Galileo 05 Limited

Lynemore Wind Farm

Environmental Impact Assessment Report (Volume 1)

Chapter 5 – Landscape and Visual

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GALILEO EMPOWER

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Non-Technical Summary / Executive Summary

5.1.1 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and the design of the Proposed Development has taken account of relevant legislation, national and local planning requirements in relation to wind farm development.

5.1.2 There would be no significant effects on any nationally important landscape planning designations including the Cairngorms National Park and Cairngorms Dark Sky Park, National Scenic Areas, or Wild Land Areas. Further there would be no significant effects on any locally important landscape planning designations, including the two closest Special Landscape Areas of Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors and Loch Ness and Duntelchaig in the Highlands.

5.1.3 The Lynemore Wind Farm is located within the undesignated Rolling Uplands landscape character, which is noted by The Highland Council's '*Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance*' (OWESG) *November 2016 as an area with lower sensitivity to large scale wind farms that may have some scope for further large-scale development. This landscape and part of the adjacent Strathnairn Farmed Strath would be significantly affected. Although significant landscape effects are to be expected, the extent of these is not unusual for wind farm development and the large scale and simple characteristics of the host landscape make it most able to accommodate larger turbines.*

5.1.4 There would be significant visual effects on the views experienced by people within a localised area including road and rail users (on parts of the A9, B9154, B861 and Inverness to Perth rail line) and residents viewing from elevated areas near Balnafoich in Strathnairn and Leachkin in Inverness. The views from some recreational routes would be significantly affected, including part of General Wade's Road heritage path and Sustrans National Cycle Route 7 near Tomatin and some Core Paths. There would be no significant effects on views from Munros or Corbetts. There would be cumulative and significant effects on the views from three other walked hill summits (Carn a' Choire Mhoir, Carn nan Tri-tighearnan and Carn na Lair) The Proposed Development would be viewed in the context of existing wind farm development, set within wide panoramic views.

5.1.5 There are no residential properties within 1 km and none would be significantly affected in terms of their residential visual amenity.

5.1.6 The Lighting Strategy for the aviation warning lights would provide mitigation to minimise night-time effects.

5.1.7 The Proposed Development includes native riparian woodland planting which would provide multiple benefits in line with Scotland's Strategic Framework for Biodiversity (2023) objectives. From a landscape perspective, the woodland planting would strengthen and enhance the local the landscape by screening views of the proposed turbines, as well as providing visual enhancement along the A9 corridor closest to the site boundary.

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This Chapter assesses the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development. It should be read with reference to the Project Description in **Chapter 2: The Proposed Development**. All additional material relating to this chapter can be found in **Volumes 2a, 2b, 2d and 3** which include the figures, visualisations and appendices respectively.

5.1.2 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is one of the key components of the EIA for wind farms due to the introduction of new development and tall elements (wind turbines) into the landscape. The Proposed Development has been considered against the requirements of the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. In addition, reliance has been placed on relevant planning policy as discussed in **Chapter 3: Planning and Energy Policy Context**, noting the adoption of the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) in February 2023.

5.1.3 The objective of this assessment has been to determine the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development on the existing landscape resource and visual amenity. The following landscape and visual receptors have been assessed:

- Landscape character, key characteristics, and elements;
- Designated landscapes; and
- Views and visual amenity experienced by residents, tourists / visitors, recreational and transport users.

5.1.4 The Site is located southwest of the A9 at Moy and approximately 6 km northwest of Tomatin within an undesignated area of *Rolling Uplands - Inverness* landscape character in the Highlands. The Proposed Development is focused on the hill of Carn na h-Easgainn (616m AOD) approximately 10 km equidistant from Inverness to the northwest and the boundary of the Cairngorms National Park to the southeast. Areas of open deciduous woodland and commercial plantation and the A9 lie to the north of the Site. The Farr / Glen Kyllachy Wind Farm complex lies approximately 2 km to the southwest of the Site.

5.1.5 In summary, the Proposed Development (**Figure 2.1**) comprises 14 wind turbines with a maximum blade tip height of up to 200m and associated infrastructure. The associated infrastructure includes the site entrance (via the A9), internal access tracks hardstanding areas and crane pads. The site of the borrow pit will also be used for the on-site substation, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and telecommunications equipment. There will be two temporary construction compounds / laydown areas that will be restored post construction. The A9 site entrance will take account of proposed dualling and new slip roads and the cables linking the turbines to the substation will be underground.

5.1.6 The assessment process has encompassed time-limited periods for the construction, operation, and decommissioning of the Proposed Development, the latter of which entails a reversal of many of the landscape and visual effects. Although the operation period for the Proposed Development is technically long term and reversible, as it will be subject to decommissioning, its 50-year duration has been assessed in the same manner as permanent development.

5.1.7 This chapter is supported by a number of Technical Appendices (as set out within Volume 3), comprising:

- **Technical Appendix 5.1:** Methodology and Glossary;
- **Technical Appendix 5.2:** Viewpoint Analysis;
- **Technical Appendix 5.3**: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment;
- **Technical Appendix 5.4**: Night-time Assessment; and
- **Technical Appendix 5.5**: Appraisal of the Proposed Development against The Highland Council's Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance – Landscape Criteria.

5.1.8 Figures illustrating this chapter are contained within **Volumes 2a-2b** and include plans and visualisations of the Proposed Development, the latter of which are presented to accord with the NatureScot (NS) guidance (2017). Further figures illustrating plans and visualisations in support of the Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) and Night-time Assessment are contained in **Volumes 2a-2b** whilst visualisations presented to accord with the Highland Council (THC) guidance (2016) are contained within **Volume 2d**.

5.1.9 Other key relevant chapters include **Chapter 2: The Proposed Development, Chapter 3: Planning and Energy Policy Context, Chapter 9: Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, Chapter 12: Socio-Economics, Recreation and Tourism** and **Chapter 13: Other Issues (including Aviation and Forestry)**.

Variations and Mico-siting

5.1.10 Post consent, the location of the proposed 14 turbines would be subject to micro-siting of up to +/- 50m. Viewpoint analysis confirms that a micro-siting allowance of up to 50m is unlikely to significantly alter the ZTV pattern or change the overall results of the LVIA with the exception of the outer-most turbines. It may however alter the layout design and visual composition of the turbines, for example reducing or increasing turbine stacking. Any micro-siting allowance of up to 50m remains subject to the existing site constraints which, in practice, would limit this movement within the site area.

5.1.11 Variations to the turbine dimensions, within the overall maximum blade tip heights, could affect the overall appearance and proportion of the turbines and each option would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Although unlikely, increases to the turbine hub height (resulting in a smaller rotor diameter) within the overall blade tip height and micro-siting may for example alter the number of aviation warning lights that are visible from some locations and consequently alter the night-time assessment.

5.2 Statutory and Planning Context

5.2.1 The LVIA process has taken account of relevant legislation, national and local planning requirements in relation to wind farm development, as described in **Chapter 3: Planning and Energy Policy Context**, and the **Planning Statement** which accompanies this Section 36 Application. This includes NPF4 (Scottish Government, 2023), the Highland-

wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) (THC, 2012) and Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2 (IMFLDP2) (THC, 2024). Further information on strategic landscape planning guidance from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) / NS[1] and The Highland Council (THC) is provided here.

Legislation and National Planning Policy

5.2.2 The Proposed Development being greater than 50MW, falls within Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 and the Schedule 9 requirement on the Scottish Ministers to have "*regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty*" and to provide reasonable mitigation as follows:

- *"(a) shall have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest; and*

(b) shall do what they reasonably can to mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects."The LVIA contains the topic specific information necessary to enable the Ministers to discharge their duty

National Planning Framework 4

5.2.3 NPF4 was adopted by the Scottish Ministers on 13 February 2023, following approval by the Scottish Parliament in January 2023. This replaces NPF3 and Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). NPF4 now forms part of the statutory development plan for all areas in Scotland.

5.2.4 NPF4 Annex B sets out statements of need for national development and provides that onshore electricity generation from renewables exceeding 50 megawatts (MW) capacity is strategically important, accordingly classifying it as a national development (category 3: Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure). Inclusion as a national development establishes the general need for renewable projects of strategic scale across Scotland.

5.2.5 NPF4 supports development which helps to meet Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions targets and states "*The global climate emergency and the nature crisis have formed the foundations for the spatial strategy as a whole. The regional priorities share opportunities and challenges for reducing emissions and adapting to the long-term impacts of climate change, in a way which protects and enhances our natural environment*" (p. 8).

5.2.6 Relevant landscape policies in NPF4 include:

- Policy 1 Tacking the Climate and Nature crisis;
- Policy 3 Biodiversity;
- Policy 4 Natural places;

[1] Previously Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH).

- Policy 6 Forestry, woodland and trees; and
- Policy 11 Energy.

5.2.7 In relation to the project design and LVIA, Policy 11, 'e' advises that:

"In addition, project design and mitigation will demonstrate how the following impacts are addressed:

- *…ii. significant landscape and visual impacts, recognising that such impacts are to be expected for some forms of renewable energy. Where impacts are localised and/or appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they will generally be considered to be acceptable;*
- *iii. public access, including impact on long distance walking and cycling routes and scenic routes; …*
- *x. impacts on trees, woods and forests;*
- *xi. proposals for the decommissioning of developments, including ancillary infrastructure, and site restoration; … and*
- *xiii. cumulative impacts."*

5.2.8 When considering the Proposed Development, consideration was given to the global climate and nature crises and the proposed woodland / forestry planting off the A9 within the Site boundary will contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity and strengthening nature networks and the connections between them, reflecting NPF4 Policy 3. The Proposed Development will also provide landscape mitigation and will enhance, expand and improve woodland and tree cover, reflectingNPF4 Policies 6 and 14 which seeks well designed development.

Highland Council Planning Policy

5.2.9 At a local planning policy level, the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) (2012) and in particular Policy 67: Renewable Energy Development and THC's *Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance* (2016) (OWESG) are relevant. Additionally, THC's *Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy* (2018), *Supplementary Guidance: Trees, Woodlands and Development* (2013), and *Highland Council Biodiversity Guidance (draft)* (2023) are relevant for mitigation design considerations.

Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) (2012)

5.2.10 Policy 67 provides support for proposals which are "*located, sited and designed such that they will not be significantly detrimental overall*". The policy details the following landscape related criteria against which wind energy developments will be assessed:

- *"… natural, built and cultural heritage features;*
- *visual impact and impact on the landscape character of the surrounding area (the design and location of the proposal should reflect the scale and character of the landscape and seek to minimise landscape and visual impact, subject to any other considerations);*
- *amenity at sensitive locations, including residential properties, work places and recognised visitor sites (in or outwith a settlement boundary);*

- *the amenity of users of any Core Path or other established public access for walking, cycling or horse riding; and*
- *tourism and recreation interests.*"

5.2.11 Other policies noted include Policy 57: Natural Built and Cultural Heritage; Policy 61: Landscape; Policy 77: Public Access; and Policy 78: Long Distance Routes.

Supplementary Guidance: Onshore Wind Energy

5.2.12 THC's '*Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance*' (OWESG) was adopted by the Council in November 2016. The Guidance makes it clear at the outset that sections related to various land use planning topics are informative and not exhaustive, and proposals will continue to be assessed by all relevant policies in the HwLDP. The OWESG does not introduce policy advice additional to Policy 67 of the LDP.

5.2.13 THC's OWESG, paragraphs 4.10-17 advises that wind farm development "*should seek to avoid significant adverse landscape and visual effects individually and cumulatively*". Whilst the avoidance of significant effects is sought through the design process it should be noted that significant adverse landscape and visual effects as a result of wind farm development cannot be avoided due to the scale and height of wind turbines. In this respect, paragraph 4.14 of the OWESG advises that "*where effects are unavoidable, appropriate mitigation will be required to overcome or otherwise minimise impacts. For example, this may include*:

- *a) Careful siting of turbines to seek to reduce overall impact of the scheme;*
- *b) Amending turbine configurations, including hub height, rotor diameter, and blade rotation speed;*
- *c) Adjusting the number of turbines;*
- *d) Considering turbine colour, including any variation from the typical off-white / pale grey colours;*
- *e) Design and arrangement of any lighting required to minimise its impact;*
- *f) Undergrounding of any power lines connecting individual turbines to any on-site sub-station;*
- *g) Undergrounding or sensitive treatment of those power lines connecting any wind farm sub- station to the electricity distribution system;*
- *h) Arrangements for any transformers for individual turbines (the Council expects these to be accommodated and enclosed within the turbine mast in order to reduce the landscape and visual impact of the development);*
- *i) Length, route, visibility and methods and materials used in the construction of*
- *access tracks.*"

5.2.14 Whist all of the above have been considered and included as part of the embedded mitigation for the Proposed Development, it should be noted that in respect of bullets g) and h), the location of transformers is a factor of turbine procurement and the grid connection would be determined by the Transmission Network Operator (TNO) at a later date through a Section 37 application process.

5.2.15 Key considerations are set out in the OWESG as follows:

- **Siting and Design of Wind Farms** - THC seek sensitively sited and designed development that safeguards important high-quality landscapes. Developers are expected to explain the detailed design of site access and other infrastructure and illustrate the evolution of the wind farm design (as set out in **Chapter 2: The Proposed Development**). Reference should be made to SNH's guidance *Siting and Design Windfarms in the Landscape*, Version 3a, (Aug 2017);
- **Landscape and Visual Effects** - THC advise that development should seek to limit significant adverse effects, although it should be noted that no wind farm development can reasonably avoid significant landscape and visual effects. Key aspects that may be relevant to the assessment include National Parks, National Scenic Areas (NSA), Special Landscape Areas (SLA), Wild Land Areas (WLA), the capacity of the local landscape character (as defined by Landscape Character Assessment) and important public views from viewpoints, roads / core paths / tourist routes and related attractions;
- **Residential Amenity** – There are six residential properties within 2 km of the proposed turbines (**Figure 5.3.1**). THC advise that the potential effects of wind energy developments on residential amenity are assessed;
- **Mitigation** - Where feasible, appropriate mitigation should be demonstrated in response to significant adverse effects. This may involve further design evolution, altering the height, number, layout or colour of the proposed turbines and amendments to the associated infrastructure, for example; and
- **Visualisations** - THC expects developers to follow its guidance, *Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments* (2016), on the production of visualisations supporting their application.

5.2.16 Finally, THC have set out 10 Criteria within their OWESG to be used as a "*framework and focus for assessing proposals.*" The criteria do not set absolute requirements but seek to ensure that developers are aware of key constraints to development. An assessment of the Proposed Development against the ten criteria is set out within the Planning Statement and included in **Technical Appendix 5.5**.

5.2.17 The Proposed Development is located within the *Monadhliath ridge and tops, Rolling Uplands* Landscape Character Area (LN6), as defined by the Loch Ness Strategic Capacity Study contained within the OSWEG. Although 'capacity' studies do not accord with NPF4 or the most recent NS guidelines on landscape sensitivity studies, it has been noted in this LVIA in regard to the advice on landscape sensitivity. Paragraph 5.34 of the OSWEG describes the 'remaining capacity' for wind farm development within the Loch Ness area as follows:

"The study identifies that any remaining capacity for this scale of development should be focused around existing clusters that are generally found in rolling uplands, rugged massif and rocky moorland Landscape Character Types, but only where these are well designed, integrated into the existing pattern of development and do not undo the landscape and visual mitigation agreed for existing schemes."

5.2.18 The document states that it is the most extensive landscape within the Study Area with a lower sensitivity to large scale wind farms and there may be some limited scope for large scale development within LN6. An assessment of the Proposed Development against the

key sensitivities of LN6 set out in the Loch Ness Strategic Capacity Study is addressed in **Section 5.12**.

Dava Moor, Nairn and Monadhliath Area Wind Energy Landscape Sensitivity Pilot Study (2021)

5.2.19 This *pilot* study was commissioned by NatureScot to test the methodology set out in their then draft Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Guidance issued as a consultative draft in November 2020. The study is also intended to provide THC with an updated landscape sensitivity assessment which can support strategic planning and assist in the appraisal of specific development proposals.

5.2.20 This study has not yet been subject to public consultation, and neither is it part of any accompanying planning guidance.

5.2.21 The objectives of this landscape sensitivity assessment for wind energy is to provide clear spatial guidance as to what size of wind energy development would be appropriate, in landscape and visual terms, within different landscapes in the Dava Moor, Nairn and Monadhliath study area. The study also considers potential cumulative and cross-border landscape and visual effects and considers broad constraints and opportunities for new wind energy developments, including extensions to, and repowering of, operational wind farms.

5.2.22 The Proposed Development is located within the *Rolling Uplands* (The Monadhliath) Landscape Assessment Unit (AU) as defined by this study. The study assesses a High-Medium sensitivity for turbines > 150m within this landscape and that turbines over 150m could fit within the scale of this landscape considering a number of constraints and opportunities. An assessment of the Proposed Development against these constraints and opportunities of the *Rolling Uplands* set out in the pilot study is described in **Section 5.11**.

Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy and Supplementary Guidance: Trees, Woodlands and Development

5.2.23 The Highland Council's Supplementary Guidance: *Trees, Woodlands and Development* (2013) supports the creation of woodlands that "*enhance and integrate with new development [which] can bring multi benefits such as landscape enhancement, biodiversity, timber resource, amenity and recreational opportunities, and improved connectivity of the green network*" (p. 18).

5.2.24 As outlined in the *Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy* (2018), the following policy objectives are relevant to mitigation of landscape and visual effects:

- "*Encourage planting that contributes to integration with and expansion of native woodland and other woodland habitat networks"* (p. 27)
- *"Promote woodland management and expansion that restores, enhances and safeguards biodiversity and habitat connectivity"* (p. 31)

- *"Ensure that provision for new planting and / or management of existing tree cover are incorporated as integral elements of development briefs and master plans for new development and regeneration proposals across Highland.*" (p. 32)

Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2

5.2.25 The Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2 (IMFLDP2) was adopted on 27 June 2024. Relevant policies in relation to the LVIA include:

- Policy 2: Nature Protection, Restoration and Enhancement (National, Major and EIA Developments); and
- Policy 8: Placemaking.

5.3 Consultation Undertaken

5.3.1 **Table 5.1** provides a summary of the consultation activities undertaken in support of the preparation of this assessment.

5.3.2 As part of the scoping exercise, a consultation exercise was undertaken to inform the scope of any design and assessment work required as part of this EIA. Consultation relevant to the LVIA assessment was undertaken with THC and NS who commented on aspects of methodology, sources of information, viewpoint selection, scope of assessment and cumulative development. A summary of these consultation responses is provided in **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1: Summary of consultation responses relevant to this chapter

Consultee	Issued Raised	Response/Action Taken
Energy Consents Unit (ECU)	*The study area in kilometres of the Proposed Development should be agreed following discussion between the Company, NatureScot and the Highland Council.*	The main LVIA Study Area of 45 km has been agreed with THC. NatureScot did not comment on the Study Area, noting that the Proposed Development did not raise issues of National Interest in relation to its landscape, visual or cumulative effects.
	The Scottish Ministers recommended *that the final list of viewpoints and visualisations should be agreed following discussion between the Company, Historic Environment Scotland, NatureScot and the Highland Council.*	The final list of viewpoints was agreed with THC. Cultural Heritage viewpoints were agreed with HES via the Heritage Consultant. NatureScot did not comment on viewpoints, noting that the Proposed Development did not raise issues of National Interest in relation to its landscape, visual or cumulative effects.
	To ensure that cumulative impact assessments are as up-to-date as possible, other developments to be included should be discussed and agreed by the Company and the Highland Council. Assessments, photography and visualisations submitted in the EIA report should reflect the most up-to-date cumulative position.	A cumulative cut-off date was set 12 weeks before the planned application submission. Cumulative developments included in the LVIA have been drawn from THC's interactive Wind Turbine map and other wind farm developer sources. Sites at scoping stage have been included in the figures and visualisations as a precaution. It is to be noted that one scoping wind farm, Balnespick, located 10 km southeast of the Proposed Development, was submitted as an application to the ECU on 20 February 2025. However, given the timing of writing this assessment and the working 'cut off' date, it has been considered as at scoping stage. This development does not significantly interact with the Proposed Development.

Consultee	Issued Raised	Response/Action Taken
	As the maximum blade tip height of turbines exceeds 150m, the LVIA, as detailed in section 5.1 of the scoping report, must include a robust Night Time Assessment with agreed viewpoints to consider the effects of aviation lighting and how the chosen lighting mitigates the effects. It is recommended by the Scottish Ministers that the Company takes into consideration the points raised by NatureScot, in relation to aviation lighting. This should be carried out in accordance with NatureScot pre-application guidance for onshore wind farms. As well as the scope, methodology, findings and recommendations of such assessments, full details of all mitigation of aviation lighting impacts subsequently identified should be provided in the EIA report.	A night-time assessment is reported in **Technical Appendix 5.4** which includes four illustrated night-time viewpoints as agreed through Scoping. The night-time assessment accords with NatureScot's *Guidance on Aviation Lighting Impact Assessment,* November 2024 which supersedes their advice in their pre-application guidance for onshore wind farms.
NatureScot	*Having reviewed the supporting information for the proposed development, we do not consider that it would raise issues of National Interest in relation to its landscape, visual or cumulative effects. This is not to say that the development would not result in significant landscape or visual effects, rather that NatureScot does not judge these effects to meet our threshold in respect of our national remit for landscapes.*	Noted.
	The EIA is expected to consider landscape and visual impacts in a way which conforms to the methodology set	Noted – landscape and visual effects have been assessed separately in the LVIA which accords with GLVIA 3.

Consultee	Issued Raised	Response/Action Taken
The Highland Council (THC)	*out in GLVIA3. The council expects landscape and visual impacts to be separately assessed.*	
	The council expect images to be taken using a 35mm format full frame sensor camera – not an 'equivalent' and focal lengths of 50mm and 75mm for the visual impact assessment.	Noted – the LVIA accords with this request.
	Photomontages should follow the Highland Councils and NatureScot Visualisation Standards but are not expected to form part of the EIA.	Noted – the LVIA accords with this request.
	The THC versions should be provided in A3 format. Existing turbines must be re-rendered into visualisations irrespective of orientation.	Noted – wirelines of all wind farms at existing, consented, application and scoping stage have been included in the visualisations packs. Existing turbines are clearly visibly on the baseline photographs.
	Assessment must also include the impact of on-site borrow pits and access roads, which should be rendered into photomontages and considered within the EIA.	Noted – the visualisations include montages of borrow pits and access roads where visible from those viewpoints within 10 km of the Proposed Development.
	We recommend that you utilise our interactive Wind Turbine map, which is up to date as of January 2024, to identify other schemes within the Study Area.	Noted - Cumulative developments included in the LVIA have been drawn from THC's interactive Wind Turbine map and other sources.
	Gardens and Designed landscapes are considered as assets due to their design and relationship to the wider landscape in addition to their historic nature. Therefore, it would be appropriate for any aspects relating to landscape setting, or relationship to the wider landscape to be considered in the LVIA chapter, if necessary in addition to appearing in the Cultural Heritage Chapter.	Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDLs) are considered under visual receptors as a visitor or tourist attraction and are also assessed in **Chapter 9: Archaeology and Cultural Heritage.** Where a GDL makes a notable contribution to the local landscape character or SLA this has also been considered as part of the landscape assessment within the LVIA.

Consultee	Issued Raised	Response/Action Taken
	When assessing the impact on recreational routes please ensure that all core paths and long-distance trails, are assessed. We expect an assessment of the development's visual impacts on surrounding settlements.	Recreational routes including Core Paths and long-distance routes, along with settlements within the Study Area have been assessed in **Section 5.13**.
	We expect the Landscape Impact Assessment to refer to the Council's Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance and expect an assessment of the proposal against the criterion set out in the Council's OWESG at pages 19 and 20 to be included within the LVIA chapter of the EIAR. The site is located within the Loch Ness Landscape Character Areas Study referenced in the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance.	An assessment of the Proposed Development against the ten criteria in the OWESG is set out within the Planning Statement and included in **Technical Appendix 5.5.**
	Suggested Additional Viewpoints to include: • *Wellington Layby (North 258567, East 836692).* • *Clansman Hotel or Abriachan Gardens.* • *A suitable location south of Invermoriston.* • *The summit of Meall Fuar-mhonaidh.* • *The vicinity of Leachkin or Kinmylies to represent local residents.* • *The Castle representing tourists and locals.* • *Chanonry Point or Fort George.*	• A82 Wellington Layby – this and other laybys along the road are all outwith the ZTV and there would be no visibility off the Proposed Development. • Clansman Hotel, Loch Ness - This is outwith the ZTV and there would be no visibility off the Proposed Development. • Abriachan Gardens, Loch Ness - This is outwith the ZTV and there would be no visibility off the Proposed Development. • Location south of Invermoriston – There is no visibility from the main receptor locations in this area as indicated in Figure 5.2 and 5.5. Elevated views from higher ground (Sron na Muic) would view the Proposed Development at more than 35 km distance. A representative view from Viewpoint 20 indicates that the visual effects would not be significant.

Consultee	Issued Raised	Response/Action Taken
		• Meall Fuar-mhonaidh – Viewpoint 20 illustrates the view from this location and has been included in the LVIA. The visual effects would not be significant.
		• Leachkin, Inverness – Viewpoint 16 illustrates the view from this location and has been included in the LVIA. The visual effects would be significant. • Kinmylies, Inverness - The views from Kinmylies are slightly more distant and would tend to be screened by buildings and vegetation in the city.
		• Inverness Castle - Theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is limited to the blade tips of five turbines from the castle which is in the centre of the city on the banks of the River Ness. Given the limited visibility and degree of intervening screening by the built form of Inverness, this viewpoint has been scoped out of the LVIA.
		• Chanonry Point - Viewpoint 19 illustrates the view from this location and has been included in the LVIA. The visual effects would not be significant. • Fort George – The view from Fort George would be more distant than Viewpoint 19 and the visual effects would not be significant.
	Inclusion of the Sutors of Cromarty, Rosemarkie and Fort George SLA	The effects of the Proposed Development on the Sutors of Cromarty, Rosemarkie and Fort George SLA has been assessed in **Section 5.12**. The LVIA has concluded that the SLA visual effects would not be significant, noting also that the SLA is beyond 20 km distance from the Proposed Development.

Consultee	Issued Raised	Response/Action Taken
	The Landscape Officer has reservations about the appropriateness of scoping out Landscape Character and Designations that do not include Dark Skies in their SLQ's. During the long summer twilights and on clear/moonlight lights a great deal can still be seen of the landform, skylines and vegetation cover. In such circumstances, blade movement may be emphasised by the presence of aviation lighting. *They would also note that "Hours of Darkness" is a more useful term than "Night Time" for this assessment.*	NatureScot's recent Guidance on *Aviation Lighting Impact Assessment*, November 2024 is clear in that it notes that night-time effects on landscape receptors (landscape character and designated landscapes) are to be included only for those which have any special qualities or characteristics susceptible to aviation warning lights. However, we have taken a broad approach and included all landscapes where it may be reasonable to assume that they would have special qualities / characteristics at night, even if these are not officially documented in the source documents. Due to the recent guidance, the terminology 'Night-time LVIA will continue to be used rather than 'Hours of Darkness Assessment'. However, the assessment covers all periods between dusk and dawn including the twilight and night.
	Night-time viewpoint at Wellington Layby	As noted above, there is no visibility of the Proposed Development from this location, or related lay-bys on the A82. This viewpoint has been scoped out of the LVIA and a wireline sent to THC Landscape Officer as noted previously.
	Reference made to the pilot study Dava Moor, Nairn and Monadhliath Area Wind Energy Landscape Sensitivity Pilot Study, 2021.	Noted – The LVIA has referred to and considered the Pilot Study.

5.4 Approach to the Assessment

Scope of Assessment

5.4.1 The scope of this assessment has been established through the Scoping process and ongoing post-scoping consultation set out in **Table 5.1**. Further information can be found in **Chapter 4: EIA Process**.

5.4.2 This section provides an update to the scope of the assessment and re-iterates/updates the evidence base for scoping out matters following further iterative assessment.

Receptors/matters scoped out of further assessment

5.4.3 **Table 5.2** lists those receptors/matters that are scoped out of further assessment, together with appropriate justification. Where a change has occurred since EIA scoping, this is clearly stated and justified.

Table 5.2: Receptor/matters scoped out of further assessment

Receptor/matter	Phase	Justification	Change since EIA Scoping
Receptors outwith the 45 km LVIA Study Area and the blade tip ZTV (**Figures 5.1** and **5.2**).	Construction & Operation	All receptors within the LVIA Study Area that are outwith the blade tip ZTV will have no view of the Proposed Development and are scoped out.	No
Landscape Receptors			
Landscape character types beyond 15 km	Construction & Operation	Viewpoint analysis identifies significant visual effects limited to within approximately 15 km, taking a precautionary approach.	No
Cairngorms National Park	Construction & Operation	Agreed through Scoping on basis of distance and limited ZTV coverage. There would be no significant effects. NatureScot confirmed that the Proposed Development did not raise issues of National Interest in	No

Receptor/matter	Phase	Justification	Change since EIA Scoping
		relation to its landscape, visual or cumulative effects.	
All National Scenic Areas (NSA) within Study Area	Construction & Operation	As above.	No
All Wild Land Areas (WLA) within Study Area	Construction & Operation	As above.	No
Highland and Moray SLAs beyond 20 km	Construction & Operation	Agreed through Scoping on basis of distance and limited ZTV coverage. There would be no significant effects. The only exception is the inclusion of the Sutors of Cromarty, Rosemarkie and Fort George SLA (SLA19) at the request of THC, along with the two SLAs within 20 km.	Yes. Include one additional SLA
Visual Receptors			
Settlements beyond 15 km distance from the Proposed Development and outwith the blade tip ZTV:	Construction & Operation	On the basis of viewpoint analysis, intervening distance and limited ZTV coverage. There would be no significant effects.	No
Transport routes: Roads beyond 15 km and outwith blade tip ZTV.	Construction & Operation	As above.	No
Recreational routes: National routes within 45 km and outwith blade tip ZTV.	Construction & Operation	As above.	No
Some National routes (the Dava Way, Moray Coast Trail, Sustrans Nation Cycle Route 78	Construction & Operation	Further baseline, ZTV and viewpoint analysis have confirmed that once the screening	Yes

Receptor/matter	Phase	Justification	Change since EIA Scoping
and the Great Glen Canoe Trail) have been excluded.		effects of buildings and vegetation are considered, as well as distance, these receptors would have little or no theoretical visibility and significant visual effects would be unlikely. Further details are provided in **Section 5.9**.	
Recreational routes: Core Paths / local routes beyond 15 km and outwith blade tip ZTV.	Construction & Operation	On the basis of viewpoint analysis, intervening distance and limited ZTV coverage. There would be no significant effects.	No
Some Core Paths and other local recreational routes within 15 km	Construction & Operation	Further baseline, ZTV and viewpoint analysis have confirmed that once the screening effects of buildings and vegetation are considered, some of these receptors would have little or no theoretical visibility and significant visual effects would be unlikely. Further details are provided in **Section 5.9**.	Yes
Recreational / Tourist Receptors within 45 km and outwith blade tip ZTV.	Construction & Operation	On the basis of viewpoint analysis, intervening distance and limited ZTV coverage. There would be no significant effects.	No
Recreational / Tourist Receptors within 15		Further baseline, ZTV and viewpoint analysis have confirmed that	Yes

Receptor/matter	Phase	Justification	Change since EIA Scoping
km and outwith blade tip ZTV.		some receptors within 15 km would have little or no visibility with significant visual effects unlikely. Further details are provided in **Section 5.9**.	
GDLs within 45 km	Construction & Operation	Further baseline, ZTV and viewpoint analysis have confirmed that none within 15 km would have visibility of the Proposed Development once vegetation is considered and those beyond 15 km would have little or no theoretical visibility with significant visual effects unlikely. The setting of GDLs is assessed separately under **Chapter 9: Archaeology and Cultural Heritage** of this EIA Report.	Yes

Receptors/matters scoped into further assessment

5.4.4 **Table 5.3** presents the receptors/matters that are scoped into further assessment, together with appropriate justification. Where a change has occurred since EIA scoping, this is clearly stated and justified.

Table 5.3: Receptor/matters scoped into further assessment

Receptor/matter	Phase	Justification	Change since EIA Scoping
Landscape Receptors			
Landscape character within which the Proposed Development is located	Construction & Operation	Receptor directly affected and will be significantly affected.	No

Receptor/matter	Phase	Justification	Change since EIA Scoping
Landscape character types within 15 km	Operation	Viewpoint analysis identifies significant visual effects generally limited to within approximately 10.5 km (with one incidence of a potentially significant visual effect occurring at 13.9 km distance. Taking a precautionary approach all receptors within 15 km have been included in the LVIA. Taking 'worst case' and proportionate approach only the operational effects are assessed.	No
Landscape planning designations: Three Highland SLAs	Operation	As above.	Yes. SLA19 included at request of THC.
Visual Receptors			
Settlements within the blade tip ZTV and 15 km	Operation	Viewpoint analysis identifies significant visual effects generally limited to within approximately 10.5 km (with one incidence of a potentially significant visual effect occurring at 13.9 km distance. Taking a precautionary approach all receptors within 15 km have been included in the LVIA. Taking 'worst case' and proportionate approach only the operational effects are assessed.	No
Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) Includes four residential properties / groups within 2 km and the blade tip ZTV.	Operation	As agreed with THC through Scoping.	No
Transport routes within blade tip ZTV and 15 km.	Operation	Viewpoint analysis identifies significant visual effects generally limited to within approximately 10.5 km (with one incidence of a potentially significant visual effect occurring at 13.9 km distance. Taking a precautionary approach all receptors within 15 km have been included in the LVIA.	No
Recreational routes: National routes within	Operation	Due to the national status of these routes the scope includes the full LVIA	No

Receptor/matter	Phase	Justification	Change since EIA Scoping
45 km and the blade tip ZTV.		Study Area, subject to ZTV coverage and levels of screening.	
Recreational routes: Core Paths / local routes within 15 km and blade tip ZTV.	Operation	Viewpoint analysis identifies significant visual effects generally limited to within approximately 10.5 km (with one incidence of a potentially significant visual effect occurring at 13.9 km distance. Taking a precautionary approach all receptors within 15 km have been included in the LVIA.	No
Recreational / Tourist Receptors within 15 km and blade tip ZTV.	Operation	As above.	No

5.5 Assessment Methodology

5.5.1 The assessment methodology is set out in **Technical Appendix 5.1** which includes a glossary of terms and methodology for the Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) and Night-time Assessment reported separately in the respective **Technical Appendices 5.3 and 5.4**.

5.5.2 The methodology for the LVIA has been undertaken in accordance with the Landscape Institute and IEMA *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, 3rd Edition (GLVIA 3). In addition to planning policy documents previously referenced, the main supporting technical guidance to the LVIA methodology includes, but is not limited to the following:

- NatureScot (2021). Guidance: *Assessing the Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments*;
- Landscape Institute (15 March 2019). *Residential Visual Amenity Assessment* (RVAA): Technical Guidance Note;
- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), (August 2017). *Siting and Designing Windfarms in the Landscape*, Version 3a;
- SNH (February 2017). *Visual Representation of Windfarms*, Version 2.2;
- SNH (June 2015). Guidance: *Spatial Planning for Onshore Wind Turbines – natural heritage considerations*; and
- Highland Council, July 2016. *Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments*.

5.5.3 A complete list of references for the LVIA is provided at the back of this chapter.

Defining the LVIA Study Area

5.5.4 The SNH guidance (2012) advises that the LVIA Study Area for wind turbines of this height should be based on an area 45km minimum distance from each of the proposed turbine locations as illustrated in **Figure 5.1**. The same 45km LVIA study area also applies to the cumulative assessment.

5.5.5 It is important to note that the boundary of the LVIA study area is not the limit of potential visibility. Rather, it is an area defined by NS, on the basis of research, to determine a suitable LVIA study area for the assessment of wind farms which will contain all likely significant landscape and visual effects.

Assessment of Landscape Effects

5.5.6 Landscape Effects are defined by the Landscape Institute in GLVIA 3, paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 as follows:

5.5.7 "An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on landscape as a resource. The concern ... is with how the proposal will affect the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character. ... The area of landscape that should be covered in assessing landscape effects should include the site itself and the full extent of the wider landscape around it which the development may influence in a significant manner."

5.5.8 The potential landscape effects, occurring during the construction, operation and decommissioning period may therefore include, but are not restricted to the following:

- Changes to landscape elements: the addition of new elements (wind turbines) or the removal of existing elements such as trees, vegetation and buildings and other characteristic elements of the landscape character type;
- Changes to landscape qualities: degradation or erosion of landscape elements and patterns and perceptual characteristics, particularly those that form key characteristic elements of landscape character types/areas or contribute to the landscape value;
- Changes to landscape character: landscape character may be affected through the incremental effect on characteristic elements, landscape patterns and qualities (including perceptual characteristics) and the addition of new features, the magnitude of which is sufficient to alter the overall landscape character within a particular area; and
- Cumulative landscape effects: where more than one wind farm may lead to a potential landscape effect.

Assessment of Visual Effects

5.5.9 Visual Effects are concerned wholly with the effect of the development on views, and the general visual amenity and are defined by the Landscape Institute in GLVIA 3, paragraphs 6.1 as follows:

5.5.10 "An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change and development on views available to people and their visual amenity. The concern ... is with assessing how

the surroundings of individuals or groups of people may be specifically affected by changes in the context and character of views."

5.5.11 Visual effects are identified for different receptors (people) who will experience the view(s) at their places of residence, during recreational activities, at work, or when travelling through the area. The visual effects may include the following:

- Visual effect: a change to an existing static view, sequential views, or wider visual amenity as a result of development or the loss of particular landscape elements or features already present in the view(s); and
- Cumulative visual effects: the cumulative or incremental visibility of similar types of development may combine to have a cumulative visual effect.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

5.5.12 The landscape and visual effects (and whether they are significant) are determined by an assessment of the nature or 'sensitivity' of each receptor or group of receptors and the nature of the effect or 'magnitude of change' that would result from the Proposed Development. The evaluation of sensitivity takes account of the value and susceptibility of the receptor to the Proposed Development. This is combined with an assessment of the magnitude of change which takes account of factors such as the size and scale of the proposed change and the geographical extent. Other factors regarding the nature of the effect such as the duration of change and whether the effect is cumulative are also noted. By combining assessments of sensitivity and magnitude of change, a level of landscape or visual effect as well as the nature of that effect can be evaluated, and the significance of the effect determined.

5.5.13 The resulting level of effect is described in terms of whether it is significant or not significant and the type or nature of effect is described as either direct or indirect; temporary or permanent (reversible); cumulative; and beneficial, neutral or adverse. The assessment has also considered the cumulative effects resulting from the Proposed Development in combination with other existing and consented wind farms, and wind farms at the planning application stage.

5.5.14 The time period for the assessment covers phases of development related to the construction of the Proposed Development and associated infrastructure, its operation for a period of 50 years, and decommissioning.

5.5.15 LVIA unavoidably involves a combination of both quantitative and subjective assessment and wherever possible a consensus of professional opinion has been sought through consultation, internal peer review, and the adoption of a systematic, impartial, and professional approach.

Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

5.5.16 The assessment of cumulative effects is essentially the same as the LVIA of the individual Proposed Development assessed on a solus basis, in that the level of landscape and visual effect is determined by assessing the sensitivity of the landscape or visual receptor

and the magnitude of change. Cumulative assessment however considers the magnitude of change posed by multiple developments.

5.5.17 The cumulative assessment accords with NS guidance (2021) and has been prepared to ensure that, as well as the effects of the Proposed Development (LVIA), the 'additional' cumulative effects and the 'combined' cumulative effects are also reported to account for two cumulative scenarios as follows:

- Scenario 1: Existing + Consented + the Proposed Development:
  The additional and combined cumulative effects of the Proposed Development and existing and consented wind energy developments are assessed.
- Scenario 2: Existing + Consented + Applications + the Proposed Development:
  The additional and combined cumulative effects of the Proposed Development and existing and consented wind energy developments and live applications (including schemes at planning appeal) are assessed.

5.5.18 In addition, the cumulative assessment takes account of the timescales or consented periods of operation for the existing and consented developments within 10 km of the Proposed Development in **Section 5.10** Future Baseline.

Evaluation of Significance and Nature of Effect

5.5.19 In accordance with the relevant EIA Regulations, it is important to determine whether the effects, assessed as a result of the Proposed Development, are likely to be significant. Significant landscape and visual effects will be highlighted in bold in the text and in most cases, relate to effects that result in a '**Substantial**', **'Substantial to Major**', '**Major**' or a '**Major to Moderate**' effect as indicated in **Table 5.4** (and shaded dark grey). 'Moderate' levels of effect (shaded grey) can also be assessed as significant, subject to the assessor's professional opinion, which should be clearly explained as part of the assessment. White or un-shaded boxes in **Table 5.4** indicate a non-significant effect.

