Chapter 6 Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum
CAA	Civil Aviation Authority
cd	Candela
CEA	Cumulative Effect Assessment
CLVIA	Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
CZTV	Cumulative Zone of Theoretical Visibility
BDOHL	The Beauly to Denny overhead line
DTM	Digital Terrain Model
EASA	European Aviation Safety Agency
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ELC	European Landscape Convention

GDL	Gardens and Designed Landscape
GLVIA3	Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third Edition
GIS	Global Information System
GWMR	General Wades Military Road
HES	Historic Environment Scotland
HFoV	Horizontal Field of View
HZTV	Horizontal angle Zone of Theoretical Visibility
HwLDP	Highland-wide Local Development Plan
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
IEMA	Institute of Environmental Management of Assessment
ILP	Institution of Lighting Professionals
km	kilometre
LCA	Landscape Character Area
LDP	Local Development Plan
LI	Landscape Institute
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LVIA	Landscape Visual Impact Assessment
m	metre
mph	Miles per hour
NCR	National Cycle Route
NPF4	National Planning Framework 4
NS	NatureScot
NSA	National Scenic Area
OS	Ordnance Survey
OWESG	Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance
PRoW	Public Right of Way
RLDP	Replacement Local Development Plan
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
RVAA	Residential Visual Amenity Assessment
SLA	Special Landscape Area

SLR	Single-Lens Reflex
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
SQ	Special Quality
THC	The Highland Council
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
VP	Viewpoint
WLA	Wild Land Area
ZTV	Zone of Theoretical Visibility

6. Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

6.1. Executive Summary

6.1.1. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment considers the effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character and visual amenity within a study area up to 45 kilometres from the site. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with all relevant published guidance and has involved desk-based and field-based assessments. The approach and scope of the assessment was agreed through scoping and through consultation with statutory consultees NatureScot and THC. The baseline for the assessment includes landscape, visual receptors and other developments in the area. Visual receptors include people in settlements, using the local area for recreation, and travelling through the area on roads.

6.1.2. Physical landscape effects on the moorland of the Site that would occur during construction are found to be localised and not significant. The assessment has identified that the significant landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development would be contained within a localised area around the site and immediate landscape and visual context that surrounds it. Significant landscape character effects (including cumulative effects) are assessed to occur within a maximum of 5 km from the nearest turbine of the Proposed Development. Significant visual effects (including cumulative effects) have been identified as occurring out to a range of 5.5 km, however the majority of significant visual effects are contained within around 4 km of the nearest Proposed Development turbines. Significant effects are also predicted for representative night-time viewpoints within this localised area as a result of turbine lighting.

6.1.3. In landscape and visual terms, it is considered that there is scope for wind farm development within the broad upland landscape that is defined by LCT 236 Smooth Moorland Ridges and its neighbouring LCTs. There are a number of factors which have influenced this finding, as follows:

- The Proposed Development is compact and contained within a single upland landscape plateau which is surrounded by larger hills and uplands resulting in a ZTV that is not widespread, particularly within areas beyond approximately 10 km.
- Whilst significant effects have been found to occur within the northern part of WLA 19, these effects are localised and moderated by the existing influence of the BDOHL which already has an influence on the wild land qualities of a similar area that the Proposed Development would affect.
- The Proposed Development turbine layout has been designed to minimise significant effects on landscape and visual receptors by setting turbines back from the Great Glen and settled landscape of Fort Augustus and by arranging the turbines in a compact layout which for most views appears as a cohesive and consistently spaced grouping of turbines.
- As a result of the compact and well designed layout and an agreed reduced lighting scheme, the effects of visible aviation lighting have been minimised to very few locations where they would be visible by the local population including on nearby settlements and roads.
- The compact nature of the layout also results in a relatively small horizontal field of view and when viewing the Proposed Development from the wider landscape context, the Proposed Development would appear as a relatively small component of the very wide skyline formed by the broad upland plateau on which it is located.

6.1.4. On this basis, it is considered that the landscape is capable of accommodating the Proposed Development and that wider landscape and visual effects are relatively limited in extent and severity.

6.2. Introduction

Background

6.2.1. This landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA), which has been undertaken by Optimised Environments Limited ('OPEN'), considers effects on the landscape resource - both direct effects and effects on how the landscape is perceived - and the effect on visual amenity (views) within the study area (**Figure 6.1**). Cumulative effects arising from the addition of the Proposed Development to other wind farms are also considered. Technical Appendices to this LVIA should be read in conjunction with the chapter as follows:

- Volume 4, Technical Appendix 6.1: Landscape and Visual Assessment Methodology
- Volume 4, Technical Appendix 6.2: WLA assessment
- Volume 4, Technical Appendix 6.3: Lighting assessment
- Volume 4, Technical Appendix 6.4: Assessment of THC supplementary guidance criteria

6.2.2. This chapter is also supported by figures and visualisations as follows:

- Volume 2, Plan Figures 6.1 – 6.21
- Volume 3, LVIA Visualisation Figures 6.22 - 6.68

The Proposed Development

6.2.3. Volume 1, **Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description** provides descriptions of the site, the main components of the Proposed Development, the associated infrastructure and the phases of construction, operation and decommissioning.

6.2.4. The Proposed Development comprises 8 wind turbines, which will have a maximum blade tip height of up to 200 m. Other elements of infrastructure of the Proposed Development assessed in this chapter, which includes turbine access tracks, control building, substation, battery energy storage compound, borrow pits and a temporary construction compound, are also described in Volume 1, **Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description**, which also describes the landscape and visual aspects of the design evolution. The site layout is shown in **Figure 1.2** and on **Figure 6.2**.

6.3. Legislation, Policy and Guidelines

6.3.1. The following legislation, policy and guidelines have been taken into consideration during the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

Key Guidance Documents

6.3.2. The LVIA follows OPEN's methodology, devised specifically for the assessment of wind farm developments (see Technical **Appendix 6.1**) in line with 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third Edition' (Landscape Institute and IEMA, 2013) ('GLVIA3'), GLVIA3 is the key source of guidance for LVIA.

6.3.3. Other sources of guidance used and referenced in the LVIA include the following:

- Carys Swanwick Department of Landscape University of Sheffield and Land Use Consultants for The Countryside Agency and NatureScot (2002). Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland.
- NatureScot (2021). Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments.
- NatureScot (2020). Assessing impacts on Wild Land Areas - Technical Guidance.
- NatureScot (2017). Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape Version 3a.
- NatureScot (2017). Visual Representation of Wind Farms, Version 2.2.

- The Highland Council (2016). Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments.
- NatureScot (2018 Working Draft 11). Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities;
- Landscape Institute (2019). Technical Guidance Note 2/19 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment.
- Landscape Institute (2019). Visual representation of Development Proposals: Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19.

Strategic Policy

European Landscape Convention (ELC)

6.3.4. The ELC is devoted exclusively to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe. Landscape is described as '*an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'* (ELC, 2000). The definition applies to all urban and peri-urban landscapes, towns, villages, rural areas, the coast and inland areas. In addition, it applies to ordinary or even degraded landscape as well as those areas that are of outstanding value or protected.

6.3.5. The ELC came into force in respect of the United Kingdom (UK) from 1 March 2007. As a convention of the Council of Europe the UK remains a party to the ELC after 31st January 2020 when the UK left the European Union. As a signatory to the ELC, the UK government has undertaken to adopt general policies and measures to protect, manage and plan landscapes as follows:

- *'to recognise landscapes in law as an essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity.*
- *to establish and implement landscape policies aimed at landscape protection, management and planning through the adoption of the specific measures. These include awareness-raising, training and education, identification and assessment of landscapes, definition of landscape quality objectives and the implementation of landscape policies.*
- *to establish procedures for the participation of the general public, local and regional authorities, and other parties with an interest in the definition and implementation of the landscape policies mentioned in the bullet above.*
- *to integrate landscape into regional and town planning policies and in cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies, as well as in any other policies with possible direct or indirect impact on landscape.'*

6.3.6. The ELC gives an appropriate basis for the importance placed on the Scottish landscape. NatureScot references the ELC as providing a framework for work on Scotland's landscapes based on the following five guiding principles:

- *'All landscapes - Every landscape is important because everyone has a right to live in and enjoy the benefits of vibrant surroundings.*
- *Shared landscapes - Scotland's landscapes are a common asset and everyone has rights and responsibilities for looking after them.*
- *Your landscapes - People and communities should always be involved in decisions that shape their landscapes.*
- *Understanding landscapes - Decisions need to be based on understanding and awareness of both the cultural and natural dimensions of our landscapes.*
- *Dynamic landscapes - Landscapes will continue to change but change needs to be informed and managed to ensure they remain resilient.'*

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

6.3.7. Scotland's fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) was adopted in February 2023. It replaces both NPF3 and Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). It sets out '*spatial principles, regional priorities, national developments and national planning policy.'* Part 1 sets out the National Spatial Strategy for Scotland in 2045, a key focus of this strategy includes a commitment to reducing emissions and create net zero places that are adaptive to the impact of climate change - '*Meeting our climate ambition will require a rapid transformation across all sectors of our economy and society. This means ensuring the right development happens in the right place. Every decision on our future development must contribute to making Scotland a more sustainable place. We will encourage low and zero carbon design and energy efficiency, development that is accessible by sustainable travel, and expansion of renewable energy generation.'* Part 2 sets out the National Planning Policy and states that Local Development Plans (LDPs) '*must address the global climate emergency and nature crisis by ensuring the spatial strategy will reduce emissions and adapt to current and future risks of climate change by promoting nature recovery and restoration in the area.' Policy 1 goes on to state that 'When considering all development proposals significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises.'*

6.3.8. The relevant Policies for the LVIA from NPF4 Part 2 are listed below and addressed in Volume 1, **Chapter 5: Planning and Energy Policy** of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report.

- NPF4 – Policy 4 Natural Places
- NPF4 – Policy 7 Historic Assets and Places
- NPF4 – Policy 11 Energy

NatureScot's Spatial Planning for Onshore Wind Turbines

6.3.9. NatureScot's Spatial Planning for Onshore Wind Turbines (NatureScot, 2015) sets out the main natural heritage considerations that should be taken into account when planning for onshore wind turbines.

6.3.10. Annex 1 set out landscape objectives, as follows:

- *'Landscape Protection - The aim of landscape protection is to maintain the existing landscape and visual resource, retaining or reinforcing its present character and protecting its quality and integrity. This approach is likely to only be acceptable for nationally designated areas which NatureScot described as within Group 1 and potentially Group 2 areas defined by the now revoked SPP' (SPP has been replaced by NPF4 and whilst the Highland wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) had adopted a similar spatial framework grouping to SPP, it is considered that HwLDP should also be considered within the context of NPF4).*
- *'Landscape Accommodation - The aim of landscape accommodation is to retain the overall character of the landscape yet accepting that development may be allowed which will have an impact on the landscape at the local scale.' 'Within local landscape designations and Wild Land Areas, the degree of landscape protection will be less than for National Scenic Areas. In these areas, an appropriate objective may be to accommodate wind farms, rather than seek landscape protection.'*
- *'Landscape Change – This objective recognises that the area is one whose landscape character may be allowed to change, which could result in a perception of a wind farm landscape. Landscape change does not imply that 'anything goes', nor that change should occur across the whole area: good landscape design principles still need to be followed to ensure that the development is appropriate for the scale and character of the landscape.'*

6.3.11. The Proposed Development is located in an area of the Central Highlands where *'landscape change'* has already taken place as a result of the operational wind farm development to the north and south of the Great Glen. The Beauly – Denny overhead line (BDOHL) is also considered to have a notable influence on the wildness qualities of Wild Land Area (WLA) 19: Braeroy – Glenshirra - Creag Meagaidh

6.3.12. . As the Proposed Development is not nationally designated, a strategy of 'landscape protection' for the site is not considered to be appropriate. Given the proximity of local designation and location of the Proposed Development within the area of WLA that is influenced by existing infrastructure, an objective of '*Landscape Accommodation'* is considered to be appropriate for the Proposed Development.

Local Planning Policy

6.3.13. Planning Policies are described in detail in Volume 1, **Chapter 5: Planning and Energy Policy** Context of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report and considered in the context of NPF4. The local development policies most relevant to the LVIA include are listed below.

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

6.3.14. The HwLDP sets out the overarching vision, spatial strategy and strategic planning policies for The Highland Council (THC) area. Policies that are relevant to the LVIA include -

- Policy 28 Sustainable Design
- Policy 57 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage
- Policy 61 Landscape
- Policy 67 Renewable Energy Developments

HwLDP, Supplementary Guidance (OWESG): Onshore Wind Energy (2016)

6.3.15. The OWESG has been adopted by THC as part of the local development plan. It includes Spatial Framework mapping on page 13 in a Figure titled Spatial Framework for Onshore Wind Energy August 2016 – Inner Moray Firth LDP Area. The mapping indicates Group 1, Group 2 and Group 3 areas, as follows:

- Group 1: Areas where wind farms will not be acceptable;
- Group 2: Areas of significant protection; and
- Group 3: Areas with potential for wind farm development.

6.3.16. It is important to note that NPF4 no longer continues with the Spatial Framework approach for onshore wind farms. While there is reference to the Spatial Framework in the OWESG, an assessment of the Proposed Development must not seek to apply the Spatial framework as this is no longer supported by national planning policy. However, consideration has been given to other aspects of the OWESG that are still relevant following the adoption of NPF4.

6.3.17. The OWESG introduces separate landscape sensitivity appraisals for three areas of the Highlands as follows - Loch Ness; Black Isle, Surrounding Hills and Moray Firth Coast; and Caithness and parts of Sutherland. The Proposed Development site falls within the Loch Ness sensitivity appraisal at its southern edges. Within the Loch Ness sensitivity appraisal, the area is split into its various Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) and receptor groups to review its sensitivity (Note - the LCAs described in the OWESG are considered superseded by the 2019 NatureScot Landscape Character Types (LCTs) but retained here for geographical reference). The Proposed Development turbines would lie within OWESG LCA-LN6: Monadhliath ridge and tops, Rolling Upland. The northernmost part of the site lies within OWESG LCA-LN19: Area directly around Loch Ness, Broad Steep-Sided Glen.

6.3.18. Within the tables for each LCA a description of 'landscape role,' 'key views,' 'key routes,' 'gateways,' 'landscape sensitivity,' 'sensitive visual receptors,' and 'current wind energy development' is provided, concluding with a summary of 'potential for wind energy development'. The OWESG LCA-LN6: Monadhliath ridge and tops, Rolling Uplands scores a 2-3 in the OWESG assessment for Large Scale Wind Farms, and in respect of Access Infrastructure scores 3 from the east side. OWESG LCA-LN19: Area directly around Loch Ness, Broad Steep-Sided Glen scores 1 for Access Infrastructure.

6.3.19. The assessment of the OWESG '*landscape and visual criteria'* in **Appendix 6.4** considers the Loch Ness sensitivity appraisal in response to the landscape and visual criteria set out in the *'Landscape and visual effects'* section of the OWESG.

6.4. Consultation

Table 6.1 – List of Consultee Responses

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Action
ECU – Scoping Opinion dated 03/05/22	*'Aviation Lighting - It is also recommended by the Scottish Ministers that with regards to impacts of night time aviation lighting the Company should discuss and agree with The Highland Council and NatureScot the range (in kilometres from the proposed Development) for night time assessments of the impacts of night-time aviation lighting and receptors therein to be assessed.'*	The LVIA study area has been agreed in consultation with THC and NS as described in **section 6.5**. The LVIA study area is utilised in the visual assessment of aviation lighting. The visual assessment of aviation lighting is detailed in **Appendix 6.3**.
	'Study area – Landscape and visual - The study area in kilometres from the outer most turbines of the proposed Development should be agreed following discussion between the Company, the Highland Council, and NatureScot.'	
	'Cumulative landscape impact assessment - To ensure that assessments are as up-to-date as possible, Developments to be included in cumulative landscape impact assessments should be discussed and agreed by the Company and the Highland Council. Photography and visualisations submitted in the EIA report should reflect the most up-to-date cumulative position and the most up-to-date ecological and vegetation position. It should be noted by the Company that the Highland Council have stated that the Study Area for a cumulative LVIA should extend to a minimum of 60 km.'	The cumulative baseline is described in **section 6.6** including the list of cumulative developments included in the LVIA. A map of cumulative developments as of August 2023 within 60 km is included on **Figure 6.19** and within 45km on **Figure 6.20**.
	'Designated areas – The Scottish Ministers recommend that the Company contact the Highland Council, RSPB Scotland and NatureScot to discuss and agree designated sites to be included in the EIA report and the survey work and further in-depth modelling and research to be undertaken.'	THC and NS have agreed which of the designated landscapes should be included in the LVIA through the scoping process.

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Action
	'Wild land assessment – NatureScot have advised that there is potential for the proposed Development to result in significant adverse impacts on Wild Land Area 19: Braeroy – Glenshirra – Creag Meagaidh. The Scottish Ministers recommend that the Company discusses and agrees with NatureScot, the assessments to be carried out and, if appropriate, mitigation measures to be applied in respect of Wild Land Area 19: Braeroy – Glenshirra – Creag Meagaidh.'	The approach to assessment of WLA 19 has been discussed with NS including WLA viewpoint selection and the focus of the WLA assessment within the northern area of the WLA where the ZTV extents is largely contained. The WLA assessment is detailed in **Appendix 6.2**.
	'*Viewpoints and visualisations – It is recommended by the Scottish Ministers that the final list of viewpoints and visualisations should be agreed following discussion between the Company, The Highland Council, HES and NatureScot.'*	LVIA Viewpoints were agreed with THC and NS. Cultural Heritage viewpoints were agreed HES.
The Highland Council – Scoping Opinion dated 07/04/22	*'The Council expects the EIAR to consider the landscape and visual impact of the development. The Council makes a distinction between the two. While not mutually exclusive, these elements require separate assessment and therefore presentation of visual material in different ways. Separate volumes of visualisations should be prepared to both Highland Council Standards and NatureScot guidance with each forming separate volumes of the EIAR.'*	Visualisations have been prepared to both THC standard and NatureScot guidance. See also **Appendix 6.1** Methodology.
	'This assessment should include the expected impact of on-site borrow pits and access roads, despite the fact that the principal structures will be a primary concern. All elements of a development are important to consider within any EIAR.'	The LVIA includes an assessment of other elements of infrastructure including any physical effects brought about by the loss of landscape elements.
	'There are a number of similar applications in this area which are yet to be determined / concluded in the vicinity of this application, which may or may not help clarify the weight towards particular policy elements in the final planning balance. We consider that you should undertake the cumulative assessment over a Study Area the same as the visual assessment.'	The cumulative baseline is described in **section 6.6** including the list of cumulative developments included in the LVIA.
	'As far as possible, the viewpoints should correspond with the viewpoints used for existing wind energy schemes within the area. The detailed location of viewpoints will be informed by site survey, mapping and predicted ZTVs. It would be useful to include a comparative ZTV between the consented scheme and the proposed scheme. Failure to do this may result in abortive work, requests for additional visual	The viewpoints take account of viewpoint locations used for other developments in the area, particularly for the previous application on this site. A cumulative Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) of the consented schemes has been included in the LVIA.

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Action
	material and delays in processing applications/consultation responses.'	
	'*The finalised list of Viewpoints (VP) and wireframes for the assessment of effects of a proposed development must be agreed in advance of preparation of any visuals with THC. On that point THC is generally satisfied with the suggested VPs in the Scoping Report, however, notes that more of the suggested VPs are within 15 km distance of the site and only few of which are within distant locations including VPs 17 and 18. Given that, the list of viewpoints should be refined and expanded to cover the proposed study area of 45 km to capture potentially affected receptors in that additional area.* *THC requests additional VPs due to the substantial scale and size of the proposed turbines as well as potential extensive visibility of the development from a number of locations including from Duntelchaig Special Landscape Area (SLA) and across the northern side of the Great Glen at both a higher elevation and down to the shoreline as well as on the water of Loch Ness.* *THC would expect additional visualisation from VPs to be included that are representative of views from various directions including from Creag Meagaidh approximately 12 km to the south, Ben nevis and Glen Coe approximately 26 km to the south-west and a location between Loch Cluaine and Loch Loyne'*	The final list of Viewpoints included in the LVIA have been agreed through consultation with THC. The viewpoint selection rationale is included within **Appendix 6.1.**
	As earlier was requested in the Pre-Application Advice Pack 21/04202/PREMAJ, Monochrome visualisations should be provided in accordance with THC's visualisation standards and agreement should be sought regarding which viewpoints these are require for upon receipt of draft photomontages;	Monochrome visualisations were suggested for viewpoints 6 and 7 within Fort Augustus due to potential tree screening during the final viewpoint discussion with THC. The Proposed Development turbines are not screened by trees in the visualisations and therefore these additional visualisations are not required.
	'*Route Assessments for the Great Glen Way; Corrieyairick Pass and the A87 and A887 shall be submitted detailing how much of the scheme is visible along those routes and at which point. We would welcome it if the route assessment is supported by descriptive text and wirelines at 1 km intervals along the relevant sections of the route. We would be happy to provide further advice and guidance on this.'*	The A87, Great Glen Way and Corrieyairack Pass are assessed in detail at viewpoints that represent the sections of these route that have visibility of the Proposed Development. The A887 would not have visibility of the Proposed Development. Following a consultation meeting with THC a series of sequential wirelines from the A87 were agreed to be included in the LVIA.

