cover the side slopes. Vegetation in the upper straths becomes more dominated by heather moorland and mixed woodland. The sheltered and often fertile straths are relatively well-settled and accommodate access roads and other communications whilst settlement is sparser in upper straths, often limited to remote crofts and shooting lodges with associated policy grounds. Abandoned crofts are also often a feature of upper straths and there are occasional pre-historic features such as brochs. Wind farm development sited in the upland interior is visible from some straths where the skyline of containing hills dips or is breached by side valleys. There is also some localised influence from hydro infrastructure in the surrounding hills, such as hydro aqueduct pipelines seen from some areas of upper Glen Cassley. Views are generally focussed along straths from the narrow roads with a backdrop of mountains often revealed in some of the upper reaches.</p>
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	<p>The key characteristics of the Strath - Caithness &amp; Sutherland LCT are noted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Straths range from fairly straight deeply incised troughs to more winding valleys with a number of minor side glens.</li> <li>• River terraces and hummocky lower side slopes a common feature.</li> <li>• Water is a key characteristic with straths accommodating a central river meandering across the floodplain, often traced by clumps of birch and alder.</li> <li>• Lochs in some straths, where a string of small lochs add to the scenic richness of the lower strath.</li> <li>• Areas of wetland often present on the strath floors.</li> <li>• Smooth and fairly large pastures the predominant land cover on the floodplains of the straths, commonly enclosed by wire fences.</li> <li>• Semi-improved pastures, heather and grass moorland and coniferous plantations covering lower side slopes.</li> <li>• Increasing extent of moorland and woodland generally further up the straths, where the floodplain narrows and settlement is sparser.</li> <li>• Smaller strip-fields present on often hummocky, lower side slopes and associated with croft houses arranged in linear groups raised on terraces above the floodplain and sometimes backed by woodland.</li> <li>• Some crofts within the Straths more randomly dispersed or staggered on lower hill slopes.</li> <li>• Occasional small farms located in the broader and more fertile parts of the straths.</li> <li>• Settlement generally denser within the lower reaches of many straths, especially at bridging points, on the coast and close to major roads.</li> <li>• Many areas rich in archaeology with cairns, roundhouses, brochs and old field systems, usually found on side slopes.</li> <li>• Abandoned crofts, particularly within the upper straths and in narrow side glens.</li> <li>• Focus in views from roads provided by a number of estate shooting lodges, and clustered, predominantly 19th Century, often estate style buildings.</li> <li>• Narrow roads, commonly aligned along the edge of the floodplain, from which views are strongly channelled by the side slopes.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rounded Hills often forming prominent edges to the straths with shapely well-defined hills, providing a distinctive skyline and scenic backdrop.</li> <li>• Highly scenic backdrop of mountains often revealed in some of the upper reaches of these straths.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Value</b>	<p>Within the detailed study area none of the areas of Strath – Caithness and Sutherland fall within designated or protected landscapes although some fringe the edge of WLAs and SLAs. Nevertheless, the straths are valued locally as contrasting farmed and settled landscape within the predominant uplands, for their accessibility and views towards the mountain interior and, within the more remote glens for their historic association with past settlement.</p> <p>Landscape value is considered to be generally <b>Medium</b>.</p>
<b>Assessment of Landscape Effects</b>	
<b>Landscape Receptors</b>	<p>The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the proposed development comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pattern of landscape features such as settlement patterns, rivers, lochs, pasture lands, woodlands and trees, and archaeological features.</li> <li>• Rounded Hills often forming prominent edges to the straths with shapely well-defined hills, providing a distinctive skyline and scenic backdrop.</li> <li>• Highly scenic backdrop of mountains often revealed in some of the upper reaches of these straths.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	<p>This is a moderately valued LCT. It has a varying sense of enclosure within the study area, but patterns that are generally smaller scale in comparison with surrounding LCTs. These smaller scale landscapes tend to be susceptible to direct change of the type proposed which as the potential to become dominating and overwhelm other features. However, the presence of existing wind turbines and localised impacts of existing hydro infrastructure typically seen in the surrounding uplands reduces susceptibility to indirect change in the wider area</p> <p>Landscape sensitivity to change of the type proposed is considered to be <b>High</b> for direct change and <b>Medium</b> for indirect change.</p>