5.5.20 In those instances where there would be no effect, the magnitude has been recorded as 'Zero' and the level of effect as 'None' or 'No View'. Intermediate levels of magnitude and levels of effect are also used in the LVIA and are shown in **Table 5.4** in italics, for example High – Medium magnitude or Substantial to Major level of effect.

Table 5.4: Evaluation of Landscape and Visual Effects

Magnitude of Change	Landscape and Visual Sensitivity			
	High	**Medium**	**Low**	**Very Low**
High	**Substantial**	**Major**	Moderate	Not used
High-Medium	***Substantial to Major***	***Major to Moderate***	*Moderate to Minor*	
Medium	**Major**	Moderate	Minor	
Medium-Low	***Major to Moderate***	*Moderate to Minor*	*Minor*	
Low	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	
Low-Very Low	*Moderate to Minor*	*Negligible*	*Negligible*	

Magnitude of Change	Landscape and Visual Sensitivity			
	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Very Low	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	
Zero	None / No View			

5.5.21 In accordance with the EIA Regulations the type or nature of effect is also described in terms of whether it is direct or indirect; its duration (temporary / permanent or reversible) cumulative; and whether the effect is positive, neutral or negative.

5.6 Viewpoint Selection

5.6.1 The viewpoints selected for the assessment have been agreed with THC through scoping and further consultation as noted in **Table 5.1**. NatureScot did not comment on the viewpoint selection as they noted that the Proposed Development did not raise issues of National Interest.

5.6.2 A total of 21 viewpoints listed in **Table 5.5** have been taken forward to the assessment stage. These viewpoints are assessed and reported in **Technical Appendix 5.2**. A summary of the viewpoint analysis is set out in **Table 5.7**.

5.6.3 All of the viewpoint locations are illustrated on **Figures 5.2 – 5.6**, and the visualisations are illustrated as photographs, wirelines and photomontages as agreed through consultation. The figures accord with NS guidance *Visual Representation of Wind Farms*: Good Practice Guidance (2017) and THC *Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments* (2016). The viewpoint locations were photographed between July 2024 and February 2025. The visualisations illustrate the proposed turbines and where visible the proposed access tracks and associated infrastructure within 10 km.

5.6.4 Viewpoint analysis has also been used for the Night-time LVIA which included four of the day-time viewpoint locations agreed through scoping. The Night-time LVIA is reported in **Technical Appendix 5.4**.

Table 5.5 Viewpoint Selection

VP No.	Viewpoint Name	Distance to nearest turbine (m)	View Direction	Receptor
1	General Wade's Road - Moy to Inverness	1,800	South / Southeast	Recreational users – walkers and road users.
2	B9154 northeast of Moy	2,346	Southwest	Road users and recreational users of Sustrans NCR 7.
3	A9 north of Tomatin	4,327	Northwest	Road users.

VP No.	Viewpoint Name	Distance to nearest turbine (m)	View Direction	Receptor
4	B861 between Balnafoich & Inverarnie	4,530	Southeast	Residents and road users.
5	B9154 at Meallmore	4,764	South	Residents and road users.
6	Sustrans NCR 7 at Tomatin	5,056	Northwest	Residents, road users and recreational users of Sustrans NCR 7.
7	A9 at Daviot	6,503	Southeast	Road users.
8	Càrn a' Choire Mhoir	8,760	Northwest	Recreational users – hill walkers.
9	B851 at Croachy	9,020	Northeast	Residents and road users.
10	Carn nan Tri-tighearnan	9,146	Southwest	Recreational users – hill walkers.
11	Carn na Làir	10,469	Northwest	Recreational users – hill walkers.
12	Culloden Visitor Centre	11,667	South	Tourists / visitors.
13	Càrn Dubh 'Ic an Deòir	12,134	Northwest	Recreational users – hill walkers.
14	Carn Loisgte, northern boundary of CNP	12,515	Northwest	Recreational users – hill walkers.
15	B862 at Ashie Moor	13,228	East	Road users.
16	Leachkin, Inverness	13,887	Southeast	Residents.
17	A9 at Kessock Bridge	15,438	Southeast	Road users and recreational users of Sustrans NCR 7.
18	Great Glen Way, Blackfold	16,255	Southeast	Recreational users – walkers, including tourists/ visitors.
19	Chanonry Point	22,399	South	Tourists / visitors.
20	Meall Fuar-mhonaidh	29,054	Northeast	Recreational users – hill walkers.
21	Meall a' Bhuachaille, CNP	30,814	Northwest	Recreational users – hill walkers.

5.7 Cumulative Wind Energy Development

5.7.1 Drawing from NS guidance (2021), the baseline of all other cumulative wind energy development, above 50m to blade tip height, within the LVIA Study Area has been collated. Whilst the LVIA Study Area extends out to 45 km, the CLVIA includes all existing and consented wind energy development, and planning applications within 30 km as agreed through Scoping. Single turbines below 50m to blade tip height have been excluded. In accordance with the same NS guidance, projects at scoping or pre-planning stage have not been included. At the time of writing, there are five scoping stage wind farms within 15 km which have been included in the viewpoint wirelines but not in the cumulative assessment due to their uncertainty and the potential for multiple layout changes during pre-application.

5.7.2 The baseline of other wind energy development within the LVIA Study Area has also taken into account THC's wind farm database, Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit (ECU) and other wind energy developer sources, up until a working 'cut off' date of 31st January 2025.

5.7.3 It is to be noted that Balnespick Wind Farm, located approximately 10 km southeast of the Proposed Development, was submitted as an application to the ECU on 20th February 2025. Additionally, Clune Wind Farm, located approximately 9.5 km south of the Proposed Development, was submitted on 3rd March 2025 and Ourack Wind Farm, approximately 30 km east, was consented on 26th March 2025. However, given the timing of writing this assessment and the working ‘cut-off’ date, both Balnespick and Clune have been left at the scoping stage and Ourack at application stage.

5.7.4 In total, 13 other wind energy developments are included in the assessment as listed in **Table 5.6** and illustrated in **Figure 5.12**. As of 31st January 2025, this includes eight existing wind farms, four consented developments and one application in the Study Area. The most relevant wind energy developments to the CLVIA include those sites within 10 km and in particular the existing Farr, Glen Kyllachy and Moy wind farms, and to a lesser extent, the existing Tom na Clach and its consented extension. Notably, all of the wind farm developments within 10 km (except Tom na Clach) are located within the *Rolling Uplands - Inverness* Landscape Character Type (LCT).

5.7.5 The cumulative assessment has considered the cumulative landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development in addition to, and in combination with, the other wind energy development included in **Table 5.6** in accordance with the methodology set out in **Technical Appendix 5.1**.

Table 5.6 Wind Energy Development Included in the CLVIA

Reference and Name	Distance (m)*	No. of Turbines	Blade tip Height (m)	Host Landscape Character Typology
Existing wind energy developments within 30 km				

Reference and Name	Distance (m)*	No. of Turbines	Blade tip Height (m)	Host Landscape Character Typology
E01. Farr	2,252	40	100	Rolling Uplands
E02. Glen Kyllachy	3,819	20	110	Rolling Uplands
E03. Moy	4,500	20	124.9	Rolling Uplands
E04. Tom nan Clach	9,936	13	125	Open Rolling Upland
E05. Aberarder	13,606	12	130	Rolling Uplands
E06. Dunmaglass	14,959	33	120	Rolling Uplands
E07. Corriegarth	23,560	23	119	Rolling Uplands
E08. Auchmore	29,507	2	80	Rounded Rocky Hills
Consented wind energy development within 30 km				
C01. Tom na Clach Extension	10,439	7	149.9	Open Rolling Upland
C02. Corriegarth 2	23,215	14	149.9	Rolling Uplands
C03. Cairn Duhie	23,581	16	149.9	Open Rolling Upland
C04. Clash Gour	30,527	48	176 / 149.5 / 143 / 136.5 / 130	Open Rolling Upland / Upland Moorland and Forestry
Application wind energy development within 30 km				
A01. Ourack	29,467	18 (17 subject to condition)	180	Open Rolling Upland
Scoping wind energy development within 15 km – Included on Viewpoint Wirelines Only				
S01. Kyllachy	4,521	11	200	Open Rolling Upland

Reference and Name	Distance (m)*	No. of Turbines	Blade tip Height (m)	Host Landscape Character Typology
S02. Carn na Saobhaidh	9,104	29	200	Rugged Massif
S03. Clune**	9,455	27	200	Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes
S04. Balnespick***	10,173	9	200	Rolling Uplands
S05. Highland	14,722	19	200 / 230	Rolling Uplands

*Distance from nearest turbine of Proposed Development to nearest turbine of cumulative development.

**Now an application wind farm as of 3rd March 2025.

***Now an application wind farm as of 20th February 2025.

5.8 Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Viewpoint Analysis

5.8.1 As a prelude to the main assessment, the ZTV and viewpoint analysis are used to further define the scope of the assessment process. In particular, a significance threshold indicating the distance from the Proposed Development, where significant effects may be likely, has been identified. This has been used to focus the baseline information and detailed reporting of the assessment in this chapter.

ZTV and Cumulative ZTV Analysis

5.8.2 The ZTVs have been calculated using ReSoft © WindFarm computer software to produce an area of potential visibility of any part of the proposed turbines, calculated to turbine blade-tip and hub-height, or selected infrastructure. The ZTV does not however take account of built development and vegetation, which can significantly reduce the area and extent of actual visibility in the field and as such provides the limits of the visual assessment within the LVIA Study Area. As a result, there may be roads, tracks and footpaths in the wider setting which, although shown as falling within the ZTV, have restricted viewing opportunities since they are heavily screened or filtered by banks, walls and vegetation. The ZTVs therefore provide a starting point in the assessment process and accordingly tend to over-estimate the potential visibility of the proposed turbines.

5.8.3 A number of ZTV maps have been provided as follows:

- **Figure 5.2:** illustrates the ZTV calculated to blade tip at 1:350,000 scale across the LVIA Study Area and provides an overview of the theoretical extent of visibility with viewpoint locations;
- **Figure 5.3**: illustrates the ZTV calculated to hub height at 1:350,000 scale across the LVIA Study Area and provides an overview of the theoretical extent of visibility with viewpoint locations;

- **Figure 5.4a**: illustrates the central section of the blade tip ZTV, shown in more detail at 1:80,000 scale, showing the area within 10 km of the Proposed Development with viewpoint locations;
- **Figure 5.4b**: illustrates the central section of the blade tip ZTV with forestry excluded, shown in more detail at 1:80,000 scale, showing the area within 10 km of the Proposed Development with viewpoint locations;
- **Figure 5.5**: (A0 fold-out) illustrates the ZTV calculated to blade tip at 1:125,000 scale across the LVIA Study Area and includes viewpoint locations and cumulative wind farm development; and
- **Figure 5.6:** (A0 fold-out) illustrates the central 20 km area of the ZTV calculated to blade tip at 1:50,000 scale across the LVIA Study Area and includes viewpoint locations and cumulative wind farm development.

5.8.4 Further cumulative ZTV maps are also illustrated in **Figures 5.13-16**, indicating the extent of theoretical cumulative visibility of other existing and consented wind farms, and wind farm applications. The cumulative developments have been grouped according to their planning status or geographical location. All of the cumulative ZTVs assume bare ground and are calculated to blade tip height, indicating the maximum theoretical visibility of other wind farms.

ZTV Analysis: Proposed Development

5.8.5 The ZTV pattern for the Proposed Development reflects the underlying landform within the LVIA Study Area and the percentages of theoretical visibility cover are summarised as follows:

- Total ZTV (to blade tip) coverage accounts for 28.65% of the 45 km LVIA Study Area;
- Total ZTV (to hub height) coverage accounts for 23.00% of the 45 km LVIA Study Area;
- Total ZTV (to blade tip) coverage accounts for 34.27% within 15 km of the Proposed Development; and
- Total ZTV (to hub height) coverage accounts for 29.37% within 15 km of the Proposed Development.

5.8.6 The blade tip ZTV coverage (**Figures 5.2, 5.5 and 5.6**) for the Proposed Development is therefore limited, accounting for approximately a quarter of the total LVIA Study Area and a third of the area withing 15 km of the Proposed Development. There is extensive forestry cover within the lower areas LVIA Study Area, particularly to the west and north along Strathnairn and Drummossie Muir, and to a lesser extent to the east and south along Strathdearn and parts along the A9. These would provide further screening of the Proposed Development, reducing the extent of the ZTV further.

5.8.7 The proposed turbines would be located within gently rounded, open moorland hills between Strathnairn and Strathdearn / River Findhorn (both southwest to northeast orientated), within the Monadhliath Mountains and east of the Great Glen / Loch Ness. Due to the influences of the Great Glen and the mountains the landscape has a strong southwest to northeast ‘grain’ which is also reflected by many of the primary transport routes through the landscape. To the northeast, this characteristic is interrupted where

the River Findhorn and Moy Burn bifurcate near Invereen, which is further emphasised by the routing of the A9.

5.8.8 Within 10 km, there is extensive ZTV coverage across the broad and open moorland of the northeastern part of the Monadhliath Mountains. Theoretical visibility is suppressed to the south and west where the plateau descends abruptly along Glen Kyllachy and Strathnairn and continuing again in more fragmented patches beyond. To the east and northeast, ZTV coverage is almost continuous along the A9 corridor and facing slopes of the low hills with visibility suppressed in the narrow glens of Moy Burn and River Findhorn. To the north and northwest, visibility extends across the strath and flats or Drummossie Moor and is constrained along the River Nairn.

5.8.9 Beyond 10 km, there is significantly less ZTV coverage in the northeast, east, and southeast up to approximately 30 km, with sparse patches of visibility on elevated facing slopes and summits within the Cairngorms between 30-40 km distance and the uplands of Moray and Nairn between 20-40 km distance. To the south and southwest, ZTV coverage becomes fragmented along the upper plateaus of the Monadhliath Mountains, as well as the southeastern facing slopes along Loch Ness (much of which is densely wooded).

5.8.10 To the northwest and north, ZTV coverage beyond 10 km follows the grain of the landscape in southwestern to northeastern swathes, including from the western slopes of Loch Ness and the Great Glen through Inverness and across the Moray Firth and from Glen Strathfarrar to the Black Isle. Further theoretical visibility is indicated between 30-45 km distance from the southeastern facing slopes that descend to the Cromarty Firth. Much of these areas are wooded or forested, particularly around Black Isle and Cromarty Firth. There is a distinctive lack of ZTV coverage along the Great Glen continuing south of Inverness to Nairn, as well as through the Aird and Beauly Firth.

5.8.11 Wind Farm development is a notable feature of this area, including within the Monadhliath Mountains and is visible across the plateaus.

Viewpoint and Cumulative Viewpoint Analysis

5.8.12 The viewpoint analysis has been conducted from 21 viewpoint locations in **Technical Appendix 5.2** and as illustrated in **Figures 5.2-5.6.** Each of these viewpoints are illustrated as baseline photographs and visualisations (wirelines and / or photomontages) in **Figures 5.19-5.39**. Four of these viewpoints were identified for the night-time LVIA and the views from these locations are illustrated in **Figures 5.4.8-11** and assessed separately in **Technical Appendix 5.4** and not repeated below. There are two sets of figures which accord with Scottish Natural Heritage, *Visual Representation of Wind Farms: Good Practice Guidance, Version 2.2*, February 2017 (**Volume 2b**) and Highland Council, *Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments,* July 2016 (**Volume 2d**).

5.8.13 Cumulative wind farm development, included within 30 km of the Proposed Development (as agreed at Scoping), that would be theoretically visible from each viewpoint has been illustrated in the wirelines.

Potential for significant effects: Proposed Development

5.8.14 The viewpoint analysis indicates that significant visual effects are likely to affect limited receptors within approximately 10.5 km distance from the Proposed Development (subject to a clear view of the proposed turbines and screening by landform and/ or vegetation), as indicated by viewpoints 1-4, 6-8 and 10-11 (**Figures 5.19-22, 5.24-26 and 5.28-29**). These receptors include views from General Wade's Road heritage path, the A9, B9154 and B861, residents in Balnafoich and Invernarnie (and northern edge of Tomatin), Sustrans National Cycle Route 7 and three hill summits (Carn a' Choire Mhoir, Carn nan Tri-tighearnan and Carn na Lair).

5.8.15 A further significant effect (Moderate) has been identified as a precaution in the northwest at approximately 13.9 km from the nearest turbine as illustrated by Viewpoint 16: Leachkin, Inverness (**Figure 5.34**). It is, however, important to note that the effect on the views from Inverness as a whole including the 'core' settlement would be Not Significant. A detailed assessment on the views from Inverness is set out in **Table 5.13**.

5.8.16 The greatest magnitude of change is visible at Viewpoints 1 and 2 (High magnitude), and at Viewpoints 3 and 4 (High-Medium magnitude) (all other viewpoints are assessed as Medium magnitude or less).

5.8.17 Out of the ten significantly affected viewpoints, the effects on viewpoints 4, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 16 (and an additional viewpoint 13) would also be cumulative and further cumulative analysis is provided below.

5.8.18 There would be no significant visual effects from the remaining 11 viewpoints (5, 9, 12-15, and 17-21) as a result of the Proposed Development.

Potential for significant cumulative effects

5.8.19 In total 15 of the 21 of the viewpoints are cumulative, in that they involve the cumulative visibility of other wind farms, in particular the existing Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Moy and Tom nan Clach, and the consented Tom na Clach Extension wind farms which are all located approximately 10 km distance from the Proposed Development. Other wind farms beyond 10 km are also frequently visible from some of the assessment viewpoints, although often to a negligible degree.

5.8.20 The Proposed Development would contribute to a significant, cumulative visual effect at six of the assessment viewpoints (Viewpoints 4, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 16), three of which (Viewpoints 8, 10 and 11) are also significantly affected by other existing and consented wind farms. Viewpoint 13 would also be significantly affected by the Proposed Development only in combination with two other existing wind farms – Farr and Glen Kyllachy. No cumulative wind farms would be visible from Viewpoints 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 9.

5.8.21 Importantly these levels of effect are indicative of a visual effect on a particular viewpoint location, and they should not be assumed to translate into visual effects on the overall visual experience, as each of the viewpoints have been specifically located where the sensitivity of the receptor and/or the views of the Proposed Development would be greatest. In this sense they are not always typical or representative.

5.8.22 As a precaution, the assessment has considered all those receptors within 15 km of the Proposed Development and national level receptors within 45 km.

Interpretation of Viewpoint Analysis Summary Tables

5.8.23 The information set out in **Table 5.7** provides a summary of the viewpoint analysis of the effects of the Proposed Development on an independent or 'standalone' basis.

5.8.24 The summary tables list the names of the viewpoints and include the following information:

- Proposed Development: Assessed on an individual basis (the LVIA)

This part of the analysis takes account of other existing forms of wind farm development that may be present in the landscape, whilst recognising that their influence on landscape character is likely to be time limited. It does not consider the additional or combined cumulative effects and only reports on the effect of the Proposed Development alone.

- Scenario 1: Existing + Consented + the Proposed Development

The additional and combined cumulative effects of the baseline, including the existing and consented wind energy developments with the Proposed Development are reported.

- Scenario 2: Existing + Consented + Applications + the Proposed Development

The additional and combined cumulative effects of the baseline, including existing and consented wind energy developments and applications with the Proposed Development are reported.

5.8.25 Further information on **Table 5.7** is provided in **Technical Appendix 5.2**.

Table 5.7: Summary of Viewpoint Analysis

Viewpoint No. and Title	FoV	Distance to nearest turbine (m)	Viewpoint Analysis: Proposed Development (PD) – 14 turbines at 200m to blade tip			Cumulative Viewpoint Analysis: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
						Cumulative Scenario 1:			Cumulative Scenario 2:		
			Sensitivity	Magnitude	Level of Effect	Magnitude (Existing & Consented)	Additional Level of Effect (PD)	Combined Level of Effect	Magnitude (Applications)	Additional Level of Effect (PD)	Combined Level of Effect
1. General Wades Road – Moy to Inverness	49°	1,800	High (walkers) Medium (road users)	High (reducing to Medium as forestry is restocked)	**Substantial** (reducing to **Major**) (walkers) **Major** (reducing to **Moderate**) (road users)	No cumulative effect.					
2. B9154, northeast of Moy	64°	2,346	High (rec. cyclists) Medium (other road users)	High	**Substantial** (rec. cyclists) **Substantial to Major** (other road users)	No cumulative effect.					
3. A9, north of Tomatin	15°	4,299	Medium	Medium (increasing to High-Medium during A9 dualling if vegetation felled)	**Moderate** (increasing to **Major** during A9 dualling if vegetation felled)	No cumulative effect.					

Viewpoint No. and Title	Fo V	Distance to nearest turbine (m)	Viewpoint Analysis: Proposed Development (PD) – 14 turbines at 200m to blade tip			Cumulative Viewpoint Analysis: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
						Cumulative Scenario 1:			Cumulative Scenario 2:		
			Sensitivity	**Magnitude**	**Level of Effect**	**Magnitude** (Existing & Consented)	**Additional Level of Effect** (PD)	**Combined Level of Effect**	**Magnitude** (Applications)	**Additional Level of Effect** (PD)	**Combined Level of Effect**
4. B861 between Balnafoich and Inverarnie, Strathnairn	13°	4,530	High (residents) Medium (road users)	High-Medium	**Substantial to Major** (residents) **Major to Moderate** (road users)	High-Medium	**Substantial to Major** (residents) **Major to Moderate** (road users)	**Substantial to Major** (residents) (PD) **Major to Moderate** (road users) (PD)	Zero	No cumulative effect	
5. B9154, Meallmore	30°	4,764	High (residents / rec. cyclists) Medium (other road users)	Very Low to Zero (Medium-Low if forestry is felled after 2053)	Minor to No View (residents, rec. cyclists) Minor to Negligible to No View (other road users) Moderate (if forestry felled after 2053)	No cumulative effect.					

Viewpoint No. and Title	Fo V	Distance to nearest turbine (m)	Viewpoint Analysis: Proposed Development (PD) – 14 turbines at 200m to blade tip			Cumulative Viewpoint Analysis: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
						Cumulative Scenario 1:			Cumulative Scenario 2:		
			Sensitivity	**Magnitude**	**Level of Effect**	**Magnitude** (Existing & Consented)	**Additional Level of Effect** (PD)	**Combined Level of Effect**	**Magnitude** (Applications)	**Additional Level of Effect** (PD)	**Combined Level of Effect**
6. Sustrans NCR 7, Tomatin	13°	5,056	High (residents, rec. cyclists) Medium (other road users)	Medium	**Major** (residents, rec. cyclists) **Moderate** (other road users)	No cumulative effect.					
7. A9, Daviot	24°	6,503	Medium	Medium	**Moderate**	Low	**Moderate**	**Moderate** (PD)	Zero	No cumulative effect	
8. Carn Choire Mhoir	8°	8,760	High	Medium	**Major**	Medium-Low	**Major**	**Major** (PD, Tom nan Clach and Tom na Clach Ext)	Very Low	**Major**	**Major** (PD, Tom nan Clach and Tom na Clach Ext)
9. B851, Croarty	9°	9,020	High (residents) High-Medium (road users)	Very Low (winter) Zero (summer)	Minor to No View (residents) Minor to Negligible to No View (road users)	No cumulative effect.					

Viewpoint No. and Title	FoV	Distance to nearest turbine (m)	Viewpoint Analysis: Proposed Development (PD) – 14 turbines at 200m to blade tip			Cumulative Viewpoint Analysis: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
						Cumulative Scenario 1:			Cumulative Scenario 2:		
			Sensitivity	Magnitude	Level of Effect	Magnitude (Existing & Consented)	Additional Level of Effect (PD)	Combined Level of Effect	Magnitude (Applications)	Additional Level of Effect (PD)	Combined Level of Effect
10. Carn nan Tri-tighearnan	19°	9,146	High	Medium	**Major**	Medium	**Major**	**Major** (PD, Tom nan Clach, Moy and Tom na Clach Extension)	Low	**Major**	**Major** (PD, Tom nan Clach, Moy and Tom na Clach Extension)
11. Carn na Lair, northern boundary of CNP	12°	10,469	High	Medium	**Major**	Medium-Low	**Major**	**Major** (PD, Glen Kyllachy and Farr)	Zero	No cumulative effect	
12. Culloden Visitor Centre	16°	11,667	High	Low	Moderate	Very Low	Moderate	Moderate	Zero	No cumulative effect	
13. Carn Dubh (Ic an Deoir)	14°	12,134	High	Low	Moderate	Low	Moderate	**Moderate** (Glen Kyllachy, Farr and PD)	Very Low	Moderate	**Moderate** (Glen Kyllachy, Farr and PD)

Viewpoint No. and Title	Fo V	Distance to nearest turbine (m)	Viewpoint Analysis: Proposed Development (PD) – 14 turbines at 200m to blade tip			Cumulative Viewpoint Analysis: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
						Cumulative Scenario 1:			Cumulative Scenario 2:		
			Sensitivity	**Magnitude**	**Level of Effect**	**Magnitude** (Existing & Consented)	**Additional Level of Effect** (PD)	**Combined Level of Effect**	**Magnitude** (Applications)	**Additional Level of Effect** (PD)	**Combined Level of Effect**
14. Carn Loisgte, northern boundary of CNP	6°	12,515	High	Low	Moderate	Low-Very Low	Moderate	Moderate	Zero	No cumulative effect	
15. B862 Ashie Moor, west of Loch Duntelchaig	5°	13,228	High-Medium	Low	Moderate to Minor	Low	Moderate to Minor	Moderate to Minor	Zero	No cumulative effect	
16. Leachkin, Inverness	9°	13,887	High	Low	**Moderate**	Very Low	**Moderate**	**Moderate** (PD)	Low	No cumulative effect	
17. A9, Kessock Bridge	10°	15,438	High (recreational users) Medium (road users)	Low-Very Low	Moderate to Minor (recreational users) Minor (road users)	Very Low	Moderate to Minor (recreational users) Minor (road users)	Moderate to Minor (recreational users) Minor (road users)	Zero	No cumulative effect	

Viewpoint No. and Title	FoV	Distance to nearest turbine (m)	Viewpoint Analysis: Proposed Development (PD) – 14 turbines at 200m to blade tip			Cumulative Viewpoint Analysis: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
						Cumulative Scenario 1:			Cumulative Scenario 2:		
			Sensitivity	**Magnitude**	**Level of Effect**	**Magnitude** (Existing & Consented)	**Additional Level of Effect** (PD)	**Combined Level of Effect**	**Magnitude** (Applications)	**Additional Level of Effect** (PD)	**Combined Level of Effect**
18. Great Glen Way north of Blackfold	5°	16,255	High	Low	Moderate	Low-Very Low	Moderate	Moderate	Zero	No cumulative effect	
19. Chanonry Point	9°	22,399	High	Low-Very Low	Moderate to Minor	Very Low	Moderate to Minor	Moderate to Minor	Very Low	Moderate to Minor	Moderate to Minor
20. Meall Fuar-mhonaidh summit	5°	29,054	High	Very Low	Minor	Low-Very Low	Minor	Moderate to Minor (Corriegarth / 2)	Zero	No cumulative effect	
21. Meall a' Bhuachaille summit, CNP	3°	30,814	High	Very Low	Minor	Very Low	Minor	Minor	Very Low	Minor	Minor

Note: Significant effects resulting from the Proposed Development are indicated in bold text and shaded dark grey.

5.9 Existing Environment

Baseline of Landscape Receptors

5.9.1 Information on the existing landscape resource or baseline conditions included in this assessment has been collected from local development plans, Ordnance Survey (OS) maps, and relevant literature, as well as information gathered from field surveys. This baseline information is set out as an inventory of the existing landscape resource and focuses on those landscape receptors with most potential to be significantly affected.

5.9.2 The baseline inventory includes the following landscape receptors:

- Landscape Character and Elements; and
- Landscape Planning Designations and WLAs.

5.9.3 The viewpoint analysis indicates that significant visual effects are likely to affect limited receptors within approximately 10.5 km distance from the Proposed Development (subject to a clear view of the proposed turbines and screening by landform and / or vegetation), as indicated by viewpoints 1-6, 6-8 and 10-11. One further significant effect has been identified as a precaution, to the northwest at approximately 13.9 km from the nearest turbine as illustrated by Viewpoint 16: Leachkin, Inverness. The greatest magnitude of change (High magnitude) is visible at Viewpoints 1 and 2. Taking a precautionary approach, the assessment has focused on those local landscape receptors, overlapped by the blade tip ZTV within 15 km of the Proposed Development and nationally important landscape planning designations within the wider LVIA Study Area. Receptors that would not be significantly affected have been excluded from the assessment with appropriate reasoning provided as part of the baseline analysis.

5.9.4 Site survey and viewpoint analysis also indicates that landscape effects, likely to result from other activities and infrastructure associated with the Proposed Development during its construction and decommissioning would be largely limited to the host *Rolling Uplands - Inverness* LCT.

Baseline Landscape Character

5.9.5 Landscape across Scotland is classified into different types of landscape character (LCTs) by NS in their Landscape Assessment (2019). The assessment divides the landscape into broad LCTs, which are illustrated within the LVIA Study Area in **Figures 5.7 and 5.8**.

5.9.6 Six LCTs within 15 km are overlapped by the blade tip ZTV for the Proposed Development, and are included in the assessment as follows:

- 221 – Rolling Uplands - Inverness LCT (the host landscape);
- 223 – Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland LCT;
- 224 – Farmed and Wooded Foothills LCT;
- 227 – Farmed Strath - Inverness LCT;

- 228 – Rolling Farmland and Woodland LCT; and
- 284 – Coastal Farmlands – Moray and Nairn.

5.9.7 The host landscape character of the *Rolling Uplands - Inverness* LCT would be directly affected by the Proposed Development. Moving away from the Site, other areas of landscape character could be indirectly affected by views of the Proposed Development (notably the turbines) and through effects on their key perceptual characteristics and qualities such as 'wildness' or 'naturalness'.

5.9.8 Other LCTs within 15 km (*128 – Forested Upland Fringe, 225 – Broad Steep Sided Glen, 291 – Open Rolling Upland, 294 – Upland Valleys and 345 – Farmed and Forested Slopes*), are either outwith the ZTV or have very limited ZTV coverage, indicating very limited theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development with existing / consented wind farm development located between the LCT and the Proposed Development. They are therefore excluded from the assessment on the basis that effects would not be significant.

5.9.9 There are LCTs within nationally designated landscapes beyond 15 km in the wider Study Area including Cairngorms National Park, NSAs and WLAs that are overlapped by the blade tip ZTV. However, effects on all national designated landscapes have been excluded from the assessment as agreed with NS, and therefore the LCTs within these areas are also excluded on this basis.

Baseline Pattern of Wind Farm Development

5.9.10 Wind farm development is now a landscape characteristic of many areas of Scotland including the Highlands. Wind farms are referenced in SNH's most recent 2019 Landscape Character Assessment and are noted as a feature of the host LCT. They are also referenced in the OWESG including the Loch Ness Strategic Capacity Study, and the draft Dava Moor, Nairn and Monadhliath Area Wind Energy Landscape Sensitivity Pilot Study.

5.9.11 There are currently approximately six clusters of wind farm development within the LVIA Study Area (**Figure 5.12**) and the baseline pattern of wind farm development is a pattern that has emerged in recent decades and may continue to evolve. As noted in **Table 5.6**, much of the existing and consented wind farms are largely located within 'uplands' whilst avoiding the high mountains and low-lying straths and coast. The main clusters of development are described as follows:

- The existing Farr and Glen Kyllachy wind farms form a close cluster, set within the *Rolling Uplands - Inverness* LCT. This cluster along with the existing Aberarder, Dunmaglass, Corriegarth, Stronelairg extend to the southwest of the Study Area along the broad ‘ridge’ or spine of the Monadhliath mountain range, all within the *Rolling Uplands - Inverness* LCT. The consented Corriegarth 2, Dell and Cloiche wind farms would also supplement this cluster;
- Moy and Tom na Clach and its consented Extension form a loose cluster to the northeast of the A9, also set within the ‘uplands’ in the *Rolling Uplands - Inverness* LCT and *Open Rolling Upland* LCT;

- Bhlaraidh, Corrimony and Bhlaraidh Extension form a close cluster, set within the *Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness* LCT to the west of the Study Areas, whilst avoiding the straths, the higher mountains and WLAs. The application Loch Liath and Chrathaich wind farms, if consented, would also supplement this cluster;
- Hill of Glaschyle, Bery Burn and Paul's Hill I form a loose cluster across the northeastern uplands of the study area, whilst avoiding the straths, the higher mountains and WLAs. The consented Clash Gour, Berry Burn Extension and Paul's Hill II, along with Cairn Duhie would also supplement this cluster. The application Ourack Wind Farm, if consented, would also supplement this cluster. The existing Rothes I and II wind farms extend this cluster slightly further to the northeast;
- The cluster of Novar, Novar Extension and Strathrory wind farms in Easter Ross is set back from the straths and firths of Cromarty and Dornoch, whilst also avoiding the higher mountains and WLAs. Strathrory is set apart but forms part of this group when viewed from more distant locations or from the coastal firths. The application Abhainn Dubh Wind Farm, if consented, would also supplement this cluster; and
- Auchmore and Fairburn form a loose cluster within the Rounded Rocky Hills LCT in Ross and Cromarty, also avoiding the straths, coastline and the higher mountains.

5.9.12 The Proposed Development would most closely associate with the existing Farr and Glen Kyllachy wind farms, and to a lesser degree, Moy Wind Farm and is comparable to other inland clusters in that it is set back from the straths and avoids the higher mountains. In common with other existing and consented wind farm development, it is located within the *Rolling Uplands - Inverness* LCT.

Baseline Landscape Planning Designations and Wild Land Areas

5.9.13 Landscape planning designations and WLAs within the LVIA Study Area are illustrated in **Figure 5.9**. They include 12 local and three national level landscape planning designations and six WLAs.

5.9.14 The Proposed Development is not located within any landscape designations or WLAs, the Site and surrounding landscape being undesignated. Therefore, there can be no physical or direct impacts on landscape designations or WLAs within the LVIA Study Area.

5.9.15 Landscape designations and WLAs may however be indirectly affected by development beyond their boundaries that may otherwise affect the Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs), including views and perceptual qualities, for which these areas are valued. As agreed through scoping, the following landscape designations are included in the assessment:

- Loch Ness and Duntelchaig Special Landscape Area (SLA);
- Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA; and
- Sutors of Cromarty, Rosemarkie and Fort George SLA.

5.9.16 The other designated landscapes (Cairngorms National Park, NSAs and SLAs illustrated in **Figure 5.9**) are excluded from the assessment as agreed through consultation. This is

because of the limited ZTV coverage within these areas and the likelihood that the SLQs would not be significantly affected by views of the Proposed Development.

Wild Land Areas

5.9.17 No WLA is included in the assessment, as agreed with NS through scoping.

Gardens and Designed Landscapes

5.9.18 Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDLs) may be considered as part of the landscape assessment particularly where they make a notable contribution to the landscape character and /or special quality of a designated landscape. Otherwise, these receptors are considered under visual receptors as a visitor or tourist destination and are also assessed in **Chapter 9: Archaeology and Cultural Heritage**. There are three GDLs within 15 km of the Proposed Development that are overlapped by the ZTV as follows:

- Leys Castle GDL – This is located within the Rolling Farmland and Woodland LCT, although once tree / vegetation cover is accounted for (Figure 5.4b) there would be no visibility from this area and it has therefore been excluded from further assessment.
- Dochfour House GDL – This is located within the Broad Steep-Sided Glen LCT and both have been excluded from further assessment due to the limited ZTV coverage which is further reduced when vegetation is considered.
- Tomnahurich Cemetery GDL– This is located within the urban area of Inverness and once tree / vegetation cover is accounted for (Figure 5.4b) there would be no visibility from this area and it has therefore been excluded from further assessment.

Baseline of Visual Receptors

5.9.19 The visual assessment draws upon the ZTV, site visits and viewpoint analysis and assesses the potential visual effects on views and visual amenity likely to be experienced by receptors (people) within the landscape as follows:

- Views from residential properties and settlements;
- Views experienced whilst travelling through the landscape (road / rail / ferry users, walkers, horse riders and cyclists for example); and
- Views from tourist and recreational destinations.

5.9.20 The viewpoint analysis indicates that significant visual effects are likely to affect limited receptors within approximately 10.5 km distance from the Proposed Development (subject to a clear view of the proposed turbines and screening by landform and / or vegetation), as indicated by viewpoints 1-6, 6-8 and 10-11. One further significant effect have been identified as a precaution, to the northwest at approximately 13.9 km from the nearest turbine as illustrated by Viewpoint 16: Leachkin, Inverness. The greatest magnitude of change (High magnitude) is visible at Viewpoints 1 and 2. Taking a precautionary approach, the assessment has focused on those local receptors, overlapped by the blade tip ZTV within 15 km of the Proposed Development. Within the

wider 45 km LVIA Study Area, the assessment has considered receptors of national importance such as Scotland's Great Trails, Sustrans Cycle Routes and popular hill walking summits (Munros / Corbetts), also overlapped by the blade tip ZTV. Receptors that would not be significantly affected have been excluded from the assessment with appropriate reasoning provided as part of the baseline analysis.

Visual Receptors: Settlements and Residential Properties

5.9.21 The assessment of visual effects likely to be experienced from settlements includes consideration of residential areas, the public realm, and public open spaces within the settlement boundaries that would be frequented by people. Settlements and 'Growing Settlements' included in the assessment are those defined in the HwLDP and IMFLDP2.

5.9.22 The following settlements within 15 km are overlapped by the blade tip ZTV and have been included in the assessment:

- Tomatin;
- Inverness – including parts of the wider conurbation at Westhill, Smithton and Culloden;
- Newlands of Culloden (classified in the HwLDP as a Smaller Settlement along the A96 Corridor); and
- Farr and Inverarnie (Growing Settlement);

5.9.23 Other settlements beyond 15 km are either outwith the ZTV or have very limited visibility of the Proposed Development and are therefore excluded from the assessment on the basis that effects would be Not Significant.

5.9.24 A Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) has been undertaken to assess the effects on residential visual amenity likely to arise as a result of the Proposed Development. Residential properties within 2 km of the Proposed Development that are overlapped by the blade tip ZTV and shown on the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 scale map have been considered in the assessment. The RVAA is reported in **Technical Appendix 5.3** and is illustrated in **Figures 5.3.1-5.**

Visual Receptors: Transport Routes

5.9.25 'A' class transport routes within 15 km of the Proposed Development that are overlapped by the blade tip ZTV are listed as follows and included in the assessment:

- A9;
- A82; and
- A96.

5.9.26 Minor 'B' roads within 15 km of the Proposed Development that are overlapped by the blade tip ZTV are listed as follows and included in the assessment:

- B851;
- B9154;
- B861;

- B862;
- B9006; and
- B9177.

5.9.27 There would be No View of Proposed Development from the A8082, A862 and B865 due to intervening built-form – they are therefore excluded from the assessment.

5.9.28 The railway line - Inverness to Perth via the Cairngorms National Park is routed within 15 km of the Proposed Development also is also and included in the assessment.

5.9.29 Another railway line - Inverness to Aberdeen Line via Nairn is beyond the 15 km study area and as significant visual effects are unlikely it has been excluded from the assessment.

Visual Receptors: Recreational Routes

5.9.30 The visual assessment has considered the potential visual effects likely to be experienced by people (walkers, cyclists, and others) on recreational routes within the LVIA Study Area. National level long distance routes such as Scotland's Great Trails, Sustrans National Cycle Routes and Tourist Routes are assessed within the wider LVIA Study Area. The local recreational routes include Core Paths, heritage paths, Scottish Hill Tracks and other Sustrans Cycle routes which have been assessed within 15 km of the Proposed Development.

National Recreational Routes (Scotland's Great Trails and National Cycle and Tourist Routes) within 45 km

5.9.31 National and other long-distance recreational routes within 45 km of the Proposed Development (as illustrated in **Figure 5.10**) that are overlapped by the blade tip ZTV are included in the assessment as follows:

- Sustrans National Cycle Route 7;
- Sustrans National Cycle Route 1 (which partially overlaps with the North Coast 500 Tourist Route); and
- The Great Glen Way (which overlaps with the Loch Ness 360 Trail).

5.9.32 The Dava Way and Moray Coast Trail have very limited ZTV coverage at beyond approximately 26-43 km with any views of the Proposed Development seen beyond existing wind farms. The closest area of ZTV coverage for the route of the North Coast 500 lies beyond 13 km within the city Centre of Inverness, where extensive screening would be provided by built form. Beyond this, the closest area of theoretical visibility for the North Coast 500 would be south of Muir of Ord, at Windhill, beyond 24 km.

5.9.33 The Great Glen Canoe Trail also exhibits very limited ZTV coverage at beyond 12 km and located within a section of the route passing through the city of Inverness where a number of intervening screening influences are present.

