

Technical Appendix 3.3: Visual Assessment Review

Introduction

In terms of assessing any potential change to visual effects, the relevant design change of the 29 Turbine Proposed Development is the removal of seven turbines from the 36 Turbine Scheme presented in the EIA Report (April 2020) along with short sections of track and hardstanding associated with these seven turbines alone.

A review of the implications arising from the removal of these seven turbines for each representative viewpoint is provided below. The effect ratings used are as described in the methodology for the Visual Assessment in the EIA Report (April 2020) (Volume 2, Chapter 7, Section 7.9).

Comparison of Visual Effects for Representative Viewpoints

Table 1: Comparison of Visual Effects for Representative Viewpoints

Viewpoint	Effect Rating in EIA Report (36 Turbine Scheme)	Potential Changes to Visual Effects	Effect Rating for 29 Turbine Proposed Development	Change to Effect Rating
VP1: Beinn a' Mheadhoin (Glen Affric) (Figure 3.8.1.1.1 – 3.8.1.1.2)	Minor (not significant)	Removal of seven turbines from the 36 Turbine Scheme Layout would reduce the horizontal spread of the eastern cluster and reduce the clustering of the western cluster. Removal of Turbine 20 would also reduce the number of hubs visible in the western cluster. However, despite these compositional improvements, it is not considered that the 29 Turbine Proposed Development would change the level of visual effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme as wind turbines would remain perceptible.	Minor (not significant)	No Change (with reduced influence of turbines)
VP2: Great Glen Way, Balbeg (Figure 3.8.2.1.1 – 3.8.2.1.2)	Minor (not significant)	None of the seven turbines proposed for removal are visible from this viewpoint. There would therefore be no change to the level of effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Minor (not significant)	No Change

Viewpoint	Effect Rating in EIA Report (36 Turbine Scheme)	Potential Changes to Visual Effects	Effect Rating for 29 Turbine Proposed Development	Change to Effect Rating
VP3: Meall Fuar-mhonaidh (Figure 3.8.3.1.1 – 3.8.3.3)	Minor-Moderate (not significant)	Compared to the 36 Turbine Scheme, the 29 Turbine Proposed Development would reduce the density of the turbines in the west in particular. Although it would still increase the visual presence of wind turbines in the area, they would clearly be seen in landscape beyond the Great Glen where wind turbines are already present. There would also be a very clear separation between the Proposed Development and the Beinneun / Millennium cluster and they would be viewed in combination with Stronelaig and Corriegarth. Whilst the turbines would still be noticeable in this view, this effect would not be significant, given the existing turbines affecting the view. It is not considered that these small compositional improvements would change the level of visual effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Minor-Moderate (not significant)	No Change (with reduced influence of turbines)
VP4: Carn na Saobhaidhe (Figure 3.8.4.1.1 - 3.8.4.2)	Minor-Moderate (not significant)	The 29 Turbine Proposed Development would reduce the horizontal spread of the western cluster compared to the 36 Turbine Scheme. The removal the turbines from the western cluster would improve the visual composition with Stronelaig by reducing the number of turbine hubs and blades that appear above the ridge. However, despite these compositional improvements it is not considered that this would change the level of visual effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Minor-Moderate (not significant)	No Change (with reduced influence of turbines)