<b>Potential Effects</b>	<p>Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appearance of the Proposed Development in the surrounding landscape context may distract focus from local landscape features, affecting balance and patterns of development in the landscape.</li> <li>• Appearance of Proposed Development in the surrounding landscape context may interrupt the skyline and edges of straths, affecting the sense of enclosure.</li> <li>• Appearance of Proposed Development in the surrounding context may intrude into views towards mountainous or other valued backdrops.</li> </ul>
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	<p>There would be no direct change to this LCT. The ZTV indicates that potential intervisibility of the Proposed Development would be predominantly focussed within Glen Cassley, Strath Oykel, Kyle of Sutherland and Strath Tirry. There would be no intervisibility in Strath Carron and very limited potential intervisibility in Strath Fleet.</p> <p>Glen Cassley: The ZTV indicates relatively widespread intervisibility with Glen Cassley, although there are also large stretches of the glen floor where no intervisibility would be experienced. Highest numbers of turbines (15 – 20) would mostly only be intervisible from the western glen-slopes and limited parts of the glen floor around Glenmuick. Intervisibility across the glen floor within 2km is mostly limited to up to 5 turbines, with much of this area having no intervisibility. The number of turbines theoretically intervisible increases when travelling further north up the glen, with the greatest degree of intervisibility likely to be within an area between Badintagairt and Glenmuick where turbines would be seen on the south-western hill slopes. Construction activities including borrow pit works would also be seen in this area. Up to 15 turbines would be visible at the bottom of the glen around Rosehall although woodland between Rosehall and Glencassley Castle would limit</p>

	<p>the degree of actual intervisibility in the lower part of the glen. The bottom of the glen around Rosehall is also already influenced by the existing nearby turbines of Rosehall Wind Farm. Along with Achany Wind Farm, this development also has some more distant intervisibility further up the glen. However, the floor of the glen is mostly unaffected by existing wind farm development.</p> <p>The magnitude of landscape change is anticipated to be <b>Medium</b> for this sub-area during construction and operation as change is likely to be notable within a localised area between Badintagairt and Glenmuick, and perceptible within other parts of the glen where fewer numbers of turbines are partially obscured by landform and vegetation or existing turbines are already influential.</p> <p>Glen Oykel and Kyle of Sutherland (the Kyle): The ZTV indicates that there would be limited areas of intervisibility through these straths with the Proposed Development typically only present in the wider context, seen through side glens to the north. At the mouth of Glen Cassley, up to 20 turbines may be intervisible with smaller numbers of turbines potentially visible from the north-facing glen slopes of Glen Oykel and the Kyle to either side of this. These would be seen in the context of the closer Rosehall and Achany Wind Farms which already strongly influence these areas though the increase in turbines may be perceptible. An area of the Kyle around Invershin would also experience intervisibility of up to five turbines comprising only tips seen through the existing wind farms and likely to be imperceptible.</p> <p>The magnitude of landscape change for Strathy Oykel and Kyle of Sutherland is anticipated to be <b>Low</b> during construction and operation due to the very localised degree of intervisibility and the prominence of existing turbines within the areas that would be affected.</p> <p>Strath Tirry: The ZTV indicates widespread intervisibility across Strath Tirry, mostly comprising 5 to 15 turbines which would appear above the south-westerly skyline. All areas affected are already strongly influenced by the existing Achany, Rosehall and Lairg Wind Farms which appear on the southern skyline. Therefore, wind turbines are already a characteristic within the landscape context reducing the degree of change which would be perceived, although, the Proposed Development would add to turbines already influencing the landscape character and would increase the part of the surrounding skyline affected by wind turbines slightly.</p> <p>Magnitude of change for the Strath Tirry sub-area would be <b>Low</b> during construction and operation.</p> <p>Magnitude of change for all other areas would be <b>Negligible</b> during construction and operation.</p>
<p><b>Effect Significance</b></p>	<p>All effects on this LCT would be indirect. The greatest degree of effect would be in Glen Cassley where the proposed turbines would be likely to appear noticeably on the skyline of the section between Badintagairt and Glenmuick. There is also the potential for tracks and some continued evidence of reinstated borrow pits to remain perceptible. It is considered that in this area, the Proposed Development on the surrounding hill slopes and skyline may distract from the remote qualities and features of the upper glen and could diminish the perceived scale of the hills enclosing the eastern side of the glen, leading to a landscape somewhat characterised by wind turbines. However, the Proposed Development would not affect the sense of enclosure on the west side of the glen, or the connection to the interior, mountainous areas as the strength of these qualities is felt more towards the west and north. Construction and borrow pit activities would also be likely to be seen in this localised area during construction. Whilst this would lead to a greater degree of distraction, including potential activity and operation of plant, it is not considered that this would lead to a greater effect during construction than operation.</p> <p>Turbines would also appear on the skyline within a smaller area to the south of Glencassley Castle. These would be fewer in number and it is considered that the greater diversity of character within this part of the glen, with a greater coverage of woodland, would reduce the degree to which these turbines would influence the character. In the lowest parts of the glen, around Rosehall, wind turbines are already a feature within the context, but the appearance of the Proposed Development up the glen would increase the impression of</p>