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Action
	'Cumulative development photomontages will be required, requiring the rendering of other consented or undetermined wind farm developments, with agreement to be sought from THC on select viewpoints.'	The cumulative situation will be represented within multiple 90-degree NatureScot visualisation baseline views and within the 65.5 degree THC baseline views. The applicant is content that the cumulative situation will be represented within the visualisations provided without the need for cumulative photomontages.
	Community Councils may request additional viewpoints and it would be recommended that any pre-application discussions with the local community, and associated reporting on consultation undertaken, take this into account.	Noted. LVIA Viewpoints were agreed with THC and NS taking into account all suggested additional locations.
	'*The purpose of the selected and agreed viewpoints shall be clearly identified and stated in the supporting information. For example, it should be clear that the VP has been chosen for landscape assessment, or visual impact assessment, or cumulative assessment, or sequential assessment, or to show a representative view or for assessment of impact on designated sites, communities or individual properties.'*	Noted. The assessments in the LVIA for each agreed viewpoint describe the receptors being represented and assessed.
	'*Further the LVIA Chapter of the EIAR should clearly set out the methodology including: Definitions of each point on the scale of magnitude of change which is used by the applicant in reaching a conclusion on the magnitude of change; Definitions of each point on the scale of sensitivity of receptor which is used by the applicant in reaching a conclusion on the sensitivity of receptor; The threshold to which the applicant considers a significant effect is reached; A clear matrix approach supported by descriptive text setting out how the applicant reaches their conclusion of effect on landscape character, designated landscapes, visual receptors and residential amenity.'*	The LVIA has been prepared in line with guidance set out in GLVIA3. See **Appendix 6.1** Methodology.
	'THC is content with a study area of 45 km, given the scale of the turbines and likely zone of Theoretical Visibility. Also, given the size of the turbines and the landscape sensitivities of the surrounding area, we would expect that a detailed assessment of effects is undertaken for the whole Study Area.'	A focussed 20 km study area was proposed during scoping which NS agreed to in their scoping response, however, in line with this THC request, landscape and visual effects are considered for the 45 km study area. See **section 6.10**.
	'The development will further extend the number of proposals of this type in the surrounding area, necessitating appropriate cumulative impacts. It is considered that cumulative impact will be a	The cumulative baseline is described in **section 6.6** including the list of cumulative developments included in the LVIA. A map of

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Action
	significant material consideration in the final determination of any future application. The Study Area for a cumulative LVIA (CLVIA) should extend to a minimum of 60 km.'	cumulative developments within 60 km is included on **Figure 6.19** and within 45 km on **Figure 6.20**
	'Given the cumulative impact of renewable energy in this area it is expected that the applicant should present images for presentation within the Panoramic Digital Viewer deployed by the Council – see visualisation standards document. If the applicant wished to utilise this tool there may be an associated cost per image to be inserted which should be discussed with the Council prior to submission.'	The cumulative situation will be represented within multiple 90-degree NatureScot visualisation baseline views and within the 65.5 degree THC baseline views. The applicant is content that the cumulative situation will be represented within the visualisations provided without the need for Panoramic Digital Viewer.
	'When assessing the impact on recreational routes please ensure that all core paths, the national cycle network, long distance trails are assessed. It should be noted that these routes are used by a range of receptors.'	Recreational receptors are included in the LVIA see visual effects in **section 6.11**.
	'Your Landscape Impact Assessment should refer to The Highland Strategic Capacity section of the Council's Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance. We expect an assessment of the proposal against the criterion set out in the Council's OWESG to be included within the LVIA chapter of the EIAR.'	**Appendix 6.4** considers the Proposed Development against the THC Criterion noted in this advice.
	'*Residential visual amenity should be assessed within the LVIA.'*	In line with Landscape Institute guidance, any properties within 2 km of the Proposed Development turbines should be included in a RVAA. There are no properties within 2 km and as such an RVAA is not required.
	'*As the turbine heights remain above 149.9m, aviation lighting is envisaged to be required. The Scoping Report proposes the LVIA to include a proportionate night-time assessment of the aviation lighting. The methodology for this assessment requires to be agreed by NatureScot and through further consultation with THC when agreeing the finalised viewpoints.'* *'As the proposed turbines will be >150m to blade tip then it is highly likely that aviation lighting will be required. Turbine lights can be seen over considerable distances, with some clearly visible at 20-30 km. A flashing effect can also occur, depending on wind direction, as turbine blades pass in front of the nacelle-mounted lighting. Turbine lighting could therefore adversely affect people's experience and enjoyment of darkness/dark skies and of sunset and sunrise views (noting that turbine lights are switched on*	Representative night time viewpoints were agreed as part of the wider viewpoint agreement. Detail on the proposed method and scope of night-time visual assessment from various locations is presented in **Appendix 6.3**. **Chapter 14: Aviation** contains information relating to which of the turbines are to be lit. **Appendix 6.3** provides a proportionate assessment of the visual effects of aviation lighting including baseline lighting levels, ZTVs illustrating the extent and intensity of potential effects of lighting, a table noting which lights are visible from which viewpoints and night time visualisations from

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Action
	before dusk and off after dawn). As a result, NatureScot recommend that these effects should be carefully assessed, and that mitigation is employed wherever possible. *Assessment of the landscape and visual effects of turbine lighting is a relatively new practice. The extent of the lighting assessment study area for LVIA should be informed by the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) map and an understanding of the nature of the likely effects. As a starting point NS highlight advice in their existing landscape guidance, however NatureScot advise that the LVIA-related lighting assessment should include:* *- Clear information on the positions and intensity of lighting proposed and, if only certain turbines are to be lit (e.g. due to a mix of turbine heights), a plan showing which turbines (numbered turbines) would be lit.* *- Production of a ZTV map which shows the areas from which the nacelle and tower lights may be seen. - Annotation of the positions of turbine lighting (including intermediate tower lights) on all wirelines from every viewpoint.* *- A table which lists how many lit turbines will be visible from each viewpoint.* *- Written assessment based on fieldwork for all relevant viewpoints (i.e. with potential visibility of lighting, and where effects may be significant). In a worst case scenario this may involve all viewpoints, but judgement should be applied to ensure the assessment remains focused on likely significant effects.* *The assessment should take into account the baseline darkness/ artificial lighting characteristics and people's likely use of different areas during darkness and low light (dusk/ dawn) conditions. In some cases, there may be the need to select some of the LVIA assessment viewpoints on the basis of the turbine lighting impacts, as opposed to day time visual effects. Edge of settlement locations are likely to be better lighting assessment viewpoints, compared with locations within towns/villages (i.e. given the influence of existing street lighting, etc.).* *- Night- time visualisations from a limited number (NS suggest two or three) of representative viewpoints. These may be selected on the basis of sensitivity or regular usage during low-light conditions.* *NatureScot would encourage the applicant to explore all available forms of lighting mitigation.'*	selected viewpoints (agreed with THC and NS). It is considered that visible aviation lighting will not affect the perception of landscape, which is not readily perceived at night and that the assessment of visible lighting is solely a visual effect. There has been some consensus by the Scottish Government's Aviation Lighting Working Group that the perception of landform/ skylines at night is a relevant consideration, with perception being a component of visual effects. There was also widespread agreement that a competent landscape character assessment cannot be undertaken at 30 minutes after official sunset, when the lights are switched on. This view is also supported in the Scottish Ministers' Decision for the Crystal Rig IV PLI. The Reporters concluded in their report at paragraph 4.141: *"4.141 It can be seen from the summaries of evidence above that the parties differ as to whether the proposed aviation lighting would be a visual impact alone. We consider that without being able to see and fully appreciate the features of the landscape and the composition of views it is not possible to carry out a meaningful landscape character assessment. Neither do we accept the notion, as suggested by East Lothian Council, that a memory of a familiar view should be taken into account in an assessment of landscape impact. On this matter, we find that the proposed lighting is indeed a visual concern, as the applicant asserts."* For this assessment therefore, we do not consider it is an unreasonable stance to adopt the findings of Scottish Ministers following a detailed Public Inquiry and for these reasons the potential effects of aviation lighting are considered to be a visual matter.

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Action
NatureScot Scoping Opinion dated 28/03/22	*'We advise that there is potential for this proposal to result in significant adverse impacts on Wild Land Area 19: Braeroy – Glenshirra - Creag Meagaidh. If it is not possible to mitigate these impacts, then we may object to the proposal.'*	The approach to assessment of WLA 19 has been discussed with NS including WLA viewpoint selection and the focus of the WLA assessment within the northern area of the WLA where the ZTV extents is largely contained. The WLA assessment is detailed in **Appendix 6.2**.
	'The Proposed Development will comprise up to 10 wind turbines, each up to 220 m blade tip height. The Cairngorms National Park lies at approximately 12.5 km to the east. The Ben Nevis and Glen Coe National Scenic Area (NSA) to the southwest, Glen Affric NSA to the west and Glen Strathfarrar NSA to the northwest are more distant at 20-35 km from the Proposed Development site. The Loch Lochy and Loch Oich Special Landscape Area (SLA) at approximately 1.9 km to the west and the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA to the north. The 10 turbines in the scoping layout and some of the access infrastructure are located within Wild Land Area 19: Braeroy – Glenshirra - Creag Meagaidh. *We are content that the scope of the LVIA focus on landscape effects within 20 km of the proposal.'*	Agreement noted on the focussed assessment within 20 km, however, in line with the THC request to consider landscape effects for the whole study area. *Landscape character effects have been considered across the 45* km study area. See **section 6.10**.
	Figure 4.1 in the scoping report sets out which of these valued landscapes will be scoped in for further assessment. We are content that neither the Cairngorms National Park or any of the NSAs require further assessment. The only Wild Land Area (WLA) to be scoped in for further assessment is WLA 19 and this assessment will follow our 2020 guidance. We are happy to engage with OPEN to agree in advance of the application submission on the wild land qualities to be assessed to ensure a focussed assessment. As per our agreement with the Highland Council, they will advise on the SLA assessment.	The approach to assessment of WLA 19 has been discussed with NS including WLA viewpoint selection. All of the WLQs are considered in the WLA assessment. The WLA assessment is detailed in **Appendix 6.2**.
	We appreciate the inclusion of the 1:50k OS backdrop under the ZTV to allow us to comment on the selection of suitable viewpoints. There is just a single viewpoint, VP5 Carn Dearg within WLA 19 and this is an elevated location at 768m AOD. In order to fully understand how the proposal may affect the range of wild land qualities, we advise that a lower level location should also be selected such as around at Coire Odhar Beag (NN368971). We are happy to discuss the precise location with OPEN as they	The approach to assessment of WLA 19 has been discussed with NS including WLA viewpoint selection. NS agreed an alternative location to Coire Odhar Beag on the slopes of Meallan Odhar in email dated 13/07/22.

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Action
	will be able to explore suitable options informed by wireframe analysis.	
	Within the scoping report (para 4.7.3) OPEN set out that they will take photos from three of the readily accessible viewpoints, Viewpoint 7 – Fort Augustus near Church Road, Viewpoint 12 – B862 An Suidhe Car Park and Viewpoint 16 – A87, Loch Garry. Whilst we appreciate the challenge in obtaining useful night time photography, given the highly sensitive landscape in which this proposal is located we advise that a low level location should be selected within WLA 19 to represent the likely effects of the lighting on the wild land qualities. We advise that the location suggested above at around NN368971 may be suitable.	An additional night time viewpoint and visualisation has been included in the LVIA, on the Beauly Denny track at the edges of WLA 19 in the approximate location suggested here.
	We note that the scoping report (para 4.9.1) lists the potential effects of the proposal. Whilst we largely agree with the sensitivities identified, we are curious to note that with regards to aviation lighting the effects are described in terms of visibility rather than the potential for landscape and visual effects. It is our view that aviation lighting has the potential to affect not only visual receptors but also the character of a landscape/ landscape characteristics. As daylight fades some landscape characteristics which under pin wild land attributes will change altering the baseline. For example the strength of some characteristics such as the naturalness of vegetation, are weakened as light fades and will ultimately no longer be present at darkness as it relies on noting the differentiation between land uses. Other characteristics however are strengthened, such as the apparent lack of development due to these become increasingly less visible. The proposed turbine lighting would be likely to add new obvious bright red lights particularly at distances of up to 10 km. From our own experience, the turbine lights would appear from these distances as prominent bright red lights, an uncharacteristic colour in this setting, which would draw attention to new structures which would otherwise not be visible after dusk. This is especially the case where they are seen to flash (due to rotor blades moving in front of them), whilst providing clear points of reference in the landscape, aiding navigation and reducing the sense of risk all of which currently culminate in areas of high wildness. Our view is that where lighting affects intrinsically dark landscapes (where there may only be occasional lights from scattered buildings and scarce intermittent	It is considered that visible aviation lighting will not affect landscape character, which is not readily perceived at night and that the assessment of visible lighting is solely a visual effect, noting that the perception of distinct landscape qualities at night is a visual consideration. There has been some consensus by the Scottish Government's Aviation Lighting Working Group that the perception of landform/ skylines at night is a relevant consideration, with perception being a component of visual effects. There is consensus that a competent landscape character assessment cannot be undertaken at 30 minutes after official sunset, when the lights are switched on. This view is also supported in the Scottish Ministers' Decision for the Crystal Rig IV PLI. The Reporters concluded in their report at paragraph 4.141: *"4.141 It can be seen from the summaries of evidence above that the parties differ as to whether the proposed aviation lighting would be a visual impact alone. We consider that without being able to see and fully appreciate the features of the landscape and the composition of views it is not possible to carry out a meaningful landscape character assessment. Neither do we accept the notion, as suggested by East Lothian Council, that a memory of a familiar view should be taken into*

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Action
	lighting from headlights), this may result in both landscape and visual effects.	*account in an assessment of landscape impact. On this matter, we find that the proposed lighting is indeed a visual concern, as the applicant asserts."* For this assessment therefore, we do not consider it is an unreasonable stance to adopt the findings of Scottish Ministers following a detailed Public Inquiry and for these reasons the potential effects of aviation lighting are considered to be a visual matter.
Mountaineering Scotland Scoping Opinion dated 23/02/22	*'3. Mountaineering Scotland has comments only on the proposed viewpoints, with reference to Scoping Report Question in Section 4.11, which we have reviewed for their appropriateness to making, in due course, an assessment of the mountaineering impact of the proposed development.* *4. Our opinion is that for assessing the potential impact on hillwalkers we endorse the proposed viewpoints 1-5, 13-15, 17, 18.'*	Agreement of the appropriateness of these locations noted.
Scotways Scoping Opinion dated 22/02/22	*'The enclosed map shows that right of way HI104 as recorded in the National Catalogue of Rights of Way (CROW) crosses or is close to the application site as shown on Figure 2.1 Site Location Plan. The enclosed map shows the Heritage Paths project promotes a route, Corrieyairack Pass [HP211] for its historic interest. This old route crosses or is close to the application site as shown on Figure 2.1 Site Location Plan. The enclosed map shows that our book Scottish Hill Tracks describes route number 236 Laggan to Fort Augustus by the Corrieyairack Pass [HT194] which crosses or is close to the application site as shown on Figure 2.1 Site Location Plan.'*	The Corrieyairack Pass is included in the assessment with the route identified as part of the Scottish National Trail and viewpoints assessed in detail on the affected section of the route, which is limited to the section close to the site.
	'As well as direct impacts of development upon public access, ScotWays has an interest in impacts on recreational amenity, so this includes the impact of wind farm development on the wider landscape. We anticipate that the applicant will take into account both recreational amenity and landscape impacts in developing their proposals for this site. We will consider these issues further should this scoping stage lead to a planning application. *As ScotWays is aware of a number of wind turbine proposed in this general area, we are particularly concerned that the cumulative impact of these proposed developments is taken into account.'*	Recreational receptors are included in the LVIA see visual effects in **section 6.11**. The cumulative baseline is described in **section 6.6** including the list of cumulative developments included in the LVIA.

6.5. Assessment Methods and Significance Criteria

Study Area

6.5.1. The initial step in the LVIA is the establishment of the study area for the assessment. Guidance developed by NatureScot (Visual Representation of Windfarms Version 2.2, February 2017) indicates that an area with a radius of 45 km from the nearest turbine is appropriate for the turbines of the size proposed in the Proposed Development. The 45 km radius study area is shown on **Figure 6.1**.

Desk Study

6.5.2. The assessment is initiated through a desk study of the site and study area as described above. ZTV analysis of the Proposed Development has been carried out for the study area outlined above (including cumulative ZTVs, CZTVs), as has mapping of landscape character, landscape related designations, wild land areas and principal visual receptors. The study area is not intended to provide a boundary beyond which the Proposed Development would not be seen, but rather to define the areas within which it may have a significant landscape or visual effect. A significant effect is, in reality, very unlikely to occur towards the edges of the identified study area.

6.5.3. The desk study also utilises Geographic Information System (GIS) and Resoft Windfarm software to explore the potential visibility of the Proposed Development. The resultant ZTV diagrams and wirelines provide an indication of which landscape and visual receptors are likely to be key in the assessment.

Field Survey

6.5.4. To inform the LVIA and layout design process, field survey was undertaken between January 2021 and October 2022. Viewpoint photography was captured during field survey visits in periods of good visibility. Field surveys were carried out throughout the 45 km radius study area, although surveys were concentrated within the areas shown on the ZTV to gain theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.

6.5.5. Field survey included visits to viewpoints as well as extensive travel around the study area to consider potential effects (including cumulative) on landscape character and on the experience of views seen from travel routes through the landscape. These visits have allowed the landscape character and the visual amenity of the study area to be experienced in a range of different conditions and seasonal variation. The field survey allows the assessors to judge the likely scale, distance, extent and prominence of the Proposed Development directly.

6.5.6. The landscape of the site was assessed for any particular features that contribute to the landscape character of the site or are important to the wider landscape setting. In particular, the form and pattern of the land was assessed from the site and surrounding area to better understand its character and to take these qualities into account in the siting and design of the Proposed Development. The landscape character types for the study area were reviewed and the key characteristics of the landscape were identified. The field surveys provided an experience of the character types of the study area and verification of how these areas might be affected by the Proposed Development. Visual amenity was surveyed including both static and sequential views, from receptors representative of the range of views and viewer types likely to experience the Proposed Development. Views from a variety of distances, aspects, elevations and extents were included. Receptor types include individual properties and settlements; main transport routes; main visitor locations; areas of cultural significance; the range of landscape character types within the study area; and the cumulative effects of the Proposed Development in combination with other existing or proposed wind farms in the study area.

Assessment Methods

Introduction

6.5.7. The detailed methodology for the assessment is described in detail in Technical **Appendix 6.1**. The broad principles used in the assessment of the significance of effects are also described here.

6.5.8. The objective of the assessment of the Proposed Development is to predict the likely significant effects on the landscape and visual resource. In accordance with the EIA Regulations the landscape and visual effects are assessed to be either significant or not significant. The LVIA does not define intermediate levels of significance as the EIA Regulations do not provide for these.

6.5.9. The significance of effects is assessed through a combination of two considerations; the sensitivity of the landscape receptor or view and the magnitude of change that would result from the addition of the Proposed Development.

Sensitivity of Receptor

6.5.10. Sensitivity is an expression of the ability of a landscape receptor or view to accommodate the Proposed Development. Sensitivity is determined through a combination of the value of the receptor and its susceptibility to the Proposed Development. The factors that determine these criteria are described in Technical **Appendix 6.1**. Levels of sensitivity - high, medium-high, medium, medium-low and low - are applied in order that the judgement used in the process of assessment is transparent.

Magnitude of Change

6.5.11. Magnitude of change is an expression of the extent of the effect on landscape receptors and views that would result from the introduction of the Proposed Development. The magnitude of change is assessed in terms of a number of variables and the factors that determine these criteria are described in Technical **Appendix 6.1**. Levels of magnitude of change - high, medium-high, medium, medium-low, low and negligible - are applied in order that the judgement used in the process of assessment is transparent.

Categories of Effects

6.5.12. The LVIA is intended to determine the effects that the Proposed Development would have on the landscape and visual resource. For the purposes of assessment, the potential effects on the landscape and visual resource are grouped into four categories:

- **Physical Effects** are restricted to the area within the site boundary and are the direct effects on the existing fabric of the site, such as alteration to ground cover. This category of effects is made up of landscape elements, which are the components of the landscape such as rough grassland and moorland that may be directly and physically affected by the Proposed Development.
- **Effects on Landscape Character:** landscape character is the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape, and the way that this pattern is perceived. Effects on landscape character arise either through the introduction of new elements that physically alter this pattern of elements, or through visibility of the Proposed Development, which may alter the way in which the pattern of elements is perceived. This category of effects is made up of landscape character receptors, which fall into two groups: landscape character types and landscape-related designated areas.
- **Effects on Views:** the assessment of effects on views is an assessment of how the introduction of the Proposed Development would affect views. The assessment of effects on views is carried out in two parts:

- an assessment of the effects that the Proposed Development would have on a series of viewpoints; and
- an assessment of the effects that the Proposed Development would have on views from principal visual receptors (relevant settlements and routes found throughout the study area).

- Cumulative Effects arise where the study areas for two or more wind farms (or in some cases other relevant development) overlap so that both of the wind farms/developments are experienced at a proximity where they may have a greater incremental effect, or where wind farms/other developments may combine to have a sequential effect.

6.5.13. It is important to remember that the objective of the cumulative assessment is different from the assessment of effects of the Proposed Development itself. In the cumulative assessment the intention is to establish whether or not the addition of the Proposed Development, in combination with other relevant existing and proposed wind farms, may lead to a landscape character or view that is characterised primarily by wind farms so that other patterns and components are no longer definitive. The assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development itself focusses on the effect that the Proposed Development would have on the viewpoints, principal visual receptors and landscape character receptors, taking baseline wind farms into consideration. Baseline (operational and under construction) cumulative wind farms are taken into consideration in both the assessment of the Proposed Development itself and the cumulative assessment, while consented and application stage wind farms are considered only in the cumulative assessment.

6.5.14. In accordance with guidance (NatureScot, 2021), the LVIA for each receptor considered assesses the effect arising from the addition of the Proposed Development to the cumulative situation, and not the overall effect of multiple wind farms. Cumulative effects are reported within the Residual Effects section of the LVIA for each landscape and visual receptor considered in detail.