5.9.34 The John o'Groats trail also originates in the centre of Inverness and follows the River Ness north through the urban context of the city to the Kessock Bridge, where views south

towards the Proposed Development are attainable. Viewpoint 17 (**Figure 5.35a-e**) is located on the Kessock Bridge, approximately15.4 km north of the proposed turbines. A detailed assessment of visual effects at this location is provided in **Technical Appendix 5.2** and concludes the residual visual effect would be Not Significant for recreational users including those on the John o'Groats trail. Beyond the Kessock Bridge the John o'Groats trail continues north across the Black Isle where further intervening screening influences are present including extensive areas of coniferous forestry.

5.9.35 Consequently, each of these receptors are excluded from the assessment on the basis that any attributable visual effects as a result of the Proposed Development would be Not Significant.

5.9.36 There is also very limited ZTV coverage from the Sustrans Nation Cycle Route 78 within the city of Inverness. In reality, built-form from within Inverness would screen views of the Proposed Development. The route is therefore excluded from the assessment on the basis that there would be No View of the Proposed Development.

Local Recreational Routes within 15 km

5.9.37 Core Paths (sourced from THC Core Path Plan) and other local recreational routes within 15 km that are overlapped by the blade tip ZTV are illustrated in **Figure 5.11** and included in the assessment as follows:

- Core Path IN27.01 - National Cycle Route 7 by A9 (overlapped with Sustrans National Cycle Route 7);
- Core Path IN27.02 – Distillery Wood (partially felled);
- Core Paths around Culloden (IN08.12, IN08.13, IN08.25, IN08.28, IN09.01, and IN09.02);
- Core Paths around the A96, east of Inverness (IN08.05, IN08.10, IN08.16, IN08.21, and IN08.23);
- Elevated sections of Core Paths within Leachkin (IN19.44), Kinmylies (IN19.08 and IN19.09);
- Heritage path HP1 - General Wade's Military Road, Moy to Inverness;
- Heritage path HP2 – Old Road to Forres (overlapped with Scottish Hill Track 229); and
- Heritage path HP3 – Slochd Military Road (overlapped with Scottish Hill Track 230).

5.9.38 Overlapping road, walking and cycling routes have not been 'double counted' and are assessed as one receptor where they occur with the national level receptor taking precedence in the assessment.

5.9.39 Core Paths within Inverness and related built-up areas are not included as there would be No View of the Proposed Development from these routes, primarily due to intervening built-form and vegetation. This includes elevated, but wooded Core paths such as Dunain Hill (IN19.63) and Tomnahurich Cemetery (IN19.46).

5.9.40 Core Path IN15.01 - Littlemill Esker Trail, Core Path IN15.02 – School Wood Circuit and Core Paths around Daviot Wood and General Wades Military Road (IN19.39, IN19.40, IN19.70, IN11.01, and IN11.02) are all excluded from the assessment as there would largely be No View of the Proposed Development from these forest trails. None of these forest areas are proposed to be felled as indicated on the Scottish Forestry Map Viewer[2].

5.9.41 Scottish Hill Track 232 has very limited ZTV coverage near Sgùman Mòr Cairn and the Proposed Development would be visible beyond existing wind farms. Similarly, Scottish Hill Tracks 231 / 233 also have very limited ZTV coverage south of Tomatin which would be largely screened by intervening vegetation. All three routes are therefore excluded from the assessment on the basis that effects would be Not Significant.

Visual Receptors: Recreational and Tourist Destinations

5.9.42 Recreational and tourist / visitor attractions relevant to the LVIA include those features that appear as prominent landmarks or landscape features, and locations associated with passive recreation such as walking, where there is a clear relationship between the feature / destination and an appreciation of the landscape. Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDL) are included where these are open to the public, as well as National Trust gardens / land and Historic Environment Scotland visitor sites which are overlapped by the blade tip ZTV. Some of these locations are also referred to in **Chapter 9: Archaeology and Cultural Heritage** and **Chapter 12: Socio-economics, Recreation and Tourism**. The assessment excludes locations for team sports and other recreational / tourist destinations where the focus of activity is not on the landscape or is indoors - for example museums, libraries, and gift shops.

5.9.43 Recreational and tourist / visitor attractions that are overlapped by the blade tip ZTV within 45 km of the Proposed Development are illustrated in **Figure 5.11** and include receptors A-O. Five of these have been included in the visual assessment as follows:

- A) Loch Duntelchaig (Viewpoint 15);
- B) Auchnahillin Holiday Park (on route of Sustrans National Cycle Route 7);
- C) Culloden Battlefield (Viewpoint 12);
- D) Loch Ruthven Nature Reserve; and
- K) Culloden Moor Caravan and Motorhome Club (on the eastern edge of the settlement at Newlands of Culloden);

5.9.44 There would be very limited to No View of the Proposed Development from E) Craig Phadrig Fort and Wood, I) Bught Park Caravan Park and Campsite, J) Ardtower Caravan Park; N) King's Golf Club and O) Inverness Golf Club, due to screening from the built-form of Inverness and/or vegetation such as woodland and parkland that is not subject to felling. Similarly, there would be No View from the H) Caledonian Canal through Inverness due to screening from built-form. The G) Slochd Ski Centre and the L) Loch Ness Golf

[2] https://scottishforestry.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0d6125cfe892439ab0e5d0b74d9acc18

Club and M) Carrbridge Golf Club are outwith the ZTV and would have no view of the Proposed Development. Therefore, these receptors have been excluded from the assessment.

5.9.45 There are a number of Forestry and Land Scotland recreational forests within 15 km including F) Daviot Wood, Littlemill Wood, School Wood and Culloden Forest, however, these have been excluded from the assessment as there would be No View of the Proposed Development from the forest trails and picnic areas within these destinations.

Gardens and Designed Landscapes

5.9.46 There are three GDLs within 15 km of the Proposed Development that are overlapped by the ZTV although all of these are excluded from further assessment as follows:

- Leys Castle GDL – Once tree / vegetation cover is accounted for (Figure 5.4b) there would be no visibility from this area and it has therefore been excluded from further assessment.
- Dochfour House GDL – Once tree / vegetation cover is accounted for (Figure 5.4b) there would be little or no visibility from this area and it has therefore been excluded from further assessment.
- Tomnahurich Cemetery GDL– This is located within the urban area of Inverness and once tree / vegetation cover is accounted for (Figure 5.4b) there would be no visibility from this area and it has therefore been excluded from further assessment.

5.9.47 Within the wider LVIA Study Area, there are 17 GDLs from the Historic Environment Scotland inventory. The majority of them are outwith the ZTV with the remaining excluded from further assessment due to the long intervening distance and further screening from intervening vegetation. The setting of GDLs is assessed separately under **Chapter 9: Archaeology and Cultural Heritage** of this EIA Report.

Hills and Mountains

5.9.48 The assessment recognises that a range of recreational / tourist activities may be undertaken within the hills and moorlands including but not limited to, stalking / fishing, climbing / mountaineering, paragliding, horse riding, and mountain biking. The assessment has focused on the walker as the main receptor activity whose attention is likely to be most focused on the landscape and an appreciation of their surroundings.

5.9.49 There are no Munros or Corbetts within 15 km of the Proposed Development. In the wider 45 km Study Area, beyond 20 km, there are 22 Munros and 14 Corbetts. Those overlapped by the blade tip ZTV and included in the assessment are listed as follows:

- Munros:
  - Cairngorm Mountain Munros (Beinn Bhrotain, Mullach Clach a' Bhlàir, Ben Macdui, Sgòr Gaoith, Braeriach, Cairn Gorm and Bynack More);
  - Monadhliath Mountain Munros (Geal Chàrn, Carn Dearg, A' Chailleach, Meall Chuaich and Càrn Sgulain);
  - Sgurr na Ruaidhe; and

- Ben Wyvis.
- Corbetts:
  - Monadhliath Mountain Corbetts (Càrn na Saobhaidehe, Càrn an Fhreiceadain, Geal-charn Mòr, and Càrn a' Chuillinn);
  - Cairngorm Mountain Corbetts (Geal Charn, Meall a' Bhuachaille (Viewpoint 21), Càrn Dearg Mòr, and Meallach Mhor.
  - Little Wyvis; and
  - Sgòrr na Diollaid and Beinn a' Bha'ach Ard.

5.10 Future baseline

5.10.1 The Proposed Development would cover a period of approximately 53 years (including construction, operation and decommissioning). The approximate time periods associated with the Proposed Development, and whether they are predominantly long-term or short-term are listed as follows:

- Construction: up to 24 months (short-term);
- Operation: up to 50 years (long-term and reversible); and
- Decommissioning: up to 6 months (short-term).

5.10.2 The LVIA also recognises that some elements of the Proposed Development such as access tracks will be permanent and remain beyond the construction and decommissioning period and left to re-vegetate over time. Borrow pits will be subject to some mitigation / restoration although the change to the landform will result in a permanent change. Although 'long-term', the operation period of up to 50 years is assessed as though it were permanent, whilst noting that the effects of the proposed turbines would be reversible once decommissioned.

5.10.3 The predicted future baseline and evolution of landscape and visual receptors is unlikely to change, subject to the continuance of landscape and forestry management and maintenance. However, land management, and consequently landscape character, is dependent on a number of economic and environmental factors including the future effects of climate change and human adaptation which are difficult to predict at a local level and not a matter for this assessment. It is however likely that mitigation and adaptation in response to changing climate and biodiversity pressures will continue to have an influence on this area in the form of increased renewable energy and other environmental changes which are likely to alter the landscape baseline including increases to the current levels of forestry and woodland.

5.10.4 The dualling of the A9 is ongoing and the section of the route between Tomatin to Moy (currently under construction), closest to the Proposed Development, would be subject to some changes which has been included, as far as possible, within the assessment.

5.10.5 Change to the future baseline of other large scale wind energy development within 10 km, which can be reasonably predicted, is set out in **Table 5.8**. The closest existing wind farms to the Proposed Development, Farr and Glen Kyllachy, would be decommissioned approximately between 26-38 years prior to the end of the operational period of the

Proposed Development. Similarly, Moy and Tom na Clach would be decommissioned approximately 35-38 years prior to the end of the operational period of the Proposed Development. The consented Tom na Clach Extension would however be decommissioned approximately 10 years prior to the end of the operational period of the Proposed Development. This information has been noted in addition to the baseline cumulative assessment where relevant.

Table 5.8 Future Baseline of other Wind Energy Development within 10 km

Wind Energy Development	Proposed Development operational period: 50 years									
	2028-2033	2033-2038	2037-2043	2043-2048	2048-2053	2053-2058	2058-2063	2063-2068	2068-2073	2073-2078
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50
Existing Wind Farms										
E01. Farr	Operational from 2005 for 35 years until 2040.									
E02. Glen Kyllachy	Operational from 2022 for 30 years until 2052.									
E03. Moy	Operational from 2016 for 25 years until 2041.									
E04. Tom nan Clach	Operational from 2018 for 25 years until 2043.									
E05. Aberarder	Currently under construction. Expected commissioning in 2026 with 35 year operational period until 2061.									
E06. Dunmaglass	Operational from 2016 for 25 years until 2041.									
E07. Corriegarth	Operational from 2017 for 25 years until 2042.									
Consented Wind Farms										
C01. Tom nan Clach Extension	Consented in May 2024. Development to commence within five years. Planning Permission granted for 43 year period from the date of final commissioning incorporating a 40 year operational period and up to three year decommissioning period. Subject to construction and commissioning timescales, development may be operational until 2069.									
C02. Corriegarth 2	Consented in December 2023. Development to commence within five years. Planning Permission granted for 33 year period from the date of final commissioning incorporating a 30 year operational period and up to three year decommissioning period. Subject to construction and commissioning timescales, development may be operational until 2058.									
C03. Cairn Duhie	Consented in February 2024. Development to commence within five years. Planning Permission granted for 38 year period from the date of									

Wind Energy Development	Proposed Development operational period: 50 years									
	2028-2033	2033-2038	2037-2043	2043-2048	2048-2053	2053-2058	2058-2063	2063-2068	2068-2073	2073-2078
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50
	final commissioning incorporating a 35 year operational period and up to three year decommissioning period. Subject to construction and commissioning timescales, development may be operational until 2064.									

5.11 Embedded Mitigation

5.11.1 The design of the Proposed Development is explained in **Chapter 2: The Proposed Development.** Landscape related aspects of the design and mitigation are described in more detail in this section. The layout of the Proposed Development and its various infrastructure components are shown in **Figure 2.1**.

5.11.2 **Chapter 2** notes that the overall design layout principle of the Proposed Development has been to minimise adverse landscape, visual and cumulative effects while balancing commercial considerations and maximising energy production.

5.11.3 A key consideration for the Proposed Development was the landscape character and expansive scale and simplicity of the host moorland (*Rolling Uplands - Inverness* LCT) which has a reduced susceptibility to large turbines in comparison to other smaller scale and complex landscape character types described by the NS Landscape Character Assessment, 2019, and OWESG. The OWESG landscape criteria have been considered and reviewed at regular stages through the design process. A summary of the assessment of the Proposed Development against the OWESG landscape criteria is contained in **Technical Appendix 5.5**.

5.11.4 Consideration has also been taken of the SNH *Guidance on Siting and Designing Windfarms*, Version 3a, 2017, which aims to achieve a simple, rational and cohesive design that, to a reasonable degree, avoids overlapping turbines and gaps within the visual composition. Further guidance was obtained through consultation and feedback from THC in their Scoping Opinion on 5th August 2024. Computer modelling was used as a tool to aid the design process and a 3D model / wireframes were generated for views from key locations around the Site at each stage.

5.11.5 As set out in **Chapter 2**, the visual composition and layout design has been guided by the following considerations:

- *"the scale and topography of the Site, including the patterns of the landscape such as watercourses, field boundaries, and woodland;*
- *reducing the vertical extent of the wind farm by micro-siting turbines to lower elevations, away from the summits and ridgeline of Beinn nan Cailleach and Carn na h-Easgainn;*
- *reducing effects on the landscape character and landform visible from the A9;*

- *reducing visual amenity effects from Culloden battlefield and Visitor centre;*
- *reducing effects on views from settlements, visitor attractions, and local residents of the area around the Site, whose visual amenity may be affected by the Proposed Development, such as Lynemore Cottage; and*
- *reaching a balanced fit in the already existing pattern of wind energy development, particularly when viewed from the closest part (northern edge) of the Cairngorms National Park."*

5.11.6 **Chapter 2** also notes that the final layout design of the Proposed Development took into account, as far as practical, the following general design principles:

- *"Reduced the vertical extent of the wind farm by micro-siting turbines to lower elevations, away from prominent summits and ridgelines.*
- *Reduced turbine overlap as far as possible and cluttering.*
- *Presented a balanced composition with limited opportunities for turbines to be viewed as 'outliers'.*
- *Reflected the existing pattern of wind energy development viewed from the northern edge of the Cairngorms National Park.*
- *Increased the distance between the proposed turbines and the closest residential property, Lynemore Cottage, as far as possible. T12 is the closest proposed turbine to Lynemore Cottage, located approximately 1,545m south of the property.*
- *Reduced sequential visibility for road users of the A9."*

5.11.7 Whilst it may not be possible for the general design principles to be fully achieved (e.g. it is not possible to avoid all turbine overlap or avoid turbine visibility from Culloden battlefield completely), the establishment of these general principles as part of the design process is an important step in providing appropriate mitigation.

Design Analysis of the Proposed Development

5.11.8 In addition to the analysis of the OWESG landscape criteria in **Technical Appendix 5.5**, the Proposed Development has been subjected to further design analysis against THC guidance set out in the OSWEG Loch Ness Strategic Capacity Study, and the Dava Moor, Nairn & Monadhliath Area Wind Energy Landscape Sensitivity Pilot Study. A response to that guidance and is reported in **Table 5.9** and **Table 5.10**.

5.11.9 In summary, the Proposed Development largely accords with the OWESG landscape criteria which have been carefully considered as part of the EIA process.

5.11.10 In respect of both the OSWEG Loch Ness Strategic Capacity Study and the Dava Moor, Nairn & Monadhliath Area Wind Energy Landscape Sensitivity Pilot Study, the Proposed Development would achieve or largely achieve the suggested design considerations, where practical.

Table 5.9 Consideration of the Loch Ness Strategic Capacity Study (Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal)

Turbines Should:	Comments
Not breach skyline when viewed from north side of Loch Ness.	Achieved: The Proposed Development would not 'breach the skyline' or appear visible from the north side of Loch Ness at the lower level due to a lack of ZTV coverage along the A82. Largely achieved: This design constraint is not practical when considered from a higher elevation and is not achieved by other cumulative wind farm development. Viewpoint 20 illustrates an elevated view from the north side of Loch Ness and although the turbines would breach the skyline the visual effects would not be significant. Further mitigation is provided by substantial forestry and woodland cover along the northern side of Loch Ness and the northern slopes of the Great Glen.
Be set back from Key Routes	Achieved: The nearest turbines are set back 1.4 km distance from the A9, beyond forestry / woodland.
Preserve mitigation established by current schemes	Achieved: The Proposed Development would not alter or otherwise adversely affected mitigation associated with other wind farm developments.
Maintain the landscape setting of each existing scheme.	Largely achieved: This consideration is not practical as development will always appear to 'overlap' when viewed from some locations. However, separation is largely achieved as the Proposed Development is 2.25 km north of the nearest existing wind farm at the Farr / Glen Kyllachy cluster and appears as a separate development set within a separate 'space' or 'setting' to its neighbour in most viewpoints e.g. Viewpoints 8, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17, 18, and 21.
Avoid coalescence with current positioning	Largely achieved: As above, the partial apparent merging or coalescence of wind farm development is unavoidable from all viewpoints. In this case the effect is rarely visible, and avoided in most cases - Viewpoint 13 is an example.
Respect spacing and scale of existing development pattern.	Largely achieved: See comments above. In respect of scale, considered against existing developments, a factor of intervening distance / perspective and apparent height is more relevant than actual turbine height comparisons. This is demonstrated by Viewpoint 13 which illustrates a good scale match between the existing Farr / Glen Kyllachy cluster and the Proposed Development.

Table 5.10 Consideration of the Dava Moor, Nairn & Monadhliath Area Wind Energy Landscape Sensitivity Pilot Study

Guidance for all wind turbine development	Comments
Set well back into the interior of these uplands, avoiding intrusion on the smaller and more pronounced hills lying on the north-western boundary of these uplands where they border Strathnairn and the upper Foyers valley.	Achieved: The Proposed Development is set back 4-3 km from the nearest northwestern edge of the Rolling Uplands LCT and avoids siting turbines within or close to the smaller and more pronounced hills (e.g. Beinn Dubh, Meall Mor and Meall na Fuar-ghlaic) due west of the Proposed Development and bordering Strathnairn. Allow though the Proposed Development would be visible from Strathnairn (Viewpoint 4) it is not visible in association with pronounced hills / landform and corresponds with a relatively simple and broad skyline.
Sited away from the narrow, intimately scaled glens which cut into the north-western edge of these uplands (these include Glen Doe, Glen Fechlin, Glen Brein and Glen Tarff) to avoid dominating containing skylines or detracting from long views to these valleys from vantage points to the north of the Great Glen.	Achieved: The Proposed Development is located and sited away from all of these glens and would not significantly affect the views or character of these areas.
Set back from the small hills which contain the settled and smaller scale Strathdearn in order to avoid a dominant effect on nearby skylines and minimise effects on views from the A9/railway in the Moy area including cumulative effects with the operational Moy and Tom na Clach wind farms.	Achieved: The Proposed Development is well set back from Strathdearn and would not dominate the skyline the ZTV indicates little or no theoretical visibility. Viewpoints 3 and 6 to the north of the A9 / railway avoid dominant effects on this area and minimise visibility to small areas. Sequential viewpoints 5-14 from the A9 illustrate limited visibility from this area (Figure 5.17-18) There are no cumulative effects with other wind farms.
Extensions to operational wind farms involving a limited number of turbines would be more likely to minimise cumulative effects on more sensitive landscapes within and surrounding this AU. Significant infill of the presently generous spaces between developments should be avoided as this would result in wind turbines having a more dominant effect from	Largely achieved: The Proposed Development mains 'generous' spaces or separation between other existing / consented wind farms and the Proposed Development as illustrated in most viewpoints e.g. Viewpoints 8, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17, 18, and 21.

Guidance for all wind turbine development	Comments
surrounding valued landscapes and popular hill summits.	
Access tracks should be carefully designed to avoid intrusion in line with best practice guidance2. Partial restoration of access tracks (revegetating edges) and rationalisation of estate tracks within the wider AU should be considered as part of a package of measures by developers/landowners to mitigate the effects of wind farm development and enhance landscape character across the Monadhliath in the long term.	Achieved: Access tracks have been carefully designed and include combinations of floating tracks and standard construction as set out in **Chapter 2: Project Description**. The access tracks have been illustrated in photomontages for viewpoints within 10 km and appear to varying degrees in Viewpoints 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10. Site tracks would be 'softened' with shoulders graded with excavated subsoil or peat and completed with the original topsoil or turfs.
Additional overhead transmission lines should be avoided particularly in the adjacent Upper Farmed Strath AU where a plethora of lines has created a cluttered effect in places.	Achieved: Grid connection between turbines and the on-site substation will be underground. However, the off-site grid connection would be determined by the Transmission Network Operator (TNO) at a later date through a Section 37 application process.
It is recommended that the planting of native woodlands, particularly on the more visible edges of these uplands, should be undertaken by wind energy developers/landowners as a condition of consent with the aim of enhancing landscape character in the long term.	Achieved: The Proposed Development includes native riparian woodland planting which would provide multiple benefits in line with Scotland's Strategic Framework for Biodiversity (2023) objectives. From a landscape perspective, the woodland planting would strengthen and enhance the local the landscape by screening views of the proposed turbines, as well as providing visual enhancement along the A9 corridor closest to the site boundary.

Landscape Specific Mitigation

Construction Mitigation

5.11.11 A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) would be agreed prior to construction commencing. This will include measures to mitigate adverse landscape and visual effects during construction such as the restriction of construction traffic to designated routes, to avoid creation of wheel ruts and ensure these are cleared-up and reinstated. Peat and topsoil will be handled in accordance with a Peat Management Plan (PMP).

5.11.12 There would be regular environmental monitoring and reporting to ensure the removal, reinstatement, and clear up of the temporary construction compound / laydown areas and any related construction arisings / redundant material.

5.11.13 A Site Restoration Plan will be submitted for approval by THC before construction begins. The key elements will include the reinstatement of the borrow pit working areas, construction compound, laydown areas and cable trenches. Site tracks would be 'softened' with shoulders graded with excavated subsoil or peat and completed with the original topsoil or turfs.

Landscape Specific Mitigation: Forestry Design and Management

5.11.14 As noted in **Chapter 13: Forestry**, the net area of tree felling lost due to the infrastructure components (not the turbines) would be 4.29 ha. Of this, 2.46 ha will be permanently lost to infrastructure and 1.83 ha will be available for restocking. The net area of permanent loss of FLS long term retention woodland in compartment 2046 is 0.75 ha. Similarly, the loss of upland juniper woodland would be 0.06 ha. **Figure 13.5** indicates the areas of proposed felling.

5.11.15 As the Proposed Development involves the permanent removal of woodland, the Scottish Government's CWP has been fully considered to establish whether Scottish Forestry would require an area of new woodland establishment to compensate for the area felled. In addition, THC's LDP (2012) specifies the inclusion of compensatory planting as part of an application for development. The need for compensatory planting to offset the permanent loss of woodland would be in the areas removed for the access track corridor and construction compound. Therefore, the area for compensatory woodland planting would be 2.46 ha which has been included adjacent to the A9 and illustrated in **Figure 13.7**. Native species are proposed with a high percentage of Scots pine, birch and common alder.

5.11.16 Sequential viewpoint analysis of the A9 is illustrated by 39 wireframe aligned photographs in **Figures 5.18a-u**. The sections of road where existing woodland vegetation already provide screening are illustrated by the majority of the sequential viewpoints. Examples of how the woodland planting would provide landscape and visual mitigation is illustrated in sequential viewpoints 23-24. The mitigation planting would be undertaken in the first available planting season from the commencement of the construction period.

5.11.17 A number of limitations and assumptions in relation to forestry management are relevant to this assessment:

- Where Forest Plans exist, felling phases are described and the replanting design and species choices are included. Designed open space and non-intervention or Long Term Retention may be developed.
- By assessing the changes to the forest structure and any permanent woodland loss resulting from the Proposed Development, a reasonable worst case is assumed whereby the integrity of the woodland as a whole is preserved.
- The typical planting and felling cycles for the normal commercial conifer, Sitka spruce are assumed to be in the range of 40 to 60 years. Given an average

growth rate of 50cms per year, Sitka spruce may well attain a height of 25m in 50 years at which stage the stem dimensions typically meet the specifications for sawmilling and other wood processing and ready for felling as part of commercial operations. Once the tree crop is felled, the area is not usually left fallow for more than two years. After this period, replanting would then take place. The site is typically cultivated which promotes early establishment and conifer transplants taken directly from the tree nursery are planted to re-establish the forestry crop. It is estimated that conifer transplants take between 5 and 7 years to grow to a height of 2m.

- It should be noted that the final tree height is dependent upon the local site conditions, particularly exposure to wind and soil strength. In exposed locations and areas of weak soil, a tree may not achieve a height of 20m before succumbing to windthrow.

Landscape Specific Mitigation: New Site Access and Internal Access Tracks

5.11.18 A total of approximately 13.1 km of wind farm access tracks would be constructed of which 3.7 km would be floating tracks to minimise potential excavation and to avoid disruption of surrounding peatland. Temporary passing places would also be provided every 500m (as required). The tracks would feature local widening on corners and would be surfaced with coarse aggregate (see **Figure 2.10** for typical track cross sections). On completion of Site construction, the Site entrance and access tracks would be cleared of any construction signage and left in a tidy and co-ordinated condition with verges restored and field boundary fencing neatly tied into new gates / access details. Access to the site would be taken from the A9 as shown in **Figure 2.9**.

5.11.19 The LVIA has taken account of the access tracks which have been illustrated in photomontages for viewpoints within 10 km and appear to varying degrees in Viewpoints 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10.

Landscape Specific Mitigation: Wind Turbines

5.11.20 A total of 14 wind turbines are proposed with a blade tip height of up to 200m, each with an associated crane pad. The turbines would be a uniform, semi-matte pale grey colour (no company logos or advertising) to reduce their contrast with the background sky and minimise their reflectivity. The proposed turbines would all rotate in the same direction at a slow and predictable speed of approximately 5 revolutions per minute (rpm) up to a maximum of approximately 17.5rpm. The transformer required for each turbine will be located within the turbine tower.

5.11.21 Aviation warning lights would be required and a lighting strategy to provide mitigation of the potential landscape and visual effects at night (being mitigation of the lighting that could have been required by the CAA) is proposed on seven of the 14 turbines which has been approved by the CAA. An assessment of the effects of the aviation warning lights is reported in **Technical Appendix 5.4**.

Landscape Specific Mitigation: Temporary Construction Compound

5.11.22 During the construction period, two construction compounds would be required that would include a laydown area for wind turbine components, and dimensions would be approximately 30 m x 50 m. The typical construction compound is shown on **Figure 2.14**. The locations have been selected partly because it has low landscape sensitivity and would largely not be visible from surrounding receptors, primarily due to intervening landform and forestry.

5.11.23 The areas would be prepared by stripping soil, laying down a geotextile material and then a working surface of stone. The stripped soil would be stored adjacent to the compound for subsequent use in reinstatement works at the end of the construction period. The site compounds and laydown areas would be fully re-instated with stored turfs or excavated soil and / or re-seeded to match the local contours and the existing vegetation.

Landscape Specific Mitigation: Borrow Pits

5.11.24 One borrow pit location has been identified, as described in **Chapter 2: The Proposed Development** and shown as borrow pit search area in **Figure 2.5.** It is anticipated that further detail regarding the location and specifications of any on-site borrow pit will be provided post-consent, following completion of detailed ground investigation and technical studies. The borrow pit search area location has a low landscape sensitivity and very limited visibility from the surrounding area.

5.11.25 Upon completion, the borrow pit would be reinstated and repurposed to form the Substation and BESS compound, drawing upon the advice of a landscape architect and implemented in agreement with THC, SEPA and NS. This will ensure that proposed reinstatement materials and techniques are suitable and may identify appropriate environmental enhancement opportunities.

Landscape Specific Mitigation: Substation and Battery Storage Compound

5.11.26 The main substation and control building would have a very low visibility from the surrounding areas, primarily due to the surrounding landform. The substation is illustrated indicatively in **Figure 2.13** and would typically include two single-storey, pitched roofed buildings comprising the network operator building and the wind farm control building, with switchgear infrastructure and car parking. The substation would also be enclosed by a 2.7m high security fence with a low visibility style and colour. The colour of the building would be selected to have a low contrast with the surrounding uplands.

5.11.27 A Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) would be constructed next to the Substation and consist of a palisade fenced open compound of batteries along with inverters and transformers connected by an underground cable to the substation. The colour of the associated battery containers would be co-ordinated with the substation to have a low contrast with the surrounding landscape.

Landscape Specific Mitigation: Electrical Cables and Grid Connection

5.11.28 All on-site electrical cables linking the turbines, substation and route to grid connection would be underground and buried within a trench alongside the internal access tracks.

5.11.29 The grid connection point would be determined by the local Transmission Network Operator (Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE)) and would be subject to a separate application.

Landscape Specific Mitigation: Operational Mitigation

5.11.30 The operation of the Proposed Development would cover a period of 50 years and include site management to ensure the adequate maintenance of site facilities and landscape features, such as access tracks, field boundaries, gates, and signage. The proposed woodland planting within the Site boundary would be maintained for 5-Years until established and monitored for a total of 10-Years.

Landscape Specific Mitigation: Decommissioning

5.11.31 The Proposed Development would be decommissioned at the end of its operational period which is expected to take up to approximately 6 months. In accordance with **Chapter 2: The Proposed Development**, all visible, above ground structures (turbines, substation and battery storage compound) would be removed upon decommissioning, thereby rendering the vast majority of the landscape and visual effects as reversible. Subject to landowner requirements, the main operational site entrance and some of the internal access tracks would remain as permanent features, with redundant areas and crane hard standings removed and restored in accordance with industry guidance. A Site Decommissioning Plan will set out environmental protection measures and restoration principles which will be implemented. This Plan will be agreed with THC.

5.12 Residual Landscape Effects

5.12.1 Landscape Effects are defined by the Landscape Institute in GLVIA 3, paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 as follows.

"An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on landscape as a resource. The concern ... is with how the proposal will affect the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character. ... The area of landscape that should be covered in assessing landscape effects should include the site itself and the full extent of the wider landscape around it which the Proposed Development may influence in a significant manner."

5.12.2 These effects are assessed by considering the landscape sensitivity (value and susceptibility) against the magnitude of change. The type of effect is also be described as temporary or permanent, direct or indirect, cumulative and positive, neutral, or negative.

5.12.3 The residual landscape effects, assessed here, are those effects remaining after all of the proposed design mitigation has been taken into account. An assessment of the cumulative landscape effects, taking account of other existing and consented wind farm development and any current wind farm applications, as set out in **Table 5.6** has been undertaken according to the methodology detailed in **Technical Appendix 5.1**.

5.12.4 The effects of the proposed aviation warning lights of the Proposed Development on the landscape resource are considered in **Technical Appendix 5.4**.

Landscape Effects on Landscape Character

5.12.5 The landscape assessment has taken account of all landscape character within 15 km of the Proposed Development and three SLAs.

5.12.6 A map of landscape character within the Study Area is illustrated **Figures 5.7-8**.

Direct Landscape Effects on Rolling Uplands – Inverness LCT

5.12.7 The 'host' landscape for the Proposed Development is the *Rolling Uplands – Inverness* LCT (number 221 on **Figures 5.7-8** and in the NS 2019 Landscape Character Assessment).

5.12.8 The *Rolling Uplands – Inverness* LCT covers a relatively large area to the southwest and centre of the 45 km Study Area and adjoins the *Rolling Uplands - Cairngorms* LCT to the south and east, making it a relatively common LCT in the area. The *Rolling Uplands – Inverness* LCT transitions to the *Open Rolling Upland* LCT to the northeast which shares many similar features and further extends the upland character within the study area. Within 15 km, the LCT covers more than half of the area as illustrated in **Figure 5.8**.

5.12.9 The landscape character of the *Rolling Uplands – Inverness* LCT is described within the NS 2019 Landscape Character Assessment as follows:

"… rolling hills which lie to the south east of the Great Glen and form an upland backdrop to much of the eastern part of Inverness district, extending far beyond the district boundary and into the Cairngorms National Park. The uplands act as a sheltering edge to the Farmed Strath landscape type, from which they rise. They also form a backdrop to more distant areas to the south, east and west where they seem to merge into an undulating skyline without any clearly identifiable features."

5.12.10 The key characteristics of the *Rolling Uplands – Inverness* LCT are described within the NS Landscape Character Assessment (2019) as follows:

- *"A series of large scale, smooth, rounded hills with summits of similar height forming broad, undulating upland plateaux containing occasional steep-sided straths.*
- *Open heather moorland dominates, the uniform colour and texture accentuating the landform.*
- *Straths floors contain inbye pastures, trees and small patches of woodland.*
- *Conifer forests limited to the lower edges of uplands and strath sides.*

- *Settlement limited to a few isolated farms in remote straths.*
- *A few mainly single track roads, integrated within the landform.*
- *Uninhabited interior, largely inaccessible to vehicles.*
- *Archaeological evidence of settlement and farming from prehistoric times to the 19th century.*
- *Striking colour and textural contrast between strath floors and moorland vegetation above.*
- *Expansive views from the hill tops and plateaux create a strong sense of openness and exposure.*
- *Scale and distance difficult to judge.*
- *Few signs of active management in the interiors, creating a strong perception of remoteness, although this is affected by a number of large wind farm developments."*

5.12.11 As acknowledged in the key characteristics, wind farm development is a feature of this LCT. Within 15 km, wind farm development occurs at the existing Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Moy, Tom nan Clach (on the boundary of the LCT) and Aberarder wind farms. The consented Tom nan Clach Extension Wind Farm on the boundary of the LCT would also have a characterising influence on this area as illustrated in **Figure 5.8**. Within the wider LVIA Study Area, there are a further three existing wind farms (the existing Dunmaglass, Corriegarth, and Dell wind farms) and three consented wind farms (Corriegarth II, Cloiche, and Sallachy) within the LCT, as illustrated in **Figure 5.7**.

5.12.12 The Proposed Development would be situated in upland moorland and would therefore follow the established pattern of wind farm development within the LCT.

5.12.13 The proposed turbines and associated infrastructure would be located on gently undulating upland slopes of the *Rolling Uplands – Inverness* LCT between the northern extents of Strathnairn to the west and Strathdearn to the south and southeast. To the north and east the of the proposed turbines the *Rolling Uplands – Inverness* LCT extends beyond the A9 pass or corridor approximately 10 km before transitioning into *Open Rolling Upland.* To the southwest, the undulating landform of the *Rolling Uplands – Inverness* LCT extends over 45 km to beyond the edge of the Study Area.

5.12.14 The city of Inverness is located approximately 10 km to the north with the Beauly Firth beyond, and Loch Ness and the Great Glen extends southwest, creating a southwest to northeast diagonal line of connected water features of the Caledonian Canal, Loch Ness and Beauly Firth, cutting across the Study Area. Parallel, striations of *Broad Steep-Side Glen*, *Farmed and Wooded Foothills*, and *Farmed Strath* (Strathnairn) interspersed with *Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland* and *Rolling Farmland and Woodland* run along the Great Glen to the north and west of the Proposed Development and the *Rolling Uplands – Inverness* LCT. West of the Great Glen is a mosaic of mountainous *Rocky Moorland Plateau*, divided by deep *Wooded Glens* and *Farmed Straths*. Further north and west of Inverness the landscape of The Aird, Cromarty Firth and the Black Isle is more complex and diverse and seascapes and coastal landscapes (*Coastal Farmland*, *Coastal Forests* and *Beaches*) extend through this area and along the Moray coast to the north near Nairn

and Forres. To the south the *Rolling Uplands – Inverness* LCT extends over the boundary of the Cairngorms National Park and is met by a further southwest to northeast diagonal of the Speyside Glen, with *Forested Upland Fringe* and the Cairngorm Mountains (*Mountain Massive*) beyond.

5.12.15 Within 15 km, the extensive upland areas provide an open landscape with extensive visibility, particularly from summits in contrast to more limited visibility from the lower lying valleys of Strathdearn and Strathnairn. Visibility in the wider LCT reduces with distance to the southwest as landform increasingly screens the views. To the north and northeast visibility towards the Proposed Development extends in open areas across the A9 pass and elevated hills – although there is extensive forestry in this area.

5.12.16 Site surveys have confirmed that the landscape character of the proposed Site and surrounding area is fairly typical of the *Rolling Uplands – Inverness* LCT and displays many of the key characteristics described in the NS landscape character description, noted previously.

Landscape Sensitivity of the Site and the Rolling Uplands – Inverness LCT

5.12.17 The landscape assessment has been undertaken in accordance with GLVIA 3 and the methodology and glossary set out in **Technical Appendix 5.1**. GLVIA 3, paragraph 5.39 advises that "*Landscape receptors need to be assessed firstly in terms of their sensitivity, combining judgements of their susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed and the value attached to the landscape. … it is specific to the particular project or development that is being proposed and to the location in question."*

Landscape Susceptibility

5.12.18 Landscape susceptibility according to the GLVIA3, glossary means "*the ability of the landscape to accommodate the development without undue consequences for maintenance of the baseline situation and / or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies*".

5.12.19 The *Rolling Uplands – Inverness* landscape typology is recognised in the THC's OWESG Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal (Loch Ness Strategic Capacity Study) as less susceptible (ranking '2-3 out of 4' in terms of susceptibility, with '1' being the most susceptibility to change). This maybe be equated to a verbal ranking of Medium to Low and is due to a number of landscape characteristics that make this landscape better able to accommodate wind farm development in comparison to other more susceptible landscapes. These characteristics include large-scale, simple, landform and moorland with some forestry cover with perceptions of openness and exposure, that reduce its susceptibility to wind farm development. Characteristics that indicate a higher level of susceptibility such as a "strong sense of remoteness", "largely uninhabited", and "inaccessible core" are weakened by the presence of the A9, levels of coniferous plantation forestry, existing wind farms to an extent, and some dispersed settlement at Moy and further afield at Tomatin.

5.12.20 The Proposed Development is located in an area where the large scale of the open landscape would be best able to accommodate the scale of turbines proposed, such that "*the scale of the landform is maintained*" as noted in the OWESG. Further the proposed Development fits with the baseline pattern of existing and consented wind farm development.

5.12.21 In comparison the *Dava Moor, Nairn and Monadhliath Area Wind Energy Landscape Sensitivity Pilot Study (2021)* concludes a '*High-medium*' sensitivity to turbines >150m for the *Rolling Uplands* LCT.

5.12.22 It is noted that the Pilot Study has identified a further character type (*Strath in Rolling Uplands* LCT) which bisects the (NS) *Rolling Uplands* LCT, following Strathdearn and the lower lying area around the A9 corridor. This creates an isolated section of the 'host' *Rolling Uplands* LCT to the northwest of the NS *Rolling Uplands* LCT. For the purposes of this assessment, the NS *Rolling Uplands* LCT is used, but the assessment recognises the increased sensitivity of Strathdearn and the lower lying area around the A9 corridor.