	<p>wind development stretching further into the interior landscape. This effect would also occur within the adjoining strath areas of Strath Oykel and Kyle of Sutherland. However, elsewhere in Strath Oykel and Kyle of Sutherland there would be no noticeable change in character.</p> <p>At Strath Tirry, the more open character is already very influenced by features outwith the area including the existing wind turbines of Achany, Rosehall and Lairg on the southern skyline. The Proposed Development would therefore not introduce a new characteristic to this landscape but the increase the numbers of turbines and the extent of the southern skyline affected may lead to a small increase in the influence of wind turbines as a characteristic. However, it is not considered that they would affect the sense of enclosure or intrude into any particularly valued views of landscapes outwith the LCT.</p> <p>The landscape effect during construction and operation is therefore considered to be <u>locally Moderate</u> (significant) affecting a small area of Glen Cassley between Badintagairt and Glenmuick. Elsewhere in Glen Cassley, the transitional area between Glen Cassley, Strath Oykel and Kyle of Sutherland, and in Strath Tirry, a <b>Minor</b> (not significant) effect to landscape character is anticipated. In all other areas, the landscape effect would be <b>Negligible</b> (not significant), during construction and operation.</p>
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**Table 1.2.6: LCT 145: Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting**

<b>Landscape Baseline</b>	
<b>Description</b>	<p>This LCT is found in two locations within the detailed study area comprising the scattered rural crofting areas around the village of Lairg (Lairg sub-area) and on either side of the Dornoch Firth surrounding the villages of Bonar Bridge and Ardgay (Dornoch Firth sub-area). It comprises a transitional landscape between the more fertile low lying farmland and upland moorland slopes and hills is characterised by a patchwork of mixed woodland, conifer plantations, moorland and farmland with a dispersed settlement pattern of crofts and farms surrounding more densely settled villages. Coniferous forest is often found in low ridges, steep slopes and on wetter ground, and extensive commercial forest plantation can be found near Clashmore, while tracts of diverse native woodland grow in some of the more narrow and deep glens. The upper hill slopes support native pine, birch and rowan as well as patches of heath and wetter moss and many watercourses run through the narrow glens and broader basins. A past history of settlement results in many features of archaeological interest being present within this landscape, including chambered cairns, settlements and field systems. The wooded character gives this LCT a semi-enclosed character and the interplay between open and enclosed spaces often creates moments of surprise when passing through the landscape. Glimpsed views towards the surrounding hills or lochs or the Dornoch Firth can be obtained from high elevations.</p> <p>There is already some influence of wind turbine development in this LCT, particularly in the Lairg sub-area, where the turbines of the Lairg, Achany and Rosehall wind farms are seen in the surrounding context within glimpsed and elevated views.</p>
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	<p>The key characteristics of the Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting LCT are noted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rolling hill slopes and ridges cut by a number of valleys which radiate down from the Rounded Hills – Caithness and Sutherland to the coast.</li> <li>• North-west/south-east grain of the landform of ridges and valleys.</li> <li>• Loch Migdale sitting within a dip between parallel steep-sided ridges in the west of this Landscape Character Type.</li> <li>• Elevated undulating basins lie at the foot of the Rounded Hills – Caithness &amp; Sutherland above Lairg and Bonar Bridge.</li> <li>• High proportion of woodland cover, with extensive conifer forest on ridges.</li> <li>• Particularly rough and coarse-textured landscape on upper hill slopes, comprising extensive mixed semi-natural woodland and fragments of heath and wetter moss.</li> <li>• Small farms and crofts located in the broader valleys in the east, commonly set above long strip pastures, fenced or occasionally enclosed by boulder walls.</li> <li>• Numerous prehistoric and historic environment features.</li> <li>• The pattern of crofts and access roads reflecting the grain of the landform of ridges and valleys with croft houses located on valley sides below the lower forest margin.</li> <li>• Pockets of pasture appear as if ‘carved out’ of woodlands in places.</li> <li>• Density of housing increasing close to the larger settlements.</li> <li>• Semi-enclosed character of this well-wooded landscape with occasional views.</li> <li>• Attractive views from small roads high up the slopes, giving views to the Rounded Hills – Caithness &amp; Sutherland and glimpses of the Dornoch Firth.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Value</b>	<p>Parts of this LCT around Bonar Bridge and Ardgay fall within the Dornoch Firth NSA. It is valued as part of the setting to the Dornoch Firth and Loch Shin areas and for its settled, rural character, though is of mixed and variable character.</p> <p>Landscape value is considered to be <b>Medium to High</b>.</p>