Turbine Lighting

6.5.15. The wind turbines would be fitted with visible aviation lighting in accordance with the Air Navigation Order (2016) and Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) requirements. As such, there is potential for the proposed development to be visible at night. The CAA requires that all obstacles at or above 150 m above ordnance datum (AOD) are fitted with visible lighting and in the case of wind turbines these should be located on the nacelle with an additional requirement for lights to be provided at an intermediate level of half the nacelle height.

6.5.16. A description of the turbine lighting requirements is found within Volume 1, **Chapter 14: Aviation** which also includes a proposed reduced lighting scheme. The proposed lighting scheme reduces the requirement for nacelle lights to only 4 of the 8 turbines and removes the need for tower lighting. The proposed lighting scheme described in **Chapter 14** has been agreed with the CAA and the visual assessment of visible aviation lighting is therefore based on this.

6.5.17. See also Volume 4, Technical **Appendix 6.3:** Visual Assessment of Turbine Lighting, which describes the lighting parameters and approach to assessing night-time effects in more detail in relation to the Proposed Development. Volume 4, Technical **Appendix 6.3** also includes specific lighting ZTVs and night-time visualisations.

Nature of Effects

6.5.18. The effects of a proposed wind farm may be assessed as 'beneficial' or 'adverse' under the term 'Nature of effect'. The landscape and visual effects of wind farms are difficult to categorise in either of these brackets as, unlike other disciplines, there are no definitive criteria by which the effects of wind farms can be measured as being categorically 'beneficial' or 'adverse'.

Generally, in the development of 'new' wind farms, a precautionary approach is adopted by OPEN, which assumes that significant landscape and visual effects will be weighed on the adverse side of the planning balance. Beneficial effects may, however, arise where a proposed wind farm contributes to the enhancement of desirable characteristics such as the restoration of a degraded landscape (e.g. through peatland restoration) and neutral effects may occur where the proposed wind farm fits with the existing landscape character. Unless it is stated otherwise, the significant effects identified in this assessment are considered to be adverse. Judgements on the nature of effect are based on professional experience and reasoned opinion informed by best practice guidance.

Duration and Reversibility of Effects

6.5.19. The effects of the Proposed Development are of variable duration, and are assessed as short-term or long-term, and permanent or reversible. It is anticipated that the operational life of the Proposed Development would be 35 years. The turbines, site access tracks control building, BESS and substation compounds would be apparent during this time, and these effects are considered to be long-term. Other infrastructure and operations such as the construction processes and plant (including tall cranes for turbine erection) and construction and storage compounds would be apparent only during the initial construction period of the Proposed Development and are considered to be short-term effects.

6.5.20. The reversibility of effects is variable. The most apparent effects on the landscape and visual resource, which arise from the presence of the turbines, are reversible as the turbines would be removed on decommissioning. The effects of the tall cranes and heavy machinery used during the construction and decommissioning periods are also temporary and reversible. In order to avoid repetition, the duration and reversibility of effects are not reiterated throughout the assessment.

Assessment of Significance

6.5.21. The significance of effects is assessed through a combination of the sensitivity of the landscape receptor or view and the magnitude of change that would result from the addition of the Proposed Development. While this methodology is not reliant on the use of a matrix to determine the conclusion of a significant or not significant effect, a matrix is included in **Table 6.2** below to illustrate how combinations of sensitivity and magnitude of change ratings can give rise to significant effects. On this basis potential impacts are assessed as of Negligible, Minor, Moderate-Minor, Moderate, Moderate-Major and Major. In those instances where the magnitude has been assessed as 'no change' and the level of effect is recorded as 'No effect'.

6.5.22. For the purposes of this assessment, any effects with a significance level of Major and Moderate-Major have been deemed significant in EIA terms (dark grey shaded boxes in **Table 6.2)**. 'Moderate' levels of effect have the potential, subject to the assessor's professional judgement, to be considered as significant or not significant, depending on the sensitivity and magnitude of change factors evaluated (light grey shaded boxes in **Table 6.2**). These assessments are explained as part of the assessment, where they occur. Significance can therefore occur at a range of levels depending on the magnitude and sensitivity, however in all cases, a significant effect is considered more likely to occur where a combination of the variables results in the Proposed Development having a defining effect on the landscape character or view. Definitions are not provided for the individual categories of significance shown in the matrix and the reader should refer to the detailed definitions provided for the factors that combine to inform sensitivity and magnitude.

6.5.23. Effects assessed as being either Moderate-Minor, Minor or Negligible level are assessed as not significant (white boxes in **Table 6.2**). In line with the emphasis placed in GLVIA3 upon the application of professional judgement, an overly mechanistic reliance upon a matrix is avoided through the provision of clear and accessible narrative explanations of the rationale underlying the assessment made for each landscape and visual receptor.

Table 6.2 – Matrix used to guide determination of effect significance.

Magnitude / Sensitivity	High	Medium-High	Medium	Medium-Low	Low	Negligible
High	Major (Significant)	Major (Significant)	Moderate-Major (Significant)	Moderate (Significant / Not Significant)	Moderate - Minor (Not significant)	Minor (Not significant)
Medium-High	Major (Significant)	Moderate-Major (Significant)	Moderate (Significant / Not Significant)	Moderate (Significant / Not Significant)	Moderate - Minor (Not significant)	Minor (Not significant)
Medium	Moderate-Major (Significant)	Moderate (Significant / Not Significant)	Moderate (Significant / Not Significant)	Moderate - Minor (Not significant)	Minor (Not significant)	Minor (Not significant)
Medium-Low	Moderate (Significant / Not Significant)	Moderate (Significant / Not Significant)	Moderate - Minor (Not significant)	Minor (Not significant)	Minor (Not significant)	Negligible (Not significant)
Low	Moderate (Significant / Not Significant)	Moderate - Minor (Not significant)	Minor (Not significant)	Minor (Not significant)	Negligible (Not significant)	Negligible (Not significant)

Assumptions and Limitations

Zone of Theoretical Visibility Analysis

6.5.24. There are limitations in the theoretical production of ZTVs, and these should be borne in mind in their consideration and use:

- The ZTVs illustrate the 'bare ground' situation, and do not take into account the screening effects of vegetation, buildings, or other local features that may prevent or reduce visibility.
- The ZTVs do not indicate the reduction in visibility that occurs with increased distance from the Proposed Development. The nature of what would be visible from 3 km away would differ markedly from what would be visible from 20 km away, although both are indicated on the ZTVs as having the same level of visibility.

- There is a wide range of variation within the visibility shown on the ZTV. For example, an area shown on the blade tip ZTV as potentially having visibility of all of the turbines may gain views of the smallest extremity of blade tips, or of full turbines. This can make a considerable difference in the effects of the Proposed Development on that area.

6.5.25. These limitations mean that while the ZTVs are used as a starting point in the assessment, providing an indication of where the Proposed Development theoretically would be visible, the information drawn from the ZTVs should not be completely relied upon to accurately represent visibility of the Proposed Development.

Visualisations

6.5.26. Photographs and other graphic material such as wirelines and photomontages used in the assessment are for illustrative purposes only and, whilst useful tools in the assessment, are not considered to be completely representative of what would be apparent to the human eye.

6.5.27. Visualisations that are produced to The Highland Council *'Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments'* (2016), (hereafter referred to as the THC visualisation guidance) provides the following statements of limitation:

- For panoramic images and photomontages, Section 3 of the THC visualisation guidance, Images for Landscape Assessment, request the following statement be included – *'The images contained on this page and the following page are not representative of scale and distance from the actual viewpoint and show the wind farm development in its wider landscape context only'.*
- For single frame images and photomontages, Section 4 of the THC visualisation guidance, Images for Visual Impact Assessment, request the following statement be included - *'when viewed at a comfortable arm's length (approx. 500 mm), this printed image is representative of our detailed central vision, but is not representative of scale and distance. '*

6.5.28. NatureScot provides the following information on the limitations of visualisations that are produced according to the NatureScot guidance 'Visual Representation of Windfarms' (February 2017): '*Visualisations of wind farms have a number of limitations which you should be aware of when using them to form a judgement on a wind farm proposal. These include:*

- a visualisation can never show exactly what the wind farm will look like in reality due to factors such as: different lighting, weather and seasonal conditions which vary through time and the resolution of the image;
- the images provided give a reasonable impression of the scale of the turbines and the distance to the turbines, but can never be 100% accurate;
- a static image cannot convey turbine movement, or flicker or reflection from the sun on the turbine blades as they move;
- the viewpoints illustrated are representative of views in the area, but cannot represent visibility at all locations;
- to form the best impression of the impacts of the wind farm proposal these images are best viewed at the viewpoint location shown;
- the images must be printed at the right size to be viewed properly (260 mm by 820 mm); and
- you should hold the images flat at a comfortable arm's length. If viewing these images on a wall or board at an exhibition, you should stand at arm's length from the image presented to gain the best impression.'

6.6. Baseline Conditions

Introduction

6.6.1. The landscape and visual baseline provides a description of the existing landscape and visual conditions in the area that may be affected. Establishing the baseline will, when reviewed alongside the description of the Proposed Development, form the basis for the identification and description of the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development.

6.6.2. The baseline description of the landscape that may be affected is primarily determined by the physical footprint of the Proposed Development components and their ZTV (**Figures 6.9 – 6.12**). The baseline also describes current pressures that may cause change in the landscape in the future, in particular drawing on information for wind energy developments that are not yet present in the landscape but are at other stages in the planning process. Operational and under construction wind energy developments are regarded as part of the baseline landscape character of the area. Any changes resulting from the Proposed Development are assessed within this context in the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

6.6.3. This section provides a baseline overview of the landscape and visual resource in the study area. A preliminary assessment has identified those landscape and visual receptors that may have the potential to experience significant effects, which require to be assessed in full. Detailed baseline descriptions are provided separately within the assessment section for each receptor considered to have potential for significant effects following the preliminary assessment.

Landscape Baseline Overview

Site Context

6.6.4. The Proposed Development turbines are located approximately 6.5 km to the south of Fort Augustus and are situated within the rolling upland moorland to the east of the Great Glen. The main components of the immediate landscape include a series of large-scale, smooth rounded hills and the steep-sided Glen Tarff. The BDOHL is aligned on a north-west to south-east axis, through the site. General Wades Military Road (GWMR) and the Corrieyairack Pass are found to the north-east of the Proposed Development turbines connecting Fort Augustus to Laggan.

6.6.5. Moorland ground cover dominates the site with some small rocky outcrops and jagged local hill summits punctuating the moorland terrain in the surrounding context of the site. Glen Tarff, which makes up the northern most section of the Corrieyairack Pass, has small areas of woodland clumped on the steep glen sides with larger areas of estate woodland found within the context of Culachy House. Scattered wind-cut trees are also found on the upper slopes of these steep sloped glens albeit as an isolated feature found on more sheltered slopes.

6.6.6. The topography of the site itself is typical of the smooth moorland ridges / rolling uplands of the immediate area. Local summits and high points with the immediate area include Mullach a' Ghlinne (528 m AOD), Carn Bad na Circe (495 m AOD), Meallan Odhar (south-west) (535 m AOD) and Eilrig Cairn (552 m AOD). The site area is contained by the larger hills that surround this area to the south and east including Glas Charn (790 m AOD), Poll-gormack Hill (806m AOD), Meallan Odhar (south-east) (605 m AOD), Corrieyairack Hill (806 m AOD) and Carn a Chuilinn (816 m AOD).

6.6.7. The wider landscape context to the site includes the Great Glen to the west; the mountainous landscape of the Monadhliath Mountains to the east; and the mountain landscapes of Glen Affric and Knoydart further west and Ben Nevis and Glen Coe to the south-west. The scenic qualities of these landscapes are recognised through in the National Scenic Area (NSA) and Special Landscape Area (SLA) designations found within this part of the Central Highlands.

Landscape Character

6.6.8. The landscape assessment considers the effect of the Proposed Development on the Landscape Character Types (LCTs) within the site and the study area. The LCTs found in the study area are shown on **Figure 6.4** with a detailed plan shown on **Figure 6.6**. (**Figure 6.14** shows LCTs with the blade tip ZTV of the Proposed Development and in detail on **Figure 6.16**).

6.6.9. In early 2019, NatureScot published an update to the characterisation of Scotland's landscape as a digital resource. The information builds on the characterisation studies published in the 1990's. NatureScot describe the recent publication as now superseding the 1990s landscape character descriptions and mapping adding that '*Where there are topic-specific landscape capacity or sensitivity studies, they would take precedence for informing that development type, e.g. windfarms.'*

6.6.10. There are no 'topic specific' characterisation studies relevant to the study area and as such the 2019 NatureScot landscape character assessment is considered to form the most up to date characterisation study in the area. The landscape character boundaries used in this study therefore forms the basis of character assessment in this LVIA. Key landscape characteristics have been summarised from this study for those LCTs assessed in detail.

6.6.11. The Proposed Development turbines are located within the LCT 236 Smooth Moorland Ridges, which extends south-west parallel to the Great Glen and transitions to the north-east with LCT 221 Rolling Upland and the LCT 238 Rugged Massif – Lochaber to the south. Parts of the access infrastructure would be located within LCT 225 Broad Steep-Sided Glen.

Landscape Designations

6.6.12. A landscape designation is an area of landscape identified as being of importance at international, national or local level, either defined by statute or identified in development plans. The landscapes are designated in relation to their special qualities or features which warrant special consideration through the planning system. National and local designations occur in parts of the study area and are designated at a national level by Scottish Ministers or NatureScot and at a local level by the local planning authority.

6.6.13. There are three ways in which such designations are relevant to the LVIA:

- The presence of a designation can give an indication of a recognised value that may increase the sensitivity of a landscape character receptor, viewpoint or visual receptor, and may therefore affect the significance of the effect on that receptor.
- The presence of a relevant designation can lead to the selection of a representative viewpoint within the designated area, as the viewpoint will provide a representative outlook from that area.
- Designated areas may be included as landscape character receptors so that the effects of the Proposed Development on these features of the landscape that have been accorded particular value can be specifically assessed.

6.6.14. The Proposed Development site is not located within any national or regional landscape designations intended to protect its landscape quality, as shown in **Figure 6.5**. Landscape designations within the landscape study area include:

- National Scenic Areas (NSAs) – Glen Strathfarrar NSA; Glen Affric NSA; Kintail NSA; Knoydart NSA; Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA; Loch Rannoch and Glen Lyon NSA; the Cairngorm Mountains NSA; and the Morar and Glen Shiel NSA
- Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) – Ben Alder, Laggan and Glen Banchor SLA; Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA; Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA; Strathconan, Monar and Mullardoch SLA; and Moidart.
- Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDLs) – Beaufort Castle GDL; Dochfour GDL; Aldourie Castle GDL; Corrour Lodge GDL and Achnacarry GDL.

6.6.15. Landscape designations found in the study area are shown on **Figure 6.5** with a detailed plan shown on **Figure 6.6.** (**Figure 6.15** shows landscape designations with the blade tip ZTV of the Proposed Development and in detail on **Figure 6.16**).

Wildland

6.6.16. Wild Land Areas (WLAs), defined and described by NatureScot, are not a landscape designation but are considered to be of national importance in NPF4. There are six WLAs in the 45 km study area, which are largely associated with the mountainous areas to the east and west of the Great Glen. The Proposed Development turbines and some of the access infrastructure is located within WLA 19: Braeroy – Glenshirra - Creag Meagaidh which extends to around 20 km to the south of the Proposed Development.

6.6.17. Within the wider study area, the WLA 15: Cairngorms lies beyond 30 km to the east and the other 4 WLAs are located between 15-20 km of the Proposed Development (WLA 14: Rannoch–Nevis–Mamores-Alder; WLA 20: Monadhliath; WLA 24: Central Highlands; and WLA 18: Kinlochlourn-Knoydart-Morar).

6.6.18. WLAs found in the study area are shown on the landscape designations **Figure 6.5** with a detailed plan shown on **Figure 6.6.** (**Figure 6.15** shows WLAs with the blade tip ZTV of the Proposed Development and in detail on **Figure 6.16**).

Visual Baseline Overview

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

Blade Tip ZTV

6.6.19. The blade tip ZTV is shown on **Figure 6.9** and alongside landscape character, designations and visual receptors on **Figures 6.14-6.18**. It is also shown on detailed 50k mapping at A1 size on **Figure 6.10** which for greater legibility has been produced for an approximate 20 km area within which the majority of ZTV extent is found.

6.6.20. The landform of the site and surrounding area has a notable influence on the extent of visibility across the study area and the pattern of theoretical visibility produced by the Proposed Development is considered to be notably limited as a result.

6.6.21. Blade tip theoretical visibility is relatively consistent across a localised area around the site which is contained within the upland plateau immediately surrounding the site within 1-2 km to the north-west and south-east and around 4 km to the north-east and south-west. Apart from this localised area, theoretical visibility is very limited within the south-east half of study area with only a few patches of limited visibility found on elevated hill tops. Theoretical visibility within the north-west half of the study area is also limited in extent albeit that a swathe of theoretical visibility is found on the hills and ridges of the northern side of the Great Glen above Fort Augustus which sits within around 10-15 km. The extent of theoretical visibility beyond 15 km in this north-west half of the study area is then limited to east facing slopes of elevated ridges and hill summits, dissipating with distance due to successive layers of hill ridges that intervene.

Hub ZTV

6.6.22. The hub height ZTV for the Proposed Development is shown in **Figure 6.11** and in detail on **Figure 6.12**. The hub height ZTV is run at the turbine hub (or nacelle) height, of 119 m and shows potential visibility of any part of a wind turbine up to the height of its hub or nacelle (but not all of the wind turbine tower would necessarily be seen). Comparison between ZTVs to blade tip and hub allows identification of those areas from which the turbine towers might not be visible, but the blades (or part of these) would. The areas of visibility shown on the blade tip ZTV (**Figures 6.9 & 6.10**) but not on the hub height ZTV (**Figures 6.11 & 6.12**) are the areas from which parts of the blades may be visible, and not the towers.

6.6.23. The overall pattern of theoretical visibility shown in the hub height ZTV is broadly similar to the blade tip ZTV, but with notably reduced theoretical visibility to the north and west along the Great Glen and on the north sloping sides of the Great Glen. Other reductions in theoretical visibility are found at the edges of the ZTV extent, this is a consistent reduction across the study area which is symptomatic of the overall limited nature of theoretical visibility due to the screening effect of intervening landform which is more acutely noticeable for the lower hub heights than for the blade tips. This reduction is also found to reduce the magnitude of change for many of the receptors in the area as large areas of theoretical blade visibility do not have any hub visibility.

Horizontal Angle ZTV

6.6.24. The Horizontal Angle ZTV is shown on **Figure 6.13**. The Horizontal Angle ZTV measures how much of the horizontal field of view is theoretically occupied by the Proposed Development. It measures the maximum lateral spread from the furthest left to the furthest right theoretically visible turbine of the Proposed Development. The information is presented as a horizontal angle in degrees. The horizontal angle ZTV provides further information on the likely magnitude of effect of the Proposed Development because the results reflect the effect that distance has on the apparent size of the Proposed Development: a large object up-close has more visual impact than the same sized object further away (all other things being equal). The horizontal angle ZTV is displayed using coloured bands showing incremental degrees of horizontal angle, in order to identify areas of greater effect.

6.6.25. The horizontal angle ZTV shows that the widest, theoretical, horizontal field of view is occupied in close proximity to the Proposed Development, particularly within the footprint of the proposed turbines themselves, where the turbines could occupy more than 180 degrees (50%) of the field of view. Within around 600 m of the proposed turbines the HZTV drops to between 90-180 degrees (25 to 50%) and within around 1.8 km of the proposed turbines would be between 50-90 degrees (14 to 25%).

6.6.26. The Proposed Development would have a slightly wider horizontal extent in views from the north-east and south-west, where the proposed turbines would appear more spread out across the width of the site but will have a reduced horizontal extent in views from the north-west and south-east, where the proposed turbines would occupy a narrower part of the view.

6.6.27. The HZTV is notable for the magnitude at which the horizontal angle occupied by the Proposed Development decreases with distance. From 3-4 km, the horizontal angle occupied by the Proposed Development drops to less than 30 degrees (8%); beyond 5 km to less than 10 degrees (3%); and beyond 20 km to less than 5 degrees (1%) of the field of view.

6.6.28. The visual effect of the Proposed Development will therefore diminish with distance; generally resulting in a higher magnitude of change from locations at closer proximity, where the Proposed Development occupies a wider horizontal extent (or 'lateral spread'), and a lower magnitude of change from distant locations for much of the study area where the extent of the horizon occupied by the Proposed Development is small.

Principal Visual Receptors

Settlements

6.6.29. Settlements identified in the HwLDP that lie within the study area include Fort William, Fort Augustus and Drumnadrochit. These settlements are found with the Great Glen and are connected by the A82.

6.6.30. Other scattered and smaller rural settlement within the study area is largely found within surrounding straths and glens, including: Invergarry and Invermoriston also connected by the A82 to the larger settlements within the Great Glen; Spean Bridge and Roy Bridge on the A86; Dundreggan and Dalchreichart on the A887 within Glen Moriston; Newtonmore and Kingussie on the A9 corridor within the upper Spey Valley; Whitebridge, Foyers, Lochgarthside, Gorthleck and Errogie on the B862 / B852 within Strath Errick; East Croachy, Farr and Tombreck within Strath Nairn; Milton and Balnain within Glen Urquhart; and Tomich, Cannich and Erchless within Strathglass.

Residential Properties

6.6.31. The Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 2/19 'Residential Visual Amenity Assessment' (RVAA), provides guidance on assessing residential visual amenity, specifically including in relation to large scale wind turbine developments. The Landscape Institute guidance presents the following advice, 'When assessing relatively conspicuous structures such as wind turbines, and depending on local landscape characteristics, a preliminary study area of approximately 1.5 to 2 km radius may initially be appropriate in order to begin identifying properties to include in a RVAA.'