5.12.23 Using the criteria to define susceptibilities and sensitivities identified in the Pilot Study, an assessment of the susceptibility of the proposed Site is presented in **Table 5.11.**

Table 5.11 Rolling Uplands – Inverness: Landscape Susceptibility

Summary description	Pilot Study Assessment of turbines >150m	Assessment of proposed Site
Scale *These uplands have an expansive scale. Individual hills rise to 942m on the border of the CNP although much of this upland plateau generally lies between 600-800m AOD. Lower and more pronounced hills lying on the north-western edge of this AU and the occasional narrow glens which cut through these uplands have a smaller scale.*	*Susceptibility is reduced due to the predominant expansive scale of this landscape. Smaller hills on the north-western edge and occasional narrow glens would be of increased susceptibility to turbines located close to these features which could dominate their smaller scale.* *Susceptibility:* ***Medium-low***	The expansive scale of this landscape is a feature that reduces susceptibility to wind farm development. The Proposed Development is remote from smaller, distinctive hills and narrow glens on the northwestern edge of the LCT. Although the Site is located in the northwest of the LCT, it is part of the larger scale landmass to the south of the A9. Susceptibility: **Low**
Landform *These uplands generally comprise smoothly rounded hills interspersed with boggy basins peppered with small lochans. The smaller hills lying*	*The predominantly subtly rolling landform of these extensive uplands reduces susceptibility to this size of turbine. The more pronounced and often craggier hills lying on the edge of Strathnairn and*	The proposed Site would be located within the subtly rolling landform to the northwest of the LCT and not within the more sensitive complex

Summary description	Pilot Study Assessment of turbines >150m	Assessment of proposed Site
on the north-eastern boundary of this AU have more complex craggy tops and ridges and are cut by deeply incised glens.	*deeply incised glens are of increased susceptibility to turbines that would detract from their more complex and often dramatic form.* *Susceptibility:* ***Medium-low***	landform at the north-eastern boundary. Susceptibility: **Low**
Landcover *A predominantly simple land cover of grass and heather moorland with extensive wet peaty basins. Some relatively small coniferous plantations are present on the outer edges of these uplands and native woodlands are associated with Glens Tarff, Doe, and Buck.*	*The predominantly simple land cover of this character would be less susceptible to development.* *Susceptibility:* ***Medium-low***	The proposed Site would be located within the typical upland land cover. Susceptibility: **Medium-Low**
Built environment. *There is no settlement in this AU. A narrow public road traverses the north-eastern end of these uplands and there are many estate tracks. A 400kV transmission line (and the Melgarve substation) is aligned close to the Corrieyairack Pass. The Glendoe Hydro Scheme and a number of operational and consented wind energy developments are sited within the core of this extensive upland plateau. There are five clusters of wind farm development in these uplands which are widely spaced and separated by undulating moorland. Built development tends to form nodes with extensive less modified tracts of ground between and as a result it is a key, but not dominant, characteristic of these uplands. Estate tracks*	*While the presence of existing wind farms and other large-scale infrastructure generally reduces susceptibility substantial additional development could cumulatively change the character of these uplands to a landscape dominated by wind energy development. The extent of open space between the five clusters of wind farm development are important in minimising effects from surrounding more sensitive landscapes (including the CNP, SLA and WLAs) and the proportion of 90-degree views occupied by turbines. The increased size and spacing of this turbine type could quickly diminish the extent of open space and the dominance of wind farm development seen in key views. Turbines of this size would contrast with existing*	The Proposed Development would be located within an undeveloped area such that there would be a separation with wind farms to the south. The A9 pass also provides separation to the north and east. The addition of the Proposed Development to the existing spread of wind farm development would increase the presence of wind farms within the LCT but would not create a wind farm landscape or 'dominate' the LCT. The proposed Site would be located 10 km from the CNP and would not be located within any SLAs. Susceptibility: **Medium**

Summary description	Pilot Study Assessment of turbines >150m	Assessment of proposed Site
are ubiquitous across these uplands.	*smaller wind turbines particularly if sited close-by.* *Susceptibility:* ***High-Medium***	
Landscape context *This AU abuts the CNP where a higher ridge (punctuated by three Munro hills) forms a definitive rim containing views of wind farms located in the lower-lying plateau from lower elevation views in the Spey valley. The more pronounced hills lying on the north-western edge of these uplands form a scenic rugged backdrop to the Upper Farmed Strath and are seen from vantage points above the dramatic trough of Loch Ness, for example, from the hill of Meall Fuar-mhonaidh.*	*The outer parts of this landscape have the greatest susceptibility in terms of indirect effects of wind energy development on adjacent landscapes. The extensiveness of this AU would generally reduce effects on adjacent landscapes provided turbines towards the lower height band of this type (generally <200m) of this size were located in lower-lying basins in the upland interior.* *Susceptibility:* ***Medium***	The Proposed Development would be located set back 3-4 km from the northwest edge of this LCT. There would be very limited visibility from within the 'trough' of Loch Ness. Views from Meall Fuar-mhonaidh are assessed in Viewpoint 20 (Very Low magnitude). Susceptibility: **Medium-Low**
Perceptual aspects *A sense of naturalness and remoteness is associated with the less modified parts of this landscape. While the Monadhliath WLA represents the most extensive area of upland with stronger qualities of wildness, a sense of wildness can also be experienced within the more visually contained basins and glens within the interior of this upland plateau where views of wind farms and other infrastructure are precluded.*	*While susceptibility is reduced close to existing nodes of large-scale infrastructure in these uplands, it increases within and close to the more remote glens where the introduction of new visibility of wind energy development would diminish the sense of seclusion and naturalness experienced. The less modified uplands south of Strathdearn are also of increased susceptibility as, although operational wind farms are already visible, this size of turbine (and particularly those >200m), visible aviation lighting and more extensive bands of development could significantly further diminish the perception of wildness.*	The Proposed Development would be located in part of the LCT influenced by existing wind farm development and the A9 road corridor, both of which reduce the sense of seclusion, remoteness, and wildness. Susceptibility: **Medium-Low**

Summary description	Pilot Study Assessment of turbines >150m	Assessment of proposed Site
	Susceptibility: ***High-medium***	
Visual amenity *This upland landscape is not settled and, beyond the Munro hills which lie on the boundary of the CNP and the Corrieyairack Pass, it is not an area which is popular with walkers. Views into the interior of these uplands are restricted due to its extensiveness and also because of the rolling nature of the landform. The outer parts of this upland plateau are generally most visible, principally from the adjacent straths and from the upper Spey valley in the CNP. There are also longer distance views from vantage points above Loch Ness to the NW of this AU, from the high summits and ridges in the Creag Meagaidh area and from parts of the CNP (beyond the Monadhliath Munro hills) including from parts of the Cairngorms Massif, the Drumochter Hills and also from the smaller hills in the Laggan area.*	*The uninhabited nature of these uplands and the general absence of popular walking routes reduces visual susceptibility in terms of views from within this landscape and the likely numbers of receptors that would potentially be affected. Views from surrounding areas are more susceptible to turbines of this size as these could increase intrusion (including the effects of lighting) and result in cumulative effects which could affect visual amenity. Particularly susceptible receptors include walkers accessing the Munro and Corbett hills lying close to the SE and SW boundaries of this landscape, settlement, roads, and footpaths to the NW either side of Loch Ness and views from the A9 corridor/ Strathdearn area. Turbines of this size sited closer to the outer parts of this landscape would be likely to increase the extent of significant visual effects.* *Susceptibility:* ***High-medium***	The Proposed Development would not be located within the more sensitive areas at the SE and SW boundaries near the Great Glen or the Cairngorms National Park. Additionally, there would be very limited visibility from Loch Ness. There would, however, be potential visibility from parts of the A9 in transitory views subject to forestry cover. Susceptibility: **Medium**
Landscape value *The Monadhliath WLA covers the southern part of this AU. The CNP and the Braeroy, Glenshirra and Creag Meagaidh WLA abut this AU and the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA also lies to the north-west. Key qualities of*	*Wind energy development sited within or closer to the Monadhliath WLA would significantly affect key qualities. Turbines of this size located in the south-western part of this AU could also affect the key qualities of the Braeroy, Glenshirra and Creag*	The Proposed Development would not be located within the Monadhliath WLA (approximately10 km north of the boundary). The turbines would not be located in the more sensitive areas to the southwest of the LCT near the

Summary description	Pilot Study Assessment of turbines >150m	Assessment of proposed Site
the Monadhliath WLA include the awe-inspiring simplicity and openness and immense scale of the uplands and the strong sense of remoteness and naturalness found in the interior. The Braeroy, Glenshirra and Creag Meagaidh WLA has similar qualities in addition to the distinctive geological features which contribute to the strong sense of naturalness. The descriptions of these WLAs does not take into account the effect of wind farms constructed in this AU since 2014. Relevant special qualities of the CNP are likely to include the strong juxtaposition of contrasting landscapes, principally relating to the backdrop the Monadhliath provide to the Spey valley.	*Meaghidh WLA. Visible aviation lighting would extend these effects. The special qualities and views from the CNP, which overlaps part of the Monadhliath WLA, could also be affected by turbines visible above the present rim of high ground which contains views. Turbines of this size sited close to the NW boundary of this AU could affect dramatic views of Great Glen, diminishing the sense of vast scale and containment, and affect the intimate scale and intricate landscape mosaic found in the Duntelchaig area east of Loch Ness which are key qualities of the SLA. Development sited in the core of these uplands would be likely to have less an effect on designated landscapes with the exception of the Monadhliath WLA.* *Susceptibility:* ***High-medium***	Braeroy, Glenshirra and Creag Meaghidh WLA. There would be very limited views from The Great Glen and the Proposed Development would have limited effects on the special qualities of the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA. Susceptibility: **Medium-Low**
Overall susceptibility	Strategic Level **High-medium**	Site Specific **Medium**

5.12.24 The Pilot Study states that the *Rolling Uplands* LCT is considered to be one of the "*least sensitive areas, in landscape and visual terms, to larger wind turbines >100m' because of its 'expansive scale and generally simple landform and landcover*". The Study also identifies the *Rolling Uplands* LCT as "*better able to accommodate turbines >150m in terms of scale*".

5.12.25 The Pilot Study outlines a '*Recommended landscape strategy*' for wind farm development. It identifies sensitive areas around the A939 and B9007 relating to Lochindorb and Dava which are unlikely to be affected by the Proposed Development. It also identifies coastal areas as sensitive to the "*development of wind turbines where they could intrude on views from roads, settlement and recreational areas and also affect the setting of historic features and the sense of wildness experienced along the most natural*

and remote stretches of coast" and seeks to "*Protect the integrity of extensive and diverse woodlands*", although recognising that many are commercially managed.

5.12.26 With regard to the location of wind farm development, the Strategy seeks to "*Ensure that any further development of larger turbines is clearly associated with less sensitive upland landscapes where their greater extent and larger scale can better accommodate, and provide an appropriate setting, to large turbines. Impacts on adjacent more sensitive landscapes should be minimised by setting development well back into the interior of more extensive tracts of upland, considering limitations in the height and numbers of turbines (including concentrating clusters of development to minimise the horizontal spread of turbines and avoid a more dominant effect) and avoiding more visually prominent sites*."

5.12.27 The Proposed Development would be located within the *Rolling Uplands* LCT which is generally of lower susceptibility to large turbines.

5.12.28 A range of landscape criteria or indicators of susceptibility to wind energy development have been considered, as set out in **Table 5.11** above. An overall susceptibility of Medium is concluded, due mainly to the large landscape scale, simple unenclosed land cover, limited settlement and the visual influence of other wind farm development. Factors that would increase susceptibility relate the more sensitive lower-lying areas of Strathdearn, Strathnairn and the A9 / Loch Moy area around the perimeter of the *Rolling Uplands* LCT. This compares with the Medium to Low ranking from THC's Loch Ness Strategic Capacity Study and the High-Medium ranking in the Pilot Study.

Landscape Value

5.12.29 The Site is not located within a designated landscape and would have limited visibility / interconnection with designated landscapes in the wider area. The closest designated landscape is the locally designated *Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors* SLA which is approximately 5 km to the northeast, and Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA approximately 6 km to the west. The nearest nationally designated landscape (CNP) is located over approximately 10 km to the southeast. The nearest WLAs are located approximately 10 km distance to the south. In terms of public access and recreational use, the Site has limited recreational use. Despite the lack of designation, the landscape is in a reasonable condition in terms of its representativeness, landscape interest, perceptual and scenic quality, and is considered to be of Medium local value.

Overall Sensitivity

5.12.30 Considering the assessment of Medium susceptibility and Medium value of the Site, the overall sensitivity of the site area and the *Rolling Uplands – Inverness* LCT is assessed as *Medium*.

5.12.31 The landscape elements on the Site are mainly moorland vegetation and small areas of forestry plantations, which in landscape terms is a common land cover that has been assessed as of Low landscape sensitivity.

Landscape Effects during Construction

5.12.32 The 18-month construction phase would result in localised direct landscape effects on the Site and its component landscape elements of moorland vegetation. During this period there would be dynamic and progressive change to the landscape involving new and upgraded access track creation, movement of people and construction vehicles, plant and machinery, localised establishment of compounds, deliveries and site storage, excavation of the borrow pit and localised construction of turbine foundations.

5.12.33 Effects on landscape elements, mainly the moorland vegetation and small areas of coniferous plantation forestry (both Low sensitivity) would affect localised areas, progressing from Zero to High magnitude of change, towards the completion of the Proposed Development. Combined with Low sensitivity the landscape effects on the fabric and constituent elements of the landscape (moorland and forestry vegetation) would range from **None** to **Moderate** and would be Not Significant.

5.12.34 In terms of the effects on landscape character, the magnitude of change during the construction phase would range progressively from Zero to High, primarily as a result of the turbine construction and related infrastructure, including the creation of new access tracks, construction compounds, substation and battery storage, and borrow pit. When combined with Medium sensitivity the landscape effects on the *Rolling Uplands - Inverness* LCT would range from None (at the start of the construction phase) increasing to **Major** and Significant upon completion, due in particular to the nature of construction activity (contrasting colours, movement people). The geographical extent of significant effects would be limited to areas within the Site itself extending out to approximately 3 km west and east up to large areas of forestry and the A9 corridor, out to approximately 2 km south up to the existing Farr Wind Farm and out to approximately 1-3 km north and northeast up to the A9 and railway corridor, and forested areas. Beyond this distance the level of effect would reduce to **Moderate** or less and Not Significant.

5.12.35 The Proposed Development includes native woodland planting along the northeastern Site boundary which will close gap in the roadside vegetation of forestry and woodland along the A9. The mitigation planting would be undertaken, beyond the land take for A9 dualling, in the first available planting season from the commencement of the construction period and there would be visibility of fencing works and planting along this section of the A9.

Landscape Effects during Operation

5.12.36 During operation, the completed wind farm would gain a more 'settled' appearance when compared to the same area during the construction period. Although significant, the landscape effects would continue throughout the operational period mainly as a result of the proposed turbines and less as a result of the associated infrastructure.

5.12.37 Most of the key characteristics of the *Rolling Uplands - Inverness* LCT are physical in nature and these would not be affected or altered by the proposed development during operation. It is worth noting that this LCT is already influenced by the presence of existing

and consented wind farm development. The Proposed Development would however introduce a new wind farm, consolidating the influence of wind farms within an area partly characterised by wind farm development that fits with the baseline pattern of wind farm development in this area. However, the Proposed Development would become a new visual focus (albeit adjacent to Farr and Glen Kyllachy wind farms) where it would be situated on an extensive area of upland hills to the south of the A9, away from the "*intimately scaled glens which cut into the* [south]-*western edge of these uplands (these include Glen Doe, Glen Fechlin, Glen Brein and Glen Tarff)"*, and from the "*small hills which contain the settled and smaller scale Strathdearn"* as suggested in the Pilot Study.

5.12.38 The proposed turbines would be set on upland hills such that they would be set back from the Great Glen, Strathnairn and Strathdearn and contained by a series of low-lying summits when viewed from low-lying areas such as the valley floors. This containment also limits the overall visibility from the Cairngorms National Park to the southeast where ZTV coverage is mostly contained by a narrow band of northwest facing slopes and summits to the western edge of the Cairngorm Mountains. The magnitude of change would be High (subject to localised screening from landform and forestry) and the geographical extent would extend out to approximately 2-3 km west and east up to large areas of forestry and the A9 corridor, out to approximately 2 km south up to the existing Farr Wind Farm and out to approximately 1-3 km north and northeast up to the A9 and railway corridor and associated forested areas. Beyond this distance the magnitude would reduce to Medium or less.

5.12.39 As a result of the Medium sensitivity and the High magnitude of change, the level of effect on part of the *Rolling Uplands – Inverness* LCT would be **Major** and Significant, extending out to approximately 3 km west and east up to large areas of forestry and the A9 corridor, up to approximately 2 km south up to the existing Farr Wind Farm and out to approximately 1-3 km north and northeast up to the A9 and railway corridor, and forested areas. Beyond this distance the level of effect would be **Moderate** or less and not significant in terms of the overall landscape character. The nature of these effects would be for a duration of 50 years (although reversible), direct and negative due primarily to the height and scale of the wind turbines and their effect on the perceptual qualities of this landscape.

5.12.40 This level of effect, and geographical extent, is not unusual for large-scale wind farm development and significant effects on the host landscape are unavoidable. The Proposed Development has undergone design iterations and mitigation to reduce the landscape and visual effects which are embedded into the Proposed Development.

5.12.41 The Proposed Development includes native woodland planting to the northeast which would strengthen the landscape by providing visual screening and enhancement along the A9. The proposed planting would take 10-15 years to establish with planting undertaken in the first available planting season from the commencement of the construction period and there would be visibility of fencing works and planting along this section of the A9. Once established the native woodland would have a localised and beneficial effect on the landscape character as perceived from the A9.

Cumulative Assessment: Proposed Development, Existing and Consented Wind Farms

5.12.42 There are seven existing wind farms and four consented wind farm development within the *Rolling Uplands - Inverness LCT* which already have a direct effect on areas of the LCT. The closest of these are Farr and Glen Kyllachy, approximately2 km to the south of the proposed turbines, and Moy Wind Farm approximately 4.5 km to the northeast across the A9. The existing Tom nan Clach and the consented Tom nan Clach Extension wind farms are located approximately 10 km from the proposed turbines to the east, on the northeastern boundary with the adjacent *Open Rolling Upland* LCT. Other existing and consented wind farms within 20 km include Aberarder and Dunmaglass wind farms (14 km to the southwest). Other wind farm development is located at greater distances between approximately 24 km (Corriegarth and the consented Corriegarth II) and approximately 32 km (Stronelairg and the consented Cloich and Dell wind farms) from the Proposed Development.

5.12.43 The Proposed Development would be most closely associated with the wind farm development at Farr and Glen Kyllachy wind farms. Although the Proposed Development would be approximately 2 km from these wind farms, it would be generally seen as a separate wind farm, slightly increasing the overall influence of wind farm development within this part of the LCT.

5.12.44 **Figure 5.13** indicates that, where they are visible, the proposed turbines would be seen in the context of other existing wind farm development. There would be some limited locations where the Proposed Development would be visible as a solo development from part of Strathnairn and the A9 within 10 km, and in places between Inverness and Nairn within 25 km distance. Noticeably, the proposed turbines would not be visible in the more sensitive Strathdearn and Glen Kyllachy areas, nor in the sensitive glens to the southwest.

5.12.45 The additional cumulative effect of adding the Proposed Development to the existing and consented wind farm baseline would be slightly reduced by the presence of these wind farms, although still significant (**Moderate**). The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible) direct, cumulative and negative.

5.12.46 The combined cumulative magnitude would be High within 1-3 km distance from the Proposed Development, but linked to a wider extent of cumulative effects combined with the existing Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Moy and Tom na Clach wind farms which form part of the baseline landscape. The level of effect resulting from the combined significant cumulative effect as a result of Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Moy and Tom nan Clach and the Proposed Development would be **Major** extending to a distance of approximately 1-3km around each wind farm, reducing to Moderate or less beyond. Unless consent is granted to extend their operation, Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Moy and Tom na Clach wind farms would be decommissioned approximately 26-38 years prior to the end of the Proposed Development's operational period, reducing this cumulative effect. However, cumulative effects would remain as a result of the Proposed Development, and the distant consented Tom na Extension Wind Farm within 10 km (which would be decommissioned approximately 10 years prior to the end of the Proposed Development's operational

period). Other existing and consented wind farm development has a Low, direct magnitude of change on this LCT, characterising the southwestern areas of *Rolling Uplands - Inverness* LCT. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible) direct, cumulative and negative.

Cumulative Assessment: Proposed Development, Existing, Consented and Application Wind Farms

5.12.47 There are no application stage wind farms within the *Rolling Uplands - Inverness* LCT at the time of assessment. The nearest application wind farm to the LCT would be Loch Laith and Chrathaich wind farms to the southwest of the 45 km study area, approximately 35 km from the Proposed Development. The nearest to the Proposed Development would be Ourack, approximately29 km to the northeast of the proposed turbines. None of these wind farms would have an influence on this LCT given their long intervening distance. Therefore, there would be no further cumulative effects on this LCT.

Landscape Effects During Decommissioning

5.12.48 During decommissioning the Site would return to a 'construction site' for a temporary period and the level of effect would be variable over the site and according to the phase of activity. In overall terms the magnitude would reduce from operational levels to Very Low with the removal of the turbines and associated above ground infrastructure (excepting on-site access tracks). The residual landscape effect would be **Negligible** and Not Significant. All other wind farm operations would have ceased under the existing consents and the residual cumulative effects post decommissioning would be **Negligible** and Not Significant. The nature of these effects would be permanent, direct, and positive to neutral when compared to the pre-existing landscape of the local area. Mature, native woodland would continue to have a localised and beneficial effect on the landscape character as perceived from the A9.

Indirect Effects on the Surrounding Landscape Character

5.12.49 The nature of the effects on surrounding landscape character units would be indirect effects on the key visual or perceptual characteristics of these landscapes, resulting from views of the proposed turbines and associated development, where visible. The assessment considers the likely change to landscape character and as such it is different from the visual assessment of particular views and visual amenity, experienced by people. Landscape character within the surrounding 15 km has been included in the assessment as reported in **Section 5.9**. The assessment is set out in **Table 5.12**, with the LCTs listed in numerical order.

5.12.50 In summary, the northern edge of Strathnairn (*Farmed Strath - Inverness* LCT) between Balnafoich and the Faillie near the A9 would be significantly affected due to the introduction of the Proposed Development which would appear clearly visible above the Strath when viewed from this area. None of the other surrounding LCTs within 15 km

would be significantly affected in terms of their landscape character, although there would be significant visual effects on the views from some of these areas.

Table 5.12 Indirect Effects on Surrounding Landscape Character within 15 km

Landscape Character Type	Assessment
223 – Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland LCT	The *Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland* LCT is a relatively small LCT located to the north of Strathnairn and northwest of the host LCT, between Strathnairn and the upper reaches of Strath Dorres as it skirts south of Inverness. The area consists of a flat to gently undulating and inclined plateau south of Inverness. Much of the area is wooded and even those areas which are indicated as open moorland on the map (along the route of the B861) are covered in scattered groups and swaths of emerging woodland and scrub. This is also a transitional landscape merging gradually with the lower *Rolling Farmland and Woodland* in the north and the higher *Farmed and Wooded Foothills* to the south. The key characteristics of the LCT as described by the NS Landscape Character Assessment (2019) are: • *"Flat to gently undulating and inclined, large scale plateau with a predominantly horizontal landform and skyline.* • *Landcover of either heather moorland and gorse scrub or large scale conifer forests, with occasional trees and fragments of broad leaved woodlands.* • *Largely uninhabited, with settlements in no distinct pattern, mainly along outer edges.* • *Man-made structures including pylons and poles are highly visible in the open landscape.* • *A few historic landscape features from prehistoric to 19th Century periods.* • *Vast and very exposed plateau top with unrestricted panoramic distant views, away from forests.* • *Uniform ground cover and simple landscape with little diversity and few structures, making orientation and determination of distance and scale often difficult.* • *Conifer forests create defined edges, enclosures and shapes contrasting with the openness and uniformity of their moorland surroundings.* • *General lack of activity, artefacts, and land management, in central areas and restricted visibility of adjoining settled lowlands creates an unexpected perception of remoteness."* The southwestern part of the LCT is overlapped by the locally designated *Loch Ness and Duntelchaig* SLA indicating a High-Medium value whilst the majority of the LCT is outwith any landscape designations indicating a Medium value. A small number of local recreational routes cross this LCT at Daviot Wood to the east of the LCT. The susceptibility to change from the introduction of the Proposed Development is High-Medium due to the medium-small scale of the LCT and in parts the relatively open nature of the landscape. The overall sensitivity is therefore assessed as *High-Medium*.

Landscape Character Type	Assessment
	Assessment: Proposed Development None of the proposed turbines would be located within this LCT and the nearest turbine would be located approximately 5 km to the southeast. Theoretical visibility is indicated across the majority of this area, becoming patchy to the southwest due to screening from Creag a Chlachain. Views towards the Proposed Development from large parts of this LCT would be filtered or screened by forestry or scrub, although there would be some visibility in open places where the proposed turbines would be visible on the skyline, beyond woodland / forestry. The LCT is also influenced by pylons and visibility of other wind farm development (Farr and Moy) in many areas where it is overlapped by the ZTV and where intervening vegetation does not restrict visibility, mainly to the southwest of the LCT. None of the key characteristics of this LCT would be notably affected by the Proposed Development. The magnitude of change would range from Low to Zero and the level of effect **Moderate to Minor, to None** and Not Significant. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative. Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented Sites + Proposed Development There are no existing or consented wind farms located within this LCT. There would be a number of wind farms located on the hills forming the skyline to the east, southeast and south of the LCT. These would be visible at varying degrees across the LCT subject to forest and scrub cover and intervening landform. The closest would be Farr (at a minimum distance of approximately 3.5 km) which would be visible adjacent to the Proposed Development but would be increasingly screened by landform to the northeast of the LCT and screened by forest towards the center of the LCT (Low to Zero magnitude). Moy Wind Farm would be partially visible to the northeast from the northeast part of the LCT at a minimum distance of approximately 6.3 km (Low to Zero magnitude). Both Farr and Moy have some influence on this LCT. Other wind farms would be theoretically visible or partially visible at greater distances to the southeast and south to the southwest including Aberarder and Dunmaglass at over 10 km (Low-Very Low and Zero magnitude), and Bhlaraidh / Extension (consented) at over approximately 20 km (Very Low to Zero magnitude). The additional effect of the Proposed Development would remain **Moderate to Minor, to None** and Not Significant. The combined landscape effect would also remain **Moderate to Minor, to None** and Not Significant. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), cumulative, indirect, and negative. Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development There are no other wind farm application within this LCT. The nearest applications include Loch Laith to the southwest at approximately 22 km, and Adhain Dubh to the north at approximately 28 km which would have no influence on this LCT. Therefore, there would be no further cumulative effects.

Landscape Character Type	Assessment
224 – Farmed and Wooded Foothills LCT	The *Farmed and Wooded Foothills* LCT is a narrow LCT following the southern edge of the Great Glen beyond the steep glen sides as the landform undulates with low, rocky hills. It is located across Strathnairn to the west and southwest of the host LCT. The area stretches from Loch Tarff in the southwest to the edges of Drummossie Muir in the north-east. To the south this ridge encloses the *Farmed Strath - Inverness* LCT. To the north, forestry edges mark a clear boundary with the adjoining *Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland*. The key characteristics of the LCT as described by the NS Landscape Character Assessment (2019) are: • *"Low rocky hills with a complex and irregular landform of steep sided slopes, rocky ridges, and peaks, with some small corries, short glens, and lochs.* • *Open summits with heather moorland, crags, and rough pasture, contrasting with mid and lower slopes of forests and woodlands interspersed with rough and improved pasture.* • *A diverse mix of woodland, agricultural land use and open moorland creating a balanced but complex range of open and enclosed spaces.* • *Small farms, crofts and farming settlements scattered on the mid to lower slopes, with a network of narrow roads, stone dykes and hedgerows field boundaries.* • *Many archaeological relics from prehistoric to 18th-19th Century periods.* • *Contrast between the panoramic views of the open, exposed upper slopes and summits, and the sheltered and enclosed lower, slopes with conifer forests and woodlands.* • *A sense of care and prosperity in settled and farmed parts due to active agricultural land management."* In addition, this area includes a notable number of lochs within a relatively small area including Loch Ruthven, Loch a Choire, Loch Ceo Glais, and Loch Duntelchaig. The LCT is largely overlapped by the locally designated *Loch Ness and Duntelchaig* SLA indicating a High-Medium landscape value. There is limited recreational value within this LCT although the Loch Ruthven Local Wildlife reserve is located within this area. The susceptibility to change from the introduction of the Proposed Development is Medium due to the undulating landform in combination with extensive forestry which combine to restrict views – although there would be some potential influence from open elevated areas or summits. The overall sensitivity is therefore assessed as *High-Medium*. <u>Assessment: Proposed Development</u> None of the proposed turbines would be located within this LCT and the nearest turbine would be located approximately 4.6 km to the southeast to 40 km at the furthest point. Theoretical visibility is limited and patchy across the LCT with the majority of coverage indicated at the western and eastern edges of the LCT. The closest ZTV coverage is indicated along Strathnairn to the west and northwest of the proposed turbines. Viewpoint 15 (**Figure 5.33**) illustrates views from the northern boundary of this partially forested area and shows the proposed turbines set back in an upland setting, beyond a number of attractive lochs. The effects on views from this location are assessed in **Technical Appendix 5.2**. Elsewhere,

Landscape Character Type	Assessment
	ZTV coverage is indicated along the western edge of the LCT and from more distant scattered summits and facing slopes to the southwest of the LCT. None of the key characteristics of this LCT would be notably affected by the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development would not change the overall character of this LCT which is already influenced by the existing Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Aberarder and Dunmaglass wind farms and would maintain the "*contrast between the panoramic views of the open, exposed upper slopes and summits, and the sheltered and enclosed lower, slopes with conifer forests and woodlands*". The magnitude of change would range from Low to Zero and the level of effect **Moderate to Minor, to None** and Not Significant. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented Sites + proposed development</u> There are no existing or consented wind farms located within this LCT, although a domestic wind turbine is located near Tullich. Visibility from the LCT to the east and south is limited throughout central and southern areas of the LCT by surrounding hills beyond Stratherrick and Strathnairn from. Where wind farms are visible, they would be seen at varying degrees across the LCT subject to forest and scrub cover and intervening landform. The most visible are Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Aberarder and Dunmaglass (all Low to Zero magnitude) which would be intervisible with the Proposed Development but would be increasingly screened by landform to the northeast of the LCT and screened by forest in other parts of the LCT. Other distant wind farms would be partially intervisible mostly as blades from elevated open locations including Corriegarth and the consented Corriegarth II, Cloiche and Dell, or hubs from isolated summits and would have no influence on this LCT given the long, intervening distance. The additional effect of the Proposed Development would remain **Moderate to Minor, to None** and Not Significant. The combined landscape effect would also remain **Moderate to Minor, to None** and Not Significant. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), cumulative, indirect, and negative. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development</u> There are no other wind farm applications within this LCT. The nearest applications include Loch Laith and Chrathaich to the south and west at approximately 10 km at their nearest point which would have no influence on this LCT at this distance. Therefore, there would be no further cumulative effects.
227 – Farmed Strath - Inverness LCT: Stratherrick, Strathnairn LCA	The *Farmed Strath - Inverness* LCT is a narrow LCT following two narrow straths within the study area: Stratherrick / Strathnairn, and Strathglass. The Strathglass LCA has minimal ZTV coverage and has been excluded from further assessment on the basis that effects would be Negligible. The Stratherrick / Strathnairn LCA of the Farmed Strath – Inverness LCT borders the 'host' LCT to the west and southwest. The straths run south-west to north-east and open to the farmed and wooded slopes and plains around Inverness. The straths are characterised by mainly open farmed valley floors and a central meandering river contained within steep, mainly forested and wooded slopes. The

Landscape Character Type	Assessment
	key characteristics of the LCT as described by the NS Landscape Character Assessment (2019) are: • *"Linear to sinuous channels cut through uplands, with a central meandering river located in a flat or gently undulating strath floor, edged by the steep, rocky, side slopes.* • *Pronounced and dynamic river meanders of Strathglass, emphasised by riparian trees, oxbow lakes, and curved wetland features.* • *Small scale broadleaf woodlands and small blocks of conifer forest within Strathnairn/Stratherrick strath floor which do not override openness of the strath.* • *A few small settlements located on the strath floor or sides and infrequent small farms, crofts, estate buildings or groups of houses.* • *Roads which generally relate well to landform, with a limited number of river crossing points.* • *Many archaeological sites in Strathnairn dating from a range of periods.* • *Contrast between the open, inhabited, and agricultural landscape of the straths, the side slopes cloaked in alternating broadleaf woodlands, conifer forests and heather moorland, and the setting of adjacent rugged, remote uplands.* • *Diversity of colour and texture added by river meanders, wetlands, damp pastures, and thin bands of woodland.* • *An overall sense of linear enclosure, which directs distant views along the strath and allows uninterrupted views of the flanking hill slopes."* The LCT is partially overlapped by the locally designated *Loch Ness and Duntelchaig* SLA indicating a High-Medium landscape value along its western boundary. There are limited recreational routes within this LCT, however, Culloden Battlefield is partially located within this LCT in the north. The susceptibility to change from the introduction of the Proposed Development is High due to the smaller scale, more intimate strath features. The overall sensitivity is therefore assessed as *High*. <u>Assessment: Proposed Development</u> None of the proposed turbines would be located within this LCT and the nearest turbine would be located approximately 3 km southeast to approximately 34 km at the furthest point. Theoretical visibility is patchy across the LCT with the majority of coverage indicated towards the middle and north of the LCT, in particular along Strathnairn to the west and northwest of the proposed turbines. Viewpoint 4 (**Figure 5.22**) illustrates views from this partially forested area of Strathnairn and shows the proposed turbines set back from the containing edges of the LCT in an upland setting, although appearing prominently above the strath when viewed from this location. Similarly views from the south of Strathnairn are illustrated in Viewpoint 9 (**Figure 5.27**), and from the north of Strathnairn at Viewpoints 7 and 12 (**Figures 5.25 and 5.30** respectively). The visual effects on these viewpoints are assessed in **Technical Appendix 5.2**. Limited views are indicated to the

Landscape Character Type	Assessment
	south at Viewpoint 9 due to intervening landform and vegetation, and partial views are indicated to the north of the LCT in Viewpoints 7 and 12 due to screening from landform. None of the key characteristics of this LCT would be notably affected by the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development would change the character of this LCT, notably increasing the influence of wind farm development in addition to the existing Farr, Aberarder and Dunmaglass (and Moy) wind farms. The proposed Development, however, would maintain the "*contrast between the open, inhabited and agricultural landscape of the straths, the side slopes cloaked in alternating broadleaf woodlands, conifer forests and heather moorland, and the setting of adjacent rugged, remote uplands."* The Proposed Development would also maintain *"the overall sense of linear enclosure, which directs distant views along the strath and allows uninterrupted views of the flanking hill slopes."* The magnitude of change would range from Low to Zero and the level of effect **Moderate to None** and Not Significant for the majority of the LCT. However, the prominent to dominant addition of the Proposed Development to views (High to Medium visual magnitude of change) from much of the strath between Balnafoich and the Faillie near the A9 would have a Moderate and significant characterizing influence on this limited part of Strathnairn. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented Sites + Proposed Development</u> There would be a number of wind farms located on the hills forming the skyline to the east, southeast and south of the LCT. These, however, have a limited visual influence and are visible at varying degrees across the LCT mostly on facing slopes to the west of the straths and from elevated areas to the east adjoining the host LCT subject to forest and scrub cover and intervening landform. Those most intervisible with the Proposed Development from Strathnairn include Aberarder, Dunmaglass and Moy which would all be partially visible to varying degrees due to intervening landform (all Low-Very Low to Zero magnitude). From isolated summits and elevated areas at the edges of the LCT, Farr and Glen Kyllachy wind farms would be visible adjacent to the proposed turbines (both Low to Zero magnitude). Other wind farms would be theoretically visible or partially visible at greater distances from elevated areas and at upper boundaries but would not influence this LCT at those distances. The additional effect and the combined landscape effect would remain **Moderate to None** and Significantly affecting the area between Balnafoich and the Faillie near the A9, due to the Proposed Development. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), cumulative, indirect, and negative. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development</u> There are no other wind farm applications within this LCT. The nearest applications include Loch Laith and Chrathaich to the south and west however, they would have no influence on this LCT given their long distance. Therefore, there would be no further cumulative effects.

Landscape Character Type	Assessment
228 – Rolling Farmland and Woodland LCT	The *Rolling Farmland and Woodland* LCT is a relatively small LCT that wraps around the eastern, southern, and western areas of Inverness. The key characteristics of the LCT as described by the NS Landscape Character Assessment (2019) are: • *"Varied landform of rolling, north-facing hill slopes and plateaux.* • *Gently sloping, simple coastal edge with the firths, falling to well-defined raised beaches in places.* • *Diverse mix of landcover and fairly even balance of open agricultural land and woodlands.* • *Varying patterns of openness and enclosure created by woodlands and hedgerows mixed with open fields and dense conifer forests with dark linear edges.* • *Diversity added by open broadleaf woodlands along stream gorges, river banks, small woodlands, trees, hedgerows, and designed landscapes.* • *Settled landscape, mostly of small farms and isolated houses, interconnected by a network of major and minor roads.* • *Other scattered settlements of old buildings in traditional layout, associated with road junctions and bridging points.* • *Clusters of farm buildings and open fields are generally set against a wooded backdrop.* • *Minor roads follow the geometric edges of field enclosures and conifer forests.* • *Large number of relic prehistoric settlements and burial cairns indicating a continuing focal point of settlement.* • *Sense of history and tradition around estates, due to stone walls, beech hedging, parkland, and wooded policies.* • *Limited visibility in wooded areas, focusing attention upon foreground detail.* • *Distant views northwards over the firths in open areas on the upper slopes.* • *An active, busy landscape, particularly in the vicinity of adjoining urban areas and major transport routes."* The LCT is not located within a designated landscape indicating a Medium landscape value. There are a small number of local recreational routes within the LCT and part of Culloden Battlefield (east of inverness) is located in this LCT to the north and Leys Castle GDL is located to the south of Inverness, although the latter has little or no visibility once the screening effects of trees and vegeation have been considered.

Landscape Character Type	Assessment
	The susceptibility to change from the introduction of the Proposed Development is Medium due to the presence of built urban elements in close proximity. The overall sensitivity is therefore assessed as *Medium*. <u>Assessment: Proposed Development</u> None of the proposed turbines would be located within this LCT. The Proposed Development would be located approximately 7.4 km southeast at their nearest point to 19 km at the furthest point. Theoretical visibility is patchy across the LCT, occurring to the west of Inverness (Viewpoint 16 – **Figure 5.22**), and in a band across Drummossie Muir and Culloden Forest (near Viewpoint 12 – **Figure 5.30**). Viewpoint 16 (**Figure 5.22**) illustrates views from the elevated landform to the west of Inverness and views across the River Ness valley. This view illustrates the distance and change in character where the host upland landscape is visible as a distant feature prominent to noticeably visible on part of the skyline. Similarly, Viewpoint 12 (**Figure 5.30**) illustrates views from the southern edge of the LCT, looking away from the LCT towards the proposed turbines across intervening landscape types and features towards the distant upland skyline. The visual effects on these viewpoints are assessed in **Technical Appendix 5.2**. Intervening hills screen the turbine towers from Drummossie Muir and Culloden, reducing their presence. None of the key characteristics of this LCT would be notably affected by the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development would not change the overall character of this LCT which is already influenced by a variety of adjacent urban built elements and pylons. The existing Farr, Aberarder and Dunmaglass wind farms would also be visible from parts of this LCT. The magnitude of change would range from Low-Very Low to Zero and the level of effect **Minor to None** and Not Significant. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative to neutral. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented Sites + Proposed Development</u> Existing and consented wind farms would be mostly visible in views to the northwest from Drummossie Muir at distances over 30 km (all Very Low to Zero magnitude). Farr, Arberarder and Dunmaglass would also be visible in some views from this area (all Very Low to Zero magnitude). The additional and combined effect of the Proposed Development would remain **Minor to None** and Not Significant. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), cumulative, indirect, and negative to neutral. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development</u> There are no other wind farm applications within this LCT. The nearest applications include Abhain Dubh to the northwest, and Loch Laith and Chrathaich to the southwest which would have no influence on this LCT given the long, intervening distance. Therefore, there would be no further cumulative effects.
284 – Coastal Farmlands –	The *Coastal Farmlands – Moray and Nairn* LCT generally follow the coastline between Inverness and Kinloss within the Study Area and continue to Cullen in

Landscape Character Type	Assessment
Moray and Nairn	the wider area. The key characteristics of the LCT as described by the NS Landscape Character Assessment (2019) are: • *"Expansive, open, flat to undulating coastal plain landscape with frequent, small landforms of fluvio-glacial sands and gravels, often topped with forests, gorse, or rougher grasslands.* • *Predominantly simple agricultural landscape, punctuated by stone built farms and villages which are connected by an extensive network of rural roads.* • *Mainly light, sandy soils and yellow seasonal flowers of gorse and broom.* • *Broadly meandering burns and the lower reaches of rivers, often associated with native woodland and wetlands, providing relatively natural features in a highly modified landscape.* • *Variation in field pattern, forms of enclosure, tree cover, settlement, road patterns and water bodies which illustrate distinctive differences between the flat former wetland and the more undulating, drier soils.* • *Patchwork of mixed arable and pasture fields, yellow flowering gorse and broom, with shelter belts and plantations on drier land.* • *Conifer plantations which coalesce to create elongated bands of dark colour contrasting strongly with the paler colours of arable land.* • *Broadleaf woodlands and shelterbelts associated with gardens and designed landscapes.* • *Established main communication routes of rail and trunk roads linking the larger settlements, off which run the network of minor rural roads.* • *Prominence of occasional built elements in a relatively flat, open landscape, particularly large or vertical structures, including grain silos and single and small groups of commercial turbines associated with larger farms.* • *Expansive, open long-distance views along the farmland belt, up to the moorland hills, and occasional views to the sea, mixed with more intimate views, foreshortened by undulations and folds in the landform, tree groups, small forests, and coastal forests."* The LCT is not located within any designated landscapes indicating a Medium landscape value (with the exception of a small area around Fort George where the area is covered by the locally designated *Sutors of Cromarty, Rosemarkie and Fort George* SLA, and a small area to the southwest of Forres where it is overlapped by the *Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates* SLA indicating a High-Medium value). There are a small number of recreational routes within this LCT. The susceptibility to change from the introduction of the Proposed Development is Medium due to the large, open landform, and influence of being located adjacent to the urban built form of Inverness to the southwest. The overall sensitivity is therefore considered to be *Medium* (increasing to *High-Medium* near Forres and Fort George). <u>Assessment: Proposed Development</u>

Landscape Character Type	Assessment
	None of the proposed turbines would be located within this LCT and the nearest turbine would be located approximately 12 km south to over 45 km to the northeast at the furthest point. Theoretical visibility is patchy across the LCT, occurring mostly to the north of the A96 between Inverness and west of Nairn. The LCT is most associated with the seascape to the north and most of the views from this part of the LCT are oriented across Moray Firth towards the Black Isle. Where visible to the south, the Proposed Development would be seen beyond rising landform with most of the towers screened by intervening landform (subject to screening from intervening forest in some areas of the LCT). There would be clearer views from locally elevated areas such as Alturlie Point where there would be views south towards the proposed turbines at beyond 12 km distance. None of the key characteristics of this LCT would be notably affected by the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development would not change the character of this LCT which is already influenced by adjacent urban built elements to the southwest with pylons also crossing the landscape. The existing Moy Wind Farm is also visible from parts of this LCT. The magnitude of change would range from Very Low to Zero and the level of effect **Minor to Negligible, to None** and Not Significant. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative to neutral. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented Sites + Proposed Development</u> Existing and consented wind farms would be visible in views to the southwest and would include Arberarder and Dunmaglass (subject to intervening forest) at a minimum distance of approximately15 km (Very Low to Zero magnitude). Moy Wind Farm would also be partially visible to the south. Other wind farm development would be visible at greater distances including Novar / Extension and Fairburn to the northwest (Very Low to Zero magnitude). Other distant wind farms would have no influence on this LCT. The additional and combined effect of the Proposed Development would remain **Minor to Negligible, to None** and Not Significant. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), cumulative, indirect, and negative to neutral. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development</u> There are no other wind farm applications within this LCT. The nearest applications include Abhain Dubh to the northwest, and Loch Laith and Chrathaich to the southwest which would have no influence on this LCT due to the long intervening distance. Therefore, there would be no further cumulative effects.