Viewpoint	Effect Rating in EIA Report (36 Turbine Scheme)	Potential Changes to Visual Effects	Effect Rating for 29 Turbine Proposed Development	Change to Effect Rating
VP5: Carn Dubh (Figure 3.8.5.1.1 – 3.8.5.2.2)	Minor (not significant)	The 29 Turbine Proposed Development would help reduce turbine density of the western cluster when seen in combination with Stronelairg and create a more even spread across the development compared to the 36 Turbine Scheme. Removal of Turbine 29 would improve the visual coherence of the eastern cluster with Stronelairg as it appears to sit elevated above the existing turbines. Despite these compositional improvements it is not anticipated that these would change the level of visual effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Minor (not significant)	No Change (with reduced influence of turbines)
VP6: Glen Markie (Figure 3.8.6.1)	Negligible (not significant)	The removal of Turbines 20 and 23 as part of the 29 Turbine Proposed Development would slightly reduce the number of turbines visible compared to the 36 Turbine Scheme. However given the prominence of Stronelairg it is unlikely to result in a perceptible change to the level of visual effect	Negligible (not significant)	No Change (with reduced influence of turbines)
VP7: Carn a' Chuilinn (Figure 3.8.7.1.1 - 3.8.7.2)	Moderate (significant)	The 29 Turbine Proposed Development would reduce the density of the western cluster compared to the 36 Turbine Scheme. It would also remove the turbines that appear to sit slightly apart behind the fold of the landscape. However, it is not considered that these small compositional improvements would change the level of visual effect from this VP, which is a Corbett summit on the plateau, located less than 5km from the closest proposed turbine, to the west of the 29 Turbine Proposed Development.	Moderate (significant)	No Change (with reduced influence of turbines)

Viewpoint	Effect Rating in EIA Report (36 Turbine Scheme)	Potential Changes to Visual Effects	Effect Rating for 29 Turbine Proposed Development	Change to Effect Rating
VP8: Carn Dearg (Monadhliath) (Figure 3.8.8.1.1 - 3.8.8.1.2)	Minor-Moderate (not significant)	The 29 Turbine Proposed Development would result in a noticeable reduction of the horizontal spread of turbines compared to the 36 Turbine Scheme. The remaining turbines would be largely contained with the horizontal spread of the Stronelaig although the eastern cluster turbines in particular would appear larger and more prominent. Therefore despite the compositional improvements the level of visual effect is not anticipated to change from that identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Minor-Moderate (not significant)	No Change (with reduced influence of turbines)
VP9: Geal Charn (Monadhliath) (Figure 3.8.9.1.1 - 3.8.9.2.2)	Minor-Moderate (not significant)	The removal of Turbine 29 would reduce the prominence of the eastern cluster and improve the visual coherence with Stronelaig compared to the 36 Turbine Scheme. Removal of the turbines from the western cluster would also reduce the density of turbines and would remove a number of turbines that appear to sit slightly higher and breach the skyline thereby generally improving the composition compared to the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Minor (not significant)	Reduction
VP10: Braeriach (Figure 3.8.10.1.1 – 3.8.10.1.2)	Negligible (not significant)	The 29 Turbine Proposed Development would reduce the horizontal spread of the turbines, however given the distance in is unlikely that this change would be perceptible compared to the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Negligible (not significant)	No Change (with reduced influence of turbines)
VP11: Carn Liath (Figure 3.8.11.1.1 – 3.8.11.2)	Minor-Moderate (not significant)	The 29 Turbine Proposed Development would remove some of the nearest turbines on the edge of the plateau and thin out the western cluster compared to the 36 Turbine Scheme. This would also reduce the number of turbines visible in the far right of the western cluster. The removal of Turbine 29 from the eastern cluster would improve visual cohesion with the Stronelaig turbines.	Minor (not significant)	Reduction