6.6.32. In line with this guidance, a residential property search within the larger 2 km radius recommended, identifies that there are no properties within a 2 km radius of the Proposed Development. Whilst it is recognised that there are further residential properties within the wider landscape that could potentially experience a significant effect, the Technical Guidance Note explains that the 'exceptionally large' study areas of up to 3 km are disproportionate further stating that 'The logic for these (exceptionally) large study areas was based on certain findings of LVIAs which identified significant visual effects from 'settlements' or from clusters of residential properties within this range. This fails to recognise that RVAA is a stage beyond LVIA. Consequently, many RVAAs, including those of windfarms with large turbines (150 m and taller), have included disproportionately extensive study areas incorporating too many properties. This appears to be based on the misconception that if a significant effect has been identified in the LVIA adjacent to a property at 2.5 km it will also potentially lead to reaching the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold.'

6.6.33. The closest residential property is approximately 3.6 km to the north-east of the Proposed Development turbines and in line with the LI guidance noted above, an RVAA is not considered to be required.

Transportation Routes

6.6.34. There are a number of A and B class roads within the study area as shown on **Figures 6.7 & 6.8**. Key routes for the Proposed Development include – the A82 which follows the Great Glen; the A87 which connects the Great Glen to the western Highlands; and the B862 to the south-east of Loch Ness. The only railway within the study area is the Glasgow to Mallaig line which passes through the southwestern quadrant of the study area and Glen Spean at its closest point. See **Figures 6.7 and 6.8**.

Recreational Routes

6.6.35. There are several long-distance walking routes in the study area including – The Affric Kintail Way; Cape Wrath Way; The East Highland Way; Great Glen Way; Scottish National Trail; South Loch Ness Trail; and West Highland Way. Other recreational routes in the study area include the Great Glen Canoe Trail and NCR 78 both of which pass along the Great Glen. See **Figures 6.7 and 6.8**.

Core Paths

6.6.36. There are no Core Paths located close to where the turbines, infrastructure and access tracks of the Proposed Development are located. The routes of Core Paths would not therefore deviate or be permanently affected due to the introduction of the Proposed Development. The closest Core Path to the Proposed Development infrastructure is approximately 400 m to the east of the Proposed Development site entrance along the Ardachy minor road (IN16.01 Kilchuimen Burial Ground and River Tarff). Other core paths within around 5-10 km follow the routes of the Caledonian Canal and Great Glen Way, in the area of Loch Lundie or within commercial forestry in the Inchdarroch Forest. See **Figures 6.7 and 6.8**.

Viewpoints

6.6.37. The viewpoints used in the assessment have been selected to cover points of specific importance such as recognised viewpoints, designated landscapes, settlements, important routes and attractions, and to inform the definition of the likely extent of significant visual effects arising from the Proposed Development. A variety of landscape character areas and points from different directions and distances have also been represented in the selected views.

6.6.38. Twenty viewpoints for the landscape and visual assessment have been selected in consultation with THC and NatureScot. **Table 6.3** lists the viewpoints and provides information on their location, the receptors which may experience views at these locations, viewpoint distance, elevation and view direction to the Proposed Development. Viewpoint locations are shown in conjunction with the blade tip ZTV on **Figures 6.9** (A3 size) and **Figure 6.10** (A1 size) and the hub height ZTV on **Figures 6.11** (A3 size) and **Figure 6.12** (A1 size).

6.6.39. Visualisations and figures have been produced to NatureScot's guidance (**Figures 6.22a-6.46b**) in line with SNH (2017) 'Visual Representation of Wind Farms: Version 2.2'[1] and THC's guidance (**Figures 6.48 – 6.68**) in line with THC (2016) 'Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments'[2], photomontages are prepared for viewpoints within 20 km radius of the nearest turbine.

Table 6.3 – LVIA Viewpoints

VP No	Viewpoint Name	Grid Ref		Receptor Type / LCT / Designation	Nearest proposed turbine (km) / Elevation (AOD m) / View Direction		
1	Corrieyairack Pass	240232	799448	Recreational Walkers	1.28	577.1	NW
2	General Wade's Military Road	238311	803142	Recreational Walkers	1.74	344.3	S
3	Corrieyairack Hill	242750	799732	Hill Walkers	3.75	880.5	W
4	Carn a' Chuilinn	241679	803387	Hill Walkers	4.48	812.8	SW
5	Carn Dearg	235723	794879	Hill Walkers	5.42	763.3	NE
6	Fort Augustus, Car Park Adjacent to A82	237887	809419	Settlement	7.85	21.2	S

[1] NatureScot (2017). Visual Representation of Wind Farms, Version 2.2. Available at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/visual-representation-wind-farms-guidance.
[2] THC (2016). Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments. Available at: https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/12880/visualisation_standards_for_wind_energy_developments.

VP No	Viewpoint Name	Grid Ref		Receptor Type / LCT / Designation	Nearest proposed turbine (km) / Elevation (AOD m) / View Direction		
7	Fort Augustus near Church Road	237487	809586	Settlement	8.01	39.4	S
8	Loch Lundie	229464	804517	Recreational Walkers	8.43	159.7	E
9	A82 North of Fort Augustus	238973	810681	Road Users	9.21	29.1	S
10	An Suidhe	244261	810362	Recreational Walkers	11.06	446.9	SW
11	Great Glen Way, Carn an Doire Mhoir	238951	811748	Recreational Walkers	10.26	231.8	S
12	B862 An Suidhe Car Park	244953	810497	Road Users	11.59	391.8	SW
13	Burach	238302	814134	Hill Walkers	12.58	604.5	S
14	Ben Tee	224077	797203	Hill Walkers	13.41	898.2	N
15	Meall Dubh	224540	807886	Hill Walkers	14.36	787.2	E
16	A87, Loch Garry	221181	802860	Road Users	15.97	244.1	E
17	Meall Fuar-mhonaidh	245687	822185	Hill Walkers	22.16	696.2	SE
18	Toll Creagach	219453	828257	Hill Walkers	32.23	1048.7	SE
19	Alltsigh Loch Ness	245709	818941	Recreational Visitors	19.18	15.4	SE
20	Meallan Odhar	235492	799954	Hill Walkers	1.72	366.1	NE
21	Beauly-Denny track	237670	802494	Recreational Walkers	0.92	366.7	S

6.6.40. 'Wireline only' illustrative viewpoints were also agreed in consultation with THC and NatureScot and although not included as assessment viewpoints, wireline visualisations have been prepared for these locations. **Table 6.4** below lists these wireline locations along with information on their location.

Table 6.4 – Wireline only Viewpoints

VP No	Viewpoint Name	Grid Ref		Nearest proposed turbine (km) / Elevation (AOD m) / View Direction		
A	Loch Ness	243477	816418	15.98	15.3	S
B	Craig Meagaidh	241841	787544	12.57	1129.2	N

VP No	Viewpoint Name	Grid Ref		Nearest proposed turbine (km) / Elevation (AOD m) / View Direction		
C	Ben Nevis	216675	771287	35.61	1343.7	NE
D	Coire Odhar Beag	237031	797461	2.53	539.9	N

Wind Energy Development Baseline

Introduction

6.6.41. The cumulative assessment set out in the LVIA assesses only the additional landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development, in the context of different baseline scenarios that make assumptions about existing and proposed wind farms. It does not present an assessment of the combined effects of all of the relevant wind farms on the landscape.

Scope of Cumulative Assessment

6.6.42. During scoping stages, a review of the broad wind farm context within the 45 km radius was undertaken. THC requested that the broad wind farm context should extend to 60 km. An updated broad wind farm context plan to 60 km has therefore been provided in the LVIA, see **Figure 6.19**. Having reviewed this broad wind farm context it is considered that any cumulative effects that would occur, would arise as a result of the pattern of development within 45 km. A detailed map of cumulative sites within a 45 km study area has therefore been produced to provide the baseline for the cumulative assessment, as shown on **Figure 6.20** and listed in **Table 6.5**. The cumulative baseline map includes operational, consented and application stage wind energy developments and where the turbines are greater than 50 m to blade tip, as of August 2023. Any changes in the cumulative situation after this date are not incorporated into the assessment. Scoping stage sites are also included on the cumulative baseline map for reference.

Table 6.5 – Cumulative Windfarms within 45 km

Windfarm	No of Turbines	Blade Tip Height (m)	Status	Distance from nearest Proposed Development turbine (km)
Millennium Group	26	115 / 125	Operational	9.9
Stronelairg	66	135 / 125 / 110	Operational	10.0
Beinneun Extension	7	136	Operational	13.7
Beinneun	25	132	Operational	13.8
Bhlaraidh	32	135	Operational	18.0
Corriegarth	23	120	Operational	21.5
Corrimony	5	100	Operational	23.0
Dunmaglass Estate	33	120	Operational	30.0
Glen Kyllachy	20	110	Operational	43.0
Farr	40	102	Operational	43.6

Windfarm	No of Turbines	Blade Tip Height (m)	Status	Distance from nearest Proposed Development turbine (km)
Aberarder	24	130 / 175	Consented	32.4
Millennium South	10	132	Consented	11.1
Dell	14	130.5	Consented	11.4
Bhlaraidh Extension	15	180	Consented	18.6
Belladrum	1	54	Consented	43.3
Bunloinn	10	200 / 230	Application	20.3
Cloiche	36	149.9	Application	7.2
Corriegarth 2	16	149.9	Application	21.1
Easter Aberchalder	1	68	Application	25.2
Dell Redesign	9	200	Scoping	11.4
Tomchrasky	43	220 / 185	Scoping	16.9
Fiodhag	46	149.925	Scoping	19.8
Chrathaich Wind Farm	17	180	Scoping	19.9
Loch Liath Wind Farm	26	200	Scoping	20.7
Allt Carach	Null	Null	Scoping	41.7

6.7. Potential Effects

6.7.1. Potential effects are those which could result from the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. **Table 6.6** below describes the landscape and visual effects that may arise from the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. It should be noted that their inclusion in this table does not imply that they would occur, or be significant, in the case of each of the landscape and visual receptors assessed in the LVIA.

Table 6.6 – Potential Effects

Specific Element	Potential Effects	Potential Sensitive Receptors
Construction		
Construction plant, temporary construction facilities, construction cranes, construction compounds, batching plant and borrow pits	Temporary physical effects on landscape fabric Permanent physical effects on landscape fabric (i.e. permanent removal of vegetation / forestry / ground cover) Temporary effects on landscape character Temporary effects on views Temporary cumulative effects	Physical landscape features Landscape character receptors Visual receptors

Specific Element	Potential Effects	Potential Sensitive Receptors
Operation (day- time)		
Turbines, access tracks, control building and substation, battery energy storage facilities, restored construction compound and working areas.	Long term effects on landscape character including cumulative effects. Long term effects on views including cumulative effects	Landscape character receptors Visual receptors
Operation (night-time)		
Turbine lighting on turbines	Long term effects on views	Visual receptors

6.7.2. The effects of the construction and operation of the Proposed Development on the landscape and visual resource would arise principally from the construction and operation of the turbines and access tracks. The temporary construction facilities, such as cranes, construction vehicles, borrow pits, construction compound and delivery vehicles required during the construction would also have effects on the landscape and visual resource during the 24-month construction period. The operational lifespan of the Proposed Development would be 35 years, after which it would be appropriately decommissioned.

6.7.3. It is expected that decommissioning would take approximately 12 months and that associated activities would be similar in nature to construction. Operational and construction effects are assessed and reported together in this chapter. Due to the large scale of the wind farm proposed, it is considered that there would be no instances where construction effects trigger a significant effect for receptors where operational effects are found to be not significant.

6.8. Mitigation

Mitigation of Physical Landscape Effects

6.8.1. Ground disturbance on-site would be restricted as far as practicable, and any soil materials excavated would be retained on the site for re-use on areas to be re-vegetated following the construction phase. The reuse of existing tracks for sections of access tracks would minimise the amount of new track required as part of the Proposed Development, and so minimising further landscape and visual effects where possible.

Embedded Mitigation

6.8.2. The finalising layout of the Proposed Development is a vital part of the EIA process and is the stage where the biggest contribution can be made to mitigate potential landscape and visual effects, creating a wind farm which is appropriate for the existing landscape character and visual features of an area. The design of the Proposed Development has evolved as part of an iterative process which has aimed to provide an optimal design in environmental, as well as technical and economic terms and landscape and visual mitigation measures have been a central consideration in the design process. This process is described in **Chapter 2: Site Selection and Design Iteration** of this EIA Report.

Landscape and Visual Design Strategy

6.8.3. The proposed turbine layout has been designed to minimise the effect on the surrounding landscape and visual resource, in particular the design has sought to minimise effects on the Great Glen, Fort Augustus and WLA 19.

6.8.4. The landscape and visual design strategy has focussed on the following key objectives:

- Reduce turbine visibility from within the area of Fort Augustus, scattered settlement and surrounding road network within the Great Glen.
- Create as compact a layout as possible to contain effects on wildness qualities to the northern corner of WLA 19 which largely aligns with areas where the BDOHL incurs baseline influence.
- Create as compact a layout as possible to minimise effects on the GWMR Scheduled Monument found in the Corrieyairack Pass.
- Minimise effects on the nearby Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA and Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA.
- Create a layout with a clear design rationale and simple appearance so it would be viewed as a compact and cohesive arrangement in longer distance views form the surrounding landscape and hilltops (including elevated sections of the Great Glen Way).
- The locations of proposed borrow pit search areas, construction compound, battery energy storage compound, access tracks and hardstands have been considered throughout the design process to minimise landscape and visual impacts where possible, with key infrastructure elements located on or behind slopes that are relatively concealed from key visual receptors.

6.8.5. The design of the layout has involved consideration of the landscape and visual resource within the study area to gain an insight into the manner in which the design evolution potentially mitigates effects on those key sensitivities identified in the objectives above. Key design viewpoints utilised in this process include – viewpoint 2 – General Wade's Military Road; viewpoint 5 – Carn Dearg; viewpoint 6 – Fort Augustus, car park adjacent to A82; viewpoint 9 – A82 North of Fort Augustus; viewpoint 11 – Great Glen Way, Carn an Doire Mhoir; viewpoint 14 – Ben Tee; viewpoint 16 – A87, Loch Garry; and viewpoint 20 – Meallan Odhar.

6.8.6. The landscape and visual design strategy for the Proposed Development has had a substantial influence on the appearance of the Proposed Development within the immediate context of the Great Glen and surrounding landscape. Design iterations explored for the Proposed Development, including the layout evolution, is explained in more detail in **Chapter 2: Site Selection and Design Iteration**.

Turbine Lighting Mitigation

6.8.7. **Chapter 14: Aviation**, includes an assessment of the turbine lighting requirements of the Proposed Development, see also **Appendix 6.3** – Visual Assessment of Visible Aviation Lighting. As described in **Appendix 6.3**, and **Chapter 14** a reduced lighting scheme has been agreed with the CAA and will be implemented. It is also proposed that visibility sensors are installed on relevant turbines to measure prevailing atmospheric conditions and visibility range. Should atmospheric conditions (for example an absence of low cloud cover, rain, mist, haze or fog) mean that visibility around the site is greater than 5 km from the Proposed Development, CAA policy permits lights to operate in a lower intensity mode of 200 candela (being a minimum of 10% of their capable illumination). If visibility is restricted to 5 kms or less, the lights would operate at 2000 candela.

6.9. Residual Effects Assessment - Physical Landscape

Introduction

6.9.1. The first category of effects covered in the assessment is physical effects, which are direct effects on the fabric of the site, such as changes to ground cover. Physical effects are found only on the site, where existing landscape elements may be removed or altered by the Proposed Development. The methodology for the assessment of physical effects is described

in full in Technical **Appendix 6.1**. It should be noted that landscape elements are assessed with reference to their contribution to the landscape character rather than in ecological terms.

6.9.2. Parts of the access infrastructure would be located in a grazed field within LCT 225 Broad Steep-Sided Glen to gain access from the public road, the physical change is to the edges of this field for a short section of the access track and therefore not considered to have the potential for significant effects.

6.9.3. The areas of the site in which the turbines and the majority of infrastructure would be located lies within areas of moorland. As a result, the physical landscape effect of the Proposed Development on the Moorland landscape element has been assessed in detail below.

Moorland

Baseline and Sensitivity

6.9.4. The construction of access tracks and other infrastructure will require the removal of areas of moorland ground cover. The moorland on the site comprises grasses and heathers typical of the Scottish uplands and upland areas within the Central Highlands. The value of moorland is medium; it is a widespread landscape element in the Scottish Highlands that is not rare or specifically recognised for its value, but it is a key characteristic element of the Smooth Moorland Ridges and Rolling Upland LCTs that cover the site and surrounding areas. There is also value in the contrast that the moorland has with the Great Glen in framing and offering a large-scale backdrop to scenic views. The susceptibility to change of this landscape element is medium-low due to the potential for reinstatement and restoration of the ground cover following construction and at the end of the lifetime of the Proposed Development. The combination of the medium value and medium-low susceptibility to change of the landscape element results in a medium sensitivity for moorland ground cover.

Magnitude of Change

6.9.5. The Proposed Development would result in an alteration to the moorland ground cover from the removal of parts of this landscape element during the construction phase. The access tracks, crane hardstandings, turbine foundations, substation compounds, construction compounds, borrow pits and cable routes are all proposed to be located within this land cover. Following construction, moorland would be reinstated over the areas not permanently occupied by infrastructure that have been disturbed by landform change including the restored construction compound and cable routes. The remaining moorland within the site would be retained over the lifetime of the Proposed Development.

6.9.6. The area of moorland to be removed in the construction and operation of the Proposed Development is relatively limited in relation to the total area of moorland on the site and elsewhere within the Smooth Moorland Ridges and Rolling Upland LCTs. The magnitude of change of this removal is therefore considered to be low.

Significance of the Effect

6.9.7. The effect of the Proposed Development on moorland is considered to **minor and not significant.** The extent of removal is not considered to constitute a redefinition of this landscape element either as a component of the site area or the wider landscape.

6.10. Residual Effects Assessment - Landscape Character

Introduction

6.10.1. Landscape character is the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape, and the way that this pattern is perceived. Effects on landscape character occur both on the site, where the pattern of elements that characterises the landscape would be directly altered by the addition of the Proposed Development to the landscape; and off-site, around the study area, where visibility of the Proposed Development may alter the way in which this pattern of elements is perceived.

6.10.2. It should be noted that levels of magnitude of change on landscape character receptors are generally found to be lower than the magnitude of change on viewpoints that lie within these receptors. This means, for example, that if a viewpoint is assessed to undergo a medium-high magnitude of change it does not necessarily follow that the landscape character types within which it lies would also undergo a medium-high magnitude of change but may undergo a medium magnitude of change instead. This is because the effects on viewpoints are assessed within the context of a specific outlook of the Proposed Development and are usually specifically selected to gain a direct view over the site. The landscape character of a receptor is not necessarily determined so specifically by the outlook over the Proposed Development, and there are many other considerations, both visual and perceptual, that may combine to give an area its landscape character. This means that the Proposed Development may have a lesser degree of influence on landscape character than on a specific view. This is particularly true of areas that lie slightly further away from the Proposed Development. In the immediate vicinity of the site, up to around 2 km away - the magnitude of change on viewpoints and landscape character is likely to be similar, but beyond this, the magnitude of change on landscape character is found to often diminish more rapidly as the influence of the turbines is subsumed in the many other influences on landscape character. Viewpoints are referred to in this assessment as they do give a useful indication of the appearance of the Proposed Development from specific locations within the various landscape receptors, but the level of magnitude of change may vary between the viewpoint assessment and the landscape character assessment.

Preliminary Assessment

Landscape Character Types

6.10.3. LCTs in the study area are assessed using ZTV analysis (**Figure 6.14 and 6.16**), to identify which of the LCTs are likely to be influenced by the Proposed Development. Using this analysis, **Table 6.7** identifies the LCTs within 45 km that have the potential to undergo significant effects and require to be assessed in detail.

Table 6.7 – Preliminary Assessment LCTs

Status – Potential for significant effects and included in detailed assessment.	
Landscape Character Type (LCT)	**Comment**
LCT 236, Smooth Moorland Ridges	The Proposed Development turbines and site infrastructure would be located within this LCT.
LCT 221, Rolling Uplands - Inverness	Closely neighbouring LCT to LCT 236 and a section of the Proposed Development access track and site entrance would be located within this LCT.

Status – Potential for significant effects and included in detailed assessment.	
Landscape Character Type (LCT)	**Comment**
LCT 239, Interlocking Sweeping Peaks - Lochaber	There are two units of this LCT within the study area. The unit of this LCT to the west in the area of the Glenquoich Forest has limited theoretical visibility and at 30 km is distant to the Proposed Development. No potential for significant effects. The unit of this LCT around 10 km south-west of the Proposed Development in the area of Glengarry Forest has elevated patches of theoretical visibility from north-east facing slopes overlooking the Great Glen. This unit of LCT 239 is therefore included in the detailed assessment.
LCT 235, Broad Forested Strath	LCT that fringes the host LCT 236. Included in the detailed assessment due to the proximity and theoretical visibility within the unit of this LCT around Glen Garry. Other units of this LCT within the study area (in the Glen Spean area) have no theoretical visibility.
LCT 237, Rocky Moorland - Lochaber	LCT that fringes the host LCT 236. Included in the detailed assessment due to the proximity and theoretical visibility within the eastern edges of this LCT where there is potential for cumulative effects with the operational wind farms found immediately north of this LCT.
LCT 220, Rugged Massif - Inverness	Included in the detailed assessment due to the proximity and theoretical visibility within the eastern edges of this LCT on elevated and exposed areas where views across the Great Glen are potentially affected. There is also the potential for cumulative effects with the operational wind farms found within this LCT.
LCT 225, Broad Steep-Sided Glen	Included in the detailed assessment due to the sensitive nature of the key characteristics of this Great Glen LCT and the theoretical visibility found on the northern side of Loch Ness and around Fort Augustus.
LCT 224, Farmed and Wooded Foothills	Included in the detailed assessment due to the theoretical visibility found at the southern end of this LCT on elevated ground.
LCT 222, Rocky Moorland Plateau - Inverness	The ZTV shows limited and distant theoretical visibility (15 km closest) from this LCT to the north of the Proposed Development. Existing wind farm developments within this LCT and in other LCTs further to the south are located within the intervening landscape which further moderates any potential distant effect.
LCT 227, Farmed Strath - Inverness	The ZTV shows no theoretical visibility within the Strathglass unit of this LCT. Within the Strath Errick unit of this LCT, theoretical visibility is limited both in extents and in terms of the amount of the Proposed Development visible with the closest patches of theoretical visibility at over 15 km from the Proposed Development. No potential for significant effects.