Effects on Landscape Planning Designations

5.12.51 As set out in the baseline and as agreed during consultation, the indirect effects on three locally designated SLAs are included in the assessment, as follows:

- Loch Ness and Duntelchaig Special Landscape Area (SLA);
- Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA; and

- Sutors of Cromarty, Rosemarkie and Fort George SLA.

5.12.52 The potential night-time effects of proposed aviation warning lights on these receptors are assessed separately in **Technical Appendix 5.4**.

5.12.53 In summary, the Proposed Development would have no significant adverse effects on any of the SLAs or the special qualities for which they have been designated.

Methodology of Assessing Landscape Planning Designations

5.12.54 The assessment of landscape planning designations differs from landscape character or visual assessment in that it considers the effects of the Proposed Development on the Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs), including views and perceptual qualities of the designation

5.12.55 The effects of the Proposed Development on the SLQs have been assessed in accordance with the methodology set out in **Technical Appendix 5.1** which accords with GLVIA 3. In addition, the assessment of landscape planning designations has also been guided by NS's *Special Landscape Qualities - Guidance on assessing effects*, January 2025. Although r, this guidance has been developed for landscape professionals undertaking LVIA for developments or land use changes with potential to impact on the SLQs of NSAs and National Parks, it has in this case been adopted as an approach to assessing local landscape designations. This guidance supersedes the earlier SNH guidance, '*Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape*, Version 3a, 2017 and does not require an assessment of 'integrity' as part of the LVIA.

5.12.56 In order to assist the assessment, a description of each of the landscape planning designations and their SLQs are documented by THC in respect of the SLAs. It is important to note that wind farm development is not necessarily incompatible with the valued qualities of a landscape, this will depend on the nature and / or effects of the development and the nature of the SLQs. A visual effect on a view from the SLA for example, may or may not affect the SLQ. In particular, the Landscape Institute further advises:

- *"An internationally, nationally or locally valued landscape does not automatically or by definition have high susceptibility to all types of change."*
- *"It is possible for an internationally, nationally or locally important landscape to have relatively low susceptibility to change resulting from the particular type of development in question, by virtue of both the characteristics of the landscape and the nature of the proposal."*
- *"The particular type of change or development proposed may not compromise the specific basis for the value attached to the landscape."*
  (GLVIA 3, paragraphs 5.46-47)

5.12.57 In summary, the sensitivity of each relevant SLQ is determined through a combination of value and the susceptibility of the SLQ to change posed by the Proposed Development; this in turn is considered against the nature or magnitude of change in order to determine the level of effect on each receptor (SLQ). The design process is integral to the

assessment which is an iterative process that seeks to reduce adverse effects and ensure that where possible, mitigation is embedded into the Proposed Development. Each effect is described in terms of its geographical extent (through reference to the viewpoints and ZTV) and whether it is cumulative, temporary / long term, positive / neutral / negative.

Effects on locally designated landscapes

5.12.58 SLAs are non-statutory designations that represent landscapes and features of local / regional importance and value within THC area. Further guidance on SLAs and their special qualities and features of importance is provided by THC in their *Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas*, June 2011.

Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA

5.12.59 The *Loch Ness and Duntelchaig* SLA is located approximately 8.2 km distance to the southeast of the Proposed Development at its closest point and extends further southeast to approximately 42 km distance. It covers an extensive area of the Loch Ness waterbody and includes the steep valley sides and areas of low hills with minor summits beyond to the west of the loch and extends across the steep valley sides and low hills between the eastern edge of Loch Ness and Stratherrick and Strathairn to the east. There are many special qualities and features of importance within this SLA and reference has been restricted to those that are overlapped by the ZTV.

5.12.60 The SLQ's are listed by THC in the above document and are described and assessed individually in **Table 5.13** against the Proposed Development.

5.12.61 Although locally designated, the SLA is indicative of High value as two of Scotland's Great Trails, the Great Glen Way and Great Glen Canoe Trail, pass through it. The landscape is of High susceptibility to wind farm development due to the 'contained' nature of the loch and its steep sides which create focused views along and across the l Great Glen. The more open hills beyond the valley sides connect to the wider landscape but are still highly visible within the lower accessible areas of the loch. However, some of these higher areas are of Medium susceptibility due to the presence of existing wind farms located close to the boundary of the SLA at its southwestern and eastern ends. The overall sensitivity of the SLA is assessed as *High-Medium*.

Assessment: Proposed Development

5.12.62 Due to distance from the Proposed Development and intervening landform, ZTV coverage is limited within the SLA to the facing valley sides and adjoining low hills to the west of the SLA and occasional summits and facing slopes on the low hills to the east of the SLA. The nearest areas of theoretical visibility are indicated on facing slopes and summits west of Strathnairn including Brin Rock (435m AOD), Creag Dhubh (443m AOD), Creag Bhuidhe (370m AOD), and Stac na Cathaig (446m AOD) – although some of the lower slopes are covered with coniferous forestry. To the west of Loch Ness theoretical visibility is indicated along the facing slopes and low hills to the northeast of Drumnadrochit and to the southwest of Bunloit, although much of the slopes are covered

with forest. The main views would be from summits beyond the steep sides including Meall Fuar-mhonaidh (Viewpoint 20, **Figure 5.38**). Further to the southwest, theoretical visibility is indicated on isolated summits and facing slopes including Beinn a Bhacaidh (555m AOD), and Burach Cairn (607m AOD).

5.12.63 The assessment against each of the SLQs of the SLAs is reported in **Table 5.13**, as follows:

Table 5.13: SLQ Assessment for the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA

Special Landscape Quality Citation (Note text in italics is extracted from the citation in full)	Assessment
Key Landscape and Visual Characteristics	
The striking, linear landform trench containing Loch Ness offers a dramatic sequence of landscape elements along its 23 mile length. The horizontal water's surface combines with adjacent steep slopes to create a simple and distinctive profile of contrasting planes and edges. The skyline is generally horizontal although there are occasional features such as hill peaks, pylons, telecommunications mast, and distant views of wind turbines.	The turbines would not affect the topography or landscape elements along the glen. Where there are views (from elevated locations), the turbines would be visible alongside existing turbines in the view. The skyline would generally remain horizontal as a consistent characteristic. There would be **no significant effect** on this key characteristic (Very Low magnitude and **Minor to Negligible** level of effect).
The steep sided slopes of the glen are frequently incised by burns, rivers and waterfalls which fall over sheer rocky cliffs.	The turbines would not affect the topography of the glen. The watercourses and woodland would be unaffected. There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
There are long vistas of grand proportions, and the sheer scale of the loch dwarfs the numerous boats, and yachts which frequent its waters.	The turbines would not affect the views within the glen along the vast expanse of the loch given the loch is outwith the ZTV. There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
At regular intervals along the loch there are small areas of low lying pasture with associated settlements, which nestle at the mouths of the rivers flowing into Loch Ness. These offer a human scale juxtaposed against the vast extent of open water and dramatic linear landform character. Public access to the loch's shore is typically limited to these areas of habitation due to the steepness of the glen side slopes.	The turbines would not affect the low-lying pasture or shoreline and there would be no views from these areas. There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
To the east of Loch Ness an undulating moorland plateau characterised by rocky knolls and small-	The turbines would not affect the topography of the plateau or the intricate landscape

Special Landscape Quality Citation (Note text in italics is extracted from the citation in full)	Assessment
scale woods and forests, and peppered with upland lochs, creates an intricate landscape mosaic which contrasts strongly with the adjacent simple drama of the Great Glen.	mosaic and its contrast with the Great Glen - although there may be some views of the turbines from some locations within the undulating upland moorland plateau. There would be **no significant effect** on this key characteristic (Very Low magnitude and **Minor to Negligible** level of effect).
The few quiet bays and more accessible areas of shore and forest give relief from the unrelenting linearity of Loch Ness and provide opportunity to savour its tranquillity.	The turbines would not affect the quiet bays or shoreline and there would be no views from these areas. There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
Historic features frequently form point foci within the glen, typically commanding positions of good defence, access or better farmland. These form landmarks while moving sequentially along the glen.	The turbines would not affect the views along the loch towards historic features forming point foci. There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
On the western shore there are more recent crofting townships and older irregular townships.	The turbines would not affect the western shore or townships. There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
Special Qualities - The Dramatic Great Glen	
1. The imposing steep-sided landform trench, formed by a large strike-slip fault which slices through the centre of the Highlands, creates a dramatic linear landscape which is relatively easily to access and readily appreciated. The very striking profile of the glen is typically best appreciated from either end, or from the water, although good views are also obtained from elevated viewpoints upon the loch-side ridges and hill tops.	The turbines would not affect the topography of the glen or views of the profile of the glen from either end of the loch or from the water. There would be some visibility from elevated viewpoints upon the loch-side ridges and hill tops where the proposed turbines would be visible in clear conditions (Viewpoint 20, Figure 5.38). There would be **no significant effect** on this key characteristic (Very Low magnitude and **Minor to Negligible** level of effect).
2. The steep sided slopes of the glen are often deeply incised by watercourses, including the notable Falls of Foyers. These slopes are also flanked by a diverse mix of woodland and forests and form an open smooth moorland skyline ridge.	The turbines would not affect the topography of the glen. The watercourses and woodland would be unaffected. There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
3. Strong contrasts exist between the northern and southern slopes in terms of access, activity and settlement which are all considerably more	The turbines would not affect the contrasts within the glen.

Special Landscape Quality Citation (Note text in italics is extracted from the citation in full)	Assessment
limited on the south side of the loch, reflecting the variations in access, slope, aspect, and microclimate.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
4. There are distinctive views of grand proportions and long vistas along a vast expanse of the loch, with the detail of foreground features gradually diminishing to distant silhouettes.	The turbines would not affect the views within the glen along the vast expanse of the loch due to no visibility. There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
5. Atmospheric mists and banks of low cloud often linger over Loch Ness and enhance its dramatic character. Limited visibility during these conditions may reinforce the myth of the monster which is responsible for the many visitor attractions and facilities in Drumnadrochit.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
6. Urquhart Castle is a prominent focus along the loch, occupying a magnificent situation on an irregular headland of rock jutting out into the loch and commanding splendid views up and down the Great Glen. Also of significance is Foyers imposing former British Aluminium Factory which is most clearly seen from the north slopes.	The turbines would not affect the views along the loch towards Urquhart Castle or Foyers due to no visibility. There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
7. The landscape is typically experienced from the B852, B851 and the A82. From these routes, however, the loch is viewed at an oblique angle and thus these do not reveal the striking 'v' shape of the glen that is visible at either end. High numbers of walkers and cyclists also view the landscape from the Great Glen Way, while others see it from a high number of boats on the loch, some travelling the length of the Caledonian Canal. From elevated locations along the glen, it is easier to appreciate the simple line, large scale, and great expanse of the loch although, even from these places, it is typically difficult to see all of the loch in one view due to its great length. It is also difficult to perceive the scale of the landscape due to a lack of size indicators. From elevated viewpoints, the glen can be seen within its context of a landscape of elevated plateaux and hills.	There would be no visibility of the turbines from the A82 or B852 or from vessels on the loch. There is some ZTV coverage of the Great Glen Way which follows an upland route to the west of the glen. However much of the route is forested and views would be heavily filtered. The most open views would be from a section of the route west of Corryfoyness where the proposed turbines would be visible in clear conditions alongside other wind farm development (similar to Viewpoint 20, Figure 5.38). This would not detract from views of the scale of the glen. Viewpoints 16 and 18 do not appreciate the great expanse of the loch given their location at the northern end and views available in other directions. There would be **no significant effect** on this key characteristic (Very Low magnitude and **Minor to Negligible** level of effect).
8. Most of the hills and high points along the enclosing ridges are indistinct in character,	The turbines would not be visible in views towards Meal Fuar-mhonaidh from either end

Special Landscape Quality Citation (Note text in italics is extracted from the citation in full)	Assessment
however Meal Fuar-mhonaidh is one example of a distinct hill peak, nearly 700m high, it stands out as a landmark clearly visible from both ends of the loch and is even prominent in views southwest from the castle in Inverness. Meall Fuar-mhonaid is a good vantage point from which to appreciate the massive scale and alignment of the Great Glen fault within a backcloth of the Monadhliath massif to the south and the Balmacann and Affric mountain interior to the north west, both areas which possess wildness qualities.	of the loch. Views across the Great Glen from Meal Fuar-mhonaidh are illustrated in Viewpoint 20, **Figure 5.38** where the proposed turbines would be visible in clear conditions alongside other wind farm development. This would not detract from views of the scale and alignment of the Great Glen. There would be **no significant effect** on this key characteristic (Very Low magnitude and **Minor to Negligible** level of effect).
Contrasting Intimate Plateau	
1. An undulating moorland plateau of rocky knolls flanked by small-scale woods and forests, patches of pastures and sporadic farmsteads, and interspersed with a sequence of tranquil lochs, that creates an intimate mix of landscape elements of changing visual interest.	The turbines will not affect the topography of the plateau or the intimate mix of landscape elements - Although there may be some views of the turbines from some locations within the undulating moorland plateau. There would be **no significant effect** on this key characteristic (Very Low magnitude and **Minor to Negligible** level of effect).
Historic Landscape	
1. Achculin, accessed from the Balmore road, is a well preserved depopulated township that is now a scheduled monument.	Although there may be some theoretical views from this location, the proposed turbines would be screened by vegetation with possible heavily filtered winter views. There would be **no significant effect** on this key characteristic (Very Low magnitude and **Minor to Negligible** level of effect).
2. The eastern shore of Loch Ness incorporating Loch Duntelchaig, Loch Ashie and Loch Ruthven were clear foci of intensive prehistoric activity. Numerous roundhouses and field systems, interspersed with ritual and burial monuments such as burial cairns, burnt mounds, and standing stones proliferate in this area; 3 crannogs are located on Loch Ruthven. This was clearly a highly significant area in prehistory supporting a large population.	There would be no visibility from the eastern shore of Loch Ness. There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
3. Two features dominate Fort Augusts; the Caledonian Canal, with its conspicuous flight of locks, which links Loch Ness to Loch Oich and bisects the town, and Fort Augustus Abbey. The	There would be no visibility from the Caledonian Canal or from Fort Augustus Abbey.

Special Landscape Quality Citation (Note text in italics is extracted from the citation in full)	Assessment
latter was enlarged in 1876 using stone from the original fort.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.

5.12.64 In summary, the Proposed Development would not significantly affect any of the underlying landscape character types or the SLQs of the *Loch Ness and Duntelchaig* SLA.

5.12.65 The nearest point on the SLA boundary to the proposed turbines is approximately 8.2 km distance. There is very limited ZTV coverage across the SLA, where theoretical visibility is indicated it does not overlap with the main features of importance listed within THC's *Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas* guidance, June 2011.

5.12.66 Overall, the magnitude of change within the SLA would be Very Low to Zero and the level of effect **Minor to None** and Not Significant. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative to neutral.

Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented Sites + Proposed Development

5.12.67 There are no existing or consented wind farms development located within the SLA. The nearest are located to the northwest and comprise Bhlaraidh and the consented Bhlaraidh Extension located approximately 2 km from the SLA boundary. These would be visible from elevated areas within the SLA such as Meall Fuar-mhonaidh (Viewpoint 20) where they would be visible at approximately 5.5 km – although in the opposite direction to the Great Glen. Thery would also be partially visible in views from the undulating plateau to the east of the glen – although at greater distances, however, they would have some influence on the SLQs of the SLA given their close distance (Medium to Zero magnitude). A cluster of wind farm development would be visible in views east to south from Meall Fuar-mhonaidh and to a lesser extent from other summits on the plateau to the east summits to the west of the Great Glen. These comprise a cluster of Moy, Tom nan Clach, Farr and Glen Kyllachy in conjunction with the Proposed Development (all Very Low to Zero magnitude), and further clusters at Aberarder / Dunmaglass to the southeast (Very Low to Zero magnitude) and Corriegarth / Extension further south (Low-Very Low to Zero magnitude). The additional effect of the Proposed Development would be reduced to **Minor to Negligible, to None** and Not Significant effect.

5.12.68 The combined effect would be **Major** and Significant (due to Bhlaraidh and the consented Bhlaraidh Extension, and not the Proposed Development) taking account of all wind farm development. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), cumulative, indirect and negative.

Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented Sites + Applications + Proposed Development

5.12.69 There would be no application wind farms located within the SLA. Loch Laith and Chrathaich wind farms would be located to the northwest and would extend the cluster of wind farm development at Bhlaraidh at approximately 5 km (both Medium to Zero magnitude). Other application wind farm development would be visible at greater distances and would not result in significant effects on the SLA SLQs. The additional effect of the Proposed Development would be **Minor to Negligible, to None** and Not Significant effect.

5.12.70 The combined effect would be **Major** and Significant (due to Bhlaraidh, the consented Bhlaraidh Extension, Loch Laith and Chrathaich, and not the Proposed Development) taking account of all wind farm development. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), cumulative, indirect and negative.

Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA

5.12.71 The *Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors* SLA is located approximately 5 km to the east and northeast of the Proposed Development. It is principally an extensive area of *Open Rolling Upland* LCT to the north of the *Cairngorms National Park* boundary, approximately 10 km wide (from north to south) and extending over 30 km east to west between Carn nan Tri-tighearnan and Carn Kitty in the east. The western extents include a small area of *Upland Valleys - Moray & Nairn* LCT which overlap with part of the River Findhorn valley and areas of *Rolling Uplands – Inverness* LCT which are similar in character to the main area of *Open Rolling Upland* LCT within the SLA.

5.12.72 The influence of wind farm development on the SLA has markedly changed the landscape, introducing a new feature (wind farm development) as recognised by the NS 2019 Landscape Character Assessment although importantly, many of the key characteristics of the landscape, most of which are reflected in the SLQs of the SLA remain strong, such that the integrity of the SLA is preserved, despite the presence of wind farm development within it and along its boundaries.

Assessment: Proposed Development

5.12.73 The sensitivity of this landscape overall has been assessed as High to Medium, largely reflecting its local landscape value.

5.12.74 Within 15 km the ZTV coverage within the SLA is limited to the western fringes of the SLA, viewing out of the SLA towards the Proposed Development. The existing wind farms at Moy and Tom na Clach are located along the boundary of the SLA. A representative viewpoint from this area is provided by Viewpoint 10 (Figure 5.28). The visual effects were assessed as significant (Major) with the Proposed Development visible on hills beyond the intervening A9 pass / and the Moy Wind Farm, which is located at a lower elevation.

5.12.75 The assessment against each of the SLQs of the SLAs is reported in **Table 5.14**, as follows:

Table 5.14: SLQ Assessment for the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA

Special Landscape Quality Citation (Note text in italics is extracted from the citation in full)	Assessment
Key Landscape and Visual Characteristics	
Rounded slopes leading to summits of relatively uniform height with a large expanse of elevated, undulating blanket bog, and moorland smooth and heather clad. Woodland cover is limited in extent and there are few buildings or structures.	The proposed turbines would not affect these physical characteristics. There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
Where buildings do exist, they are of a distinct estate architectural character	N/A – there are no buildings within this part of the SLA overlapped by the ZTV.
The strongly horizontal composition of elements is dominated by the sky and moorland, and a simple and prominent skyline in between. Occasional foci do exist, however, such as small craggy hills, lochans and lodges.	The proposed turbines would not affect these physical and perceptual characteristics within the SLA. Viewpoint 10 indicates an effect on skyline and horizontal elements which extend beyond the SLA boundary. There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic within the SLA.
Views across the undulating moorland offer wide, open horizons and broad panoramas in all directions, providing visual connectivity with the higher mountain ranges to the north, west and south	The proposed turbines would appear within part of the "*wide, open horizons and broad panoramas"* which are visible in all directions and extend beyond the boundaries of the SLA as indicated by Viewpoint 10. However, the vast majority of these panoramas (as indicated by the 360 degree views illustrated for Viewpoint 10) would remain largely open with other wind farm development appearing as an established, well-spaced characteristic. The Proposed Development would fit with this pattern of development, and both partly affect this SLQ and continue the existing character of wind farm development spaced across this open landscape. There would be **no significant effect** on this key characteristic (Low to Very Low magnitude and **Moderate to Minor** level of effect).
The heather moors are defined by distinctive, geometric muirburn patterns which create an abstract mosaic of colour and texture across the slopes, and identify this as partly a manmade landscape where land management for grouse shooting is the primary activity.	The proposed turbines would not affect these physical characteristics. There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.

Special Landscape Quality Citation (Note text in italics is extracted from the citation in full)	Assessment
There are isolated fragments of native pine-birch woodland scattered across the area. This is an attractive feature which serves (by contrast) to emphasise the dominance of the horizontal dimension and unbroken skylines that predominate across the open landscape.	The proposed turbines would not affect these physical characteristics. There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
The moorland plateau is dissected by a series of incised river valleys, many of which are flanked by estate access tracks leading into the moorland core. Distinctive rocky outcrops occur and the more steep-sided valleys, such as that of the River Findhorn at Drynachan, offer enclosed and intimate relief from the surrounding expansive moorland.	The proposed turbines would not affect these physical characteristics. There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
The limited network of public roads through the area, lack of habitation and other built features and open character convey a sense of remoteness and isolation. This is reinforced by the notable consistency of this character throughout its extent. There is a strong sense of tranquillity in many parts of this landscape.	
Some access tracks are cut into the slope, resulting in visible excavation and consequent erosion	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
Lochindorb stands out as the only major tract of open water in the area (largest surface body of water in East Highland plus whole of Grampian Region) and has the added interest of a ruined castle on an island in the middle. The loch has low-lying shores and is fringed with pockets of sheltered pastoral farmland, offering a pleasant contrast to the dominant surrounding moorland.	Lochindorb, Lochindporb Castle and much of the surrounding area is outwith the ZTV and would have no view of the Proposed Development. There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
Special Qualities - A Sense of Solitude, Views over Heather Moorland, and Big Skies	
1. Expansive views and broad panoramas across open, rolling moorland and vast skies instill a boundless sense of scale and space, enhanced by the consistency of moorland cover and landform character.	The proposed turbines would appear within part of the "*broad panoramas"* which are visible in all directions and there would be some limited effect on the "*sense of scale and space*" viewing out of the SLA and noting that this SLQ would remain strongly apparent with the addition of the Proposed Development. There would be **no significant effect** on this key characteristic (Low to Very Low magnitude and **Moderate to Minor** level of effect).

Special Landscape Quality Citation (Note text in italics is extracted from the citation in full)	Assessment
2. A narrow, deep section of the Findhorn river valley at Streens offers enclosed and intimate relief in contrast to the elevated and exposed moorland. Elsewhere, valleys frame views to Lochindorb.	Streens is outwith the ZTV and would have no view of the Proposed Development. There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
3. Land management practices create distinctive abstract muirburn patterns, accentuated by ever-changing weather and light patterns.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
4. The limited extent of tree cover, and human habitation creates a simple yet powerful moorland image of tranquillity, simplicity and isolation which is emphasized by Lochindorb and its ruined castle.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
5. Where buildings exist, these are of a distinctive estate character. Also building remains from preclearance farmsteads, with enclosures, head dykes and associated field systems and improved land form one of the few built and 'managed' elements within the landscape. These engender a strong atmosphere which can arouse contemplative emotions of past human endeavour and hardship.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
6. The long, fairly straight routes through this landscape allow an easy appreciation of the openness and simplicity of the landscape. These are typically lined with permanent snow poles which serve to reinforce the impression that this is a landscape exposed to adverse weather.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.

5.12.76 In summary, the Proposed Development would not significantly affect any of the SLQs of the *Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors* SLA. At most there would be a **Moderate to Minor** level of effect on SLQ: *Expansive views and broad panoramas across open, rolling moorland and vast skies instil a boundless sense of scale and space, enhanced by the consistency of moorland cover and landform character – which would not be significant.* The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative.

Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented Sites + Proposed Development

5.12.77 There are two existing wind farms within the western boundary of the SLA at Moy (approximately 5 km distance from the Proposed Development) and Tom na Clach and its consented extension (approximately 5 km distance from the Proposed Development). Beyond this the Farr and Kyllachy wind farm cluster is located approximately 8 km distance from the Proposed Development to the west / southwest. These developments already affect SLQ 1, although the "broad panoramas" which are visible in all directions

and the “sense of scale and space” viewing out of the SLA remain strongly apparent. The additional of the Proposed Development and combined cumulative effect would be **Moderate to Minor** (Low to Very Low magnitude) and **not significant**. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), cumulative, indirect and negative.

Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented Sites + Applications + Proposed Development

5.12.78 There would be no application wind farms located within this part of the SLA or the 15 km Study Area and consequently there would be no further cumulative effects.

Sutors of Cromarty, Rosemarkie and Fort George SLA

5.12.79 The *Sutors of Cromarty, Rosemarkie and Fort George* SLA is located approximately 21 km to the north of the Proposed Development. Darwing from THC overview this SLA encompasses the Inner Moray Firth and provides a gateway between the open coast and expansive waters of the Moray Firth and the intimate landscapes of the Cromarty and Inverness Firths with the twin headlands at North and South Sutor forming the entrance to the Cromarty Firth. The opposing low lying promontories at Chanonry and Fort George also mark the entrance to the Inner Moray Firth. Both promontories have landmark buildings at their seaward extremities and are vantage points in their own right and are best appreciated from the higher ground adjacent and to the north.

5.12.80 There are extensive sandbanks between Fort George and Whiteness Head.

5.12.81 The steep coastline between the South Sutor and Rosemarkie provides further contrast and has some qualities of wildness in an area which is otherwise developed to some degree.

Assessment: Proposed Development

5.12.82 The sensitivity of this landscape overall has been assessed as High to Medium, largely reflecting its local landscape value.

5.12.83 Much of the sea, coastline and land-based part of the SLA is overlapped by the ZTV at a distance of between approximately 21-44 km from the Proposed Development. A viewpoint from this area is provided by Viewpoint 19 (Figure 5.37) at Chanonry Point which is the closest point to the Proposed Development. The visual effects from this viewpoint were assessed as not significant.

5.12.84 The assessment against each of the SLQs of the SLAs is reported in **Table 5.15**, as follows:

Table 5.15: SLQ Assessment for the Sutors of Cromarty, Rosemarkie and Fort George SLA

Special Landscape Quality Citation (Note text in italics is extracted from the citation in full)	Assessment
Key Landscape and Visual Characteristics	
The diverse coastal edge includes straight and indented geometry, soft shingle bars and hard cliffs, developed and undeveloped land uses and distinctive coastal landforms (including the spits at Chanonry Point, Fort George, and Whiteness, and the headlands of the Cromarty Sutors).	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
Contrasting and distinctive visual experiences are provided by the juxtaposition of elevated and sea level viewpoints and views across enclosed and open firths. Contrasting perceptions of exposure and shelter are associated with the open coast and enclosed firth.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
The dominant undeveloped coastal edge is punctuated by the occurrence of settlements, and isolated dwellings and farmsteads dot the higher ground above the cliff tops. Huddled close to the shoreline, and densely packed, settlements retain core historical and cultural integrity and strongly and distinctively reflect their exposed coastal position.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
Most of the coastline in this SLA – the stretch between Rosemarkie and Port an Righ - is however steep and undeveloped, punctuated only by the occurrence of isolated dwellings and farmsteads dotting the higher ground above the cliff top	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
The distant mountain backdrop in many views gives distinctive Highland context to the interplay of views back and forth across the firth.	The proposed turbines would appear within the backdrop of views towards mountains, appearing as a relatively small and distance feature in what is a wide panoramic view. This SLQ would remain strongly apparent with the addition of the Proposed Development. There would be **no significant effect** on this key characteristic (Very Low magnitude and **Minor** level of effect).
The regular pattern of farmland on inland slopes provides an attractive contrast to the more natural shorelines of cliffs, shingle banks and mudflats.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.

Special Landscape Quality Citation (Note text in italics is extracted from the citation in full)	Assessment
Unusual contrasts in scale are experienced where huge oil-rigs or large ships are viewed within the enclosed firths in the context of small scale settlement and in contrast to the horizontal arrangement of sea, land, and sky.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
The citadel of Fort George is a substantial and distinctive man-made feature in the landscape, which itself offers views of the SLA from a historical 'defended' position. The fort is linked to Ardersier by the B9006, a road that follows the line of the original military road.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
The remains at the South Sutor form part of what is probably one of the most complete coastal batteries surviving in Scotland.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
Some sense of remoteness and tranquillity is obtained in the less accessible areas and the cliffs and thickly wooded gullies on the steep outer edge of the Black Isle are local havens for wildlife. However, with the presence nearby of coastal settlements, ports and an airport, human activity is usually noticeable in this area – on the land, in the sea, or overhead.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
Special Qualities	
Distinctive Variety of Coastal Scenery	
The main scenic interest of the area is the visual interplay of land and sea at these two distinctive gateways to the Inverness and Cromarty Firths. The opposing spits of Chanonry and Fort George together represent a feature which is uncommon and this juxtaposition can be enjoyed from a variety of perspectives (e.g., from Chanonry Point itself, which is also notable for dolphin sightings, or more majestically from the high points of the road between Janefield and Eathie). The high viewpoints also reveal the full extent of the sandbanks off Fort George and Whiteness Head. The Sutors also provide high vantage points, with contrasting views of the narrow mouth of the deep Cromarty Firth and the wide expanse of the Outer Moray Firth.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.

Special Landscape Quality Citation (Note text in italics is extracted from the citation in full)	Assessment
The diversity of coastal landscape here includes the dramatic contrasts between steep cliffs and low sand and shingle bars.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
The area is experienced in a number of ways including birds' eye views from aircraft, elevated views from areas of high ground and low level views from boats, ferries, and the shoreline.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
Expanse and Containment	
The area offers a wide range of visual and perceptual experiences within a restricted area. In large part this stems from strong contrasts associated with the proximity of exposed and sheltered situations, developed and undeveloped coastline, and the availability of different perspectives from varying elevations and viewpoints.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
Unusual visual and perceptual contrasts are provided by oil-rigs and large ships viewed within enclosed firths against settled landscape backdrops.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic, although it may be considered that the distance view of wind farm development add to this diversity.
Strong Cultural and Military Landscape Links	
The location and form of settlement typically shows a very strong response to the landscape, including the impressive Hanoverian fortress of Fort George, which has a very dramatic and direct strategic relationship with the coastline of the firth.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
Cromarty is known as "the jewel in the crown of Scotland's vernacular architecture" and it is a truly outstanding collection of 18th and early 19th century dwelling houses and public buildings.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
Located at the North Sutor, and highlighting the strategic importance of this area throughout history, are the Scheduled remains of Dunskeath Castle, a 12th century defensive motte and bailey, flanked on either side by 20th century coastal batteries.	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.
In the most northern area of this SLA stand the remains of the oldest defensive structures; an Iron Age fort, consisting of three ruinous walls and two outer ramparts, with a later circular structure crowning the top of summit (possibly a dun or a	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.

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well-built hut circle) and, some 250m to the west, a structure that crowns the top of a prominent knoll which has been levelled to accommodate it.	
The Nigg Ferry follows the pilgrimage route taken by King James IV of Scotland and connects landscapes which would otherwise be very distant overland	There would be **no effect** on this key characteristic.

5.12.85 In summary, the Proposed Development would not significantly affect any of the SLQs of the *Sutors of Cromarty, Rosemarkie and Fort George* SLA. The level of effect would be **Minor** and not significant. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and neutral.

5.12.86 There are no existing or consented wind farms, or wind farm applications within this SLA or within 20 km of the SLA boundary and consequently there would be no significant cumulative effects.

5.13 Residual Visual Effects

5.13.1 Visual effects are assessed by considering the sensitivity of the receptor (people in the landscape) and the magnitude of change that would affect the view or overall visual amenity. They are defined by the Landscape Institute in GLVIA 3, paragraphs 6.2 as follows:

"An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity. The concern here is with assessing how the surroundings of individuals or groups of people may be specifically affected by changes in the content and character of views as a result of the change or loss of existing elements of the landscape and/or introduction of new elements."

5.13.2 The assessment has taken a precautionary approach and focused on visual receptors within 15 km of the Proposed Development, in order to assess the likely significant visual effects. This has been guided by the results of the viewpoint analysis (**Technical Appendix 5.2**) which indicated that significant visual effects would be limited to within approximately 10.5 km of the Proposed Development with a further potentially significant effect in the northwest at approximately 13.9 km distance. Within the wider Study Area, the assessment has included receptors of national importance such as Scotland's Great Trails, Sustrans Cycle Routes and popular hill walking summits (Munros and Corbetts) that are overlapped by the blade tip ZTV.

5.13.3 A full night-time assessment on the visual receptors is provided in **Technical Appendix 5.4** and not repeated here.

Visual Effects during Construction, Operation and Decommissioning

5.13.4 The majority of the significant visual effects would be experienced as a result of views of the proposed turbines during the operational period and this forms the main focus of the assessment. However, the visual effects associated with the construction and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development and the infrastructure components also have the potential to be significant and these have been included in the assessment where there is the potential for a significant visual effect.

5.13.5 An outline description of the visual effects associated with the construction and decommissioning phases is set out here.

Visual Effects during Construction

5.13.6 The assessed levels of effect will increase from Zero, at the start of construction and progressively increase to a maximum level of effect, equal to that occurring during operation, upon completion of the construction period. The construction effects although temporary are likely to involve greater movement of machinery and visibility of contrasting construction activity, background noise and associated lighting. The nature of these effects would be temporary, direct, and negative. Some construction activities may be remote from the turbine locations (access works) and / or temporary (temporary construction compounds) and subject to restoration on completion of the construction period.

5.13.7 An outline assessment of each of the component parts of the Proposed Development likely to be constructed during the construction period is provided as follows:

New Internal Access Tracks, Turning Heads and Crane Hard-standings:

5.13.8 The construction of the proposed new access tracks are unlikely to cause significant visual effects on local receptors as they would generally have low visibility due to the Site location and the surrounding landform. The site access, off the A9 (allowing for proposed dualling) would be visible as a new / replacement road junction in-keeping with the style and appearance of the A9 road / dual carriageway and the visual effects would be **Negligible to Zero** and not significant. A new section of access track would then be created through the forest and moorland beyond and is unlikely to be visible to visual receptors, although it is acknowledged that there would be a Moderate to Negligible landscape effect in **Section 5.12**. Construction traffic may, however, be visible beyond trees from the nearest residential properties at Keepers Cottage and Lynemore Cottage. Allowing for the high sensitivity of these receptors, the visual effects are likely to be **Minor** and not significant (Very Low magnitude).

5.13.9 The access track would then overlap the existing track for approximately 200m, following the route of the General Wade's Military Road heritage path (high sensitivity). Walkers on this route would encounter the new access track and the temporary construction compound at close range. The magnitude of change is likely to be High to Medium within 200-300m and the visual effect, although small in geographical extent, would be

Substantial to Major and significant. The nature of these effects would be temporary and negative. Post construction the temporary construction compound would be removed and the new access track would assimilate into the existing track along the route of the heritage path.

5.13.10 Allowing for wider visibility, sections of the access tracks would be visible from Viewpoints 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10 within approximately 10 km of the Proposed Development. Of the assessment viewpoints visibility of the proposed access tracks would be greatest from Viewpoint 2 on the B9154 northeast of Moy (Figure 5.20). This viewpoint is located at 2.35 km north of the Proposed Development. The sensitivity of receptors at this location would range from High (recreational cyclists) to Medium (other road users) and the magnitude of change caused by the visibility of the construction vehicles / machinery and the new road formation would be Low, with the finished road appearing as a line across the hillside, similar to the existing track also visible from this viewpoint. Both temporary construction compounds would be screened by landform / vegetation. The visual effects would therefore range from Moderate (cyclists) to Moderate to Minor and not significant.

Temporary construction compounds:

5.13.11 Two temporary construction compounds are proposed and as with the internal access tracks they are not sited in a visually prominent location and are unlikely to cause significant visual effects during the construction period. However, small parts of one compound to the northeast would be partially visible from a small number of receptors in the north including the A9, B9154 (overlapped with Sustrans NCR 1) and the railway line as noted above. The construction compounds would generally, be largely screened by intervening landform and/or vegetation which would provide sufficient screening to avoid wider visibility or significant visual effects from surrounding receptors.

Grid Connection Infrastructure:

5.13.12 As with the temporary construction compounds, the substation and BESS would be largely screened by intervening landform which would provide sufficient screening to avoid wider visibility or significant visual effects from surrounding receptors. The substation and BESS would be theoretically visible from Viewpoint 6 which is representative of the only, lower lying location where they would be visible. The substation and BESS would, however, be visible from some elevated viewpoints (hill summits) including Viewpoints 8, 10 and 11 within 10 km resulting in no significant effects from these receptors.

5.13.13 Electrical cables connecting to the proposed turbines to the substation would be underground within the Site, and post construction there would be no visual effects.

On-Site Borrow Pits:

5.13.14 There would be very limited visibility of the one borrow pit location due to the screening effects of the surrounding landform and the nature of this feature, being ‘dug into’ the hillside. The existing landform would provide sufficient screening to avoid wider visibility

from surrounding receptors, and as noted in relation to the adjacent substation and BESS, the visual effects would be limited to a small number of elevated locations. The borrow pit would be subject to a more detailed excavation and restoration plan.

Visual Effects during Operation

5.13.15 The assessed levels of effect are likely to be at their greatest during the period of operation (which is the focus of the main visual assessment), due to the visibility of the proposed turbines and associated infrastructure. However, in comparison to a busy construction site, the appearance of the Proposed Development would also recover a 'calmer' visual character with negligible levels of maintenance activity visible on Site.

Visual Effects during Decommissioning

5.13.16 During decommissioning the wind farm would return to a construction site for a temporary period and the level of visual effect would gradually reduce with the removal of the turbines and associated above ground infrastructure. Therefore, the visual effects likely to be experienced during the decommissioning period would reduce from the operational levels and would not be significant on completion of the decommissioning. As with the construction period, although temporary, these works are likely to involve greater movement of machinery and visibility of contrasting construction activity, background noise and associated lighting. In overall terms the level of visual effect would reduce to non-significant levels and the nature of these effects would be temporary (excepting the access tracks which would remain), direct, and neutral when compared to the pre-existing baseline landscape of the local area.

Visual Effects on Views from Settlements and Residential Properties

5.13.17 The visual effects likely to be experienced from settlements include consideration of residential areas, the public realm and public open spaces within the settlement boundaries that would be frequented by people. The sensitivity of each of these receptors (people) has been assessed as *High*.