<b>Assessment of Landscape Effects</b>	
<b>Landscape Receptors</b>	<p>The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the proposed development comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pattern of crofts and access roads reflecting the grain of the landform of ridges and valleys and patterns of pastureland and woodland.</li> <li>• Semi-enclosed character of this well-wooded landscape with occasional views.</li> <li>• Attractive views from small roads high up the slopes, giving views to the Rounded Hills – Caithness &amp; Sutherland and glimpses of the Dornoch Firth.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	<p>This is a valued landscape with a settled and intimate character. However, it's semi-enclosed and semi-developed character, with existing influence of wind turbines, gives some limited opportunity to accommodate a degree of change of the type proposed.</p> <p>Landscape sensitivity to change of the type proposed is <b>Medium - High</b>.</p>
<b>Potential Effects</b>	<p>Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The appearance of the proposed wind turbines within the wider landscape context could distract from the small scale patterns of the LCT.</li> <li>• The Proposed Development may form a feature with views to other landscape areas and distract from existing focal points or features.</li> </ul>
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	<p>There would be no direct change to this LCT. Indirect change may occur in the form of intervisibility with the Proposed Development within the surrounding landscape context.</p> <p>Within the Lairg sub-area, the Proposed Development would be intervisible with elevated areas to the north and west of Lairg, likely to appear within westerly views, as turbines on the horizon, to the north of existing Achany and Rosehall turbines but at a similar scale. This would not add a new characteristic to the LCT but would be likely to comprise a perceptible increase in surrounding wind turbine development, potentially affecting some limited areas or views where turbines are not already a feature.</p> <p>Within the Dornoch Firth sub-area, potential intervisibility would be limited to Bonar Bridge and few surrounding slopes and forest areas. However, this would be limited to a small number of turbine tips potentially seen in the north-westerly context, to the rear of existing turbines at Achany and Rosehall where they would be likely to be indiscernible.</p> <p>Magnitude of change during construction and operation is anticipated to be <b>Low</b> for the Lairg sub-area and <b>Negligible</b> for the Dornoch Firth sub-area.</p>
<b>Effect Significance</b>	<p>Potential effects on this LCT would be indirect only. Within the Lairg sub-area, the appearance of turbine on the westerly skyline would be similar to the influence of existing turbines. However, it would increase the portion of the surrounding skyline affected potentially leading to more of an impression of the LCT being surrounded by wind turbines and reducing the sense of the connection to the more undeveloped setting of upland hills. Nevertheless, given the existing influence of wind turbines as a characteristic of this LCT, this is not considered to constitute a significant effect on the landscape character.</p> <p>Within the Dornoch Firth sub-area the Proposed Development would be indiscernible in the context in relation to existing wind farm development.</p> <p>The landscape effect is therefore anticipated to be <b>Minor</b> (not significant) for the Lairg sub-area during construction and operation and <b>Negligible</b> for the Dornoch Firth sub-area.</p>

**Table 1.2.7: LCT 329: Rounded Mountain Massif**

<b>Landscape Baseline</b>	
<b>Description</b>	Within the detailed study area, this LCT covers an area 20.4 km to the south of the nearest Proposed Development turbine covering the lower hillslopes to the north-east of Carn Chuinneag. It is described as comprising a group of broad-based mountains with high summits and steep slopes surrounded by a landscape of lower rounded hills and straths across the south and east of Ross and Cromarty. These mountains often have prominent, rugged summits, which can be angular or rounded, and smooth shoulders which curve down to u-shaped valleys and wide straths accommodating meandering rivers or lochs. Vegetation consists mainly of heather and rough grassland, giving the mountains a smooth appearance. Conifer plantations are found on some of the lower slopes and sheltered margins, and small patches of native broad leaf woodland occur. This is a largely uninhabited landscape with few man-made structures, although wind turbines can be seen in the easterly context. It has an open and exposed character, and often extensive panoramic views across neighbouring peaks and distant mountains. It has a vast feel, with few indicators of scale, and there is a strong sense of remoteness and wildness.