Status – Limited level of influence to the defining characteristics, due to limited / restricted or distant visibility of the Proposed Development, such that there is no potential for significant effects.	
LCT 223, Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland	LCT 328, Rugged Mountain Massif – Ross & Cromarty
LCT 226, Wooded Glen - Inverness	LCT 230, Interlocking Sweeping Peaks - Inverness
LCT 233, Mountain Massif - Lochaber	LCT 365, Rugged Massif - Skye & Lochalsh
LCT 238, Rugged Massif – Lochaber	LCT 369, Interlocking Sweeping Peaks - Skye & Lochalsh

Status – No theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development. No potential for significant effects and not included in detailed assessment.	
LCT 85, Isolated Mountain Plateau	
LCT 86, Smooth Rounded Hills - Badenoch & Strathspey	LCT 232, Boggy Moorland - Lochaber
LCT 87, Small Craggy Knolls and Hills	LCT 234, Lochs with Settled Edges
LCT 88, Loch and Glen	LCT 329, Rounded Mountain Massif
LCT 89, Broad Loch and Glen	LCT 342, Farmed River Plains
LCT 123, Smooth Rounded Hills - Cairngorms	LCT 345, Farmed and Forested Slopes - Ross & Cromarty
LCT 124, Summits and Plateaux - Cairngorms	LCT 346, Open Farmed Slopes
LCT 125, Rolling Uplands - Cairngorms	LCT 357, Farmed and Settled Lowlands - Skye & Lochalsh
LCT 126, Upland Glen - Cairngorms	LCT 371, Mid Upland Glens
LCT 127, Upland Strath	LCT 373, Upper Upland Glens with Lochs
LCT 128, Forested Upland Fringe	LCT 374, Mid Upland Glens with Lochs
LCT 228, Rolling Farmland and Woodland	LCT 376, Summits and Plateaux – Tayside
LCT 229, Enclosed Farmland	LCT 378, Plateau Moor - Tayside
LCT 231, Upland Glen – Inverness	

Landscape Designations and Wild Land

6.10.4. Landscape Designations and wildland in the study area are assessed using ZTV analysis (**Figure 6.15 and 6.16**), to identify which are likely to be influenced by the Proposed Development. Using this analysis, **Table 6.8** identifies the landscape designations and wildland within 45 km that have the potential to undergo significant effects and require to be assessed in detail.

Table 6.8 – Preliminary Assessment Landscape Designations and Wild Land

Status – Potential for significant effects and included in detailed assessment.	
Landscape Designation	**Comment**
19: Braeroy - Glenshirra - Creag Meagaidh	The Proposed Development lies partly within this WLA. Included in detailed assessment due to potential for direct and indirect effects.
Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA	Included in detailed assessment due to the proximity of the Proposed Development, theoretical visibility within the designated areas, and the potential for cumulative effects.
Status – Considered further in preliminary assessment but found to have no potential for significant effects and not included in detailed assessment.	
Landscape Designation	**Comment**
Strathconan, Monar and Mullardoch SLA	The ZTV shows very limited and distant theoretical visibility from elevated hill summits in excess of 26 km, with existing influence on the SLA from the closer-range operational wind farms of Bhlaraidh, Corrimony, Beinneun and Millennium & Extensions. Not included in detailed assessment.
Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA	The ZTV shows theoretical visibility is limited to elevated hill summits in excess of 20 km, with existing influence on the SLA from closer-range operational wind farms of Bhlaraidh, Beinneun and Millennium & Extensions. Not included in detailed assessment.
Glen Strathfarrar NSA	The ZTV shows extremely limited theoretical visibility in excess of 30 km from the Proposed Development. Not included in detailed assessment.
Knoydart NSA Kintail NSA	The ZTV shows very limited theoretical visibility in excess of 35 km from the Proposed Development. Not included in detailed assessment.
Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA	The ZTV shows very limited theoretical visibility from elevated hill summits in excess of 25 km from the Proposed Development, with existing influence on the NSA from the operational wind farms of Beinneun, Millennium & Extensions and Stronelairg at similar distance. Not included in detailed assessment.
Glen Affric NSA	The ZTV shows theoretical visibility is limited to elevated hill summits at the edges of the NSA in excess of 20 km from the Proposed Development, with existing influence on the NSA from the closer-range operational wind farms of Bhlaraidh, Corrimony, and Millennium & Extensions. Not included in detailed assessment.
Achnacarry GDL	The ZTV shows extremely limited theoretical visibility. Not included in detailed assessment.
Aldourie Castle GDL Dochfour GDL	The ZTV shows very limited and distant theoretical visibility. Not included in detailed assessment.
13. Moidart - Ardgour	The ZTV shows very limited theoretical visibility beyond 43 km from the Proposed Development. Not included in detailed assessment.

WLA 14. Rannoch - Nevis - Mamores – Alder, WLA 24. Central Highlands, WLA 20. Monadhliath	The ZTV shows limited theoretical visibility from within these WLAs which lie beyond 17 km from the Proposed Development and are influenced by closer range operational wind farms. Not included in detailed assessment.
Status – No theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development. No potential for significant effects and not included in detailed assessment.	

Cairngorms National Park

WLA 15. Cairngorms

The Cairngorm Mountains NSA

Loch Rannoch and Glen Lyon NSA

Ben Alder, Laggan and Glen Banchor SLA

Beaufort Cemetery Castle GDL

Corrour Lodge GDL

Summary of Preliminary Landscape Character Assessment

6.10.5. The preliminary assessment has identified the following principal landscape receptors that require to be assessed in detail as a result of the potential effects of the Proposed Development.

Landscape Character Types

- LCT 236, Smooth Moorland Ridges
- LCT 221, Rolling Uplands - Inverness
- LCT 239, Interlocking Sweeping Peaks - Lochaber
- LCT 235, Broad Forested Strath
- LCT 237, Rocky Moorland - Lochaber
- LCT 220, Rugged Massif - Inverness
- LCT 225, Broad Steep-Sided Glen
- LCT 224, Farmed and Wooded Foothills

Landscape Designations and Wildland

- WLA 19: Braeroy - Glenshirra - Creag Meagaidh (assessed in **Appendix 6.2**)
- Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA
- Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA

Detailed Assessment - LCT 236, Smooth Moorland Ridges

Baseline Description

6.10.6. The NatureScot 2019 Landscape Character Assessment describes the key characteristics of this LCT as follows -

- *'Gently undulating hills with smooth elongated ridge profiles, developing a more undulating landform in transitional areas with Rugged Massif - Lochaber.*
- *Simple, large scale landscape pattern dictated by uniform landcover and uncomplicated landform.*
- *Plateau summits generally draped in a mixture of grasses, heather and sedges, with exposed peat hags.*
- *Large blocks of conifer forests along the hill sides and lower foothills.*

- *Broadleaf woods on lower slopes and along loch edges, often framing crofts.*
- *Scattered croft settlements with stone dykes concentrated on lower slopes, particularly along roads and south-facing slopes.*
- *Roads and transmission lines following the base of the hills.*
- *Smooth open slopes highly visible.'*

6.10.7. Viewpoints 5, 20 and 21 are within this LCT. There are no Wind Farms within this LCT albeit that the Millennium group, Beinneun and Beinneun Extension are visible to the west on the opposite side of the Great Glen.

Sensitivity

6.10.8. The majority of this LCT is not located within any scenic designations apart from its western edges which overlaps with the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA. Much of the LCT also overlaps with WLA 19. Value is considered to be Medium-High. This large-scale landscape is dominated by simple land cover of moorland and large blocks of coniferous forestry. The LCT is noted as having 'uniform landcover and uncomplicated landform' and the site area is typified by this characterisation rather than the elongated ridge profiles which are not evident in the northern part of the LCT where the site is located. It is considered that this LCT, in particular the northern area where the site is located, is an appropriate receiving landscape for wind energy development. The presence of existing wind energy development within neighbouring landscapes reduces susceptibility to change as wind turbines are not an entirely unfamiliar feature, however, this may also result in cumulative effects potentially increasing the susceptibility to change. On balance this LCT unit would have a Medium susceptibility. In combining the Medium-High value with the Medium susceptibility, sensitivity is considered to be Medium-High.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

6.10.9. The ZTV shows that theoretical visibility is largely limited to the north-west corner of this LCT. In all other areas theoretical visibility is very limited with the vast majority having no visibility.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- The introduction of the Proposed Development, including tracks and infrastructure during the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.
- The effect on the perception of uncomplicated moorland characteristics for the north-west corner of the LCT resulting from the introduction of the Proposed Development.
- Cumulative effects within the LCT resulting from the increased perception of wind energy development within neighbouring landscapes in combination with the Proposed Development within the north-west corner of this LCT.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The presence of existing turbines in neighbouring landscapes means that the proposed turbines would be introducing elements that are not entirely uncharacteristic within the context of surrounding upland.
- The large scale of the upland landscape and simple upland landcover of open moorland within the landscape immediately surrounding the site provides a large-scale upland landscape context considered appropriate for the scale of development proposed.
- The immediate context of the site area is within close context to the BDOHL and towers which, along with the associated tracks that cross the site area bring a man-made influence to this part of the LCT, moderating the influence that the Proposed Development would have on the landscape of this area.
- Away from the visibility extent found in the north-west corner of the LCT, landform restricts visibility of the Proposed Development from the majority of other parts of this LCT.

Magnitude of Change

6.10.10. Taking these factors into account the magnitude of change for this LCT is considered to be High locally, defined as the area of this LCT within the immediate context of the site area and extending to approximately 3.5 km to the south-west defined by the hills of Meallan Odhar (535 m AOD), Glas Charn (790 m AOD) and Leac nan Uan (693 m AOD). Beyond this localised area to the south-west, the magnitude of change is considered to be Medium to approximately 5 km where visibility spreads to more isolated slopes at the edges of the visibility threshold to the south-west. Other more distant parts of this LCT have very limited patches of theoretical visibility and the magnitude of change is considered to be Low.

Significance of Effect

6.10.11. The effect of the Proposed Development on a localised area of this LCT unit (within the site area and 3.5 km to the south-west of the Proposed Development turbines), is considered to be **major and significant.** Beyond this localised area, approximately 5 km to the south-west, the effect is considered to be **moderate and significant.** In other parts of this LCT the effect is considered to be **minor and not significant.**

Cumulative Assessment (See CZTVs on Figures 6.21a-f)

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.10.12. Visible consented schemes from elevated parts of this LCT unit includes Millennium South, Bhlaraidh Extension and Dell. The CZTVs show that these consented schemes will share a similar pattern of visibility to the operational schemes in the baseline. These consented schemes will have little cumulative influence on the baseline situation as a result of them appearing within a similar context to operational schemes or due to distance. The magnitude of change to landscape characteristics is therefore considered to be Negligible resulting in a **minor and not significant** cumulative effect.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.10.13. Visible application schemes from elevated parts of this LCT include Bunloinn, Tomchrasky, Corriegarth 2 and Cloiche. Similar to the consented scenario these application schemes would have little cumulative influence on the baseline situation due to them appearing within a similar context to operational and/or consented schemes and would only very slightly increase the influence of wind energy development on the key characteristics of this LCT. The magnitude of change to landscape characteristics is therefore considered to be Negligible resulting in a **minor and not significant** cumulative effect.

Detailed Assessment - LCT 221, Rolling Uplands - Inverness

Baseline Description

6.10.14. The NatureScot 2019 Landscape Character Assessment describes the key characteristics of this LCT 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.'*

6.10.15. Viewpoints 1, 2, 3, 4 and 21 are within this LCT. The Stronelairg, Corriegarth, Dunmaglass, Easter Aberchalder, Glen Kyllachy and Farr wind farms are within this LCT and elevated parts have views towards the Millinium Group and Bhlaraidh wind farms.

Sensitivity

6.10.16. The majority of this LCT is not located within any national or local scenic designations. A very small part of the southern edges of the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA overlaps with the northern edges of the LCT and part of the WLA 20 lies within the LCT also. Taking this into account, value is considered to be Medium. This is a large-scale landscape dominated by large areas of smooth rounded and gently undulated hills and plateau which have a simple land cover of moorland and large blocks of coniferous forestry. The presence of existing wind energy development within this LCT reduces susceptibility to change as wind turbines are not an unfamiliar feature, however, this may also result in cumulative effects potentially increasing the susceptibility to change. On balance this LCT unit would have a Medium-Low susceptibility. In combining the Medium value with the Medium-Low susceptibility, sensitivity is considered to be Medium.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

6.10.17. The ZTV shows that theoretical visibility is localised to the south-west corner of this LCT. This is a large LCT which extends out across the Monadhliath Mountains to the north-east edges of the study area and in all other areas away from this localised area, theoretical visibility is very restricted with the vast majority having no visibility.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- The introduction of the Proposed Development turbines to the closely neighbouring Smooth Moorland Ridges LCT to the south-west.
- The introduction of Proposed Development access tracks to this LCT.
- The effect on the perception of undulating upland plateaux moorland characteristics for the south-west corner of the LCT resulting from the introduction of the Proposed Development.
- Cumulative effects within the LCT resulting from the increased perception of wind energy development in addition to the operational wind farms within the LCT to the north.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The presence of existing turbines within this LCT means that the proposed turbines would be introducing elements that are not entirely uncharacteristic within the context of surrounding upland.
- The large scale of the upland landscape and simple upland landcover of open moorland within the landscape immediately surrounding the site provides a large-scale upland landscape context considered appropriate for the scale of development proposed.

- The immediate context of the site area is within close context to the BDOHL, towers and tracks which, along with the highly visible tracks associated with the Glendoe Reservoir bring a man-made influence which is visible from the southern part of the LCT, moderating the influence that the Proposed Development would have on the landscape of this area.
- Away from the visibility extent found in the south-west corner of the LCT, landform restricts visibility of the Proposed Development from the majority of this large LCT limiting the change experienced for key landscape characteristics in the area.

Magnitude of Change

6.10.18. Taking these factors into account the magnitude of change for this LCT is considered to be High locally, defined as the area of this LCT extending to approximately 4 km to the north-east, 2 km to the north-west and 3 km to the south-east. Beyond this localised area, the magnitude of change is considered to be Low.

Significance of Effect

6.10.19. The effect of the Proposed Development on a localised area of this LCT unit (4 km to the north-east, 2 km to the north-west and 3 km to the south-east), is considered to be **moderate-major and significant.** Beyond this localised area, the effect is considered to be **minor and not significant.**

Cumulative Assessment (See CZTVs on Figures 6.21a-f)

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.10.20. The consented Dell and Aberarder schemes will be located within this LCT unit. These schemes will extend the influence of wind energy development within this LCT, particularly in a localised context to the schemes themselves and in relation to the existing influence of Stronelairg and Dunmaglass with which they are closely related. Consented schemes visible from elevated parts of this LCT unit also include Millennium South and Bhlaraidh Extension. Whilst these consented developments further spread and slightly intensify the influence of wind energy development on this LCT, when considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered similar to the assessment against the operational / under construction baseline. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be High locally and Low for other areas. This results in a localised **moderate-major and significant** effect (4 km to the north-east, 2 km to the north-west and 3 km to the south-east) and beyond this localised area, the effect is considered to be **minor and not significant**.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.10.21. The application Cloiche, Corriegarth 2 and Easter Aberchalder would be located within this LCT unit. These schemes would further extend the influence of wind energy development within this LCT, particularly in a localised context to the schemes themselves and in relation to the existing influence of Stronelairg and Corriegarth with which they would be closely related. Application schemes visible from elevated parts of this LCT unit would also include Bunloinn and Tomchrasky. When considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, this increase of wind energy development within the LCT and the contribution of the Proposed Development to this situation slightly increases the level of change. On balance it is considered that the magnitude of change within this scenario is considered to be High locally and Medium-Low for other areas. This results in a localised **moderate-major and significant** effect (4 km to the north-east, 2 km to the north-west and 3 km to the south-east) and due to the increased cumulative influence of wind energy development across this LCT, a **moderate-minor and not significant** effect in other areas.

Detailed Assessment - LCT 239, Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Lochaber

Baseline Description

6.10.22. As described in the preliminary assessment in **Table 6.7** it is only the unit of this LCT in the area of Glengarry Forest that is considered required to be assessed in detail. The NatureScot 2019 Landscape Character Assessment describes the key characteristics of this LCT as follows –

- *'Pyramidal mountain summits with a jagged profile, often appearing as overlapping, peaks along glen views.*
- *Sweeping slopes with screes plunging directly into deep glens or lochs with little or no flat shoreline fringe.*
- *Sparsely vegetated with few trees.*
- *Numerous rocky outcrops punctuate the steep, rugged terrain.*
- *Inaccessible and remote with wild character.*
- *Long panoramic views.'*

6.10.23. This unit of LCT 239 sits between 10 and 20 km to the south-west of the Proposed Development. It is centred around the hills of Ben Tee (901 m AOD), Sean Mheall (887 m AOD) and Sron a Choire Ghairbh (935 m AOD) and the glens of Glen Garry to the north, the Great Glen to the south-east and Loch Arkaig to the south-west. There are no large developments within this unit of LCT 239, however, the wind farms of Beinneun and Millennium are located in neighbouring landscapes to the north, as viewed across Glen Garry and Loch Garry. The BDOHL towers can be seen crossing the Proposed Development site area, and whilst only a distant influence on the characteristics of this LCT, it brings a man made influence to the localised part of the upland in the panorama to the east, which includes the site area. Viewpoint 14, Ben Tee is within this unit of LCT 239.

Sensitivity

6.10.24. The Glengarry Forest unit of this LCT lies within the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA and south-western parts lie within the edges of the Kinlochhourn – Knoydart - Morar WLA 18. Value is considered to be Medium-High. This unit of LCT has some capacity to absorb the change of the type proposed without diminishing its key characteristics due to the separation from the landscape context of the Proposed Development, to the north-east by Glen Garry and the Great Glen but also due to the strong existing influence of wind energy development to the north and east which moderates susceptibility as the Proposed Development would not be experienced as entirely uncharacteristic. On balance susceptibility is considered to be medium. In combining the medium-high value with the medium susceptibility, the sensitivity of the Glengarry Forest unit of this LCT is considered to be medium-high.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

6.10.25. The ZTV shows that theoretical visibility is largely found on north-east facing slopes, however, a narrow band of limited theoretical visibility is also found along the south-east facing lower slopes, north of Loch Lochy.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change to the experience of the landscape character of this unit of LCT resulting from addition of large-scale wind turbines to the north-east.
- The Proposed Development would add further development to the existing spread of wind energy development currently visible, introducing potential cumulative effects.

- The Proposed Development would appear in the upland backdrop to the views across the Great Glen and would bring development closer on the broad upland plateau to the north-east than currently experienced when viewing more distant existing schemes such as Stronelairg.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The landscape of this unit of LCT 239 is separated from the Proposed Development by the Great Glen and Glen Garry and has a closer association with these surrounding glens than the landscape of the site area.
- The Proposed Development would appear to sit clearly within a large upland landscape to the east which is of a relatively simple broad upland landscape form.
- The change to key characteristics would be minimal from areas of this unit of LCT found along south-east facing slopes overlooking Loch Lochy due to intervening landform limiting visibility extents and forestry found along the lower slopes.
- Large parts of this LCT to the south have no visibility of the Proposed Development. Where visibility occurs on north-east facing slopes the Proposed Development would be experienced as a distant feature occupying a small part of a wide horizon of upland within the same part of the panorama as existing wind farm development.
- The presence of existing wind turbines in views from this unit of LCT 239 to the north and to the east means that the proposed turbines would not be introducing elements that are uncharacteristic in their influence.
- The presence of the BDOHL towers brings further existing tall structures to the specific part of the panorama in which the Proposed Development would be located, further moderating the influence that the Proposed Development would have.

Magnitude of Change

6.10.26. Taking all of this into account, the experience of the key characteristics of the Glengarry Forest unit of LCT 239 would only be affected to a small extent and within the context of existing development, the magnitude of change is predicted to be Medium-Low.

Significance of Effect

6.10.27. The effect for the Glengarry Forest unit of LCT 239 resulting from the introduction of the Proposed Development is considered to be **moderate and not significant.**

Cumulative Assessment (See CZTVs on Figures 6.21a-f)

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.10.28. Visible consented schemes from elevated parts of this LCT unit includes Millennium South, Aberarder, Bhlaraidh Extension and Dell. The CZTVs show that these consented schemes will share a similar pattern of visibility to the operational schemes in the baseline. These consented schemes will have little cumulative influence on the baseline situation as a result of them appearing within a similar context to operational schemes or due to distance. The magnitude of change to landscape characteristics is therefore considered to be Negligible resulting in a **minor and not significant** cumulative effect.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.10.29. Visible application schemes from elevated parts of this LCT include Bunloinn, Tomchrasky, Corriegarth 2 and Cloiche. Similar to the consented scenario these application schemes would have little cumulative influence on the baseline situation due to them appearing within a similar context to operational and/or consented schemes and would only very slightly increase the influence of wind energy development on the key characteristics of this LCT. The magnitude of change to landscape characteristics is therefore considered to be Negligible resulting in a **minor and not significant** cumulative effect.