5.13.18 In summary, there would be significant visual effects on the views from elevated areas at Leachkin within Inverness at approximate 13.9 km distance, although there would be no significant visual effects on the city of Inverness overall. There would be no significant visual effects from any of the other the settlements identified in the local development plans at Farr, Inverarnie, Westhill, Tomatin, Smithton, Culloden, or Newlands of Culloden.

5.13.19 Although not identified as a settlement in the IMFLDP2, the views from Balnafoich on the western side of Strathnairn would be significantly affected as illustrated by Viewpoint 4.

5.13.20 Additionally, a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) has been conducted for those properties within 2 km of the Proposed Development. The results of the RVAA are reported in **Technical Appendix 5.3** and confirm that although the views from two properties would be significant, none of the properties would be affected by the Proposed Development in terms of their residential visual amenity. This is due largely to the

intervening distance, partial or full screening, and use / orientation of the property, such that the living standards would not be affected, and the property would not be adversely affected to the extent that it would become an unattractive place to live when judged objectively and in the public interest, on an individual basis or cumulatively.

5.13.21 The views from Moy at just over 2 km from the proposed turbines are well screened by mature roadside vegetation, although there may be significant visual effects from the adjacent Moy estate buildings at approximately 3 km distance, viewing across open areas.

Table 5.16: Visual Effects on Views from Settlements within 15 km

Settlement	Assessment
Tomatin	Tomatin is located approximately 5.1 km southeast of the Proposed Development, within Strathdearn to the south and west of the A9 and River Findhorn. The primary access to the settlement is taken via the minor road (also Sustrans NCR 7) providing a link to the A9 to the north and south (across the Findhorn Bridge). A further unclassified road accesses Tomatin from the east, passing under the A9 road bridge and Findhorn Viaduct from Raigbeg. The main part of the settlement, including the primary school and community facilities is located to the south of the railway arches and viaduct. This part of the settlement is relatively enclosed by trees and woodland and the main open views are easterly and southerly viewing across the strath towards Carn a' Choire Mhoir and towards the Monadhliath from the eastern and southern margins of the town, including more elevated residential properties located on Juniper Drive. The western extents of the settlement in this location are flanked by coniferous forestry, some of which has been recently felled. The centre of Tomatin is characterised by mature tree planting which restricts views. In proximity to Strathdearn Primary School, outward visibility is further contained by landform, mature vegetation, and the built form of the Tomatin railway viaduct which dissects the settlement and restricts northerly views. North of the viaduct, the road is open to fields (Viewpoint 6) and a clear view of the Proposed Development would be possible, although this location is separated from the settlement by the viaduct. The area to the west of this road is proposed for housing development in the IMFLDP2 and it is likely that housing development in this area would screen out views and from within its area. There are limited and isolated properties further north along this road, most have some woodland / forestry screening. The northern end of the village, north of the Allt ns Frithe watercourse, is essentially occupied by the Tomatin Distillery and visitor center (the area with open views north to the site is proposed for distillery extension in the IMFLDP2. There are some further residential properties to the west of the distillery warehousing. A large area of coniferous forestry, lying southeast of Tomatin distillery, borders Tomatin to the northwest. Most of the settlement is set within an extensive area of 'green network' in the IMFLDP2 which includes large areas of forestry / woodland.

Settlement	Assessment
	Assessment: Proposed Development The ZTV illustrates theoretical visibility of up to 14 turbines from the northern part of Tomatin, north and east of the railway line at a minimum distance of approximately5.1 km. Theoretical visibility of 8-10 turbines is illustrated for the southern-most part of Tomatin. This is reduced in the hub height ZTV and in reality, much of this area is overlapped and further restricted by mature, mixed coniferous / deciduous forestry / woodland which is protected as 'green network' within the IMFLDP2. Figure 5.4b allows for vegetation screening and illustrates very limited ZTV overlap with the settlement. North-westerly views from the minor road through Tomatin to the north of the railway viaduct are illustrated by Viewpoint 6 (**Figure 5.24a-f**) where theoretical visibility of all 14 turbines, including 10 hubs and four blade tips affecting approximately 13° of the horizontal FoV, is illustrated. This view is not however representative of the settlement. Views of the Proposed Development from the settlement, close to and south of the viaduct, including the primary school and community facilities would be screened by landform and vegetation with Very Low to Zero magnitude. Views from housing to the west of the distillery warehousing and west of the railway line would also be largely screened by landform and vegetation. The level of effect on the settlement would range from **Minor** and Not Significant to No View The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), direct and negative to neutral. Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development The existing wind farm at Farr is theoretically visible in westerly views from the northern part of the settlement (**Figure 5.24b**) at a minimum distance of approximately5.5 km, however, in reality views in this direction are screened by intervening mature coniferous forestry (Zero magnitude). The existing Tom nan Clach wind farm and its consented extension are theoretically visible in north easterly views from the southern part of the settlement, close to the Strathdearn Hub. However, actual visibility in this direction from Tomatin is screened by a combination of intervening landform, mature vegetation, and the built form of the settlement, the Tomatin viaduct and A9 road bridge (Zero magnitude). There would therefore be no cumulative effect. Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development There are no application wind farms visible from this settlement. There would therefore be no cumulative effect.
Inverness	The city of Inverness is the main settlement within the Study Area, located approximately 8.7 km distance north of the Proposed Development. The city occupies a strategic position on the southern shoreline where the River Ness meets the Moray and Beauly Firths and has developed to the southeast following the course of the River Ness and Caledonian Canal towards the north eastern end of the Great Glen. The primary access to the city is taken from the A9, which passes through the Raigmore and Longman areas to cross the Kessock Bridge, to the north of Inverness. The A96 approaches the city

Settlement	Assessment
	from the east, running parallel to the Moray Firth, while the A82 follows the Great Glen to provide access to the south western part of the city. The A8082 forms a peripheral route around the southern edge of the city, while various other routes provide alternative access route including the A862 (approaching from the west along the Beauly Firth) and the B861, B862 and Essich Road (approaching from the south). The majority of the northern part of the city comprises a predominantly industrial area, at Longman and Merkinch, although smaller residential areas are present at South Kessock and Scorguie. More recent expansion and residential development of the city has been focused along the southern and south western periphery, south of the city centre, in areas such as Milton of Leys, Culduthel, Holm, Leachkin and Kinmylies. These expansion areas are located on the containing hill slopes to the south of the city and are largely orientated to view north, northeast and northwest across Inverness to the Moray Firth and Moray uplands. <u>Assessment: Proposed Development</u> The ZTV indicates theoretical visibility of all 14 turbines across the majority of the city centre, northern, eastern, and western parts of the Inverness. Theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development reduces to 1-3 turbines south of the River Ness with no visibility illustrated for much of the more elevated parts of the city north of Drummossie Muir at Inshes, Drakies, Lochardil and Culduthel. The southern-most part of Milton of Leys, west of the A9, is illustrated as attaining theoretical visibility of up to 14 turbines. Taking account of vegetation screening (Figure 5.4b) and built development, theoretical visibility from the city becomes very limited. Allowing for the screening effects of buildings and vegetation there would be No View of the Proposed Development from the vast majority of the city (zero magnitude). Visibility would be limited to a small, elevated area of Leachkin, where long views are possible due to the sloping open space to the south and east. These views are not representative of the city. They are illustrated in Viewpoint 16 (**Figure 5.34a-f**) where all 14 turbines (including 14 hubs) would be theoretically visible on the skyline affecting approximately 9° of the horizontal field of view at a minimum distance of approximately13.9 km. The Proposed Development would appear reasonably well balanced forming a distinct cluster on the skyline above the broad ridgeline of containing landform on the horizon to the southeast. Due to the expansive views, intervening distance, presence of other wind farms and the large scale of the receiving landscape, the turbines would appear fairly well accommodated within the view (Low magnitude). For the majority of the settlement, visibility of the Proposed Development would be screened by the intervening built form of the urban context, including from the city centre and historic core of Inverness at Inverness Castle. Across the northern part of the city, the primary focus and orientation of views is towards the Moray Firth, away from the Proposed Development. Where distant visibility of the Proposed Development is available on the ridgeline of containing landform to the south, this would be in the context of a large-scale receiving landscape and often in an industrial context. From the southern

Settlement	Assessment
	settled edge of the city, at Milton of Leys, intervening built form and blocks of coniferous forestry and deciduous woodlands across Drummossie Muir would reduce the visible extents of the Proposed Development where existing overhead lines and lattice towers cross the view south (Very Low to Zero magnitude). The level of effect on the settlement would range from No View to Minor and Not Significant for the majority of Inverness. There would be a small area of visibility on the elevated western edge of the settlement, at Leachkin where the visual effects would be **Moderate and Significant**. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), direct and negative to neutral. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development</u> From elevated parts of the western settlement, the existing wind farms at Moy (15.8 km), Farr (13.2 km) and Glen Kyllachy (17.2 km, all Very Low magnitude) are visible. The existing Dunmaglass (23.6 km) and Corriegarth (30.7 km) wind farms are also distant features of south westerly views where Aberarder wind farm (22.7 km, all Very Low magnitude), currently under construction, would also be visible in clear or exceptional conditions. The consented Tom na Clach Extension (24.7 km) would be visible to the southeast while Corriegarth 2 (30.3 km, both Very Low magnitude) would be a very distant feature of south westerly views in clear or exceptional conditions. The additional and combined effect of the proposed development would remain **Moderate and Significant** to Minor and Not Significant. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible) direct, cumulative, and negative to neutral. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development</u> There would be no other wind farm applications visible from this settlement. Consequently, there would be no further cumulative effects.
Parts of Westhill, Smithton and Culloden	Westhill, Smithton and Culloden comprise small settlements east of Inverness located approximately 11 km north of the Proposed Development, east of the A9 and south of the Moray Firth. The primary access to these settlements is taken from the A96 east of Inverness (towards Narin) with secondary access from the south provided by the B9006 Culloden Road from the Culcabock area of Inverness. The settled areas lie on the eastern margins of Inverness, southeast of the Longman area, on the gradually sloping southern side of the Moray Firth. The settlements are predominantly orientated to the north / northeast as a result of the terrain profile and proximity to the Moray Firth. The western margins are dominated by the A9 and the city of Inverness with a settled agricultural landscape to the east and the farmed containing slopes of Inverness to south (towards the Proposed Development) where coniferous forestry is a prominent land use across Drummossie Muir at aster Daviot and Bogbain Woods. The southern settlement boundary of Culloden is defined by Culloden Wood and the Inverness to Aberdeen railway line.

Settlement	Assessment
	Assessment: Proposed Development The ZTV illustrates theoretical visibility of up to 11-14 turbines along the southern and eastern settlement edges of Westhill and Smithton, respectively, as well as up to 8-10 turbines from the northern edge of Culloden at a minimum distance of 10.9 km. In reality, visibility of the Proposed Development as a new feature of the skyline to the south would be screened by intervening built form within the settlements and multiple intervening screening influences including the coniferous forestry across Drummossie Muir at Daviot Wood (Very Low to Zero magnitude). This is also confirmed by the ZTV in Figure 5.4b. The level of effect on the settlements would range from Minor and Not Significant to No View. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), direct and neutral. Cumulative Assessment: Cumulative visibility of other wind farm development in these areas is also limited and the Proposed Development would not contribute to significant additional or combined cumulative effects.
Newlands of Culloden (classified in the HwLDP as a Smaller Settlement along the A96 Corridor)	Newlands of Culloden is another small settlement along the A96 corridor to the east of Inverness (approximately 2.5 km east of Westhill, Smithton and Culloden) located approximately 12.4 km north of the Proposed Development. Access to the settlement is from the B9006 between Westhill and Croy, which passes along the southern edge of the settlement. The settlement lies on the eastern margins of Inverness, southeast of the Longman area, on the gradually sloping southern side of the Moray Firth. Newlands of Culloden is predominantly made up by a series of small, inward facing residential streets and clusters of properties. The Culloden Moor Caravan and Motorhome Club abuts the settlement to the east and Culloden Forest defines the northern extents of the village. To the south, towards the Proposed Development, the farmed containing hill slopes south of Inverness to south are forested at Daviot and Bogbain Woods. The Inverness to Aberdeen railway line also crosses underneath the B9006 at Newlands of Culloden. Assessment: Proposed Development The ZTV illustrates theoretical visibility of up to 11-14 turbines for the western part of the settlement, gradually reducing to up to 1-3 turbines for the eastern settlement and Culloden Moor Caravan and Motorhome Club at a minimum distance of approximately 12.4 km. This theoretical visibility would be restricted to the hub and upper half of the rotator sweep of turbines and there would be no visibility of lower towers or ground based infrastructure. There would be further intervening screening of the Proposed Development by successive layers of intervening vegetation including the coniferous forestry along the wooded ridgeline and hill summit of Meall Mor. The majority of properties within the settlement would also experience screening by adjoining properties and very marginal visibility of the Proposed Development would be limited to those properties on the southern edge of the settlement and for road

Settlement	Assessment
	users of the B9006, at an oblique angle to either direction of travel (Very Low to Zero magnitude). The level of effect on the settlements would be Minor and Not Significant. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development</u> The existing Dunmaglass (approximately27 km) and Aberarder (approximately 27 km, currently under construction) wind farms and the consented development Corriegarth 2 (approximately 36 km, all Very Low magnitude) are distant features of southerly views from the settlement, in clear or exceptional conditions. The additional and combined effect of the proposed development would remain Moderate to Minor and Not Significant. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible) direct, cumulative, and negative to neutral. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development</u> There would be no other wind farm applications visible from this settlement. Consequently, there would be no further cumulative effects.
Farr and Inverarnie (Growing Settlement)	Farr and Inverarnie form a 2 km string of settlement along the B851 on the eastern side of Strathnairn between Croftcroy junction to south and the Hall to north as described in the IMFLDP2. The settlement is located approximately 3.9 km west of the Proposed Development at the closest point. Access to the settlements is via the B851, along Strathnairn, and along the B861 from Inverness which crosses Strathnairn to the west of Inverarnie. Inverarnie comprises a small cluster of properties arranged around the junction between the B851 and B861 with residential properties extending northwest into Strathnairn. Farr Community Hall is also located in Inverarnie. Dalvourn, Forestry Houses and Farr lie to the south of Inverarnie, distributed along the B851, and are interspersed by areas of coniferous forestry. The arrangement of properties and prevalence of mature woodland and garden vegetation restricts outward visibility from these settled areas. Where views are attainable, they are largely focused across the strath (to the west) with easterly views towards the Proposed Development contained by mature vegetation and eastern flanking hill slopes of Strathnairn. <u>Assessment: Proposed Development</u> The ZTV, Figure 5.4aillustrates limited theoretical visibility of up to 11-14 turbines in the northern part of the settlement. Figure 5.4b illustrates more limited visibility with the no visibility from the primary school. Further wireline and site visit analysis confirms visibility from Farr (southernmost part of the settlement would be limited to two blade tips which are likely to be further screened by mature forestry. Not accounting for the forestry, the magnitude of change would be Very Low, and the level of effect would be Minor and not significant.

Settlement	Assessment
	Theoretical visibility from the northern part of the settlement, close to the B861 / B851 junction would be limited to four hubs and four blades / tips, much of which would be further screened by mature trees and woodland. The magnitude of change would range between Low - Very Low and Zero and the level of effect would be Moderate to Minor reducing to No View and not significant. Crossing the strath on the B861 towards the bridge over the River Nairn, visibility would increase as illustrated in **Viewpoint 4** (**Figure 5.22a-f**). This viewpoint is not representative of the view from the settlement at Farr and Inverarnie as defined by the IMFLDP2, which is 'tucked' closer into the eastern side of the strath. This viewpoint is however representative of views likely to be experienced by residents at Balnafoich along the minor road on the western side of the strath, although not recognized as a settlement in the IMFLDP2. The views from this area would be of High to Medium magnitude and the visual effect experienced by residents would be **Substantial to Major** and significant. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development</u> The existing wind farm at Dunmaglass and the Aberarder wind farm, currently under construction, are visible on the distant horizon to the south in views along Strathnairn (both Very Low magnitude). The additional and combined effect of the Proposed Development would Moderate to Minor and Not Significant along the B861 on the eastern side of Strathnairn. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible) direct, cumulative, and negative to neutral. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development</u> There would be no other wind farm applications visible from these settlements. Consequently, there would be no further cumulative effects.

Visual Effects on Views from Transport Routes

5.13.22 This section of the assessment considers the sequential and cumulative visual effects on views of the Proposed Development from transport routes within 15 km of the Proposed Development that are overlapped by the ZTV.

5.13.23 The views from these routes would be experienced transiently by road users (mainly drivers / passengers and where appropriate cyclists) who would experience the wind farm as part of the changing sequence of views experienced from the road route. Each of the roads were driven in both directions to assess the potential effects. All routes were assessed with the assistance of sequential wirelines, ZTV maps and True View Visuals 3D augmented reality software. The assessment has also taken account of other wind farms visible from these routes.

5.13.24 In summary, significant effects would be limited to sections of the following four transport routes:

- A9
  - Northbound: Of the approximately439 km total route, approximately 2.9 km across four short sections would be significantly affected equating to a total of approximately 2 minutes of travel time assuming an average speed of 60mph; and
  - Southbound: Of the approximately439 km total route, approximately 3.9 km (reducing to approximately2.6 km accounting for coniferous forestry) across four short sections would be significantly affected equating to a total of approximately 2.5 minutes of travel time assuming an average speed of 60mph.
- B9154
  - Approximately 5.5 km of the route, southbound, between Moy and Auchnahilin (reducing to approximately 1.1 km accounting for coniferous forestry) equating to approximately 5 minutes of travel time (reducing to 1 minute of travel accounting for screening) assuming an average speed of 40mph.
- B861
  - Approximately 1.5 km of the route, southbound would be significantly affected (**Major to Moderate** and **Moderate**) near Mains of Gask (approximately 900m) and Balnafoich (approximately 600m) and equating to less than 1 minute of travel time at each location, assuming an average speed of 40mph.
- Main Railway Line – Inverness to Perth
  - Of the approximately 190 km total route, approximately 800m close to the site would be significantly affected equating to less than approximately 1 minute of travel time assuming an average speed of 60mph.

5.13.25 Mitigation resulting from the native woodland planting along the A9 near Moy has the potential to reduce some of the significant visual effects from the A9 as the planting matures through the operational period of the Proposed Development.

5.13.26 None of the remaining transport routes would be significantly affected by the Proposed Development.

Table 5.17: Visual Effects on Views from Transport Routes within 15 km

Transport Route	Assessment
A Roads within 15 km	
A9	The A9 is routed a total of 439 km between Bridge of Allan in the south and Scrabster in the north via Perth, Pitlochry, Aviemore, Inverness, Invergordon and Thurso. Within 15 km of the Proposed Development, the A9 forms part of the Sustrans Network, overlapping with: NCR 7 southeast of Tomatin and between Tomatin and Moy; and NCR 1 and the John o'Groats Trail long distance walking route

Transport Route	Assessment
	north of Inverness on approach to the Kessock Bridge. The southern part of the route at between 10-15 km passes through the Cairngorms National Park. Sequential views from the route are shown in **Figure 5.17** and illustrated in **Figure 5.18a-u**. Viewpoints 1, 3, 7 and 17 are also located along the route. Within the 15 km Study Area, the route is located within the Cairngorms National Park, indicating a High value in this area southeast of Slochd Summit. The remaining route of the A9 through the Study Area is not located within a nationally or locally designated landscape and is not a promoted tourist route, indicating a Medium value. The views would be experienced by road users whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the road ahead and susceptibility to change is assessed as Medium. Overall, the sensitivity is assessed as Medium (High within the Cairngorms National Park to the southeast). <u>Assessment: Proposed Development</u> The ZTV (**Figure 5.17**) indicates theoretical visibility along the majority of the A9 route within 15 km between Slochd summit in the south and east of Balvonie of Inshes near Inverness in the north (approximately 25.6 km of the route) with patches of reduced visibility for approximately 2.9 km between Invereen and Moy (northbound) and for approximately 4.7 km between Daviot and Auchbain (southbound). A further area of theoretical visibility is illustrated by **Figure 5.17** for approximately 3.9 km of the A9 between Inshes and the Kessock Bridge as the route passes through Inverness. There is no ZTV coverage indicated for approximately 5.6 km from east of Carrbridge to Slochd summit with the Cairngorms National Park. There is no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development for road users on the A9 within the boundary of the Cairngorms National Park (northbound). There is also no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development for approximately 0.2 km of the route as it passes over the River Findhorn, for approximately 0.4 km east of Invereen (both northbound) and for approximately 1.3 km between Inshes and Balvonie of Inshes south of Inverness (southbound). In summary, views northbound from the A9 would be significantly affected for: • Approximately 1 km section north of Tomatin, within approximately 4.4 km of the nearest turbine (Sequential Viewpoint 9); • Approximately 600m section between Dalmagarry and the B9154 junction for Moy Tomatin, within approximately 2.6 km of the nearest turbine (Sequential Viewpoints 15-16); and Approximately 600m passing site, within approximately 1.8 km of the nearest turbine (Sequential Viewpoint 22). Views southbound from the A9 would be significantly affected for: • Approximately 600m between Daviot and east of Dun Davie fort, at a minimum distance of approximately 6 km (Sequential Viewpoint 34); • Approximately 1.3 km section between the B851 junction and north of Meall Mor, at a minimum distance of approximately 3.3 km if intervening coniferous forestry was felled to the west of the section of

Transport Route	Assessment
	the A9 lying north of the proposed turbines (Sequential Viewpoints 31-29). • Approximately 2 km section west and south of Meall Mor as the A9 passes north of the Proposed Development (Sequential Viewpoint 24-28). Accounting for existing levels of intervening screening, the views from approximately 6.8 km (approximately 5.5 km allowing for coniferous forestry due to be felled) of the route (1.5% of the 439 km route total) would be significantly affected as follows: • Northbound: approximately 2.9 km across four short sections of the route, equating to approximately 2 minutes of travel time assuming an average speed of 60mph; and • Southbound: approximately 3.9 km (reducing to approximately 2.6 km accounting for coniferous forestry) across four short sections of the route, equating to approximately 2.5 minutes of travel time assuming an average speed of 60mph. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative. Sequential analysis travelling southeast to northwest is as follows: **A9 Northbound:** Northbound: Sequential Viewpoints 1-7 - Slochd Summit to east of Findhorn Bridge (approximately 4 km, **Figures 5.18a-c**) (also part of the route of Sustrans NCR 7) Between Slochd summit and east of Findhorn Bridge the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development illustrated by **Figure 5.17** would be predominantly screened by mature roadside vegetation flanking the A9. There would be heavily filtered visibility of the proposed turbines at Sequential Viewpoint 2 (**Figure 5.18a**) at a minimum distance of approximately 10 km where the Proposed Development would be largely screened by intervening mature vegetation as well as an existing lattice tower (Very Low to Zero magnitude). Photography for Sequential Viewpoint 5 was taken from a layby on the southbound carriageway for Health and Safety reasons and due to roadworks on the northbound carriageway. Partial visibility of the southwestern proposed turbines (T5-T6) would be experienced from the northbound carriageway as blade tips on the horizon for a short dual carriageway section of the A9 (approximately1 km) at, and north of, Sequential Viewpoint 5 (**Figure 5.18c**), Very Low magnitude). If intervening coniferous forestry bordering the A9 were to be felled, the Proposed Development would be visible on the horizon for this section of the A9 (Low magnitude). The level of effect for this section of the route would range from Negligible and Not Significant to No View.

Transport Route	Assessment
	Northbound: Sequential Viewpoints 8-11 - east of Tomatin to Tomatin Junction (approximately 3.4 km, **Figures 5.18c-f**) Between the point the A9 passes to the east of Tomatin and the junction from the A9 north of the town, the screening influence of mature roadside vegetation continues to reduce visibility of the Proposed Development. Partial visibility of blade tips would be experienced as the route crosses the bridge over the Findhorn River at Sequential Viewpoint 7 for an approximately 200m section of the dual carriageway (Very Low magnitude increasing to Medium-Low if intervening coniferous were to be felled, **Figure 5.18d**). Having crossed the bridge, the blade tip and part of the rotator sweep of T12 would be visible as the A9 turns to the northwest towards the Proposed Development, at Sequential Viewpoint 8 (Low-Very Low magnitude, increasing Medium-Low Low if intervening coniferous were to be felled, **Figure 5.18d**). For the following approximately 1 km section of the route, north of Tomatin, there would be largely open views towards the proposed development in the direction of travel and at a minimum distance of approximately 4.4 km to the nearest turbine. (Sequential Viewpoint 9, **Figure 5.18e**, LVIA Viewpoint 3, **Figure 5.21a-g**, Medium magnitude) until the A9 reaches the junction to the north of Tomatin (Sequential Viewpoint 10, **Figure 5.18e,** Zero magnitude). It is anticipated that the baseline view in this location would be subject to considerable change as part of the future A9 dualling between Tomatin and Moy with a new junction being constructed in this location. Should the mature vegetation in the view from Sequential Viewpoint 9 be felled as part of these works the magnitude of change would be *High-Medium.* As the route continue north towards Invereen, theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines would again be screened by intervening vegetation, including from the layby north of Tomatin (Sequential Viewpoint 11, **Figure 5.18f**). Sustrans NCR 7 follows the route of the A9 in this location. The level of effect for this section of the route would range from **Moderate and Significant** for an approximately 1 km section north of Tomatin (**Major to Moderate and Significant** during A9 dualling if forestry is felled) to No View. Northbound: Sequential Viewpoints 11 - 17 north of Tomatin Junction to north of B9154 Junction for Moy (approximately 3 km, **Figures 5.18f-i**) (also part of the route of Sustrans NCR 7) From the layby north of Tomatin, near Sequential Viewpoint 11 theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines is screened by mature coniferous and mixed species vegetation (Sequential Viewpoints 12 and 13, **Figure 5.18i-g**, Zero magnitude) until the A9 reaches the junction for Ruthven where the hubs of T11 and T12 and the blade tips of T1, T7 and T10 would become visible beyond roadside trees (Sequential Viewpoint 14, **Figure 5.18g**, Very Low magnitude). As the A9 reaches Dalmagarry, open views of the proposed turbines would be experienced by road users for approximately 600m single carriageway section of the route, at an angle to the northbound direction of travel and a minimum distance of approximately 2.6 km to the nearest turbine

Transport Route	Assessment
	(Sequential Viewpoints 15 and 16, **Figure 5.18h**, High-Medium magnitude). As the route passes the junction with the B9154 to Moy, mature mixed species roadside vegetation to the west would screen visibility of the proposed turbines (Sequential Viewpoints 17 and 18, **Figure 5.18i**, Zero magnitude) The level of effect for this section of the route would range from **Major to Moderate and Significant** for an approximately 600m section between Dalmagarry and the B9154 junction for Moy to No View. Northbound: Sequential Viewpoints 17- 26 North of B9154 Junction for Moy to northwest of Lynemore (3.8 km, **Figures 5.18j-n**) As the A9 crosses over the main Inverness to Perth Railway Line, views of the Proposed Development for northbound road users would continue to be screened by intervening coniferous forestry (Sequential Viewpoints 17 to 19, **Figure 5.18j**, zero magnitude). Intervening coniferous forestry in this location is scheduled to be felled between 2054 and 2058 during the operational period of the Proposed Development as noted by the Meall Mòr, Moy, and Farr Land Management Plan (produced by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS)[3] and Scottish Forestry Map Viewer[4]. If intervening forestry were felled the magnitude of change would be Low. Southeast of Lynemore at Sequential Viewpoint 20 (**Figure 5.18j**), within approximately 1.9 km of the Proposed Development, there would be blade tip visibility of approximately six proposed turbines, at an oblique angle to the northbound direction of travel, with the remaining proposed turbines screened from view by intervening coniferous forestry (Low magnitude). Although some of the intervening forestry is shown as being scheduled for felling between 2029-2033 by the Meall Mòr, Moy, and Farr Land Management Plan (produced by FLS), the plans also show that the area would be restocked during 2033, and an area of forestry would also be retained with 'minimal intervention'. This area of intervening forestry also precludes visibility of the proposed turbines at Sequential Viewpoint 21 (**Figure 5.18k**, Zero magnitude). As the route approaches the Lynemore junction, open views towards the Proposed Development (mostly visible as hubs and towers) are available at an oblique angle to the north and southbound direction of travel for approximately 600m passing the Lynemore junction, at a minimum distance of approximately 1.8 km. Intervening forestry to the right of the view would be felled and restocked as part of the Proposed Development (Sequential Viewpoint 22, **Figure 5.18k** and **13.6**, High magnitude). Having passed the Lynemore junction, the A9 is flanked to the west by existing mixed species roadside trees which filter visibility of the Proposed Development for approximately1.4 km between northwest of the Lynemore

[3] Meall Mòr, Moy, and Farr Land Management Plan

[4] https://scottishforestry.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0d6125cfe892439ab0e5d0b74d9acc18

Transport Route	Assessment
	junction to the location of Sequential Viewpoint 24 (**Figure 5.18m**, assessed below). Sequential Viewpoint 23 illustrates the screening influence of these roadside trees along this section of the A9 at a minimum distance of approximately1.9 km (**Figure 5.18l**, Very Low magnitude). There is, however, a degree of uncertainty around the future of the roadside trees in this location due to the imminent dualling of the A9. Consequently, roadside mitigation planting has been incorporated as part of the Proposed Development (**Figure 13.6**) to reinforce existing roadside trees and ensure an intervening screening influence is retained for this section of the A9 should the existing roadside trees be felled to accommodate the dualling of the A9. Should the existing roadside trees be felled, the magnitude of change would be High for the initial period post construction until the proposed mitigation had sufficiently matured, when the magnitude of change would return to Very Low. At Sequential Viewpoint 24, the existing roadside trees flanking the A9 become increasingly sparse resulting in open views of the proposed turbines as mostly hubs and towers at an oblique angle to the northbound direction of travel and a minimum distance of approximately1.8 km (**Figure 5.18m**, High magnitude). As a result, roadside mitigation planting has been incorporated as part of the Proposed Development (**Figure 13.6**) to strengthen the screening influence of existing roadside trees in this location. Once mature (Year 10-15 post construction) the proposed mitigation planting would reduce visibility of the proposed turbines in this location (**Figure 5.18m**, Medium-Low magnitude). Northeast of Lynemore, open views of the proposed turbines, northern access tracks and substation / BESS would be experienced by northbound road users at an oblique angle to the direction of travel for approximately 600m and at a minimum distance of approximately1.7 km to the nearest turbine (Sequential Viewpoint 25 and 26, **Figure 5.18n**, High magnitude). Although existing road side trees provide limited screening of views towards the Proposed Development, the Meall Mòr, Moy, and Farr Land Management Plan (produced by FLS)[5] and Scottish Forestry Map Viewer[6] show recently felled coniferous forestry adjoining the A9 in this location would be restocked by 2028. The level of effect for this section of the route would range from **Major and Significant** for approximately 600m passing the Lynemore junction, at a minimum distance of approximately 1.8 km, and for approximately 600m northeast of Lynemore, at a minimum distance of approximately 1.7 km, to No View. **A9 Southbound:**

[5] Meall Mòr, Moy, and Farr Land Management Plan

[6] https://scottishforestry.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0d6125cfe892439ab0e5d0b74d9acc18

Transport Route	Assessment
	Southbound: - Longman, Inverness to east of Balvonie of Inshes (approximately 3.6 km, **Figures 5.17**) Travelling south from Inverness on the A9, towards the Proposed Development, south easterly views from this dual carriageway section of the route would be characterised by the urban, industrial context of the city location. Theoretical visibility of the proposed turbine for this section would be extensively screened by intervening roadside vegetation and the built form of the immediate industrial context of the Longman Industrial Estate and by successive urban / residential areas on the southern containing hill slopes of Inverness as well as by roadside trees, road bridges and wooded slopes of Drummossie Muir (Very Low to Zero magnitude). The level of effect for this section of the route would range from Negligible and Not Significant to No View. Southbound: Sequential Viewpoints 39-35 East of Balvonie of Inshes to B851 junction north of Daviot (approximately 4.1 km, **Figures 5.18u-s)** As southbound road users pass to the east of Balvonie of Inshes, dense and mature mixed species roadside trees would screen south easterly views towards the Proposed Development, reducing visibility of proposed turbines to the blade tips of T3 and T6 in the direction of travel for a short (approximately 300m) dual carriageway section of the route (Sequential Viewpoint 39, **Figure 5.18u**, Very Low magnitude). From the Milton of Leys junction (Sequential Viewpoint 38, **Figure 5.18t**) to the junction with the B851 north of Daviot (approximately 3.8 km) visibility of the Proposed Development would be screened by the mature mixed species woodland and coniferous forestry across Drummossie Muir, including Daviot Wood (Sequential Viewpoint 38-35, **Figure 5.18t-s**, Zero magnitude). The level of effect for this section of the route would range from Negligible and Not Significant to No View. Southbound: Sequential Viewpoint 34-32 - B851 junction north of Daviot to B851 Junction for Inverarnie (Scatraig) (approximately 2.5 km, **Figures 5.18r-q**) Having passed the B851 junction north of Daviot, road users of the A9 would crest the landform on the northern side of Strathnairn where the four western-most turbines (T3-T6) would be visible on the skyline on the eastern side of Strathnairn in the direction of travel for approximately 600m passing Daviot (Sequential Viewpoint 34, **Figure 5.18r** and LVIA Viewpoint 7, **Figure 5.25a-f**). The turbines would appear slowly rotating against the sky on the ridgeline to the south. The blade tips of T1, T7 and T8 would appear above the ridgeline formed by the summits of Beinn a' Bheurlaich and Meall Mor at a minimum distance of approximately 6 km. Part of the access tracks to T4 and T5 would be visible on the southern horizon of the strath, while the remaining infrastructure components of the Proposed Development would not be visible from this location (Medium magnitude).

Transport Route	Assessment
	As the A9 continues into Strathnairn, mature mixed species woodland following the course of the River Nairn and intervening landform screens visibility of the proposed turbines until the junction with the B851 for Inverarnie (Sequential Viewpoint 33-32, **Figure 5.18r-q**, Zero magnitude). The level of effect for this section of the route would range from **Moderate and Significant** for approximately 600mnear Daviot, at a minimum distance of approximately 6 km, to No View. Southbound: Sequential Viewpoints 32-29 - B851 Junction for Inverarnie (Scatraig) to northeast of Lynemore (approximately 5.3 km, **Figures 5.18q-o**) As the A9 passes the southernmost junction with the B851, the western most turbines (T3-T6) would be visible on the horizon in the southbound direction of travel - for approximately 1.3 km at a minimum distance of approximately 3.3 km – although intervening coniferous forestry flanking the A9 would reduce the visible extents of the Proposed Development (Sequential Viewpoints 31-29, **Figure 5.18q-p**, ranging from Medium to Medium-Low magnitude). Intervening coniferous forestry in this location is scheduled to be felled between 2054 and 2058 during the operational period of the Proposed Development as noted by the Meall Mòr, Moy, and Farr Land Management Plan (produced by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS)[7] and Scottish Forestry Map Viewer[8]. If intervening forestry were felled the magnitude of change would be Medium for all of this section. West of Meall Mor (Sequential Viewpoint 28, **Figure 5.18o,** LVIA Viewpoint 1, **Figure 5.19a-e**) all 14 turbines would be theoretically visible on the skyline for an approximately 300m section at a minimum distance of approximately 1.8 km. Western turbines (T3-T4) would be mostly visible with the lower towers of adjacent turbines (T5, T6, and T7) screened by intervening landform. The lower rotor sweep of turbines T1-T2, T8-T9, T13 and T14 would be screened by landform and forestry, along with the hub of T10 limiting views to blade tips only and excluding views of T11 and T12. None of the infrastructure components of the Proposed Development would be visible from this location (Sequential Viewpoint 28, **Figure 5.18o**, High magnitude). The forestry forming the skyline on the western margin of the A9 carriageway, providing a screening influence, would be retained during the operational period of the Proposed Development as noted by the Meall Mòr, Moy, and Farr Land Management Plan (produced by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS)[9] and Scottish Forestry Map Viewer[10].

[7] Meall Mòr, Moy, and Farr Land Management Plan

[8] https://scottishforestry.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0d6125cfe892439ab0e5d0b74d9acc18

[9] Meall Mòr, Moy, and Farr Land Management Plan

[10] https://scottishforestry.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0d6125cfe892439ab0e5d0b74d9acc18

Transport Route	Assessment
	Visibility of the Proposed Development would be screened for the next approximately 700m of the southbound route by the forestry on the western margin as the A9 turns east towards Moy at Sequential Viewpoint 27 (**Figure 5.18o**). From Sequential Viewpoint 27, where the route returns to single carriageway, the proposed turbines and ground-based infrastructure (including access tracks, substation and BESS) would be visible in open views an oblique angle to the southbound direction of travel as the A9 passes the Proposed Development for approximately 1.7 km (High magnitude), at a minimum distance of approximately 1.7 km. The Meall Mòr, Moy, and Farr Land Management Plan (produced by FLS)[11] and Scottish Forestry Map Viewer[12] show recently felled coniferous forestry adjoining the A9 in this location would be restocked by 2028. However, it is expected that any mature re-stocked forestry would provide limited screening to the proposed turbines due to the relative elevation of the A9 to re-stocked areas. The level of effect for this section of the route would range from **Major and Significant** for approximately 300m section west of Meall Mor, at a minimum distance of approximately 1.8 km, and for an approximately 1.7 km section as the A9 passes north of the Proposed Development, to No View. If intervening coniferous forestry was felled to the west of the section of the A9 lying north of the proposed turbines, there would be significant effects for a further approximately 1.3 km section for southbound road users between the B851 junction and west of Meall Mor. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development</u> The existing wind farms at Glen Kyllachy and Farr would be intermittently visible for northbound road users as the A9 approaches Tomatin from Slochd summit and at an angle to the direction of travel crossing the River Findhorn but are frequently screened by intervening mature woodland and coniferous forestry (Very Low magnitude). The existing Moy wind farm is partially visible at an oblique angle to both the northern and southern direction of travel as the A9 passes to the north of the Proposed Development, southeast of Meall Mor (Low magnitude). For southbound road users as the route passes Daviot, the existing wind farms at Farr and Dunmaglass are visible on the distant horizon in southerly views towards the Proposed Development alongside the Aberarder Wind Farm which is currently under construction (all Very Low magnitude). The existing Moy Wind Farm is also briefly visible at an angle to the southbound direction of travel, to the southeast, in this location (Low magnitude). The additional and combined effect of the proposed development would still range from **Major and Significant** to No View, due to the addition of the

[11] Meall Mòr, Moy, and Farr Land Management Plan

[12] https://scottishforestry.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0d6125cfe892439ab0e5d0b74d9acc18

Transport Route	Assessment
	Proposed Development. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible) indirect, cumulative, and negative. Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development There would be no other wind farm applications visible from this route. Consequently, there would be no further cumulative effects.
A82	The A82 is a single carriageway route approximately 269 km in length between Glasgow and Inverness via Loch Lomond, Rannoch Moor, Glen Coe, and Loch Ness. Within the 15 km Study Area, the A82 originates at the Longman roundabout with the A9 in northern Inverness and crosses the city to the southwest. The route then follows the Caledonian Canal along the Great Glen to Loch Ness passing within approximately 12.7 km distance from the Proposed Development at its closest point, at Queens Park Inverness. Beyond 15 km, the A82 continues to follow the western shore of Loch Ness to Drumnadrochit, Invermoriston, Fort Augustus and Invergarry. The route follows the course of the River Ness through Inverness where outward visibility to the Proposed Development, in excess of approximately 13 km to the southeast, would be contained by intervening built form. As the A82 leaves the southwestern edge of Inverness, south of Kings Golf Club, views are similarly contained by mature woodland lining the route. Visibility across the Great Glen becomes more open south of Balnagaig Farm and Loch Ness Country house Hotel as the route passes Dunain Mains Quarry before again becoming enclosed by mature vegetation west of Loch Dochfour. Upon reaching Loch Ness, views are generally channeled along the glen in the direction of travel (northeast or southwest) with the flanking hills forming the skyline and screening longer range views to the east and west, in conjunction with maturing roadside vegetation. Within the 15 km Study Area, the route passes though undesignated landscapes and the designated landscape of the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA indicating a variable value of High to Medium along its route. The views would be experienced by road users whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the road ahead and tourists visiting the area whose attention is likely to be focused on surrounding landscape features. The susceptibility to change from the introduction of the Proposed Development is considered to be High (tourists) to Medium (other road users) and the overall sensitivity of this route is therefore assessed as High. Assessment: Proposed Development The ZTV illustrates theoretical visibility of up to 11-14 turbines for an initial approximately 4.5 km section of the route through Inverness, between Longman roundabout and south of Kings Golf Club, as well as for a subsequent approximately 3.5 km section between Inverness Crematorium and Lagnalean. The remaining part of the A82 through the 15 km Study Area is not illustrated as having theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development. Wireline analysis has shown that there would also be no theoretical visibility of

Transport Route	Assessment
	the Proposed Development from the Wellington Layby, Clansman Hotel, Abriachan Gardens or in proximity to Invermoriston. Within Inverness, intervening built form would restrict visibility of the Proposed Development for road users of the A82 (Zero magnitude). Upon leaving the southwestern edge of the city at Kings Golf Club, visibility towards the Proposed Development would be similarly screened mature woodland lining the route (Zero magnitude). Visibility across the Great Glen becomes more open south of Balnagaig Farm and Loch Ness Country house Hotel as the route passes Dunain Mains Quarry where intermittent and fleeting visibility of all 14 turbines would be experienced at an oblique angle to the south western direction of travel for approximately 1.5 km of the route, at a minimum distance of approximately 13.5 km (Very Low magnitude). Existing overhead electricity infrastructure also occupies the view in this direction. As the route approached Lagnalean and Loch Dochfour visibility would again be screened by intervening mature vegetation (Zero magnitude). The level of effect from this route would range from Minor and Not Significant, for approximately 1.5 km passing Dunain Mains Quarry, to No View. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative to neutral. <u>Cumulative Assessment:</u> Cumulative visibility of other wind farm development along this route is also limited and the Proposed Development would not contribute to significant additional or combined cumulative effects.
A96	The A96 is a dual and single carriageway route approximately 164 km in length between Inverness and Aberdeen via Narin, Elgin, Keith, and Huntly. Within the 15 km Study Area, the A96 originates in Inverness at the Raigmore roundabout and follows the southern foreshore of the Moray Firth to Newton of Petty for approximately 6.7 km. Beyond 15 km, the A96 continues to follow the southern shore of the Moray Firth to the east and on to Narin, Forres and Elgin. Although in close proximity to the Moray Firth, visibility towards the coastline is fairly limited by a mixture of roadside verges, maturing scrub vegetation and built form including the Inverness to Aberdeen Line. Inland views to the south, towards the Proposed Development exhibit similar screening influences including the University of the Highlands and Island (UHI) campus and the Inverness Shopping Park; although occasional open views over the settled agricultural landscape occur, particularly for westbound road users. This part of the route is located approximately 13 km north of the Proposed Development at its nearest point passing to the north of the University of the Highlands and Island (UHI) campus. This section of the route is not promoted as a tourist route and is not overlapped by any landscape designations, indicating a Medium value. The views from the route would be experienced by road users who would experience the view transiently and who would be focused on the view ahead (Medium susceptibility). Sensitivity is therefore assessed as Medium.