Viewpoint	Effect Rating in EIA Report (36 Turbine Scheme)	Potential Changes to Visual Effects	Effect Rating for 29 Turbine Proposed Development	Change to Effect Rating
VP12: Glen Shirra (Figure 3.8.12.1)	Negligible (not significant)	The removal of Turbine 29 would remove any visibility of the 29 Turbine Proposed Development from this view. However, as visibility of Turbine 29 would have been very limited, its removal is unlikely to result in a perceptible change to the level of visual effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Negligible (not significant)	No Change (with reduced influence of turbines)
VP13: Geal Charn (Ardverikie) (Figure 3.8.13.1 - 3.8.13.2)	Minor (not significant)	Although the 29 Turbine Proposed Development would not reduce the horizontal spread of turbines, it would reduce the intensity of turbines in the western cluster and remove some of the turbines which appear slightly larger, further diminishing their presence compared to the 36 Turbine Scheme. It is not considered that these small compositional changes would change the level of visual effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Minor (not significant)	No Change (with reduced influence of turbines)
VP14: A87, Loch Garry Viewpoint (Figure 3.8.14.1.1 – 3.8.14.1.2)	Minor (not significant)	The 29 Turbine Proposed Development would not result in any changes to this view compared to the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Minor (not significant)	No Change
VP15: Beinn Teallach(Figure 3.8.15.1.1 - Figure 3.8.15.2)	Minor-Moderate (not significant)	The 29 Turbine Proposed Development would remove some of the nearest turbines which appear to sit larger and closer than Stronelairg. This would result in a slight improvement to the composition of the view, however, it would not change the level of visual effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Minor-Moderate (not significant)	No Change (with reduced influence of turbines)
VP16: Footpath East of Loch Spey (Figure 3.8.16.1)	Minor-Moderate (not significant)	The 29 Turbine Proposed Development would remove any visibility from this view, reducing the potential effects identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Negligible (not significant)	Reduction

Viewpoint	Effect Rating in EIA Report (36 Turbine Scheme)	Potential Changes to Visual Effects	Effect Rating for 29 Turbine Proposed Development	Change to Effect Rating
VP17: Carn Dearg (Glen Roy) (Figure 3.8.17.1.1 – 3.8.17.1.2)	Minor-Moderate (not significant)	The 29 Turbine Proposed Development would reduce the number of turbine tips visible to the east where they had the potential to create a new focus as part of the 36 Turbine Scheme. The changes would result in a slight improvement to a relatively small part of the larger view, however, it is not considered that they would change the level of effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Minor-Moderate (not significant)	No Change (with reduced influence of turbines)
VP18: Loch na Lairige (Figure 3.8.18.1)	Moderate (significant)	The 29 Turbine Proposed Development would remove the nearest and most prominent turbines from the view compared to the 36 Turbine Scheme. It would also improve the sense of containment of the development within the landform 'bowl'. This would result in an improvement to the view and reduction in level of visual effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Minor-Moderate (not significant)	Reduction
VP19: Carn na Caim (Figure 3.8.19.1 - 3.8.19.2)	Minor (not significant)	The 29 Turbine Proposed Development would reduce the intensity of the western cluster, however, given the distance in is unlikely that this change would be perceptible compared to the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Minor (not significant)	No Change (with reduced influence of turbines)
VP20: Urquhart Castle (Figure 3.8.20)	Negligible (not significant)	The 29 Turbine Proposed Development would not be visible from this VP and would not result in any changes to this view compared to the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Negligible (not significant)	No Change

Comparison of Visual Effects for Residential Areas

Table 2: Comparison of Visual Effects for Residential Areas

Receptor	Effect Rating in EIA Report (36 Turbine Scheme)	Potential Changes to Visual Effects	Effect Rating for 29 Turbine Proposed Development	Change to Effect Rating
RRL1: Bunloit, Balbeg and Incherrach House	Minor (not significant)	None of the seven turbines proposed for removal are visible from this viewpoint. There would therefore be no change to the level of effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Minor (not significant)	No Change
RRL2: Whitebridge	Minor (not significant)	None of the seven turbines proposed for removal are visible from this viewpoint. There would therefore be no change to the level of effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Minor (not significant)	No Change
RRL3: Foyers (upper)	Negligible (not significant)	None of the seven turbines proposed for removal are visible from this viewpoint. There would therefore be no change to the level of effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Negligible (not significant)	No Change
RRL4: Garvamore and Garvabeg	Minor – Moderate (not significant)	The 29 Turbine Proposed Development would reduce the majority of visibility from this area compared to the 36 Turbine Scheme. Remaining theoretical visibility would be limited to tips of 2 turbines partially filtered by trees which are likely to be generally barely perceptible as an element in the view. This would result in an improvement to the view and reduction in level of visual effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Negligible (not significant)	Reduced
RRL5: Killin and Garrogie Lodges	Negligible (not significant)	The removal of Turbine 29 would further reduce the already very limited potential visibility from this location. Despite the improvements here would be no change to the level of effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Negligible (not significant)	No Change (with reduced influence of turbines)