Detailed Assessment - LCT 235, Broad Forested Strath

Baseline Description

6.10.30. As described in the preliminary assessment in **Table 6.7** it is only the unit of this LCT in the area of Glen Garry that is considered required to be assessed in detail. The NatureScot 2019 Landscape Character Assessment describes the key characteristics of this LCT as follows –

- *'Broad, low-lying straths with rolling relief and sculptural glacial landforms.*
- *Simple, large scale mosaic of forested ridges, rolling pastures and heather moorland, but dominated by swathes of forestry.*
- *A comparatively densely settled landscape with villages, houses and sporadic commercial development.*
- *Quarries hidden amongst the woodland cover.*
- *Strong communication and service corridors.*
- *Long distance views from surrounding hills over the glens, which are framed by steep glen sides.*
- *Lochs, rivers or canals on glen floor have often been engineered or substantially altered by man.'*

6.10.31. This unit of LCT 235 sits to the west of the Proposed Development and is defined by the wide and wooded glen of Glen Garry which is orientated east to west connecting with the Great Glen at its eastern end. There are no large developments within this unit of LCT 235, however, the wind farms of Beinneun and Millennium are located in neighbouring landscapes to the north. The BDOHL towers can be seen crossing the Proposed Development site area, and whilst only a distant influence on the characteristics of this LCT, it brings a man made influence to the localised part of the upland in the panorama to the east, which includes the site area. Viewpoint 16 on the A87 is within this unit of LCT 235.

Sensitivity

6.10.32. The majority of this LCT is not located within any national or local scenic designations, albeit that a small part of the western edges of the LCT lies within the Lochy and Loch Oich SLA. Value is considered to be medium. This unit of LCT has some capacity to absorb the change of the type proposed without diminishing its key characteristics due to the separation from the landscape context of the Proposed Development to the east by the Great Glen but also due to the strong existing influence of wind energy development to the north which moderates susceptibility as the Proposed Development would not be experienced as entirely uncharacteristic. On balance susceptibility is considered to be medium. In combining the medium value with the medium susceptibility, the sensitivity of the Glen Garry unit of this LCT is considered to be medium.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

6.10.33. The ZTV shows that theoretical visibility is largely found on the northern side of the glen including on elevated forested slopes and across parts of Loch Garry. Theoretical visibility on the southern side of the glen is more restricted in nature and is focussed on the easternmost forested lower slopes of Ben Tee. The eastern part of the LCT, including in Invergarry, has some theoretical visibility which is limited in extent and in reality, surrounding trees and forest screen views to the east, including towards the site.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change to the experience of the landscape character of this unit of LCT resulting from addition of large-scale wind turbines to the east.

- The Proposed Development would add further development to the existing spread of wind energy development currently visible, introducing potential cumulative effects.
- Where visible, the Proposed Development would appear in the upland backdrop to the views across the Great Glen.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The landscape of this unit of LCT 235 is separated from the Proposed Development by the Great Glen and this unit of LCT and has a closer association with the Great Glen and other neighbouring glens to the west than the landscape of the site area.
- Where visible, the Proposed Development would appear to sit clearly within a large upland landscape, as a distant feature, to the east which is of a relatively simple broad upland landscape form.
- The change to the key characteristics of this LCT would be minimal from large areas of the LCT due to intervening topography and forestry which covers much of the areas found to have theoretical visibility.
- Large parts of this LCT to the west have no visibility of the Proposed Development.
- The presence of existing wind turbines in views from this unit of LCT 235 to the north and to the east means that the proposed turbines would not be introducing elements that are uncharacteristic in their influence.
- The presence of the BDOHL towers brings further existing tall structures to the specific part of the panorama in which the Proposed Development would be located, further moderating the influence that the Proposed Development would have.

Magnitude of Change

6.10.34. Taking all of this into account, the experience of the key characteristics of the Glen Garry unit of LCT 235 would only be affected to a small extent and within the context of existing development, the magnitude of change is predicted to be Low.

Significance of Effect

6.10.35. The effect for the Glengarry Forest unit of LCT 235 resulting from the introduction of the Proposed Development is considered to be **minor and not significant.**

Cumulative Assessment (See CZTVs on Figures 6.21a-f)

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.10.36. The consented scheme of Millennium South will be visible from elevated and southern parts of this LCT. The CZTVs show that consented schemes will share a similar pattern of visibility to the operational schemes in the baseline. Millennium South will only add slightly to the cumulative influence on the baseline situation as a result of it appearing within a similar context to operational Millennium Group and Beinneun schemes. Whilst these consented developments further spread and slightly intensify the influence of wind energy development on this LCT, when considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered similar to the assessment against the operational / under construction baseline. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be Low resulting in a **minor and not significant** effect.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.10.37. Visible application schemes from elevated and southern parts of this LCT include Bunloinn, Tomchrasky and Cloiche. The CZTVs show that consented schemes will share a similar pattern of visibility across this LCT to the operational / consented schemes in the baseline. However, the Bunloinn and Tomchrasky applications in particular would add a more notable cumulative influence for this LCT. Taking this into account it is considered that the level of change in this scenario would increase, and the magnitude of change is considered to be Medium-Low resulting in a **moderate-minor and not significant** effect in this scenario.

Detailed Assessment - LCT 237, Rocky Moorland - Lochaber

Baseline Description

6.10.38. The NatureScot 2019 Landscape Character Assessment describes the key characteristics of this LCT as follows –

- *'Rugged, undulating plateaux of heather moorland with a textured and crinkled skyline and no distinct summits or peaks.*
- *Large patches of coniferous forestry.*
- *Uniform expanses of marshy grassland, sedges and rushes, rocky outcrops and stunted trees.*
- *Isolated, upland lochans.*
- *Infrastructure and engineered structures associated with hydro-electricity schemes such as pylons, dams and sub-stations.*
- *Closely related to Smooth Moorland Ridges with long views but lacking the latter's distinctive smooth relief.'*

6.10.39. This LCT fringes the host LCT 236 to the west of the Proposed Development. Viewpoints 8 is within this LCT. There are no wind farms within this LCT, however, the Millinium Group is visible from much of the eastern part of this LCT.

Sensitivity

6.10.40. The majority of this LCT is not located within any national or local scenic designations, albeit that a small part of the western edges of the LCT lies within the Lochy and Loch Oich SLA. Value is considered to be medium. This LCT has some capacity to absorb the change of the type proposed without diminishing its key characteristics due to the separation from the landscape context of the Proposed Development to the east by the Great Glen but also due to the strong existing influence of wind energy development to the north which moderates susceptibility as the Proposed Development would not be experienced as entirely uncharacteristic within the wider landscape. On balance susceptibility is considered to be medium. In combining the medium value with the medium susceptibility, the sensitivity of this LCT is considered to be medium.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change to the experience of the landscape character of this unit of LCT resulting from addition of large-scale wind turbines to the east.
- The Proposed Development would add further development to the existing spread of wind energy development currently visible, introducing potential cumulative effects.
- From elevated parts of this LCT, the Proposed Development would appear in the upland backdrop to the views across the Great Glen.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- Where visible, the Proposed Development would appear to sit clearly within a large upland landscape, as a distant feature, to the east which is of a relatively simple broad upland landscape form.
- The eastern slopes of the Great Glen when viewed from this LCT appear large in scale and the upland plateau on which the Proposed Development is located, is set back beyond the ridge at the top of these slopes. This accentuates the degree of separation experienced from within this LCT.
- Large parts of this LCT to the west have no visibility of the Proposed Development.

- From the lower elevated east facing slopes of this LCT, including from Loch Lundie, theoretical visibility is limited in extent and large forested areas further limit the potential effect on key characteristics.
- The upper east facing slopes are largely closely associated with the neighbouring and higher elevated LCT 220, including the influence of the operational Beinneun and Millennium Group of wind turbines.
- The influence of these operational turbines means that the Proposed Development turbines would not be introducing elements that are uncharacteristic in the wider landscape and the Proposed Development would be located at greater distance.
- The presence of the BDOHL towers in views to the east brings further existing tall structures to the specific part of the panorama in which the Proposed Development would be located, further moderating the influence that the Proposed Development would have.

Magnitude of Change

6.10.41. Taking all of this into account, the experience of the key characteristics for this LCT would only be affected to a small extent and within the context of existing development, the magnitude of change is predicted to be Low.

Significance of Effect

6.10.42. The effect on this LCT resulting from the introduction of the Proposed Development is considered to be **minor and not significant.**

Cumulative Assessment (See CZTVs on Figures 6.21a-f)

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.10.43. The consented scheme of Millennium South will be visible from elevated and eastern parts of this LCT. The CZTVs show that consented schemes will share a similar pattern of visibility to the operational schemes in the baseline. Millennium South will only add slightly to the cumulative influence on the baseline situation as a result of it appearing within a similar context to the operational Millennium Group. Whilst this consented development further spreads and slightly intensify the influence of wind energy development on this LCT, when considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered similar to the assessment against the operational / under construction baseline. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be Low resulting in a **minor and not significant effect.**

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.10.44. The Bunloinn and Tomchrasky applications would be visible from western parts of this LCT where there is little or no visibility of the Proposed Development. In itself the influence of these applications would be to further spread and intensify wind energy development experienced from this LCT. When considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered to increase when compared to the operational / consented scenario due to the extended influence of wind energy development across the LCT for which the Proposed Development contributes to. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be Medium-Low resulting in a **moderate-minor and not significant** effect in this scenario.

Detailed Assessment - LCT 220, Rugged Massif - Inverness

Baseline Description

6.10.45. The NatureScot 2019 Landscape Character Assessment describes the key characteristics of this LCT as follows –

- *'Parallel ranges of massive mountains of irregular landform divided by deep glaciated valleys.*

- *Mainly broad, sometimes rounded rugged summits connected by long ridges and relatively few individual mountain peaks, particularly in the east.*
- *Steep terrain with many mountain-side burns and occasional lochans in corries and depressions.*
- *Landcover of rock outcrops, glacial debris, deer-grazed heather and rough grassland create a smooth surface with mottled texture, with alpine habitats on high land to the west.*
- *Almost uniform texture and cover from lower to upper levels in the east makes the size of the hills difficult to perceive.*
- *Tracts of Caledonian pinewoods and occasional small patches of open birch woodland add colour, texture and seasonal diversity.*
- *Largely uninhabited, few signs of human activity or human artefacts in the interior, and sparse archaeological evidence.*
- *Hill ranges combine to create a fairly even undulating skyline and a sense of enclosure when viewed from straths.*
- *Views from the hill tops at the edges of the massif offer expansive views of the adjacent straths and surrounding landscape character types.*
- *A sense of remoteness and wildness which is particularly strong within the interior.'*

6.10.46. Viewpoints 13 and 15 are located within this LCT. The Beinneun and Millennium Group wind farms are within the eastern part of this LCT.

Sensitivity

6.10.47. The edges of the LCT overlap with the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA, Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA and the Glen Affric NSA. A small portion of WLA 24 is also found in the western reaches of the LCT. However, given the majority of the LCT is not located within national or local scenic designations, value of the LCT is considered to be medium. This LCT has some capacity to absorb the change of the type proposed without diminishing its key characteristics due to the separation from the Proposed Development to the east by the Great Glen but also due to the strong existing influence of wind energy development to the north which moderates susceptibility as the Proposed Development would not be experienced as entirely uncharacteristic within the wider landscape. On balance susceptibility is considered to be medium. In combining the medium value with the medium susceptibility, the sensitivity of this LCT is considered to be medium.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change to the experience of the landscape character of this unit of LCT resulting from addition of large-scale wind turbines to the east.
- Affected parts of this LCT are elevated and where visible the Proposed Development would appear in the upland backdrop to the views across the Great Glen.
- From the area to the north of the Inchnacardoch Forest the view across the Great Glen includes views of Loch Ness and Fort Augustus and the Proposed Development would create an additional focus in the backdrop to this view.
- The Proposed Development would add further development to the existing spread of wind energy development currently visible, introducing potential cumulative effects with the closer context of existing wind farm development that is located within this LCT.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- Where visible, the Proposed Development would appear to sit clearly within a large upland landscape, as a distant feature, to the east which is of a relatively simple broad upland landscape form.
- The eastern slopes of the Great Glen when viewed from this LCT appear large in scale and the upland plateau on which the Proposed Development is located, is set back beyond the ridge at the top of these slopes. This accentuates the degree of separation experienced from within this LCT.
- Large parts of this LCT to the west have no visibility of the Proposed Development. Large areas of east facing slopes that overlook the Great Glen are either forest covered of are strongly influenced by the existing wind farm developments which are located to the south of Inchnacardoch Forest.
- Whilst the Proposed Development creates an additional focus in the same part of the view as Fort Augustus for parts of this LCT to the north, it is considered that the setting of Fort Augustus, and therefore it's influence on this LCT, would not be eroded by the introduction of the Proposed Development as it would appear as distant features, set well back into the upland beyond the ridgeline on the opposite sides of the Great Glen.
- The influence of these operational turbines means that the Proposed Development turbines would not be introducing elements that are uncharacteristic in this LCT and the Proposed Development would be located at greater distance.
- The presence of the BDOHL towers in views to the east brings further existing tall structures to the specific part of the panorama in which the Proposed Development would be located, further moderating the influence that the Proposed Development would have.

Magnitude of Change

6.10.48. Taking all of this into account, the experience of the key characteristics for this LCT would only be affected to a small extent and within the context of existing development, the magnitude of change is predicted to be Medium-Low.

Significance of Effect

6.10.49. The effect on this LCT resulting from the introduction of the Proposed Development is considered to be **moderate-minor and not significant**.

Cumulative Assessment (See CZTVs on Figures 6.21a-f)

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.10.50. The consented scheme of Millennium South will be located within the southern part of this LCT and will be visible from elevated northern parts of this LCT. The consented Bhlaraidh Extension will be visible from elevated north facing slopes within this LCT. These consented schemes will only add slightly to the cumulative influence on the baseline situation as a result of them appearing within a similar context to operational schemes. Whilst the Millennium South development further spreads and slightly intensifies the influence of wind energy development within this LCT, when considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered similar to the assessment against the operational / under construction baseline. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be Medium-Low resulting in a **moderate-minor and not significant** effect.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.10.51. The Cloiche application would be visible to the east within the context of the operational Stronelairg. The Bunloinn and Tomchrasky applications would be located within the western part of this LCT where there is little or no visibility of the Proposed Development, albeit that both of these schemes (and the Proposed Development) would be visible from the elevated summit and ridge of Meall Dubh close to the existing Millennium Group development. In itself these applications would further spread and intensify the influence of wind energy

development on this LCT, particularly Bunloinn which is located within it. When considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered to reduce due to the moderating influence of the increased presence of development within the LCT. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be Low resulting in a **minor and not significant** effect in this scenario. Whilst the Proposed Development contributes to the increased level of change in this scenario, its influence is moderated due to the underlying wind energy development at closer range.

Detailed Assessment - LCT 225, Broad Steep-Sided Glen

Baseline Description

6.10.52. The NatureScot 2019 Landscape Character Assessment describes the key characteristics of this LCT as follows -

- *'A clearly defined, broad, linear, steep sided, v-shaped glen and deep loch cutting through mountains and hills, with limited areas of flatter ground.*
- *Large-scale conifer forests with small areas of open moorland covering most of the glen sides, particularly the lower slopes.*
- *Small patches of broad leaved woodlands, mostly in side glens and close to the shore.*
- *Agricultural land on less steep slopes, glen intersections and alluvial plains.*
- *A few settlements, with a well-defined core, located at glen intersections and on gentler slopes, separated by long stretches of relatively uninhabited land.*
- *Contrast between the busy trunk road and larger settlements on the west side and the quiet minor road on east side which has fewer settlements separated by large undeveloped areas.*
- *Strong evidence of past settlement in the number and diversity of archaeological and historic sites from prehistoric times to the 20th Century.*
- *Contrast between the visual and seasonal diversity of broadleaf woodland and bright, open pockets of farmland and the forested and moorland surroundings.*
- *Contrast between the smaller scale landscapes of settled, lower slopes and the large-scale moorland and forested backdrop.*
- *A simple linear and enclosed visual composition of bands of land, water and sky, with long skylines of even height, and the glen and loch as unifying features.*
- *Visual focus directed along the linear route of the glen or across the water to the opposite shore and up to the skyline.'*

6.10.53. Viewpoints 6, 7, 11 and 19 are within this LCT. There are no Wind Farms within this LCT, however, the existing wind farms of Bhlaraidh to the west, Corriegarth and Dunmaglass to the east and the Millennium cluster to the south can be seen from parts of this LCT including from elevated slopes and parts of the loch and loch shore where intersecting glans allow views to surrounding uplands.

Sensitivity

6.10.54. Much of this LCT lies within the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA (the area closest to the site around Fort Augustus is not designated) and value is considered to be Medium-High. This large-scale landscape is dominated by Loch Ness and its steep sided slopes which as the key characteristics describe is a 'simple linear and enclosed composition' that directs visual focus 'along the linear route of the glen or across the water to the opposite shore and up to the skyline'. The presence of existing wind energy development within neighbouring landscapes reduces susceptibility to change as wind turbines are not an entirely unfamiliar feature, however, this may also result in cumulative effects potentially increasing the susceptibility to change. On balance this LCT is considered to have a Medium-High susceptibility to change.

In combining the Medium-High value with the Medium-High susceptibility, sensitivity is considered to be Medium-High.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

6.10.55. The ZTV shows that theoretical visibility is largely found on the northern side of the Great Glen including on elevated forested slopes of Inchnacardoch Forest. These forested slopes give way to moorland ridges in more elevated areas at the edges of the LCT in the Portclair Forest area (viewpoint 11) where views across the Great Glen open up. The ZTV on lower slopes is more limited in both extent and amount of the Proposed Development visible which is evidenced at viewpoints 6, 7 and 9. To the north of Invermoriston the ZTV shows that the extent of theoretical visibility is further limited, the majority of which is forest covered steep sided slopes.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change to the LCT characteristics resulting from the addition of large-scale wind turbines to the south experienced from the elevated steep north side of the Great Glen and lower slopes around Fort Augustus.
- The Proposed Development would add further development to the existing spread of wind energy development currently visible, introducing potential cumulative effects.
- From the hills above Fort Augustus, the Proposed Development would appear in the upland backdrop to the views across the Great Glen and Fort Augustus, bringing development to a different part of the broad upland plateau to the south than currently experienced when viewing existing schemes to the east such as Corriegarth and Dunmaglass.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The Proposed Development would appear to sit clearly within a large upland landscape to the east which is of a relatively simple broad upland landscape form and is set back from the ridgelines that help define the Great Glen.
- The change to key characteristics would be minimal from large area of this LCT which have limited visibility or restricted by forestry.
- Large areas of the LCT have no visibility of the Proposed Development including the southern sides of the Great Glen and much of the Loch and shoreline.
- Whilst the Proposed Development creates an additional focus, from the hills above Fort Augustus, the turbines would appear set well back into the upland and away from the leading ridgeline of the Great Glen which forms the dramatic backdrop to this settlement. It is considered therefore that the setting of Fort Augustus would not be eroded by the introduction of the Proposed Development.
- From elevated open parts of this LCT, at its south-west edges, the Proposed Development would be seen within the close context of other visibly noticeable infrastructure such as Meall a Cholumain communications mast and BDOHL towers and as such would not introduce large scale infrastructure into this distant upland view south.
- From elevated open parts of this LCT, the Proposed Development would appear as distant features, occupying a relatively small part of the southern skyline and set well back into the upland. It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development would not interrupt the visual focus along the Great Glen.

Magnitude of Change

6.10.56. Taking all of this into account, the magnitude of change is predicted to be Medium-Low.

Significance of Effect

6.10.57. The effect on the LCT resulting from the introduction of the Proposed Development is considered to be **moderate and not significant.** It is considered that the experience of the key characteristics would be restricted for the vast majority of the LCT and that changes would occur within a separate upland landscape character within the context of existing electricity infrastructure and the setting of Fort Augustus within the Great Glen would not be eroded.

Cumulative Assessment (See CZTVs on Figures 6.21a-f)

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.10.58. Visible consented schemes from elevated parts of this LCT on the southern slopes of the great glen include limited visibility of Millennium South and Bhlaraidh Extension. Visibility of these schemes tends to occur where there is no visibility of the Proposed Development and the CZTVs show that these consented schemes will share a similar pattern of visibility to the operational schemes in the baseline. These consented schemes will have little cumulative influence on the baseline situation as a result of their limited visibility, of them appearing within a similar context to operational schemes or due to distance. The magnitude of change to landscape characteristics is therefore considered to be Negligible resulting in a **minor and not significant** cumulative effect.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.10.59. Visible application schemes from elevated parts of this LCT on the northern slopes of the great glen include Corriegarth 2 and Cloiche. Similar to the consented scenario these application schemes would have little cumulative influence on the baseline situation due to them appearing within a similar context to operational and/or consented schemes. The magnitude of change to landscape characteristics is therefore considered to be Negligible resulting in a **minor and not significant** cumulative effect.

Detailed Assessment - LCT 224, Farmed and Wooded Foothills

Baseline Description

6.10.60. The NatureScot 2019 Landscape Character Assessment describes the key characteristics of this LCT as follows –

- *'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.'*

6.10.61. Viewpoint 10 is within the LCT and viewpoint 12 is located at the edges of the LCT. There are no Wind Farms within this LCT, however, the existing wind farms of Bhlaraidh and the Millennium cluster to the west along with Corriegarth and Dunmaglass to the east can be seen from parts of this LCT particularly from elevated ridges.