Transport Route	Assessment
	Assessment: Proposed Development The ZTV illustrates theoretical visibility of up to 14 turbines for the approximately 6.7 km section of the A96 within the 15 km Study Area. In reality, actual visibility of the Proposed Development would be markedly reduced by the viewing distance to the Proposed Development (approximately 13 km at the closest point, increasing to 15.6 km at Newton of Petty) in conjunction with the extensive intervening screening influences including roadside verges and vegetation, the settlements of Westhill, Smithton, Culloden and Balloch and the widespread coniferous forestry across the containing hill slopes and southern visible horizon at Drummossie Muir. Any distant visibility of the proposed turbines from this section of the route would be experienced intermittently, at an oblique angle to either direction of travel and would be limited to the blade tips of turbines (Very Low magnitude). The level of effect from this route would range from Negligible and Not Significant to No View. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and neutral. Cumulative Assessment: Cumulative visibility of other wind farm development along this route is also limited and the Proposed Development would not contribute to significant additional or combined cumulative effects.
B Roads within 15 km	
B851	The B851 is a single carriageway route approximately 22 km in length and constitutes the main access route along Strathnairn, between the A9 at Scatraig in the north and the B862 north of Loch Mhor in the south. The whole route is located within the 15 km Study Area and parts are single track with passing places. The route of the B851 follows the eastern side of Strathnairn, close to the base of the eastern flanking hill slopes, which are well wooded. Travelling southbound, views from the route are generally across the strath, with frequent screening to both sides of the route by mature deciduous woodland, coniferous forestry and the built form of the various small hamlets and groups of residential properties. Northbound, from the junction with the B862, more open and inclusive visibility along Strathnairn is available with the enclosing ridgelines on both sides of the strath appreciable for longer durations. Despite this, there are still frequent screening influences that contain visibility along the strath including built form, coniferous forestry, deciduous woodlands, and shelterbelt planting. The closest part of the B851 to the Proposed Development lies north of Inverarnie, at approximately 4 km distance. A separate approximately 6.3 km section of the route crosses Drummossie Muir from the A9 at Daviot to Newlands of Culloden. This section of the route is lined to the south by mature deciduous trees and riparian planting following the course of the River Nairn. The B851 is not promoted as a tourist route and is not overlapped by any landscape designations, indicating a Medium value. The views from the route

Transport Route	Assessment
	would be experienced by road users who would experience the view transiently and who would be focused on the view ahead (Medium susceptibility). Sensitivity is therefore assessed as Medium. Assessment: Proposed Development The ZTV illustrates theoretical visibility of up to 11-14 turbines for sections of the B851 between Scatraig and Inverarnie in the north and from Aberarder House to Milton in the south. Smaller areas of visibility of up to 8-10 turbines are also illustrated between Brinmore and East Croachy and from Carn Ban to Aberarder House. Theoretical visibility of up to 1-3 turbines is also shown between Little Mill and Dell Farm, south of Inverarnie, between Forestry Houses and Farr and at Woodside. An assessment of the visual effects on views from the settlements at Inverarnie and Farr is provided in **Table 5.16**. The separate approximately 6.3 km section between Daviot and Newlands of Culloden is also illustrated as having theoretical visibility of up to 11-14 turbines. In reality, visibility of the proposed turbines for road users travelling southwest from Newlands of Culloden would be frequently screened by intervening woodland lining the route. The western most turbines (T3-T5) would be visible as hubs and blade tips for approximately 1.1 km section east of Mains of Nairnside, partially screened by the wooded ridgeline and hill summit of Meall Mor, over a viewing distance of approximately 10.2 km and at an angle to the direction of travel (Low magnitude). Views of the Proposed Development for southbound road users would be screened by intervening landform and coniferous forestry on the eastern side of Strathnairn. Actual visibility would be limited to an approximately 200m section of the route where the Proposed Development would be viewed fleetingly as five hubs and five tips at a minimum distance of approximately 4 km (Medium-Low magnitude). This location is also the closest point of the B851 to the Proposed Development. For northbound road users, the Proposed Development would be a visible feature of the skyline on the eastern side of Strathnairn where views along the strath are available from the following sections of the route: • approximately 800m section near Dunmaglass Mains as 10 hubs and two blade tips at a minimum distance of approximately 14.6 km (Low magnitude); • approximately 500m section at Aberarder House as 10 hubs and one blade tip at a minimum distance of approximately 12.4 km (Low magnitude); • approximately 1.9 km section southwest of East Croachy as five hubs and three blade tips at a minimum distance of approximately 9.6 km (Medium-Low magnitude); and • approximately 1.6 km section between north of East Croachy, passing Brinmore, as four hubs and three tips at a minimum distance of approximately 7.4 km (Low magnitude).

Transport Route	Assessment
	Viewpoint 9 is also located on the northern edge of East Croachy (Very Low to Zero magnitude) and is assessed in detail in **Technical Appendix 5.2**. The level of effect from this route would range from Moderate to Minor and Not Significant to No View. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative to neutral. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development</u> The existing wind farm at Dunmaglass and Farr are sequentially between north of Dunmaglass Mains and Brinmore as blade tips at an angle to the direction of travel (Very Low magnitude). The Aberarder wind farm, currently under construction, would also be a feature of sequential views at angle to the direction of northerly travel (Very Low magnitude); albeit there would be more inclusive visibility of six hubs and four blade tips for approximately 200m of the route as it passes Aberarder House (Low magnitude). The additional and combined effect of the Proposed Development would continue to range from Moderate to Minor and Not Significant, for the short sections of the route detailed above to No View. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible) indirect, cumulative, and negative. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development</u> There would be no other wind farm applications visible from this route. Consequently, there would be no further cumulative effects.
B9154	The B9154 is a single carriageway route approximately 10.7 km in length and forms a circuitous route from the A9 providing access to Moy, Meallmore Lodge, Auchnahillin Holiday Park, and Bridgend. The whole route is located within the 15 km Study Area. The route is reasonably contained by intervening coniferous forestry and mature woodland between the southern junction with the A9 and the majority of its route through Moy. The western extent of the road is also flanked by the Highland Main Railway Line through Moy before passing underneath the railway west of Moy Hall. Travelling north, less obstructed views are available across the basin of the Moy Burn and Loch Moy, towards Moy Wind Farm. West of Moymore the route is contained on both sides by coniferous forestry and mature woodland for much of its length to south of Mid Craggie. The Highland Main Railway Line flanks the road to the east for a short section southeast of Meallmore Lodge. The B9154 in this location forms part of Sustrans NCR 7, indicating a High value. This location is representative of the view experienced by road users, including experienced cyclists, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the road ahead (Medium susceptibility). Recreational cyclists who use this route would be of High susceptibility as their attention is likely to be on the surrounding landscape. Therefore, the overall sensitivity of this route is assessed as High. <u>Assessment: Proposed Development</u>

Transport Route	Assessment
	The ZTV illustrates theoretical visibility of up to 11-14 turbines for an approximately 7.1 km section of the B9154 between Auchnahillin and to the southeast of Moy. Further theoretical visibility is illustrated by the ZTV of; up to 8-10 turbine for approximately 1.1 km of the route between the southern junction with the A9 and to the west of Loch Moy; and of up to 4-7 turbines for approximately 1.2 km of the B9154 between the northern junction with the A9 and Craggie. In reality, actual visibility of the Proposed Development from the route would be largely restricted by the intervening built form of the railway and the settlement of Moy as well as widespread parts of the route which are lined by mature, dense roadside trees and coniferous forestry. Actual visibility of the proposed turbines and ground-based infrastructure would be limited to an approximately 5.5 km section of the road (reducing to approximately 1.1 km allowing for coniferous forestry) after it passes underneath the railway bridge northwest of Moy (High magnitude). Viewpoint 2 is located on this section of the B9154, approximately 2.4 km to the northeast of the Proposed Development at the closest point (please refer to **Technical Appendix 5.2** for the detailed visual assessment). Viewpoint 5 is also located on the B9154 and illustrates the screening effect of intervening coniferous forestry; as well as assessing the likely visual effects if forestry were to be felled prior to the end of the operational period of the Proposed Development (**see Technical Appendix 5.2**). The level of effect from this route would range from **Substantial and Significant**, for approximately 5.5 km of the route north of the railway bridge (reducing to approximately 1.1 km accounting for coniferous forestry), to No View. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative to neutral. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development</u> The existing wind farm at Moy is as hubs and blade tips approximately 2.3 km to the east at the closest point for approximately 1 km of the same section of the route as the Proposed Development, at an oblique angle to either direction of travel (Medium-Low magnitude). The additional and combined effect of the Proposed Development would continue to range from **Substantial to Substantial to Major and Significant**, to No View. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible) indirect, cumulative, and negative. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development</u> There would be no other wind farm applications visible from this route. Consequently, there would be no further cumulative effects.
B861	The B861 is a single carriageway route approximately 11.5 km in length between Inverarnie in Strathdearn in the south and the city of Inverness in the

Transport Route	Assessment
	north. The whole route is located within the 15 km Study Area and parts are single track with passing places across Drummossie Muir. Travelling south from Inverness, the route originates in the city centre before traveling south to the A8082 circular route at Oldtown of Leys. From here, the B861 leaves the southern edge of Inverness and crosses Drummossie Muir to Balnafoich on the western side of Strathdearn. From Balnafoich, the route crosses the base of Strathdearn and reaches Inverarnie on the eastern side of the strath. Outward visibility to the south, towards the Proposed Development is limited within the urban context of Inverness and intervening landform and coniferous forestry contain southerly visibility crossing Drummossie Muir. Upon reaching Mains of Gask, broad views over Strathdearn and the hill ranges on the opposing side of the strath are available from the route of the B861. In a northerly direction of travel, panoramic views are available from Drummossie Muir across Inverness to the Black Isle, Moray Firth, and Moray Uplands. The B861 is not promoted as a tourist route and is not overlapped by any landscape designations, indicating a Medium value. The views from the route would be experienced by road users who would experience the view transiently and who would be focused on the view ahead (Medium susceptibility). Sensitivity is therefore assessed as Medium. <u>Assessment: Proposed Development</u> The ZTV illustrates theoretical visibility for southbound road users of up to 11-14 turbines for an approximately 6.1 km section from Inverarnie, in Strathdearn, to west of Newton of Leys to the north of Drummossie Muir. A further approximately1.8 km section of the route in the centre of Inverness is also shown as having theoretical visibility of up to 11-14 turbines. In reality, views of the Proposed Development for southbound users of the B861 would be screened by intervening built form within the urban context of the city of Inverness. For southbound road users, the Proposed Development would be a visible feature of the skyline on the eastern side of Strathnairn from the following sections of the route: • approximately 3.2 km section crossing Drummossie Muir south of Newton of Leys (reducing to approximately 1.3 km allowing for screening by the coniferous forestry across Drummossie Muir), intermittently visible as seven hubs and seven blade tips at a minimum distance of approximately 7.4 km in a field view of view where sporadic vegetation and overhead lines with lattice towers are existing feature (Medium-Low magnitude). The level of effect would be Moderate to Minor and Not Significant. • approximately 900m section of the route near Mains of Gask, between northeast of Cloughmore and Hilton as 10 hubs and four blade tips on the facing hill slopes of Strathnairn; at a minimum distance of approximately 5.4 km (Medium magnitude). The level of effect would be **Moderate and Significant**; and

Transport Route	Assessment
	• approximately 600m section of the route crossing the base of Strathnairn south of Balnafoich and the bridge over the River Nairn as eight hubs and four blade tips at a minimum distance of approximately 4.2 km (High-Medium magnitude). The level of effect would be **Major to Moderate and Significant**. Viewpoint 4 is also located on the B861 near Balnafoich (High-Medium magnitude) and is assessed in detail in **Technical Appendix 5.2**. In total, the views from approximately 1.5 km of the route would be significantly affected (**Major to Moderate** and **Moderate**) near Mains of Gask (approximately 900m) and Balnafoich (approximately 600m). The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development</u> From the base of Strathnairn, between Balnafoich and Inverarnie, and crossing Drummossie Muir the existing wind farm at Dunmaglass and the Aberarder wind farm, currently under construction, are visible on the distant horizon to the south (Very Low magnitude). The additional and combined effect of the Proposed Development would continue to be significant from approximately 1.5 km of the route (**Major to Moderate** and **Moderate**) and near Mains of Gask (approximately 900m) and near Balnafoich (approximately 600m). The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible) indirect, cumulative, and negative. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development</u> There would be no other wind farm applications visible from this route. Consequently, there would be no further cumulative effects.
B862	The B862 is a single carriageway route approximately 54 km in length between Fort August and Inverness. Within the 15 km Study Area the route crosses the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA, north of Torness, along Loch Ceo Glais and Loch Duntelchaig and into the Great Glen at Dores where it follows the eastern side of Loch Ness and the River Ness into Inverness where the route ends. Beyond 15 km to the southwest, the B862 continues to follow the eastern side of the Great Glen to Fort Augustus. From Torness, in the south, the B862 crosses a remote interior plateau of rocky hills and moorland ridges set among upland lochs and areas of woodland. At this point, views are contained within the upland interior and westerly visibility to Loch Ness is limited by interveing moorland ridges to the east of the Great Glen. North of Achnabat, and west of Loch Duntelchaig, the B8622 crosses the moorland ridge to west and descends the eastern slopes of the Great Glen where panoramic views over Loch Ness are available at angle to the route. North of Dores, southbound road users' views are channeled along the Great Glen to Loch Ness. For northbound users, the route is frequently lined by mature woodland and coniferous forestry before reaching the outskirts of Inverness.

Transport Route	Assessment
	Within the 15 km Study Area, the route passes though undesignated landscapes and the designated landscape of the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA indicating a variable value of High to Medium along its route. The views would be experienced by road users whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the road ahead and tourists visiting the area whose attention is likely to be focused on surrounding landscape features. The susceptibility to change from the introduction of the Proposed Development is considered to be High (tourists) to Medium (other road users) and the overall sensitivity of this route is therefore assessed as High. Assessment: Proposed Development The ZTV illustrates theoretical visibility of up to 11-14 turbines for approximately 2.6 km section of the B862 between Achnabat and Kindrummond, west of Loch Duntelchaig. Viewpoint 15 is located on the B862 in this location and illustrates the expansive view and the large scale of the receiving landscape as well as the presence of other vertical man-made features flanking the route (please refer to **Technical Appendix 5.2** for the detailed visual assessment). The Proposed Development would occupy a narrow horizontal FoV, at an intervening distance of 13 km at the closest point and at angle to the direction of travel (Low magnitude). The level of effect from this route would range from Moderate and Not Significant, for approximately 2.6 km of the route between Achnabat and Kindrummond, to No View. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative. Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development In easterly views towards the Proposed Development the existing wind farm at Moy (Very Low magnitude) is visible. In views to the south from the route, the existing wind farm at Dunmaglass and Aberarder (both Low magnitude), which is currently under construction, are visible. The additional and combined effect of the Proposed Development would continue to range from Moderate and Not Significant to No View. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible) indirect, cumulative, and negative. Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development There would be no other wind farm applications visible from this route. Consequently, there would be no further cumulative effects.
B9006	The B9006 links the settled area east of Inverness on the gradually sloping southern side of the Moray Firth, with Fort George to the northeast via Ardersier. Within the 15 km Study Area, the route links the B865 in the Raigmore area of Inverness with Cantraywood, southwest of Croy. Outward visibility from the B9006 is frequently restricted by mature vegetation and settled areas flanking the road. Views north towards the Moray Firth are often also screened. To the south, towards the Proposed Development,

Transport Route	Assessment
	intermittent visibility is available across the settled agricultural landscape to and the farmed containing slopes of Inverness to south coniferous forestry is a prominent land use across Drummossie Muir at aster Daviot and Bogbain Woods Within the 15 km Study Area, the B9006 is not promoted as a tourist route and is not overlapped by any landscape designations, indicating a Medium value. The views from the route would be experienced by road users who would experience the view transiently and who would be focused on the view ahead (Medium susceptibility). Sensitivity is therefore assessed as Medium. <u>Assessment: Proposed Development</u> The ZTV illustrates theoretical visibility of up to 11-14 turbines for an approximately 8.6 km section of the B9006 between Westhill and Cantraywood. In reality, visibility of the Proposed Development as a new feature of the skyline to the south would be screened by intervening roadside vegetation and the coniferous forestry across Drummossie Muir at Daviot Wood (Very Low to Zero magnitude). The level of effect on the settlements would range from Negligible and Not Significant to No View. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and neutral. <u>Cumulative Assessment:</u> Cumulative visibility of other wind farm development along this route is also limited and the Proposed Development would not contribute to significant additional or combined cumulative effects.
B9177	The B9177 forms a short, circuitous link route between the B9006 at Inshes and the Milton of Leys junction on the A9. The route crosses underneath the A9 via an underpass to access Milton of Leys. The route runs in close proximity to the A9 dual carriageway south of Inverness and is flanked by mature vegetation, built and form for most of its length including at the junction with the A9. The B9177 is not promoted as a tourist route and is not overlapped by any landscape designations, indicating a Medium value. The views from the route would be experienced by road users who would experience the view transiently and who would be focused on the view ahead (Medium susceptibility). Sensitivity is therefore assessed as Medium. <u>Assessment: Proposed Development</u> Although illustrated by the ZTV as having theoretical visibility of up to 11-14 turbines along the southern extent of the route, south of the Drummossie Hotel, actual visibility of the Proposed Development from this route would be almost entirely screened by intervening built form and mature vegetation. The sequential route assessment of the southbound A9 between East of Balvonie of Inshes to the B851 junction north of Daviot identifies limited visibility of the Proposed Development and intervening screening along the B9177 is judged to be similar (Very Low to Zero magnitude).

Transport Route	Assessment
	The level of effect from this route would range from Negligible and Not Significant to No View. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and neutral. Cumulative Assessment: Cumulative visibility of other wind farm development along this route is also limited and the Proposed Development would not contribute to significant additional or combined cumulative effects.
Railway Lines within 15 km	
Main Railway Line - Inverness to Perth via the Cairngorms National Park	The Highland Main Line railway line covers approximately 190 km route between Perth and Inverness. Within the 15 km Study Area, the route links Carrbridge in the Cairngorms National Park, in the south, with Inverness in the north. Within the 15 km Study Area the route is partly within the Cairngorms National Park but is not a designated tourist route, indicating a Medium value. The views would be experienced by rail passengers, including tourists and visitors to the area, whose attention is likely to be focused on surrounding landscape features. The susceptibility to change from the introduction of the Proposed Development is considered to be Medium (rail passengers) and the overall sensitivity of this route is therefore assessed as Medium. Assessment: Proposed Development The ZTV illustrates that there would be no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from the section of the route within the Cairngorms National Park (Zero magnitude). From Slochd summit, on the northern boundary of the National Park adjoining the A9, there is relatively consistent theoretical visibility of up to 11-14 turbines for the railway line until west of Daviot, to the north of the Proposed Development. Further sections of theoretical visibility of up to 11-14 turbines are illustrated through Culloden Forest, north of Newlands of Culloden, and as the railway line approaches Inverness through the Longman area of the city. In reality, visibility of the proposed turbines would be limited to perpendicular sections of the railway, where lateral views from passenger windows towards the Proposed Development are available. Additionally, actual visibility of the Proposed Development would be limited to rail passengers on the western side of the train and would frequently be screened by intervening built form, coniferous forestry, and mature vegetation alongside the railway and from sections of the track in cutting. The potential for significant visual effects for rail users is judged to be limited to the following sections of the route: • Approximately 1.2 km section between Tomatin and Invereen, intermittently visible as two hubs and six blade tips at a minimum distance of approximately 3.5 km (Medium-Low magnitude). The level of effect would be Moderate to Minor and not Significant. • Approximately 0.7 km elevated section west of Dalmagarry and north of Tom na h-Ulaidh as five hubs and 3 tips at a minimum distance of

Transport Route	Assessment
	approximately 2.4 km (Medium-Low magnitude). The level of effect would be Moderate to Minor and not Significant. • Approximately 800m section northeast of Moy intermittently visible as 14 hubs and six blade tips at a minimum distance of approximately 3.5 km with visibility of the main access track from Lynemore as well as the access track for T1 and T10. The remaining infrastructure components of the Proposed Development would not be visible from this location. (High magnitude). The level of effect would be **Major and Significant.** Viewpoint 2 is located nearby on the B9154 / Sustrans National Cycle Route 7 northeast of Moy at the railway bridge over the road and is assessed in detail in **Technical Appendix 5.2**. The remaining sections of the route are judged to experience very minor parts of the Proposed Development (Very Low magnitude) or no visibility (Zero magnitude). In total, the views from approximately 800m of the route would be significantly affected (**Major**) to the northeast of Moy. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development</u> The existing wind farm at Moy would be intermittently visible to the east for an approximately 2.4 km section of the route north of Moy (Low magnitude). The existing Farr, Glen Kyllachy and Tom nan Clach wind farms, as well as the consented Tom nan Clach Extension, are for short sections of the route (Very Low magnitude). The additional and combined effect of the Proposed Development would continue to be significant from approximately 800m of the route (**Major**) northeast of Moy. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible) indirect, cumulative, and negative. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development</u> There would be no other wind farm applications visible from this route. Consequently, there would be no further cumulative effects.

Visual Effects on Views from Recreational Routes

5.13.27 The visual assessment has considered the potential visual effects likely to be experienced by people (walkers / cyclists / horse riders / and others) on recreational routes overlapped by the blade tip ZTV. The recreational routes include Core Paths, heritage paths and Scottish hill tracks which have been assessed within 15 km of the Proposed Development, and Scotland's Great Trails, Sustrans Cycle Routes which have been assessed within 45 km of the Proposed Development. These routes are illustrated in **Figure 5.10-11**.

5.13.28 Each of these routes were walked and / or visited and walked in sections according to the ZTV coverage and the assessment has been assisted on-site with the use of sequential wirelines and True View Visuals 3D software.

5.13.29 All of the routes have been assessed as of *High* sensitivity on account of their High-Medium value as recreational routes, some routed through designated landscapes and the High susceptibility of the people using these routes, mostly walkers and cyclists, whose attention would be focused on the landscape around them. Some exceptions include sections of routes that partly follow existing roads.

5.13.30 In summary, there would significant visual effects on the views from recreational routes in broadly four areas. These include areas close to the site and south of the A9 viewing from part of General Wade's Military Road (heritage path HP1); part of the Sustrans National Cycle Route 7 and heritage path HP2 between Moy and Tomatin; and routes in the Tomatin and Slochd Summit area near the A9. A number of these routes are subject to some forestry screening and the assessment has assumed a 'worst case' (that forestry is recently felled), although in practice these areas would be subject to rotational harvesting and re-growth.

5.13.31 Significant visual effects would also affect elevated views from a further area at Leachkin, in southwestern Inverness. Views from this area would intermittently affect small parts of the Great Glen Way / Loch Ness 360 Trail and related Core Paths, subject to intervening vegetation and built form.

5.13.32 These routes are further summarised as follows:

- National Recreational Routes:
  - The Great Glen Way / Loch Ness 360 Trail - significant visual effects for approximately approximately1 km of the combined routes in the elevated Leachkin part of south western Inverness.
- Sustrans National Cycle Network:
  - Sustrans National Cycle Route 7 - significant visual effects for approximately 8 km of the route (reducing to approximately 2.3 km due to the screening effects of forestry in the Tomatin, Dalmagarry and Moy areas.
- Core Paths:
  - Core Path IN27.02 at Tomatin – significant visual effects would be experienced for approximately 1.2 km of the route through the forest. This effect is completely dependent on the assumption that all forestry has been felled.
  - Core Paths IN19.08, IN.19.09 and IN.19.44 in the Leachkin and Kinmylies area of Inverness – significant visual effects in proximity to the Great Glen Way to the north and west of Kings Golf Club.
- Heritage paths and Scottish Hill Tracks:
  - Heritage path HP1: General Wade's Military Road, Moy to Inverness – significant visual effects for approximately 6.8 km of the route (reducing to approximately 4.5 km accounting for coniferous forestry) between Lynemore and Auchbain.

- Heritage path HP2: Old Road to Forres / Scottish Hill Track 229 - significant visual effects for approximately 200m of the combined routes at Milton of Moy.
- Heritage path HP3: Slochd Military Road / Scottish Hill Track 230 - significant visual effects for approximately 1.3 km of the combined routes north of Creag an Tuim Bhig and south Raigbeag.

5.13.33 There would be no significant visual effects on the views from any other recreational routes within the Study Area. The assessment of recreational routes is set out in **Table 5.18**, starting with local routes within 15 km first.

Table 5.18: Visual Effects on Views from Recreational Routes

Recreational Route	Assessment
Local Recreational Routes within 15 km	
Core Path IN27.01 - National Cycle Route 7 by A9	Overlapped with Sustrans National Cycle Route 7 – see assessment further below in this table. In summary, the level of effect for Core Path IN27.01 would be Not Significant.
Core Path IN27.02 – Distillery Wood (partially felled)	Core Path IN27.02 forms a short loop around Distillery Wood, west of Tomatin, where recent felling of coniferous forestry appears to have taken place. The route is accessed from the end of Old Mill Road in Tomatin. <u>Assessment: Proposed Development</u> The ZTV illustrates theoretical visibility of up to 11-14 turbines for the majority of the route's circuit towards Tomatin Distillery and back to Tomatin. Actual visibility of the Proposed Development would be experienced by users of the Core Path for approximately1.2 km of the northern section of the route, where the proposed turbines would be visible as nine hubs and four blade tips at a minimum distance of approximately4.3 km (Medium magnitude). There would be a degree of screening by intervening forestry / woodland (identified as 'green network' in the IMFLDP2), which would mature over time to reduce the visible parts of the Proposed Development. The access tracks at T12 and T14 would also be visible in this location. Views of the Proposed Development from the remainder of the route would be intermittently screened by intervening coniferous forestry, mature vegetation, and landform (Low-Very Low magnitude). The level of effect would range from **Major and Significant**, for approximately 1.2 km of the route, to No View. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development</u> The existing Farr, Glen Kyllachy and Moy wind farms are visible in north westerly views from the route, largely as blade tips (all Low-Very Low magnitude). Tom nan Clach wind farm and the consented Tom nan Clach

Recreational Route	Assessment
	Extension are visible as hubs and blade tips on the northeastern horizon, partially screened by intervening coniferous forestry (Low magnitude). The additional and combined effect of the Proposed Development would continue to be **Major and Significant** for approximately1.2 km of the route. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible) indirect, cumulative, and negative. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development</u> There would be no other wind farm applications visible from this route. Consequently, there would be no further cumulative effects.
Core Paths on elevated south western edge of Inverness at Leachkin and Kinmylies (IN.19.08, IN.19.09 and IN.19.44)	Core Path IN.19.08 and IN.19.09 cross the Kinmylies part of Inverness, travelling south through elevated open space bordering residential areas to link up with the Great Glen Way (IN19.17) in the Leachkin part of the city. From the Great Glen Way, IN19.44 at Great Glen House, follows the western edge of Kings Golf Club to Kilvean Cemetery in the elevated southwestern part of Inverness. Views from these routes would be similar to those assessed in Viewpoint 16 in **Technical Appendix 5.2** and illustrated in **Figure 5.34a-f**. In summary, the effect would be **Moderate and Significant**.
Core Paths around Culloden (IN08.12, IN08.13, IN08.25, IN08.28, IN09.01, and IN09.02)	This group of core paths form a number of short walking routes around Culloden Battlefield and the woodland and forestry that surrounds it. For the most part, these paths are routed through mature woodland or coniferous forestry more than approximately11.2 km north of the Proposed Development. Whether through Culloden Wood (IN08.12 and IN08.13), Culloden Forest (IN08.28 and IN09.01) or the forestry southeast of Westhill (IN08.25), there would largely be No View of the Proposed Development from these forest trails. Views from Culloden Battlefield would be similar to those assessed in Viewpoint 12 in **Technical Appendix 5.2** and illustrated in **Figure 5.30a-f**, albeit Viewpoint 12 represents the view from an elevated location on the roof of the Culloden Visitor Centre and views from the battlefield would be experienced from ground level. In summary, the effect would be Not Significant.
Core Paths around the A96 (IN08.05, IN08.10, IN08.16, IN08.21, and IN08.23)	This group of core paths flank the route of the A96 between the Longman area of eastern Inverness and Allanfearn, south of the A96. Views from these core path routes would be similar to those assessed in **Table 5.16** for the settlements of Westhill, Smithton, Culloden, and Newlands of Culloden, as well as in **Table 5.17** for the A96 transport route. In summary, the effect would be Not Significant.
Heritage path HP1 - General Wade's Military	Within the 15 km Study Area, HP1 follows the southern and western margins of the A9 along the northern hill slopes of Carn na Loinne, Carn na h-Easgainn and Beinn Cailleach, in close proximity to the Proposed Development. The route then continues north to Auchbain and crosses the B851 before entering

Recreational Route	Assessment
Road, Moy to Inverness	the extensive coniferous forestry between Scatraig and Milton of Leys, on the southern edge of Inverness. <u>Assessment: Proposed Development</u> The ZTV illustrates theoretical visibility of up to 11-14 for the majority of the route's length (approximately 12.7 km), barring a short section in the vicinity of Scatraig on the B851. In reality, actual visibility of the Proposed Development would be screened by intervening coniferous forestry for the initial approximately 3.5 km section between Milton of Leys and north of Faillie. None of these forest areas are proposed to be felled as indicated on the Scottish Forestry Map Viewer. Between Faillie and north of Scatraig, regular intervening screening by built form, riparian woodland along the course of the River Nairn, roadside trees and shelterbelts would frequently reduce visibility of the proposed turbines. There would be no visibility of the Proposed Development as the route crosses the B851 due to intervening landform. From Scatraig, the route continues south to Auchbain and follows the western margins of the A9 south to cross the northern hill slopes of Carn na Loinne, Carn na h-Easgainn and Beinn Cailleach and on to Lynemore, northeast of the Proposed Development. Viewpoint 1 (**Figure 5.19a-e**) is located on this section of the route and assessed in **Technical Appendix 5.2**. For much of this approximately 6.8 km section of the route, the proposed turbines would be a prominent new feature of the ridgeline to the south and southwest, visible alongside the substation/ BESS and access tracks (High magnitude). Existing coniferous forestry currently flanks approximately 2.3 km of this section of the route and would provide intermittent screening, however, much of this is scheduled to be felled during the operational period of the Proposed Development as noted by the Meall Mòr, Moy, and Farr Land Management Plan (produced by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS)[13] and Scottish Forestry Map Viewer[14]. A small section of intervening screen west of the A9 and shown in Viewpoint 1 would be retained. The route would also be crossed by the proposed access track west of Lynemore Cottage. Areas of future restocking of coniferous forestry are programmed for short sections of the route, south of Auchbain and west of Lynemore Cottage, before 2028, which would provide an additional screening influence on views from the route over the operational period of the Proposed Development. Upon entering Lynemore, the Proposed Development would be screened by intervening mature woodland for the initial section of the route to Lynemore (**Figure 5.3.5**). The level of effect would range from **Substantial and Significant**, for approximately 6.8 km of the route (reducing to approximately 4.5 km

[13] Meall Mòr, Moy, and Farr Land Management Plan

[14] https://scottishforestry.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0d6125cfe892439ab0e5d0b74d9acc18

Recreational Route	Assessment
	accounting for coniferous forestry), to No View. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative. Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development The existing wind farm at Moy is visible to the east for southbound walkers, visible as hubs and blade tips for the section of the route between west of Meall Mor and Lynemore Cottage (Low magnitude). Tom nan Clach wind farm and the consented Tom nan Clach Extension are also distant features of the easterly skyline from this section of the route, visible as hubs and blade tips (Very Low magnitude). The existing Dunmaglass and Aberarder (currently under construction) wind farm are minor, distant feature of the horizon in the south westerly views along Strathnairn from the section of the route between Faillie and Auchbain (Very Low magnitude). The additional and combined effect of the Proposed Development would continue to be significant for approximately 6.8 km of the route (reducing to approximately 4.5 km accounting for coniferous forestry). The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible) indirect, cumulative, and negative. Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development There would be no other wind farm applications visible from this route. Consequently, there would be no further cumulative effects.
Heritage path HP2 – Old Road to Forres / Scottish Hill Track 229	Within the 15 km Study Area, Scottish Hill Track 229 overlaps with the Old Road to Forres heritage path. Therefore, these routes have been assessed as a single route. The combined route follows the course of the River Findhorn through the Drynachan Valley (also known as Streens) from the bridge over the Funtack Burn, southeast of Moy, to Ruthven, Daless, Drynachan Lodge and onto Dulsie (outside the 15 km Study Area). Assessment: Proposed Development The ZTV illustrates theoretical visibility of between 11-14 and 1-3 turbines for the initial western section of the combined routes between Milton of Moy and Ruthven and a very short section east of Ruthven. In reality, actual visibility of the Proposed Development would be limited to the initial approximately 0.2 km section of the route, crossing the bridge over the Funtack Burn, where the proposed turbines would be visible on the horizon of channeled westerly views along the basin of the Funtack Burn; at a minimum distance of approximately 3.7 km. Ground based infrastructure, including access tracks at T12 and T14 would also be visible in this location (High-Medium magnitude). For the remainder of the illustrated areas of theoretical visibility along the combined routes, intervening localised landform, mature woodland and roadside trees as well as coniferous forestry would screen visibility towards the Proposed Development (Zero magnitude). The level of effect would range from **Substantial to Major and Significant**, for approximately 0.2 km of the initial western extents of the combined routes,

Recreational Route	Assessment
	to No View. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative. Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development The existing wind farms at Moy, Tom nan Clach as well as the consented Tom nan Clach Extension are partially visible for northeastern parts of the combined routes, largely as blade tips on the enclosing hill slopes of Streens (Low-Very Low magnitude). The additional and combined effect of the Proposed Development would continue to be significant for approximately 0.2 km of the combined routes. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible) indirect, cumulative, and negative. Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development There would be no other wind farm applications visible from this route. Consequently, there would be no further cumulative effects.
Heritage path HP3 – Slochd Military Road / Scottish Hill Track 230	Within the 15 km Study Area, Scottish Hill Track 230 overlaps with the Slochd Military Road heritage path. Therefore, these routes have been assessed as a single route. The combined routes follow the western side of the Allt Braenrerich along General Wade's Military Road between the A9 at Slochd summit in the south and Raigbeg, to the east of Tomatin, in the north. Assessment: Proposed Development The ZTV illustrates theoretical visibility of up to 11-14 turbines for the majority of the combined routes' length. In reality, actual visibility of the Proposed Development would be screened by intervening landform and mature roadside vegetation from the start of the route near Slochd summit and for the southern-most section of the combined routes (Very Low to Zero magnitude), as detailed in the sequential assessment of the A9 in this location in **Table 5.17**: *Northbound: Slochd Summit to east of Findhorn Bridge* (**Figure 5.18a-b**). As the combined routes gain elevation travelling north, the intervening landform of Creag an Tuim Bhig would restrict visibility of the proposed turbines until the northern section to the north of the summit where the Proposed Development, including ground based infrastructure and access tracks, would be visible in open elevated views to the northwest as hubs and blade tips for approximately1.3 km and at a minimum distance of approximately6.6 km (Medium magnitude). The Proposed Development would appear reasonably well balanced forming a distinct cluster evenly spaced between other wind farm developments. As the combined routes descend towards Raigbeg, intervening screening by mature vegetation at Soilshan Wood and to the west of the A9 as well as built form including the settlement at Tomatin, the A9 carriageway and main Highland railway line would restrict views towards the Proposed Development (Very Low to Zero magnitude).

Recreational Route	Assessment
	The level of effect would range from **Major and Significant**, for approximately 1.3 km of the combined routes, to No View. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development</u> The existing wind farms at Moy, Tom nan Clach, Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Dunmaglass and the Aberarder wind farm (currently under construction) as well as the consented Tom nan Clach Extension are visible features of the horizon to the north and west, particularly from the most elevated section of the combined routes (Medium-Low to Low magnitude). The additional and combined effect of the Proposed Development would continue to be significant for approximately1.3 km of the combined routes. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible) indirect, cumulative, and negative. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development</u> There would be no other wind farm applications visible from this route. Consequently, there would be no further cumulative effects.
National Recreational Routes within 45 km	
Sustrans National Cycle Route 7 / Core Path IN27.01	Sustrans National Cycle Route 7 (NCR 7) is a cross-Border long-distance cycling route made up by numerous different sections between Sunderland and Inverness. Within the 45 km Study Area, the route broadly follows the A9 between Dalwhinnie in the south and Moy, to the northeast of the Proposed Development. From Moy, the route follows the B9154 to Craggie and then joins the minor road through Castleton to Dalroy where it meets NCR 1. <u>Assessment: Proposed Development</u> The ZTV illustrates that there would be no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from the southern section of the route between Dalwhinnie and Boat of Garten nor the initial southern part of the route between Carrbridge and Slochd summit, within the Cairngorms National Park (Zero magnitude). From Slochd summit, on the northern boundary of the Cairngorms National Park adjoining the A9, the ZTV illustrates relatively consistent theoretical visibility of up to 11-14 turbines for the route until Craggiemore, north of the B9154 and the Proposed Development. No theoretical visibility is demonstrated between Craggiemore and Dalroy. Consequently, this visual assessment will consider the section of NCR 7 between Slochd summit in the south and Craggiemore in the north. The route of NCR 7 between Slochd summit and Craggiemore has been broken down into the following sections for assessment purposes: • Slochd summit to southern Tomatin junction with the A9 (approximately 1.6 km); • Southern Tomatin junction to layby north of Tomatin (approximately 6.7 km);

Recreational Route	Assessment
	• Layby north of Tomatin to B9154 junction with A9 (Moy) (approximately 2.3 km); • B9154 junction with A9 to Craggie (approximately 9.3 km); and • Craggie to Craggiemore (approximately 2.9 km). Slochd summit to southern Tomatin junction with the A9 (approximately 1.6 km, Core Path IN27.01) NCR 7 borders the A9 for this section of the route, which is traffic free and also part of Core Path IN27.01. This part of the A9 is assessed in **Table 5.17**: *Northbound: Slochd Summit to east of Findhorn Bridge* (Very Low to Zero magnitude). Views from this section of NCR 7 are also illustrated in A9 Sequential Viewpoints 1-4 (**Figures 5.18a-b**). The level of effect for this section of NCR 7 would range from Minor and Not Significant to No View. Southern Tomatin junction to layby north of Tomatin (approximately6.7 km) As the route turns onto the minor road to Tomatin from the A9, the Proposed Development would be visible on the horizon for northbound recreational users for approximately 1.7 km (reducing to approximately 0.3 km accounting for screening by coniferous forestry) on the approach to the Findhorn Bridge (Medium-Low magnitude). Between Findhorn Bridge and the southern edge of Tomatin, visibility of the proposed turbines would be limited to blade tips at an angle to either direction of travel on the route (Very Low magnitude). The settlement at Tomatin is assessed in **Table 5.16** and concludes that visibility of the Proposed Development would be limited to the northern area of the town, North of the viaduct and not significant. Viewpoint 6 is located on NCR 7 in this part of Tomatin, approximately 5.1 km to the southeast of the Proposed Development at the closest point (please refer to **Technical Appendix 5.2** for the detailed visual assessment and **Figures 5.24a-f**). The **Major and Significant** effect (Medium magnitude) identified at this point of NCR 7 would be experienced by northbound cyclists for approximately 0.3 km of the route before intervening mature woodland, roadside trees and coniferous forestry screened visibility of the proposed turbines. The level of effect for this section of NCR 7 would range from **Major to Major to Moderate and Significant**, for approximately 2 km of the route (reducing to approximately 0.6 km accounting for coniferous forestry), to No View. Layby north of Tomatin to B9154 junction with A9 (Moy) (approximately 2.3 km) NCR 7 borders the A9 for this section of the route, which is predominantly traffic free. This part of the A9 is assessed in **Table 5.17**: *Northbound: north of Tomatin Junction to north of B9154 Junction for Moy* (High-Medium to Zero magnitude). Views from this section of NCR 7 are also illustrated in A9 Sequential Viewpoints 10-17 (**Figures 5.18e-i**).