Comparison of Visual Effects for Routes

Table 3: Comparison of Visual Effects for Routes

Receptor	Effect Rating in EIA Report (36 Turbine Scheme)	Potential Changes to Visual Effects	Effect Rating for 29 Turbine Proposed Development	Change to Effect Rating
R1: A82 Trunk Road	Negligible (not significant)	None of the seven turbines proposed for removal are visible from this viewpoint. There would therefore be no change to the level of effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Negligible (not significant)	No Change
R2: B852 (also part of National Cycle Route 78)	Negligible (not significant)	None of the seven turbines proposed for removal are visible from this viewpoint. There would therefore be no change to the level of effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Negligible (not significant)	No Change
R3: B862 (also part of National Cycle Route 78)	Negligible (not significant)	None of the seven turbines proposed for removal are visible from this viewpoint. There would therefore be no change to the level of effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Negligible (not significant)	No Change
R4: The Great Glen Way	Minor (not significant)	The 29 Turbine Proposed Development would reduce the density of the western cluster where it is glimpsed in views from elevated sections of route compared to the 36 Turbine Scheme. Despite these small compositional improvements it is not anticipated that they would change the level of visual effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Minor (not significant)	No Change
R5: Scottish Hill Track 200: Dalwhinnie to Feagour (Strath Mashie)	Minor (not significant)	Compared to the 36 Turbine Scheme the 29 Turbine Proposed Development would reduce the number of turbines perceptible from the highest part of this route, between Meall nan Eagan and Carn na Ceàrdaich. It would also remove the nearest and most prominent turbines from the view improving the sense of containment of the development within the landform 'bowl'. This would result in an improvement to the view and reduction in level of visual effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Negligible (not significant)	Reduction

Receptor	Effect Rating in EIA Report (36 Turbine Scheme)	Potential Changes to Visual Effects	Effect Rating for 29 Turbine Proposed Development	Change to Effect Rating
R6: Scottish Hill Track 231: Tomatin to Whitebridge	Negligible (not significant)	The 29 Turbine Proposed Development would slightly reduce the number of turbines visible compared to the 36 Turbine Scheme. However, despite this improvement, it would be unlikely to lead to any perceptible reduction in visual amenity when travelling this route when considering the prominence of the existing Stronelaig turbines.	Negligible (not significant)	No Change (with reduced influence of turbines)
R7: Scottish Hill Track 235: Laggan to Whitebridge	Minor (not significant)	As the route passes through the eastern cluster, between Turbines 30 and 31, the 29 Turbine Proposed Development is unlikely to result in a reduction in the level of effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Minor (not significant)	No Change
R8: Scottish Hill Track 237: Laggan to Roybridge or Glenfintaig Lodge (Spean Bridge) by Leckroy	Minor – Moderate (not significant)	The 29 Turbine Proposed Development would remove visibility of turbines from large sections of the route compared to the 36 Turbine Scheme. In the area around Garvabridge it would reduce visibility to tips of 2 turbines partially filtered by trees which are likely to be generally barely perceptible as an element in the view. This would result in an improvement to the view and reduction in level of visual effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Negligible (not significant)	Reduction
R9: South Loch Ness Trail	Negligible (not significant)	None of the seven turbines proposed for removal are visible from this viewpoint. There would therefore be no change to the level of effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Negligible (not significant)	No Change
R10: Monadhliath Trail	Minor (not significant)	This route provides access to the site and turbines would appear very prominent, but in areas where the Stronelaig turbines are already prominent. Although the 29 Turbine Proposed Development would see the removal of seven turbines, it would not reduce the length of the route from which turbines would be immediate and close. There would therefore be no change to the level of effect identified for the 36 Turbine Scheme.	Minor (not significant)	No Change