Sensitivity

6.10.62. Much of this LCT lies within the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA and value is considered to be Medium-High. This LCT follows the southern sides of Loch Ness and the Great Glen and is heavily influenced by its distinctive steep sided glen to the north and west but is also influenced by the neighbouring Farmed Strath LCT 227 and Rolling Uplands LCT 221 to the east, and it is considered that this LCT is a transitional character type between these two areas. The presence of existing wind energy development within neighbouring landscapes reduces susceptibility to change as wind turbines are not an entirely unfamiliar feature. Taking this into account this LCT is considered to have a Medium susceptibility to change. In combining the Medium-High value with the Medium susceptibility, sensitivity is considered to be Medium-High.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

6.10.63. The ZTV shows that theoretical visibility is found at the southern end of this narrow LCT at around 10 km from the Proposed Development. To the north of this area, limited levels of theoretical visibility is found in small patches between 25 km and the edges of the study area on elevated rocky or forest covered ridges.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change to the LCT characteristics resulting from the addition of large-scale wind turbines to the south-west.
- The Proposed Development would add further development to the existing spread of wind energy development currently visible from this LCT to the east and west, introducing potential cumulative effects by introducing development to a different part of the broad upland plateau to the south than currently experienced when viewing existing schemes to the east such as Corriegarth and Dunmaglass.
- From the southern part of this LCT, the Proposed Development turbines would detract from the focus created by the distinctive intervening hill forms found in the valleys the south of this LCT.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The Proposed Development would appear to sit clearly within a large upland landscape to the south which is of a relatively simple broad upland landscape form and is set back from the more distinctive hill forms and ridgelines immediately neighbouring this LCT.
- The change to key characteristics would be minimal from large area of this LCT which have limited visibility or restricted by forestry. Large areas of the LCT also have no visibility of the Proposed Development including the stretch between 10 km and 25 km.
- From the southern part of this LCT, the Proposed Development would not encroach on the scenic views across Loch Tarff to the south-west.
- From the southern part of this LCT, the Proposed Development would not affect the scenic and elevated view across the landscape of Strath Errick and Loch Mhor, large parts of which are defined by the key characteristics of this LCT.
- From this LCT, the Proposed Development would not be seen to interrupt the scenic views across the Great Glen or to more distant hills to the south-west that form the distinct mountain backdrop.

Magnitude of Change

6.10.64. Taking all of this into account, the magnitude of change is predicted to be Low.

Significance of Effect

6.10.65. The effect on the LCT resulting from the introduction of the Proposed Development is therefore considered to be **moderate-minor and not significant.**

Cumulative Assessment (See CZTVs on Figures 6.21a-f)

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.10.66. Visible consented schemes from elevated parts of this LCT unit includes Millennium South, Aberarder and Bhlaraidh Extension. The CZTVs show that these consented schemes will share a similar pattern of visibility to the operational schemes in the baseline. These consented schemes will have little cumulative influence on the baseline situation as a result of them appearing within a similar context to operational schemes or due to distance. The magnitude of change to landscape characteristics is therefore considered to be Negligible resulting in a **minor and not significant** cumulative effect.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.10.67. Visible application schemes from elevated parts of this LCT include Bunloinn, Corriegarth 2 and Cloiche. Similar to the consented scenario these application schemes would have little cumulative influence on the baseline situation due to them appearing within a similar context to operational and/or consented schemes and would only very slightly increase the influence of wind energy development on the key characteristics of this LCT. The magnitude of change to landscape characteristics is therefore considered to be Negligible resulting in a **minor and not significant** cumulative effect.

Detailed Assessment - Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA

Baseline Description

6.10.68. This SLA largely overlaps with LCT 239, Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Lochaber; LCT 236, Smooth Moorland Ridges; and LCT 235, Broad Forested Strath. Viewpoint 14, Ben Tee is within this SLA. The Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas (2011)[3] describes the 'Key Landscape and Visual Characteristics' of this SLA as follows:

- *'The trench-like landform of the Great Glen is very large in scale and consistent in form along its length. This creates a highly distinctive corridor which provides an over-riding coherence within which a diverse range of smaller scale features are accommodated at a local level. Views up and down the glen present a strong sense of perspective, although often influenced by weather conditions.*
- *The smooth moorland slopes which form much of the lochs' sides are clothed in mosaics of heather, and grass with woodland upon some of the mid and lower reaches. These slopes are often deeply incised by watercourses over exposed rocky outcrops and crags. Imposing mountains form the visual back cloth and containing edges to the settled glen.*
- *Many existing forest plantations contrast in scale, colour, texture and line with the glen slopes. Associated forest tracks are also often prominent, particularly where they cross the steep side slopes of the glen and incorporate cuttings or embankments.*
- *Settlement tends to occur within small areas of low lying farmland that occurs occasionally upon the lochs' shores, either clustered at the ends of the lochs or at intersections of side glens. The features within these settlements provide a human scale in contrast to the massive scale of surrounding hills and lochs.*
- *The loch shorelines are intricate in places creating small bays, inlets and promontories which offer a more varied sequence of views for canal boat users than is typically available to road users. A clearer appreciation of the form of the glen is typically only appreciated from the central part of the glen floor/ loch.'*

[3] The Highland Council, Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas (2011)

6.10.69. Drawing on these characteristics, the Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas (2011), goes on to identify the 'Special Qualities' of the SLA as - '*The Great Glen– scale, striking linearity, long narrow lochs; Classic Highland Scenery, Distinctive Mountain-top Views; and Intimate Drama'.*

'The Great Glen– scale, striking linearity, long narrow lochs

- *This area covers one link in a chain of lochs and stretches of canal lengths which extend from Inverness to Fort William. These lie in a large and imposing steep sided v shaped glen, formed by a large strike-slip fault which cleaves through the centre of the Highlands.*
- *The two main lochs in this SLA are bounded by consistently steep slopes which contain and channel the views. In Loch Lochy's case, these slopes rise to an eye-catching group of peaks over 900m high on its west side. On its east side, a somewhat lower hill ridge parallels the loch for most of its length. This, in turn, parallels similar ridges above the glens Gloy and Roy further to the east, giving the impression of a remarkably regular, corrugated landscape, particularly when seen from the higher Loch Lochy hills.*
- *The Great Glen Way is a maintained and promoted long distance walking and cycling route which allows visitors the opportunity to experience the area at a leisurely pace, remote from vehicular traffic.*
- *This is a distinctly interior landscape, part of Highland Scotland, part way along the Great Glen with landmark features including the old railway line, the Glengarry Castle Hotel and the Well of the Seven Heads.*
- *Most people experience this landscape from the A82, which is one of the main roads between Inverness and Glasgow, this is a route which demands driver attention on the road ahead rather than on the surroundings except at locations where traffic is slowed at bridging points, road junctions and stopping place.*

Classic Highland Scenery, Distinctive Mountain-top Views

- *Views from low lying locations over agricultural grazings and lochs to steep wooded slopes and rolling summits are made more atmospheric in some weathers when mists and trails of low cloud roll in from the south-west. In contrast, in clam conditions, superlative linear views may be gained along the base of the 'v' shaped valley over reflective loch surfaces that mirror the wooded slopes and bare hill tops and blurring the boundaries between land and water.*
- *Outstanding views occur from higher elevations, most notably from Meall Dubh and Meall na Teanga. These views along and across the Great Glen include Loch Ness more than twelve miles to the north and Ben Nevis a similar distance to the south. The wider views also include the sweep of mountains to the north and west and in clear conditions extend as far southwest as Mull and Colonsay.*

Intimate Drama

- *A sense of comfort and shelter is gained from the intimate scale of features at close proximity to the lochs' shores, including rolling pastures and human settlement contrasts. These qualities are empathised by the contrast with the sense of drama and grandeur of the wider glen.*
- *The double waterfall at the mouth of Gleann Cia-aig crashing down from the hills north of Achnacarry into a deep pool called the "Witch's Cauldron" adds dramatic movement and noise.*
- *Càm Bhealach, on the west side of Loch Lochy, is a classic hanging valley and steep mountain pass which is angled in such a way that it is well seen in its entirety from the main A82 road on the main glen floor.'*

6.10.70. There are no large developments within the SLA, however, the wind farms of Beinneun and Millennium are located in neighbouring landscapes to the north, as viewed across Glen Garry and Loch Garry. The BDOHL towers can be seen crossing the Proposed Development site area from elevated parts of the SLA within LCT 239, and whilst only a distant influence on the characteristics of this SLA, it brings a man-made influence to the localised part of the upland in the panorama to the east, which includes the site area. Other operational wind farms visible from this SLA include Corrimony, Bhlaraidh, Farr, Dunmaglass Estate, Corriegarth and Stronelairg.

Sensitivity

6.10.71. The Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA is a local level landscape designation and south-western parts lie within the edges of the Kinlochhourn – Knoydart - Morar WLA 18. Value is considered to be Medium-High. The SLA has some capacity to absorb the change of the type proposed without diminishing its key characteristics due to the separation from the landscape context of the Proposed Development, to the north-east by Glen Garry and the Great Glen but also due to the strong existing influence of wind energy development to the north and east which moderates susceptibility as the Proposed Development would not be experienced as entirely uncharacteristic. On balance susceptibility is considered to be Medium-High. In combining the medium-high value with the medium-high susceptibility, the sensitivity of the SLA is considered to be medium-high.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

6.10.72. The ZTV shows that theoretical visibility is largely found on north-east facing slopes of the high hills to the west of Loch Lochy including Ben Tee (901 m AOD), Sean Mheall (887 m AOD) and Sron a Choire Ghairbh (935 m AOD). There is also a stretch of theoretical visibility to the east of Loch Oich above Aberchalder and a narrow band of limited theoretical visibility found along the south-east facing lower slopes, north of Loch Lochy. The special qualities of the SLA are affected in the following ways -

- The ‘intimate drama’ special quality experienced from the glen floor of the Great Glen is largely unaffected by the introduction of the Proposed Development, with the ZTV showing an extremely little amount of theoretical visibility on the glen floor or lower side slopes.
- The ‘Great Glen– scale, striking linearity, long narrow lochs’ special quality is also largely experienced from the glen floor where, as previously described, the Proposed Development would have very little influence.
- In relation to the ‘classic Highland scenery, distinctive mountain-top views’ special quality, the areas where this is experienced with the Proposed Development is in the area of high hills to the west of Loch Lochy and the ridge above Aberchalder, east of Loch Oich.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change to the experience of the SLA characteristics resulting from addition of large-scale wind turbines to the north-east from relatively close range on the slopes above Aberchalder, east of Loch Oich and more distant from the east from the high hills west of Loch Lochy.
- The Proposed Development would add further development to the existing spread of wind energy development currently visible, introducing potential cumulative effects.
- From the hills above Loch Lochy, the Proposed Development would appear in the upland backdrop to the views across the Great Glen and would bring development closer on the broad upland plateau to the north-east than currently experienced when viewing more distant existing schemes such as Stronelairg.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The Proposed Development would appear to sit clearly within a large upland landscape to the east which is of a relatively simple broad upland landscape form and is set back from the ridgelines that help define the Great Glen.
- The change to key characteristics would be minimal from areas of this SLA found within the glen floor of the Great Glen or on lower elevated glen sides of Loch Lochy or Loch Oich.
- Large parts of this SLA to the south and along the eastern sides of the Great Glen have no visibility of the Proposed Development.
- From the high hills west of Loch Lochy the Proposed Development would be experienced as a distant feature occupying a small part of a wide horizon of upland within the same part of the panorama as existing wind farm development.
- From the ridge east of Loch Oich, the Proposed Development not be experienced simultaneously with the dramatic views along the Great Glen, moderating the change to special qualities in this area.
- The presence of existing wind turbines in views from this SLA, both to the north and east means that the proposed turbines would not be introducing elements that are uncharacteristic in their influence.
- The presence of the BDOHL towers brings further existing tall structures to the specific part of the panorama in which the Proposed Development would be located, further moderating the influence that the Proposed Development would have.

Magnitude of Change

6.10.73. Taking all of this into account, the magnitude of change is predicted to be Medium-Low. It is considered that the experience of the key characteristics and special qualities of the SLA would only be affected to a small degree and changes would occur within the context of existing electricity infrastructure and influence of existing wind farm development.

Significance of Effect

6.10.74. The effect on the SLA resulting from the introduction of the Proposed Development is considered to be **moderate and not significant.**

Cumulative Assessment (See CZTVs on Figures 6.21a-f)

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.10.75. Visible consented schemes from elevated parts of this SLA unit includes Millennium South, Aberarder, Bhlaraidh Extension and Dell. The CZTVs show that these consented schemes will share a similar pattern of visibility to the operational schemes in the baseline. These consented schemes will have little cumulative influence on the baseline situation as a result of them appearing within a similar context to operational schemes or due to distance. The magnitude of change to landscape characteristics is therefore considered to be Negligible resulting in a **minor and not significant** cumulative effect.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.10.76. Visible application schemes from elevated parts of this SLA include Bunloinn, Corriegarth 2 and Cloiche. Similar to the consented scenario these application schemes would have little cumulative influence on the baseline situation due to them appearing within a similar context to operational and/or consented schemes and would only very slightly increase the influence of wind energy development on the key characteristics of this SLA. The magnitude of change to landscape characteristics is therefore considered to be Negligible resulting in a **minor and not significant** cumulative effect.

Detailed Assessment - Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA

Baseline Description

6.10.77. This SLA largely overlaps with LCT 225, Broad Steep-Sided Glen which encompasses the Loch Ness section of the Great Glen. The northern edges of the SLA overlap with LCT 222, Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness and the southern edges and Duntelchaig area of the SLA overlap with LCT 224, Farmed and Wooded Foothills and LCT 223, Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland. Viewpoints within this SLA include – Viewpoint 9- A82 North of Fort Augustus; Viewpoint 10 - An Suidhe; Viewpoint 11 - Great Glen Way, Carn an Doire Mhoir; Viewpoint 12 - B862 An Suidhe Car Park; Viewpoint 17 - Meall Fuar-mhonaidh; and Viewpoint 19 - Alltsigh Loch Ness. The Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas (2011) describes the 'Key Landscape and Visual Characteristics' of this SLA as follows:

- *'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 steep sided slopes of the glen are frequently incised by burns, rivers and waterfalls which fall over sheer rocky cliffs.*
- *There are long vistas of grand proportions, and the sheer scale of the loch dwarfs the numerous boats, and yachts which frequent its waters.*
- *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.*
- *To the east of Loch Ness an undulating moorland plateau characterised by rocky knolls and small-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.*
- *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.*
- *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.*
- *On the western shore there are more recent crofting townships and older irregular townships.'*

6.10.78. Drawing on these characteristics, the Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas (2011), goes on to identify the 'Special Qualities' of the SLA as – *'The Dramatic Great Glen; Contrasting Intimate Plateau; and Historic Landscape.'*

'The Dramatic Great Glen

- *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 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.*

- *Strong contrasts exist between the northern and southern slopes in terms of access, activity and settlement which are all considerably more limited on the south side of the loch, reflecting the variations in access, slope, aspect and microclimate.*
- *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.*
- *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.*
- *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 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.*
- *Most of the hills and high points along the enclosing ridges are indistinct in character, 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.*

Contrasting Intimate Plateau

- *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.*

Historic Landscape

- *Achculin, accessed from the Balmore Road, is a well preserved depopulated township that is now a scheduled monument.*
- *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.*
- *Two features dominate Fort Augustus; 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 latter was enlarged in 1876 using stone from the original fort.'*

6.10.79. There are no wind farms within the SLA, however, the wind farms of Beinneun, Millennium Group, Corrimony, Bhlaraidh, Dunmaglass Estate, Corriegarth and Stronelairg are located in neighbouring landscapes to the east, west and south, as viewed from various locations at the edges of the SLA on elevated surrounding ridges and hilltops. The BDOHL towers and the Meall a Cholumain communications mast can be seen crossing in front of the Proposed

Development site area when viewed from the SLA, and whilst a distant influence on the characteristics of this SLA, it brings a man-made influence to the localised part of the panorama that includes the site area.

Sensitivity

6.10.80. The Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA is a local level landscape designation which encompasses a highly valued part of the Great Glen for tourists and visitors at a national level. Value is considered to be High. The special qualities relating to the 'dramatic great glen' are susceptible to change proposed outside of the immediate context of the SLA due to the strong contextual relationship that the 'v' shaped glen sides have with the overall sense of drama experienced within it. Special qualities relating to views overlooking the SLA from the elevated edges of the Great Glen are also susceptible to these changes. The existing influence of wind energy development moderates susceptibility as the Proposed Development would not be experienced as entirely uncharacteristic, however, its presence also brings the potential for cumulative effects potentially increasing susceptibility. On balance susceptibility is considered to be high. In combining the high value with the high susceptibility, the sensitivity of the SLA is considered to be high.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

6.10.81. The ZTV shows that theoretical visibility within the SLA is largely found on the northern side of the Great Glen including on elevated forested slopes of Inchnacardoch Forest. These forested slopes give way to moorland ridges in more elevated areas at the edges of the SLA in the Portclair Forest area (viewpoint 11) where views across the Great Glen open up. The ZTV on lower slopes is more limited in both extent and amount of the Proposed Development visible which is evidenced at viewpoints 6, 7 and 9. To the north of Invermoriston the ZTV shows that the extent of theoretical visibility is further limited, the majority of which within the Great Glen is forest covered steep sided slopes and in the Duntelchaig area is limited in extent and distant. The special qualities of the SLA are affected in the following ways -

- The 'dramatic great glen' special quality is experienced from both the glen floor and high enclosing ridges of the Great Glen. The glen floor and Loch Ness is largely unaffected by the introduction of the Proposed Development, with the ZTV showing an extremely little amount of theoretical visibility on the glen floor or lower side slopes. However, the Proposed Development would be seen alongside the 'dramatic great glen' from the higher glen sides and enclosing ridges.
- In relation to the 'contrasting intimate plateau' theoretical visibility is limited from the area this relates to the east of Loch Ness and as such it is considered that effects on this special quality would be limited.
- The 'historic landscape' described in the SLA citation has little if any theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development and as such it is considered that there would be no or little effect on this special quality.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change to the characteristics 'Dramatic Glen' special quality of the SLA resulting from the addition of large-scale wind turbines to the south of Loch Ness experienced from the elevated steep north side of the Great Glen and lower slopes around Fort Augustus.
- The Proposed Development would add further development to the existing spread of wind energy development currently visible, introducing potential cumulative effects.
- From the hills above Fort Augustus, the Proposed Development would appear in the upland backdrop to the views across the SLA, Great Glen and Fort Augustus, bringing development to a different part of the broad upland plateau to the south than currently experienced when viewing existing schemes to the east such as Corriegarth and Dunmaglass.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The Proposed Development would appear to sit clearly within a large upland landscape to the east which is of a relatively simple broad upland landscape form and is set back from the ridgelines that help define the Great Glen (and the edges of the SLA).
- The change to key characteristics and its 'Dramatic Glen' special quality would be minimal from large parts of this SLA which have limited visibility or restricted by forestry.
- Large areas of the SLA have no visibility of the Proposed Development including the southern sides of the Great Glen, much of the Loch and shoreline and large areas of the Duntelchaig area
- Whilst the Proposed Development creates an additional focus, from the hills above Fort Augustus, the turbines would appear set well back into the upland and away from the leading ridgeline of the Great Glen which forms the dramatic backdrop to this settlement. It is considered therefore that the setting of Fort Augustus would not be eroded by the introduction of the Proposed Development.
- From elevated open parts of this SLA, at its south-west edges, the Proposed Development would be seen within the close context of other visibly noticeable infrastructure such as Meall a Cholumain communications mast and BDOHL towers and as such would not introduce large scale infrastructure into this distant upland view south.
- From elevated open parts of this SLA, the Proposed Development would appear as distant features, occupying a relatively small part of the southern skyline and set well back into the upland. It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development would not interrupt the visual focus along the 'Dramatic Glen' and so would have a limited effect on this special quality.

Magnitude of Change

6.10.82. Taking all of this into account, the magnitude of change is predicted to be Medium-Low.

Significance of Effect

6.10.83. The effect on the SLA and the special qualities resulting from the introduction of the Proposed Development is considered to be **moderate and not significant.** It is considered that the experience of the key characteristics and special qualities would be restricted for the vast majority of the SLA and that changes would occur within a separate upland landscape character within the context of existing electricity infrastructure and the setting of Fort Augustus within the Great Glen and the 'Dramatic Glen' special quality would not be eroded.

Cumulative Assessment (See CZTVs on Figures 6.21a-f)

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.10.84. Visible consented schemes from elevated parts of this LCT include visibility of Millennium South, Dell and Bhlaraidh Extension. The CZTVs show that these consented schemes will share a similar pattern of visibility to the operational schemes in the baseline and that there is little intervisibility with the Proposed Development within the parts of the SLA to the south of the Great Glen. These consented schemes will have little cumulative influence on the baseline situation as a result of them appearing within a similar context to operational schemes or due to distance and separation from the Proposed Development. The magnitude of change to landscape characteristics is therefore considered to be Negligible resulting in a **minor and not significant** cumulative effect.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.10.85. Visible application schemes from elevated parts of this LCT on the northern slopes of the great glen include Corriegarth 2 and Cloiche. Similar to the consented scenario these application schemes would have little cumulative influence on the baseline situation due to them appearing within a similar context to operational and/or consented schemes. The magnitude of change to landscape characteristics is therefore considered to be Negligible resulting in a **minor and not significant** cumulative effect.

6.11. Residual Effects Assessment - Visual

Introduction

6.11.1. Effects on views are the changes to views experienced by people that result from the introduction of the Proposed Development. As described in the baseline overview, the assessment of effects on views includes effects on people at representative viewpoints and on principal visual receptors (i.e. groups of people in settlements, motorists on roads or users of recreational routes). The following preliminary assessment identifies which of these views and visual receptors may experience significant effects and therefore which require to be assessed in full. A detailed baseline description is provided separately within the assessment section for each viewpoint and visual receptor identified as requiring more detailed assessment.