Recreational Route	Assessment
	The level of effect for this section of NCR 7 would range from **Substantial to Major and Significant** for an approximately 0.6 km section between Dalmagarry and the B9154 junction for Moy to No View. B9154 junction with A9 to Craggie (approximately 9.3 km) NCR 7 follows the B9154 for this section of the route, which is predominantly on the public road. The B9154 is assessed in **Table 5.17** (High to Zero magnitude). Viewpoint 2 is located on this section of NCR 7, approximately 2.4 km to the northeast of the Proposed Development at the closest point (please refer to **Technical Appendix 5.2** for the detailed visual assessment and **Figures 5.20a-j**). Viewpoint 5 is also located on this section of NCR 7 and illustrates the screening effect of intervening coniferous forestry; as well as assessing the likely visual effects if forestry were to be felled prior to the end of the operational period of the Proposed Development (see **Technical Appendix 5.2** and **Figures 5.23a-f**). The level of effect for this section of NCR 7 would range from **Substantial to Substantial to Major and Significant**, for approximately 5.5 km of the route north of the railway bridge (reducing to approximately 1.1 km accounting for coniferous forestry), to No View. Craggie to Craggiemore (approximately 2.9 km). Southbound recreational users on this section of the route would experience limited visibility towards the Proposed Development due to the screening effect of mature deciduous trees, roadside scrub vegetation, hedgerows and coniferous forestry lining the route (Very Low magnitude). The level of effect for this section of NCR 7 would range from Minor and Not Significant to No View. The potential for significant visual effects for recreational users of NCR 7 is judged to be limited to the following sections of the route: • Approximately 1.7 km section between southern junction for Tomatin from the A9 at a minimum distance of approximately 7 km, reducing to approximately 0.3 km accounting for coniferous forestry. The level of effect would be **Major to Moderate and Significant**; • Approximately 300m section north of the viaduct in Tomatin at a minimum distance of approximately 4.9 km. The level of effect would be **Major and Significant**; • Approximately 600m section between Dalmagarry and the B9154 junction for Moy at a minimum distance of approximately 2.6 km. The level of effect would be **Substantial to Major and Significant**; and • Approximately 5.5 km section north of the rail bridge northwest of Moy at a minimum distance of approximately 2.4 km, reducing to approximately 1.1 km accounting for coniferous forestry. The level of effect would be **Substantial and Significant.**

Recreational Route	Assessment
	In total, the views from approximately 8.1 km of the route (reducing to approximately 2.3 km accounting for coniferous forestry) would be significantly affected (**Substantial, Substantial to Major, Major and Major to Moderate**) south of Tomatin, in the northern part of Tomatin, between Dalmagarry and the B9154 junction for Moy and north of Moy. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development</u> The existing wind farm at Moy is as hubs and blade tips approximately 2.3 km to the east at the closest point for approximately 1 km of the route, at an oblique angle to either direction of travel (Medium-Low magnitude). The existing Farr and Glen Kyllachy wind farms, as well as the consented Tom nan Clach Extension, are for short sections of the route, mainly south of Tomatin. (Low magnitude). The additional and combined effect of the Proposed Development would continue to be significant for approximately 8.1 km of the route (reducing to approximately 2.3 km accounting for coniferous forestry) (**Substantial, Substantial to Major, Major and Major to Moderate**) south of Tomatin, in the northern part of Tomatin, between Dalmagarry and the B9154 junction for Moy and north of Moy. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible) indirect, cumulative, and negative. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development</u> There would be no other wind farm applications visible from this route. Consequently, there would be no further cumulative effects.
Sustrans National Cycle Route 1	Sustrans National Cycle Route (NCR) 1 is a cross-Border long-distance cycling route made up by numerous different sections between Dover in the south of England and Tain in the Scottish Highlands. Within the 45 km Study Area, the follows the southern coastline of the Moray Firth to Inverness where it crosses the Kessock Bridge. Having crossed onto the Black Isle NCR 1 splits into two spurs at Arpafeelie; one following the Black Isle northeast to Cromarty, Nigg and Balinton; the other continuing north to Dingwall and then following the northern coastline of the Cromarty Firth and tracing the A9 to Alness. <u>Assessment: Proposed Development</u> The ZTV illustrates limited theoretical visibility of up to 1-3 turbines for short, largely wooded sections west of Forres, between Kinloss and Newlands of Culloden in the northeastern Study Area. North of the Proposed Development, east of Culloden Moor, a short section of theoretical visibility of up to 11-14 turbines is illustrated between Leanach and Balloch where NCR 1 passes through areas of coniferous forestry and settlement. From Balloch, the route largely passes through the settled areas east of Inverness and Inverness itself before turning north to cross onto the Black Isle via the Kessock Bridge. Viewpoint 17 (**Figure 5.35a-e**) is located on the Kessock Bridge, approximately 15.4 km north of the proposed turbines. A detailed assessment

Recreational Route	Assessment
	of visual effects at this location is provided in **Technical Appendix 5.2** and concludes the residual visual effect would be Not Significant for recreational users including those on NCR 1. Beyond the Kessock Bridge the route continues north across the Black Isle and to Dingwall and the Cromarty Firth where further influences of intervening screening and distance are present including extensive areas of coniferous forestry (Very Low to Zero magnitude). The level of effect from this route would range from Minor and Not Significant to No View. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative to neutral. <u>Cumulative Assessment:</u> Cumulative visibility of other wind farm development along this route is also limited and the Proposed Development would not contribute to significant additional or combined cumulative effects.
Great Glen Way/ Loch Ness 360 Trail	Views from the Great Glen Way and the Loch Ness 360 are assess at Viewpoint 16 and Viewpoint 18 in Technical Appendix 5.2 and illustrated in **Figure 5.34a-f** and **5.36a-e**. In summary, the effect would be **Moderate and Significant** for a short section (approximately 1.1 km) at Leachkin in Inverness (Viewpoint 16) where the routes are lined by maturing vegetation. North of Loch Ness in the Great Glen, visibility of the Proposed Development would frequently be filtered and screened by intervening mixed species vegetation. North of Blackfold (Viewpoint 18), where the Proposed Development is visible, the effect would be Moderate and Not Significant, due to the intervening distance and narrow FoV. The effect for the remainder of both routes would be Not Significant, due mainly to the intervening distance and landform screening.

Visual Effects on Views from Recreational and Tourist Destinations

5.13.34 The visual assessment has considered the potential visual effects likely to be experienced by people at recreational / visitor or tourist destinations or attractions, which are overlapped by the ZTV, within the LVIA Study Area. Each of these locations were visited and / or assessed with the use of ZTVs and wirelines. All of the destinations have been assessed as of *High* sensitivity on account of their High - Medium value as recreational and tourist destinations, some located within designated landscapes and the High susceptibility of the people visiting these destinations, whose attention would be focused on the landscape around them. Golfers for example would be assessed as of medium sensitivity as the attention or interest is likely to be primarily focused on the sporting activity of golf.

5.13.35 In summary, there would be no significant effects on views from recreational and tourist destinations within 15 km. There would also be no significant effects on views from hill summits between 15-45 km distance from the Proposed Development, as assessed below in **Table 5.19**.

Table 5.19: Visual Effects on Views from Recreational and Tourist Destinations

Recreational and Tourist Destination	Assessment
Loch Duntelchaig	Views from Loch Duntelchaig would be similar to those assessed in Viewpoint 15 in **Technical Appendix 5.2** and illustrated in **Figure 5.33**. In summary, the effect would be Not Significant.
Auchnahillin Holiday Park	Auchnahillin Holiday Park is located northeast of the B9154 between Moy and Craggie on the route of Sustrans NCR 7. As assessed for the route NCR 7 (**Table 5.18**), extensive areas of mature woodland and coniferous forestry occupy the intervening landscape to the south and west of the B9154 in this location, restricting southerly visibility towards the Proposed Development. Additionally, the Holiday Park incorporates areas of mature deciduous woodland both internally and on its boundaries, including the southwestern boundary with the B9154, reinforcing the screening for visual receptors in this location (Very Low to Zero magnitude). Consequently, the level of effect would range from Minor and Not Significant to No View. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and neutral.
Culloden Battlefield	Views from Culloden Battlefield are assessed in Viewpoint 12 in **Technical Appendix 5.2** and illustrated in **Figure 5.30**. In summary, the effect would be Not Significant.
Loch Ruthven Nature Reserve	Loch Ruthven Nature Reserve lies approximately10 km southwest of the Proposed Development and is set within the remote interior plateau of rocky hills, moorland ridges, upland lochs and areas of woodland that define the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA. The nature reserve conserves habitat for breeding birds and is characterised by the birch woodlands and heather moorland that border the open water of Loch Ruthven. <u>Assessment: Proposed Development</u> The ZTV illustrates theoretical visibility of up to 11-14 turbines for the southern, western, and eastern shorelines bordering Loch Ruthven as well as across the wooded summit of Torr Mor, to the north. In reality, actual visibility of the Proposed Development would be largely restricted from the southern and northern margins of the loch due to the presence of extensive, mature birch woodland (Very Low magnitude). Visitors to Loch Ruthven utilise a car park to the east, on the minor road between Elrig and Tullich, from where the Proposed Development would be visible to the northeast in channeled views along Strathnairn towards Brin Rock, as seven hubs and five blade tips at a minimum distance of approximately10.1 km (Low magnitude). This visibility of the proposed turbines would be experienced in a field of view where wind energy development is an existing feature (Farr wind farm). From the western end of Loch Ruthven, partial visibility of the hubs of two turbines (T13-T14) and the blade tips of two turbines (T7-T8) are theoretically visible at a minimum distance of approximately13.6 km. However, intervening

Recreational and Tourist Destination	Assessment
	screening by mature woodland bordering the loch and across the sum it if Torr Mor would reduce this in reality (Low-Very Low magnitude). The level of effect would range from Moderate and Not Significant at the car park and path to the east of the reserve, due also to the wide 360 degree views from this location. Deeper within the Nature Reserve and along the loch shores the visibility would reduce to No View. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect and negative. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development</u> The existing wind farm at Farr is visible in north easterly views along Strathnairn, towards the Proposed Development, as hubs and blade tips from the car park to the east as well as the eastern and western shores of Loch Ruthven (Low-Very Low magnitude). The additional and combined effect of the Proposed Development would continue to be Moderate and Not Significant at the car park to the east of the reserve. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect, cumulative, and negative. <u>Cumulative Assessment: Existing + Consented + Applications + Proposed Development</u> There would be no other wind farm applications visible from this route. Consequently, there would be no further cumulative effects.
Culloden Moor Caravan and Motorhome Club	Views from Culloden Moor Caravan and Motorhome Club are assessed in **Table 5.16** for the adjoining settlement at Newlands of Culloden. In summary, the effect would be Not Significant.
Hills and Mountains - Munros	
Cairngorm Mountain Munros (Beinn Bhrotain, Mullach Clach a' Bhlàir, Ben Macdui, Sgòr Gaoith, Braeriach, Cairn Gorm and Bynack More)	Munro summits within the Cairngorm Mountains overlapped by the ZTV are located between approximately 36 km (Sgòr Gaoith) to approximately 44 km (Beinn Bhrotain) to the southeast of the Proposed Development within the Cairngorms National Park, Cairngorms NSA, and Cairngorms WLA. Views are distant across the elevated, broad plateaux with particular scenic qualities toward the south, southeast and east toward the remote interior of the Cairngorms. The Proposed Development would be back clothed by surrounding landform when viewed from these summits with limited visibility due to the intervening distance. Considering the wider 360° panoramas afforded from the summits, the magnitude is assessed as Very Low, and the level of effect is Minor and Not significant. <u>Cumulative Assessment:</u> The Proposed Development would not contribute to significant additional or combined cumulative effects.
Monadhliath Mountain Munros (Geal Chàrn, Carn Dearg, A'	Munro summits within the Monadhliath Mountains overlapped by the ZTV are located between approximately 27 km (Càrn Sgulain) to approximately 44 km (Meall Chuaich) to the south and southwest of the Proposed Development within the northwestern edge of the Cairngorms National Park. Views are open

Recreational and Tourist Destination	Assessment
Chailleach, Meall Chuaich and Càrn Sgulain)	across the moorland with few distinctive ridges. The southwest – northeast orientation of the mountains is evident where views of Strathdearn, Strathnairn and the Great Glen interrupt the broad moorland. The Proposed Development would be skylined from these summits (including Càrn Sgulain), however considering the distance and wider 360° panoramas afforded from the summits, the magnitude is assessed as Very Low, and the level of effect is Minor and Not significant. Cumulative Assessment: The Proposed Development would not contribute to significant additional or combined cumulative effects.
Sgurr na Ruaidhe	Sgurr na Ruiadhe is located approximately 45 km to the west of the Proposed Development within the Glen Strathfarrar Munros. Due to the intervening distance, the Proposed Development would be barely perceptible. The magnitude would be Very Low, and the level of effect would be Minor and Not significant. Cumulative Assessment: The Proposed Development would not contribute to significant additional or combined cumulative effects.
Ben Wyvis	The summit of Ben Wyvis is located approximately 44 km to the northwest. Due to the intervening distance, the Proposed Development would be barely perceptible. The magnitude would be Very Low, and the level of effect would be Minor and Not significant. Cumulative Assessment: The Proposed Development would not contribute to significant additional or combined cumulative effects.
Hills and Mountains - Corbetts	
Monadhliath Mountain Corbetts (Càrn na Saobhaidehe, Càrn an Fhreiceadain, Geal-charn Mòr, and Càrn a' Chuillinn)	Corbett summits within the Monadhliath Mountains overlapped by the ZTV are located between approximately 21 km (Geal-charn Mòr) to approximately 43 km (Càrn a' Chuillinn) to the south and southwest of the Proposed Development. Views are open across the rolling upland moorland with occasional distant views to the west, north and northeast. The Proposed Development would be skylined from these summits, however Càrn na Saobhaidehe and Càrn a' Chuillinn are within close proximity (approximately 1-3 km) of existing wind farms viewed in the foreground of the proposed turbines. Views from Geal-charn Mòr and Càrn Fhreiceadain are predominantly focused on Strathspey and the Cairngorm Mountains to the southeast; to the north and west, existing wind farm development is evident from the summits within approximately 15 km. The magnitude is assessed as Very Low, and the level of effect is Minor and Not significant. Not significant Cumulative Assessment: The Proposed Development would not contribute to significant additional or combined cumulative effects.

Recreational and Tourist Destination	Assessment
Cairngorm Mountain Corbetts (Geal Charn, Meall a' Bhuachaille, Càrn Dearg Mòr, and Meallach Mhor	Views from these mountains are assessed from Viewpoint 21 in **Technical Appendix 5.2** and illustrated in **Figure 5.39**. In the summary, the effect would be Minor and Not Significant.
Little Wyvis	Assessed with Ben Wyvis above
Sgòrr na Diollaid and Beinn a' Bha'ach Ard	Assessed with Sgurr na Ruaidhe above.

5.14 Summary of Effects

5.14.1 A summary of the landscape and visual and cumulative effects are provided in **Table 5.20** and **Table 5.21** and the information set out in these tables is explained as follows:

- Proposed Development: Assessed on an individual basis (the LVIA)

  This part of the assessment takes account of other existing forms of wind farm development that may be present in the landscape, whilst recognising that their influence on landscape character is likely to be time limited. It does not consider the additional or combined cumulative effects and only reports on the effect of the Proposed Development alone.
- Scenario 1: Existing + Consented + the Proposed Development

  The additional and combined cumulative effects of the baseline, including the existing and consented wind energy developments with the Proposed Development are reported.
- Scenario 2: Existing + Consented + Applications + the Proposed Development

  The additional and combined cumulative effects of the baseline, including existing and consented wind energy developments and applications with the Proposed Development are reported.

Table 5.20: Summary of Landscape Effects

Receptor	Sensitivity	Primary Assessment: LVIA: Proposed Development only		Assessment: CLVIA: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
		Magnitude (Standalone)	Level of Effect (Standalone)	Magnitude (Existing and Consented)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 1: Combined Level of Effect:	Magnitude (Applications)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 2: Combined Level of Effect:
Direct Landscape Effects on the 'Host' Rolling Uplands – Inverness LCT									
Construction Effects: **Rolling Uplands – Inverness LCT**	Medium	Zero to High	None to **Major**	Cumulative effects would increase from None at the start of construction to the operational levels of **Major** (due to Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Moy, Tom na Clach and the Proposed Development).					
Operational Effects: **Rolling Uplands – Inverness LCT**	Medium	High (up to 1-3 km) to Zero	**Major** (up to 1-3 km) reducing to Moderate and None	High to Zero	**Moderate** to None	**Major** (up to 1-3 km) (Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Moy, Tom na Clach and PD + other distant wind farms within this LCT) to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	

Receptor	Sensitivity	Primary Assessment: LVIA: Proposed Development only		Assessment: CLVIA: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
		Magnitude (Standalone)	Level of Effect (Standalone)	Magnitude (Existing and Consented)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 1: Combined Level of Effect:	Magnitude (Applications)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 2: Combined Level of Effect:
Decommissioning Effects: **Rolling Uplands – Inverness LCT**	Medium	Reducing to Very Low	Reducing to Negligible	The residual cumulative effects post decommissioning would be Negligible.					
Indirect Landscape Effects on the Surrounding Landscape Character within 15 km									
223 – Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland LCT	High-Medium	Low to Zero	Moderate to Minor, reducing to None	Low to Zero	Moderate to Minor, reducing to None	Moderate to Minor, reducing to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	
224 – Farmed and Wooded Foothills LCT	High-Medium	Low to Zero	Moderate to Minor, reducing to None	Low to Zero	Moderate to Minor, reducing to None	Moderate to Minor, reducing to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	
227 – Farmed Strath - Inverness LCT: Stratherrick, Strathnairn LCA	High	Low to Zero	Moderate to None **Moderate** and significant characterising influence on limited	Low to Zero	Moderate to None **Moderate** and significant characterising influence	Moderate to None **Moderate** and significant characterising influence on limited	Zero	No cumulative effect	

Receptor	Sensitivity	Primary Assessment: LVIA: Proposed Development only		Assessment: CLVIA: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
		Magnitude (Standalone)	Level of Effect (Standalone)	Magnitude (Existing and Consented)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 1: Combined Level of Effect:	Magnitude (Applications)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 2: Combined Level of Effect:
			part of Strathnairn		on limited part of Strathnairn	part of Strathnairn			
228 – Rolling Farmland and Woodland LCT	Medium	Low-Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	Minor to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	
284 – Coastal Farmlands – Moray and Nairn	Medium (High-Medium)	Very Low to Zero	Minor to Negligible, to None	Very Low to Zero	Minor to Negligible, to None	Minor to Negligible, to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	
Indirect Effects on Landscape Planning Designations									
Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA	High-Medium	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	Low to Zero	Minor to None	**Major** (Bhlaraidh / Ext.) to None	Medium to Zero	Minor to Negligible, to None	**Major** (Bhlaraidh / Ext, Loch Laith, Chrathaich) to None
Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA	High-Medium	Low to Zero	Moderate to Minor to None	Low to Very Low to Zero	Moderate to Minor to None	Moderate to Minor to None	Negligible to Zero	No significant cumulative effects	
Sutors of Cromarty,	High-Medium	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	No significant cumulative effects					

Receptor	Sensitivity	Primary Assessment: LVIA: Proposed Development only		Assessment: CLVIA: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
		Magnitude (Standalone)	Level of Effect (Standalone)	Magnitude (Existing and Consented)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 1: Combined Level of Effect:	Magnitude (Applications)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 2: Combined Level of Effect:
Rosemarkie and Fort George SLA									

Table 5.21: Summary of Visual Effects

Receptor	Sensitivity	Primary Assessment: LVIA: Proposed Development only		Assessment: CLVIA: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
		Magnitude (Standalone)	Level of Effect (Standalone)	Magnitude (Existing and Consented)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 1: Combined Level of Effect:	Magnitude (Applications)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 2: Combined Level of Effect:
Visual Effects on Settlements									
Tomatin	High	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	No Cumulative effect					
Inverness	High	Very Low to Zero	Minor to No View	Very Low to Zero	Minor to No View	Minor to No View	Zero	No cumulative effect	
Note: A small area of **Moderate** and significant visibility would affect an elevated area of Leachkin in the west of Inverness as illustrated by Viewpoint 16.									

Receptor	Sensitivity	Primary Assessment: LVIA: Proposed Development only		Assessment: CLVIA: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
		Magnitude (Standalone)	Level of Effect (Standalone)	Magnitude (Existing and Consented)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 1: Combined Level of Effect:	Magnitude (Applications)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 2: Combined Level of Effect:
Westhill, Smithton and Culloden	High	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	No significant cumulative effects.					
Newlands of Culloden	High	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	Minor to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	
Farr and Inverarnie	High	Low - Very Low, to Zero	Moderate to Minor, reducing to None Inverarnie) to None	Very Low to Zero	Low - Very Low, to Zero	Moderate to Minor, reducing to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	
Note: Although not identified as a settlement in the IMFLDP2, the views from residential properties at Balnafoich on the western side of Strathnairn would be significantly affected as illustrated by Viewpoint 4 (**Substantial to Major**).									
Visual Effects on Transport Routes									
A9	High (CNP) Medium (remainder of route)	High-Medium (approximately 6.8 km of route) Medium-Low to Zero (rest of route)	**Major to Moderate** (approximately 6.8 km) to None	Low to Zero	**Major to Moderate** (approximately 6.8 km) to None	**Major to Moderate** (approximately 6.8 km, due to PD) to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	

Receptor	Sensitivity	Primary Assessment: LVIA: Proposed Development only		Assessment: CLVIA: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
		Magnitude (Standalone)	Level of Effect (Standalone)	Magnitude (Existing and Consented)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 1: Combined Level of Effect:	Magnitude (Applications)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 2: Combined Level of Effect:
A82	High	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	No significant cumulative effects.					
A96	Medium	Very Low to Zero	Negligible to None	No significant cumulative effects.					
B851	Medium	Medium-Low to Zero	Moderate to Minor to None	Low to Zero	Moderate to Minor to None	Moderate to Minor to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	
B9154	High	High (approximately 5.1 km, reducing to approximately 1.1 km accounting for forestry) to Zero	**Substantial** (approximately 5.1 km, reducing to approximately 1.1 km accounting for forestry) to None	Medium-Low to Zero	**Substantial** (approximately 5.1 km, reducing to approximately 1.1 km accounting for forestry) to None	**Substantial** (approximately 5.1 km, reducing to approximately 1.1 km accounting for forestry, due to PD) to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	

Receptor	Sensitivity	Primary Assessment: LVIA: Proposed Development only		Assessment: CLVIA: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
		Magnitude (Standalone)	Level of Effect (Standalone)	Magnitude (Existing and Consented)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 1: Combined Level of Effect:	Magnitude (Applications)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 2: Combined Level of Effect:
B861	Medium	High-Medium to Medium (approximately 1.5 km) Medium-Low to Zero (rest of route)	**Major to Moderate** (approximately 1.5 km) to None	Very Low to Zero	**Major to Moderate** (approximately 1.5 km) to No View	**Major to Moderate** (approximately 1.5 km, due to PD) to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	
B862	High	Low (approximately 2.6 km) to Zero	Moderate (approximately 2.6 km) to None	Low to Zero	Moderate (approximately 2.6 km) to None	Moderate (approximately 2.6 km) to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	
B9006	Medium	Very Low to Zero	Negligible to None	No cumulative effect					
B9177	Medium	Very Low to Zero	Negligible to None	No cumulative effect					
Main Railway Line - Inverness to Perth via the Cairngorms National Park	Medium	High (approximately 800m) reducing to Zero (rest of route)	**Major** (approximately 800m) to None	Low to Zero	**Major** (approximately 800m) to None	**Major** (approximately 800m) to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	

Receptor	Sensitivity	Primary Assessment: LVIA: Proposed Development only		Assessment: CLVIA: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
		Magnitude (Standalone)	Level of Effect (Standalone)	Magnitude (Existing and Consented)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 1: Combined Level of Effect:	Magnitude (Applications)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 2: Combined Level of Effect:
Visual Effects on Recreational Routes									
Core Path IN27.01 - National Cycle Route 7 by A9	High	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	No cumulative effect					
Core Path IN27.02 – Distillery Wood (partially felled)	High	Medium (approximately 1.2 km) to Zero	**Major** (approximately 1.2 km) to None	Low to Zero	**Major** (approximately 1.2 km) to None	**Major** (approximately 1.2 km, due to PD) to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	
Core Paths on elevated western edge of Inverness (IN19.08, IN19.09 and IN19.44)	High	Low to Zero	**Moderate** to None	Low-Very Low to Zero	**Moderate** to None	**Moderate** (due to PD) to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	
Core Paths around Culloden (IN08.12, IN08.13,	High	Low to Zero	Moderate to None	Very Low to Zero	Moderate to None	Moderate to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	

Receptor	Sensitivity	Primary Assessment: LVIA: Proposed Development only		Assessment: CLVIA: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
		Magnitude (Standalone)	Level of Effect (Standalone)	Magnitude (Existing and Consented)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 1: Combined Level of Effect:	Magnitude (Applications)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 2: Combined Level of Effect:
IN08.25, IN08.28, IN09.01, and IN09.02)									
Core Paths around the A96 (IN08.05, IN08.10, IN08.16, IN08.21, and IN08.23)	High	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	No significant cumulative effects					
Heritage path HP1 - General Wade's Military Road, Moy to Inverness	High	High to Zero	**Substantial** (approximately 6.8 km reducing to approximately 4.5 km accounting for forestry) to None	Low to Zero	**Substantial** (approximately 6.8 km reducing to approximately 4.5 km accounting for	**Substantial** (approximately 6.8 km reducing to approximately 4.5 km accounting for forestry,	Zero	No cumulative effect	

Receptor	Sensitivity	Primary Assessment: LVIA: Proposed Development only		Assessment: CLVIA: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
		Magnitude (Standalone)	Level of Effect (Standalone)	Magnitude (Existing and Consented)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 1: Combined Level of Effect:	Magnitude (Applications)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 2: Combined Level of Effect:
					forestry) to None	due to PD) to None			
Heritage path HP2 – Old Road to Forres / Scottish Hill Track 229	High	High-Medium to Zero	**Substantial to Major** (approximately 0.2 km) to None	Low-Very Low to None	**Substantial to Major** (approximately 0.2 km) to None	**Substantial to Major** (approximately 0.2 km, due to PD) to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	
Heritage path HP3 – Slochd Military Road / Scottish Hill Track 230	High	Medium to Zero	**Major** (approximately 1.3 km) to None	Medium-Low to None	**Major** (approximately 1.3 km) to None	**Major** (approximately 1.3 km, due to PD) to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	
Sustrans National Cycle Route 7	High	High to Medium-Low (approximately 8.1 km reducing to approximately 2.3 km	**Substantial to Major to Moderate** (approximately 8.1 km reducing to approximatel	Medium-Low to Zero	**Substantial to Major to Moderate** (approximately 8.1 km	**Substantial to Major to Moderate** (approximately 8.1 km	Zero	No cumulative effect	

Receptor	Sensitivity	Primary Assessment: LVIA: Proposed Development only		Assessment: CLVIA: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
		Magnitude (Standalone)	Level of Effect (Standalone)	Magnitude (Existing and Consented)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 1: Combined Level of Effect:	Magnitude (Applications)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 2: Combined Level of Effect:
		accounting for forestry) to No View Very Low to Zero (rest of route)	y 2.3 km accounting for forestry) to None		reducing to approximately 2.3 km accounting for forestry) to None	reducing to approximately 2.3 km accounting for forestry, due to PD and Moy) to None			
Sustrans National Cycle Route 1	High	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	No significant cumulative effects					
Great Glen Way / Loch Ness 360 Trail	High	Low to Zero	**Moderate** (approximately 1.1 km) to None	Low-Very Low to Zero	**Moderate** (approximately 1.1 km) to None	**Moderate** (approximately 1.1 km, due to PD) to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	
Visual Effects on Recreational and Tourist Destination									

Receptor	Sensitivity	Primary Assessment: LVIA: Proposed Development only		Assessment: CLVIA: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
		Magnitude (Standalone)	Level of Effect (Standalone)	Magnitude (Existing and Consented)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 1: Combined Level of Effect:	Magnitude (Applications)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 2: Combined Level of Effect:
Loch Duntelchaig	High	Low to Zero	Moderate reducing to None	Low to Zero	Moderate reducing to None	Moderate reducing to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	
Auchnahillin Holiday Park	High	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	No significant cumulative effect					
Culloden Battlefield	High	Low to Zero	Moderate reducing to None	Very Low to Zero	Moderate reducing to None	Moderate reducing to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	
Loch Ruthven Nature Reserve	High	Low to Zero	Moderate reducing to None	Low-Very Low to Zero	Moderate reducing to None	Moderate reducing to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	
Culloden Moor Caravan and Motorhome Club	High	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	Minor to None	Zero	No cumulative effect	
Munros									
Cairngorm Mountain Munros (Beinn Bhrotain,	High	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	No significant cumulative effect					

Receptor	Sensitivity	Primary Assessment: LVIA: Proposed Development only		Assessment: CLVIA: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
		Magnitude (Standalone)	Level of Effect (Standalone)	Magnitude (Existing and Consented)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 1: Combined Level of Effect:	Magnitude (Applications)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 2: Combined Level of Effect:
Mullach Clach a' Bhlàir, Ben Macdui, Sgòr Gaoith, Braeriach, Cairn Gorm and Bynack More)									
Monadhliath Mountain Munros (Geal Chàrn, Carn Dearg, A' Chailleach, Meall Chuaich and Càrn Sgulain)	High	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	No significant cumulative effect					
Sgurr na Ruaidhe	High	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	No significant cumulative effect					
Ben Wyvis	High	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	No significant cumulative effect					
Corbetts									

Receptor	Sensitivity	Primary Assessment: LVIA: Proposed Development only		Assessment: CLVIA: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
		Magnitude (Standalone)	Level of Effect (Standalone)	Magnitude (Existing and Consented)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 1: Combined Level of Effect:	Magnitude (Applications)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 2: Combined Level of Effect:
Monadhliath Mountain Corbetts (Càrn na Saobhaidehe, Càrn an Fhreiceadain, Geal-charn Mòr, and Càrn a' Chuillinn)	High	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	No significant cumulative effect					
Cairngorm Mountain Corbetts (Geal Charn, Meall a' Bhuachaille, Càrn Dearg Mòr, and Meallach Mhor	High	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	No significant cumulative effect					
Little Wyvis	High	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	No significant cumulative effect					

Receptor	Sensitivity	Primary Assessment: LVIA: Proposed Development only		Assessment: CLVIA: Proposed Development (PD) and other wind farms					
		Magnitude (Standalone)	Level of Effect (Standalone)	Magnitude (Existing and Consented)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 1: Combined Level of Effect:	Magnitude (Applications)	Additional Level of Effect	Scenario 2: Combined Level of Effect:
Sgòrr na Diollaid and Beinn a' Bha'ach Ard	High	Very Low to Zero	Minor to None	No significant cumulative effect					

5.15 Conclusions

5.15.1 The Proposed Development would comprise 14 wind turbines (maximum height 200m to blade tip) and associated infrastructure, west of the A9 at Moy and approximately 6 km northwest of Tomatin within an undesignated area of *Rolling Uplands - Inverness* landscape character in the Highlands.

5.15.2 The Proposed Development also includes native riparian woodland planting which would provide multiple benefits in line with Scotland's Strategic Framework for Biodiversity (2023) objectives. From a landscape perspective, the woodland planting would strengthen and enhance the local landscape by screening views of the proposed turbines, as well as providing visual enhancement along the A9 corridor closest to the site boundary.

Landscape Planning Policy and Guidance

5.15.3 The design and assessment process has taken account of national and local planning policy nand advicein relation to wind farm development, as described in Chapter 4 and the Planning Statement which accompanies this Section 36 Application. This includes NPF4, the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) (2012), the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2) and THC's 'Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance' (OWESG), which includes the Loch Ness Strategic Capacity Study. In addition the LVIA has considered the Dava Moor, Nairn and Monadhliath Area Wind Energy Landscape Sensitivity Pilot Study (2021) and the Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy and Supplementary Guidance: Trees, Woodlands and Development.

5.15.4 THC's OWESG details the council's guidance on measures to be considered for the design and assessment of onshore wind farms. In relation to landscape and visual amenity it identifies ten criteria to be used by THC as a framework and focus for assessing proposals. Analysis of the Proposed Development in relation to these criteria is provided in **Technical Appendix 5.5**, which concludes the Proposed Development largely accords with defined criteria.

Consultation

5.15.5 Consultation has been undertaken with the Highland Council and Nature Scot who commented on aspects of methodology, sources of information, viewpoint selection, scope of assessment and cumulative development.

Landscape and Cumulative Landscape Effects

5.15.6 The Proposed Development is not located within any designated landscapes or Wild Land Areas and there would be no significant effects on any nationally important landscape planning designations including the Cairngorms National Park and Cairngorms Dark Sky Park, National Scenic Areas, or Wild Land Areas. Further there would be no significant effects on any locally important landscape planning designations, including the two

closest Special Landscape Areas of Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors and Loch Ness and Duntelchaig in the Highlands.

5.15.7 However, significant effects resulting from large-scale wind farm development are unavoidable and the Proposed Development would have a significant effect on part of the *Rolling Uplands* and adjacent Farmed Strath (Strathnairn) landscapes, affecting a local area within approximately 2-5 km of the proposed turbines. This level of effect, and geographical extent, is not unusual for wind farm development.

Visual and Cumulative Visual Effects

5.15.8 The viewpoint analysis indicates that significant visual effects are likely to affect clear views of the proposed turbines within approximately 10.5 km distance from the Proposed Development as indicated by viewpoints 1-4, 6-8 and 10-11 inclusively. A further, potentially significant effect has been identified within approximately 13.9 km at Viewpoint 16: Leachkin, Inverness.

Effects on Views from Settlements and Residential Properties

5.15.9 There would be significant visual effects on the views from elevated areas at Leachkin within Inverness at approximate 13.9 km distance, although there would be no significant visual effects on the city of Inverness overall. There would be no significant visual effects from any of the other the settlements identified in the local development plans at Farr, Inverarnie, Westhill, Tomatin, Smithton, Culloden, or Newlands of Culloden.

5.15.10 Although not identified as a settlement in the IMFLDP2, the views from Balnafoich on the western side of Strathnairn would be significantly affected as illustrated by Viewpoint 4.

5.15.11 A Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) has been conducted for those properties within 2 km of the Proposed Development. The results of the RVAA conclude that there are no residential properties within 1 km and none within 2 km would be significantly affected in terms of their residential visual amenity.

Effects on Views from Transport Routes

5.15.12 Significant visual effects would be limited to parts of the sections of four transport routes:

- A9
  - Northbound: Of the approximately 439 km total route, approximately 2.9 km across four short sections would be significantly affected equating to a total of approximately 2 minutes of travel time assuming an average speed of 60mph; and
  - Southbound: Of the approximately 439 km total route, approximately 3.9 km (reducing to approximately2.6 km accounting for coniferous forestry) across four short sections would be significantly affected equating to a total of approximately 2.5 minutes of travel time assuming an average speed of 60mph.
- B9154

- Approximately 5.5 km of the route, southbound, between Moy and Auchnahilin (reducing to approximately 1.1 km accounting for coniferous forestry) equating to approximately 5 minutes of travel time (reducing to 1 minute of travel accounting for screening) assuming an average speed of 40mph.

- B861
  - Approximately 1.5 km of the route, southbound would be significantly affected near Mains of Gask (approximately 900m) and Balnafoich (approximately 600m) and equating to less than 1 minute of travel time at each location, assuming an average speed of 40mph.
- Main Railway Line – Inverness to Perth
  - Of the approximately 190 km total route, approximately 800m close to the site would be significantly affected equating to less than approximately 1 minute of travel time assuming an average speed of 60mph.

5.15.13 Mitigation resulting from the native woodland planting along the A9 near Moy has the potential to reduce some of the significant visual effects from the A9 as the planting matures through the operational period of the Proposed Development.

Receptors on Views from Recreational Routes

5.15.14 There would be significant visual effects on the views from recreational routes in broadly four areas. These include areas close to the site and south of the A9 viewing from part of General Wade's Military Road (heritage path HP1); part of the Sustrans National Cycle Route 7 and heritage path HP2 between Moy and Tomatin; and routes in the Tomatin area near the A9. A number of these routes are subject to some forestry screening and the assessment has assumed a 'worst case' (that forestry is recently felled), although in practice these areas would be subject to rotational harvesting and re-growth.

5.15.15 Significant visual effects would also affect elevated views from a further area at Leachkin, in southwestern Inverness. Views from this area would intermittently affect small parts of the Great Glen Way / Loch Ness 360 Trail and related Core Paths, subject to intervening vegetation and built form.

5.15.16 These routes are further summarised as follows:

- National Recreational Routes:
  - The Great Glen Way / Loch Ness 360 Trail - significant visual effects for approximately approximately1 km of the combined routes in the elevated Leachkin part of south western Inverness.
- Sustrans National Cycle Network:
  - Sustrans National Cycle Route 7 - significant visual effects for approximately 8 km of the route (reducing to approximately 2.3 km due to the screening effects of forestry in the Tomatin, Dalmagarry and Moy areas.
- Core Paths:
  - Core Path IN27.02 at Tomatin – significant visual effects would be experienced for approximately 1.2 km of the route through the forest. This

effect is completely dependent on the assumption that all forestry has been felled.

- Core Paths IN19.08, IN.19.09 and IN.19.44 in the Leachkin and Kinmylies area of Inverness – significant visual effects in proximity to the Great Glen Way to the north and west of Kings Golf Club.

- Heritage paths and Scottish Hill Tracks:
  - Heritage path HP1: General Wade's Military Road, Moy to Inverness – significant visual effects for approximately 6.8 km of the route (reducing to approximately 4.5 km accounting for coniferous forestry) between Lynemore and Auchbain.
  - Heritage path HP2: Old Road to Forres / Scottish Hill Track 229 - significant visual effects for approximately 200m of the combined routes at Milton of Moy.
  - Heritage path HP3: Slochd Military Road / Scottish Hill Track 230 - significant visual effects for approximately 1.3 km of the combined routes north of Creag an Tuim Bhig and south Raigbeag.

Effects on Views from Recreational and Tourist Destinations

5.15.17 In summary, there would be no significant effects on views from recreational and tourist destinations within 15 km. There would also be no significant effects on views from hill summits between 15-45 km distance from the Proposed Development, as assessed below in **Table 5.19**.

Night-time Assessment on Aviation Warning Lights (TBC)

5.15.18 The Lighting Strategy to mitigate the effects of aviation warning lights, required as part of the Proposed Development has been approved by the CAA and requires seven of the turbines to be lit (T1, T4, T5, T7, T12, T13, and T14).

5.15.19 A full night-time assessment of the aviation warning light effects is provided in **Technical Appendix 5.4**. It has concluded that there would be some significant night-time effects on the host Rolling Uplands landscape character and some visual receptor locations where people are likely to be present at night.

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