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	<p>The key characteristics of the Rounded Mountain Massif LCT are noted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High, broad-based, smooth sided, lobed mountains found in discrete groups set within, and sweeping down to, smooth, lower hills and high level straths and u-shaped valleys, giving a sense of grandeur.</li> <li>• Well-defined summits with either a rounded or angular profile. Often both occur on the same summit where rounded tops have been sculpted by glacial activity into corries and cliff faces.</li> <li>• Similar height to Rugged Mountain Massif – Ross &amp; Cromarty but appear lower due to their landform.</li> <li>• Fresh snow lines disclose the true height of the mountains.</li> <li>• Rugged or stony summits and extensive moorland groundcover.</li> <li>• Strong relationship with adjoining Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes – Ross &amp; Cromarty type which unifies the mountain groups into a vast landscape.</li> <li>• Limited settlement, few footpaths or other structures, and little evidence of historic or current land use.</li> <li>• Far reaching views from upper reaches to the mountains, plains and firths in adjacent areas.</li> <li>• Vastness of the landscape due to simple lines of mountain profile, sweeping horizons, undifferentiated ground cover, and few man-made structures to indicate scale.</li> <li>• Wild character over much of the area.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Value</b>	Within the detailed study area, this LCT falls within WLA 29 (Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis) and on the edge of (but just outside) the Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA. It is valued for its, remote and wild characteristics and elevated mountainous character, within the generally lower lying, easterly context which results in far-reaching views. Landscape value is considered to be <b>High</b> .
<b>Assessment of Landscape Effects</b>	
<b>Landscape Receptors</b>	<p>The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the proposed development comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-defined summits with either a rounded or angular profile.</li> <li>• Strong relationship with adjoining Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes – Ross &amp; Cromarty type and also rounded hills Caithness and Sutherland</li> <li>• Far reaching views from upper reaches to the mountains, plains and firths in adjacent areas.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vastness of the landscape due to simple lines of mountain profile, sweeping horizons, undifferentiated ground cover, and few man-made structures to indicate scale.</li> <li>• Limited settlement, few footpaths or other structures, and little evidence of historic or current land use leading to wild character.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	This is a highly valued landscape. Although its vast scale and simple structure is theoretically capable of accommodating development of the type proposed, the remote and wild characteristics are very susceptible to change. However, the presence of some existing wind farm development within the landscape context leads to locally reduced sensitivity to indirect change. Sensitivity is therefore considered to be <b>Medium to High</b> .
<b>Potential Effects</b>	<p>Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appearance of Proposed Development in northerly landscape context could distract from the simple lines of the mountains and rounded hills;</li> <li>• Appearance of Proposed Development in northerly landscape context create a new focus in far reaching views and reduce sense of scale;</li> <li>• Appearance of Proposed Development in northerly landscape context could reduce sense of wild character.</li> </ul>
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	<p>There would be no direct change to this LCT. Potential indirect change would occur as a result of intervisibility with the Proposed Development in the northerly context. At over 20km to the nearest turbine, this would appear relatively distant, adjacent to the existing, smaller but closer turbines of the Achany and Rosehall Wind Farms. There would be a slight increase in the area from which turbines would be theoretically intervisible although within these areas it would be a very small feature in the context as only small numbers of distant turbines would be distantly intervisible. As similar influence of wind turbines is already present within this LCT, this is considered to lead to an inappreciable degree of change to the landscape characteristics.</p> <p>Magnitude of change is anticipated to be <b>Negligible</b> during construction and operation.</p>
<b>Effect Significance</b>	<p>Effects on this LCT would be indirect, usually arising from the appearance of wind turbines within the northern context. The wind turbines would be seen within a context of existing turbines or would form a small additional feature in themselves, similar to other small clusters of turbines which are already seen within the surrounding context of this LCT. Therefore, notwithstanding a possible perceptible increase in turbines in some specific views, an increased influence of wind turbines as a characteristic of the LCT is not anticipated to occur.</p> <p>Landscape effect is anticipated to be <b>Negligible</b> (not significant) during construction and operation.</p>