Preliminary Assessment - Visual

Viewpoints

6.11.2. LVIA viewpoint locations are shown in conjunction with the blade tip ZTV on **Figure 6.9** and with the hub height ZTV on **Figure 6.11**. Detailed versions can be found on **Figures 6.10** and 6.12. Viewpoint visualisations are shown on **Figures 6.22 - 6.68**. Photomontages are provided for those viewpoints that are within 20 km. Visualisations have been prepared to meet the requirements of NatureScot (Visual Representation of Windfarms Version 2.2, December 2017), **Figures 6.22 – 6.46** and THC (Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments, 2016), **Figures 6.48 – 6.68**. It should be noted that the photomontage views in these visualisations do not always include a view of key existing wind farms in the view. It is important therefore that the baseline panoramas provided are reviewed alongside the photomontages when reviewing the visualisations, so that these existing wind farms are properly taken into account.

6.11.3. Whilst there was theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development scoping layout at viewpoint 19 Alltsigh Loch Ness, there would be no visibility of the Proposed Development following design mitigation, which has greatly reduced the level of theoretical visibility within lower lying areas of the Great Glen, including on the shores of Loch Ness and this viewpoint. As a result. Viewpoint 19 is not considered further in the LVIA.

Principal visual receptors

6.11.4. The principal visual receptors in the study area are shown on **Figures 6.7** and **6.8** and with the Proposed Development blade tip ZTV on **Figures 6.17** and in detail on **Figure 6.18**.

6.11.5. **Table 6.9** to **Table 6.11** identify which of the principal visual receptors have the potential to undergo significant effects (including cumulative effects), and which of them do not require further detailed assessment.

Table 6.9 – Preliminary Assessment of Settlements

Status – Potential for significant effects and included in detailed assessment.	
Receptor	**Comment**
HwLDP identified settlement of Fort Augustus	This settlement is included in the detailed assessment due to its proximity to the Proposed Development within the context of its location within the Great Glen.
Status – Limited level of influence to the defining characteristics, due to limited / restricted or distant visibility of the Proposed Development, such that there is no potential for significant effects and not included in detailed assessment	
Smaller rural settlements of - Foyers, Lochgarthside, Gorthleck and Errogie on the B862 / B852 within Strath Errick.	
Status – No theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development. No potential for significant effects and not included in detailed assessment.	
HwLDP identified settlements of Fort William and Drumnadrochit.	
Smaller rural settlements of - Invergarry and Invermoriston within the Great Glen; Spean Bridge and Roy Bridge on the A86; Dundreggan and Dalchreichart on the A887 within Glen Moriston; Newtonmore and Kingussie on the A9; Whitebridge on the B862 / B852 within Strath Errick; East Croachy, Farr and Tombreck within Strath Nairn; Milton and Balnain within Glen Urquhart; and Tomich, Cannich and Erchless within Strathglass.	

Table 6.10 – Preliminary Assessment of Transportation Routes

Status – Potential for significant effects and included in detailed assessment.	
Receptor	**Comment**
A82	Included in the detailed assessment due to the proximity to the Proposed Development and the context of its location within the Great Glen.
A87	Included in the detailed assessment due to the direct facing nature of eastbound road users on the section of A87 between the Glen Garry viewpoint and Invergarry. See also sequential wirelines on **Figures 6.47a-j**.
Status – Limited level of influence to the defining characteristics, due to limited / restricted or distant visibility of the Proposed Development, such that there is no potential for significant effects and not included in detailed assessment	
B862, B851, B852.	
Status – No theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development. No potential for significant effects and not included in detailed assessment.	
A887, A86, A889, A9, A830.	
B8004, B8005.	
Glasgow to Mallaig railway line	

Table 6.11 – Preliminary Assessment - Core paths within 10 km and Long Distance Recreational Routes

Status – Potential for significant effects and included in detailed assessment.	
Receptor	**Comment**
Great Glen Way	Included in the detailed assessment due to visibility of the Proposed Development from the elevated section of this route between Fort Augustus and Meall Fuar-mhonaidh.
Scottish National Trail	A section of this trail follows GWMR through the Corrieyairack Pass. Corrieyairack Pass included in detailed assessment due to close proximity and level of visibility.
Status – Considered further in preliminary assessment but found to have no potential for significant effects and not included in detailed assessment.	
Receptor	**Comment**
Core paths - IN16.03 (Jenkins Park to Great Glen Way); IN16.11 (Alt na Criche); IN16.16 (Fort Augustus to Glen Moriston); IN16.02 (Jenkins Park Forest Walks); IN16.14 (Auchteraw Woods paths); and IN16.10 (Bridge of Oich to Torr Dhuin).	These core paths are located within large areas of forestry and any visibility is limited as a result.
Core Paths - LO11.02 (Aldernaig Burn to Loch Lundie); and IN16.09 (Bridge of Oich to Invergarry by Loch Lundie).	Whilst these core paths have theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development, the level of visibility is limited. Visibility increases in this area to the west where viewpoint 8 Loch Lundie is located on more elevated terrain.
Status – Limited level of influence to the defining characteristics, due to limited / restricted or distant visibility of the Proposed Development, such that there is no potential for significant effects and not included in detailed assessment	
South Loch Ness Trail; Great Glen Canoe Trail; and NCR 78. Core Paths – LO11.03 (Cycle Track Bridge of Oich); LO11.04 (Cycle Track North Laggan); LO11.05 (Black Bridge to Mandally Road); LO11.01 (River Garry Paths); LO11.08 (Access to Whitebridge); IN16.13 (Torr Dhuin to River Oich walk); and IN16.12 (Torr Dhuin Fort Walk).	
Status – No theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development. No potential for significant effects and not included in detailed assessment.	
The East Highland Way; Cape Wrath Way; West Highland Way; and The Affric Kintail Way. Core Paths – LO11.06 (Great Glen Way Loch Oich); LO11.07 (South Laggan to Loch Oich on Great Glen Way); LO11.09 (River Garry Access for water sports); IN16.15 (Great Glen Way Aberchalder to North Laggan); IN16.08 (Bridge of Oich to Invergarry); IN16.05 / IN16.07 (Caledonian Canal from Bridge of Loch Oich to Fort Augustus); IN16.04 (Caledonian Canal to A82); IN16.06 (A82 to Fort Augustus by Caledonian Canal); IN16.17 (Fort Augustus Loop); and IN16.01 (Kilchuimen Burial Ground and River Tarff).	

Summary of Preliminary Assessment on Views

6.11.6. The preliminary assessment has identified the viewpoints and principal visual receptors that require to be assessed in full as a result of the potential visual effects of the Proposed Development, these are listed as follows:

Viewpoints

- Viewpoint 1 Corrieyairack Pass
- Viewpoint 2 General Wades Military Road
- Viewpoint 3 Corrieyairack Hill
- Viewpoint 4 Carn a' Chuilinn
- Viewpoint 5 Carn Dearg
- Viewpoint 6 Fort Augustus, Car Park Adjacent to A82
- Viewpoint 7 Fort Augustus near Church Road
- Viewpoint 8 Loch Lundie
- Viewpoint 9 A82 North of Fort Augustus
- Viewpoint 10 An Suidhe
- Viewpoint 11 Great Glen Way, Carn an Doire Mhoir
- Viewpoint 12 B862 An Suidhe Car Park
- Viewpoint 13 Burach
- Viewpoint 14 Ben Tee
- Viewpoint 15 Meall Dubh
- Viewpoint 16 A87, Loch Garry
- Viewpoint 17 Meall Fuar-mhonaidh
- Viewpoint 18 Toll Creagach
- Viewpoint 20 Meallan Odhar
- Viewpoint 21 Beauly-Denny track

Principal Visual Receptors

- Fort Augustus settlement, assessed at viewpoints 6 & 7.
- A87, assessed at viewpoint 16 and within chapter.
- A82, assessed at viewpoint 6 & 9.
- Scottish National Trail (Corrieyairack Pass) assessed at viewpoints 1 & 2.
- Great Glen Way, assessed at viewpoint 11.

Detailed Assessment - Viewpoint 1 Corrieyairack Pass

Baseline Description

6.11.7. This viewpoint represents recreational users of GWMR within the Corrieyairack Pass that connects Glen Tarff with the upper Spey Valley. The viewpoint is located on an elevated section of the Corrieyairack Pass (577.1 m AOD) within the steep sided valley created by the Allt Coire Uchdachan between Meallan Odhar (605 m AOD) and Poll-gormack Hill (805 m AOD). Views to the east and south are contained by the surrounding steep sided topography.

6.11.8. Views to the north are partially contained by the slopes of Meallan Odhar although the upper slopes of Glen Tarff are apparent. Views to the west and north-west are across the broad moorland plateau in which the site is located. The BDOHL is visible in the foreground view, across the site and mid distance from the north-west beyond the site to the south-east further along the Corrieyairack Pass. This brings large scale man-made structures to an otherwise remote and exposed landscape context. The operational turbines of the Millennium and Beinneun wind farms are visible to the north-west.

Sensitivity

6.11.9. This viewpoint is not within a designated landscape, however, the route through the Corrieyairack Pass is recognised as part of the Scottish National Trail and GWMR which also has a cultural value. The value of this viewpoint is therefore considered to be medium-high.

6.11.10. Recreational users of this route will have an appreciation of the surrounding landscape and will be focussed on views including across the site area which is in close proximity. Whilst the existing close proximity of the overhead line towers and backdrop of existing turbines has a slightly moderating influence on susceptibility, on balance, susceptibility to change is considered to be high.

6.11.11. In combining the medium-high value with the high susceptibility, the sensitivity of recreational receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be high.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

- The Proposed Development turbines would be visible at 1.28 km to the nearest turbine to the north-west of the viewpoint.
- All of the Proposed Development turbines would be visible from this location including all hubs and the majority of towers.
- The access tracks and hardstands of all 8 turbines would be visible. All other Proposed Development infrastructure would not be visible.
- The proposed turbines theoretically occupy 33.1 degrees of the view.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change in the view resulting from the addition of wind turbines within close proximity to the viewpoint.
- Turbine 8 appears larger than the others in the group due to its closer proximity.
- The cumulative effect of the BDOHL seen in combination with the Proposed Development turbines.
- The Proposed Development would increase the perception of wind energy development in the view and bring wind energy development closer to viewers than currently experienced.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The view to the north-west from this location is not particularly scenic, particularly when considered against the more scenic view to the north along Glen Tarff or south-east along the Corrieyairack Pass.
- The close proximity of the existing tall structures of the BDOHL towers and the existing wind farms in the distance beyond the site moderate the effect of the Proposed Development as it would not be entirely uncharacteristic in the view.
- The rough moorland landcover and overall large upland scale of the landscape in the view north-west towards the Proposed Development provides a landscape context considered suitable for wind energy development of the type proposed.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.12. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, the magnitude of change for the Proposed Development is considered to be high.

Significance of Effect

6.11.13. The effect on recreational receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be **major and significant.** The viewpoint is within close proximity to the Proposed Development which would introduce further large scale structures to this section of the Corrieyairack Pass.

Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.11.14. The Millennium South consented development will appear in the view to the south-west beyond the Proposed Development. In itself the Millennium South development will increase the number of turbines already visible as part of the Millennium Group which would introduce a slight change to the baseline scenario. Whilst this consented development slightly intensifies the visual effect, when considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered similar to the assessment against the operational / under construction baseline due to the contribution of the Proposed Development to this scenario. The magnitude of change in this scenario is therefore considered to be high resulting in a **major and significant** effect.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.11.15. The theoretically visible Tomchrasky application would in reality not be readily discernible as it is restricted by intervening landform such that only an extremely small blade tip would be visible in the distance. The Bunloinn application would appear in the view to the south-west beyond and amongst the operational Beinneun and Extension developments. This would further increase the number of turbines already visible as part of the Beinneun / Millennium Group which would introduce a slight change to the baseline scenario. When considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered similar to the assessment against the operational / under construction and consented baselines due to the contribution of the Proposed Development to this scenario. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be high resulting in a **major and significant** effect.

Detailed Assessment - Viewpoint 2 General Wades Military Road

Baseline Description

6.11.16. This viewpoint represents recreational users of General Wade's Road within Glen Tarff that connects with the upper Spey Valley via the Corrieyairack Pass. The viewpoint is situated on the shoulder of the rocky ridge known as Liath Dhoire. Views are relatively contained within the immediately surrounding Rolling Uplands LCT which is largely including views across broad moorland plateaux contained by higher elevated surrounding hills and rocky slopes. Views to the north are particularly restricted by localised topography. The view south towards the site is along Wades Military Road and the Black Burn with the Blackburn of Corrieyairack Bothy nestled into the burn corridor. The Bothy draws the eye and creates a focus for views for this particular section of the route.

6.11.17. The BDOHL is visible in the foreground view, across the site and mid distance breaking the skyline from the west to the south, which brings large scale man-made structures to an otherwise remote and exposed landscape context. There are no operational turbines visible in views from this location.

Sensitivity

6.11.18. This viewpoint is not within a designated landscape, however, the route along GWMR to Strathspey via the Corrieyairack Pass is part of the Scottish National Trail and GWMR also has a cultural value (See **Chapter 10: Cultural Heritage** of this EIA Report). The value of this viewpoint is therefore considered to be medium-high. Recreational users of this route will have an appreciation of the surrounding landscape and will be focussed on views including across the site area which is in close proximity. Whilst the existing close proximity of the overhead line towers has a slightly moderating influence on susceptibility, on balance, susceptibility to change is considered to be high.

6.11.19. In combining the medium-high value with the high susceptibility, the sensitivity of recreational receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be high.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

- The Proposed Development turbines would be visible at 1.74 km to the nearest turbine to the south of the viewpoint.
- All of the Proposed Development turbines would be visible from this location. Two as blade tips, two with only the top half of towers visible above an intervening ridgeline and the other four as majority of towers visible to base.
- The access tracks and hardstands of 2 turbines would be visible. All other Proposed Development infrastructure would not be visible.
- The proposed turbines theoretically occupy 40.9 degrees of the view.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change in the view resulting from the addition of wind turbines within close proximity to the viewpoint.
- The Bothy in the foreground view south draws the eye towards the Proposed Development which would disrupt this focus with the introduction of large scale infrastructure beyond it.
- The Proposed Development appears within a similar part of the view as the BDOHL, introducing a potential scale comparison and cumulative effect.
- The Proposed Development would introduce wind energy development to a view that currently has none visible.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The view from this location is not particularly scenic, particularly when considered against the more scenic view to the north along Glen Tarff or south-east along the Corrieyairack Pass.
- The presence of the existing tall structures of the BDOHL towers moderates the effect of the Proposed Development as large-scale infrastructure is already a key feature of the view.
- The rough moorland landcover and overall large upland scale of the landscape in the view south towards the Proposed Development provides a landscape context considered suitable for wind energy development of the type proposed.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.20. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, the magnitude of change for the Proposed Development is considered to be high.

Significance of Effect

6.11.21. The effect on recreational receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be **major and significant**. The viewpoint is within close proximity to the Proposed Development which would introduce further large scale structures to this section of the GWMR.

Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative Assessment (consented and application scenario)

6.11.22. No consented or application schemes would be visible from this viewpoint. As a result, there is no cumulative change and **no cumulative effect** in these scenarios.

Detailed Assessment - Viewpoint 3 Corrieyairack Hill

Baseline Description

6.11.23. This viewpoint is located at the summit of Corrieyairack Hill (896 m AOD), a Corbett that lies at the southern edges of Monadhliath Mountains. It is accessed from the elevated section of the Corrieyairack Pass either from Melgarve to the south-east or on a much longer walk from Fort Augustus to the north-west. The route is relatively straightforward along GWMR as far as the Corrieyairack Pass then a rough track along the southern shoulder of the hill to the summit.

6.11.24. Views are panoramic from the boulder strewn summit mound. The view north is across the uplands of the Glendoe area with Glen Brein cutting a distinctive valley through this upland. Some of the many small lochans to the north are visible from this location. The large Glendoe reservoir to the north is obscured by Bac nam Fuaran (833 m AOD) and the Stronelairg Wind Farm occupies a wide part of the view north-east. Views to the east are largely taken up by other parts of the summit or of neighbouring hill Gael Charn (876 m AOD). Views south-east from the edges of the summit are through Allt Yairack towards the upper Spey valley. Views south are across the Corrieyairack Pass and the steeply sloping ridge created by Sron a Bruirich, Coire Shesgnan and Carn Leac. The Nevis range is a distant focus for the view south beyond this immediate ridge of hills.

6.11.25. The view west and towards the site is across the immediate foreground of Meallan Odhar Meadhon with Poll-gormack Hill beyond this, which slopes down towards the upland plateau area in which the site is located with Loch Garry and the distinctive profile of Ben Tee in the distance beyond. The western edges of upland plateau create an intermediate ridge that follows the alignment of the Great Glen. Whilst the floor of the Great Glen is not visible in itself, the upper slopes of the north-west side are visible with the low hills of the Inchdarroch and Beinneun Forests beyond provide a linear reference to its presence (including the Millennium and Beineun Wind Farms).

6.11.26. The BDOHL is a distinct feature in the views south and west as it spans across the upland plateau of the site area and then climbs up through the Corrieyairack Pass. Operational wind farms visible in the view include Beinneun and Extension, Millennium Group, Bhlaraidh, Stronelairg, Dunmaglass Estate, and Corriegarth.

Sensitivity

6.11.27. This viewpoint does not lie within a landscape designated for its scenic quality, it is however, within easy reach from GWMR via a rough track. The value of this viewpoint is considered to be medium. Recreational walkers will have an appreciation of the surrounding landscape and will be focussed on views, operational wind turbines and the BDOHL line slightly moderate susceptibility to change, however, the potential for cumulative effects potentially increases susceptibility to change. On balance, susceptibility to change is considered to be medium-high. In combining the medium value with the medium-high susceptibility, the sensitivity of receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be medium-high.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

- The Proposed Development turbines would be visible at 3.75 km to the nearest turbine to the west of the viewpoint.
- All of the Proposed Development turbines would be visible from this location including the bases and hardstands of 7 of the 8 turbines.
- The access tracks would be visible. All other Proposed Development infrastructure would not be visible.
- The proposed turbines theoretically occupy 21.0 degrees of the view.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change in the view resulting from the addition of wind turbines within relatively close proximity to the viewpoint.
- The Proposed Development turbines appear in front of the intermediate ridge that follows the alignment of the Great Glen, creating a new focus in the foreground of its alignment.
- The Proposed Development appears within a similar part of the view as the BDOHL, introducing a potential scale comparison and cumulative effect.
- The Proposed Development would increase the perception of a wind energy development in the landscape to the west in combination with the operational Beinneun and Millennium Group.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The presence of the existing tall structures of the BDOHL line towers moderates the effect of the Proposed Development as large-scale infrastructure is already a key feature of the landscape in which the Proposed Development would be located.
- The rough moorland landcover and overall large upland scale of the landscape in the view west towards the Proposed Development provides a landscape context considered suitable for wind energy development of the type proposed.
- Whilst the Proposed Development would appear in front of the intermediate ridge that follows the alignment of the Great Glen, the valley floor and distinctive landscape features of the Great Glen are not visible from this location to the west and the influence of the Proposed Development on its key characteristics are considered minimal from this location.
- The presence of existing wind energy development in the view beyond the site moderates the effect of the Proposed Development as it would not be entirely uncharacteristic in the view to the west.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.28. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, the magnitude of change for the Proposed Development is considered to be medium-high.

Significance of Effect

6.11.29. The effect on recreational receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be **moderate-major and significant.** The viewpoint is within relatively close proximity to the Proposed Development and would introduce further large-scale structures in the view west including access tracks and turbine hardstands.

Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.11.30. The Millennium South consented development will appear in the view to the west beyond the Proposed Development. In itself the Millennium South development will increase the number of turbines already visible as part of the Millennium Group which would have minimal change to the baseline scenario. To the north-east, the Aberarder consented development will appear on the distant horizon beyond the operational Dunmaglass Estate and Corriegarth developments. Dell will appear beyond and to the north of the operational Stronelairg development, appearing to visually connect the operational and consented development in the view north-east. The consented Bhlaraidh Extension will appear within close context to the operational Bhlaraidh development and from this location will notably increase the spread of development visible to the north.

6.11.31. Whilst these consented developments further spread and slightly intensify the visual effect experienced from this view, when considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered broadly similar to the assessment against the operational / under construction baseline due to the contribution of the Proposed Development in this scenario. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be medium-high resulting in a **moderate-major and significant** effect in this scenario.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.11.32. The Bunloinn application would appear behind the Beinneun Extension to the south of the Millennium Group and Tomchrasky would appear to the north of the Millennium Group, extending its horizontal extent. The Corriegarth 2 application would appear within close context and in the foreground of the operational Corriegarth development in the distant view to the north-east. The Cloiche application would appear within close context to Stronelairg in views to the north-east. The Cloiche turbines would appear to wrap around the existing Stronelairg development extending the existing array of turbines to the north and south in this view. The Cloiche development also extends to the south-west from Stronelairg which brings turbines within closer proximity to the viewpoint and to the Proposed Development. This scenario in itself would increase the perception of wind farm development occupying views and bring development closer to the viewpoint. The Proposed Development would further increase the spread of development at yet closer proximity and so would play a role in the overall intensification of the cumulative effect from this viewpoint. When considering these factors and the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered to increase compared to the operational / under construction and consented baseline due to the contribution of the Proposed Development in this scenario. The magnitude of change is considered to be high resulting in a **major and significant** effect in this scenario.

Detailed Assessment - Viewpoint 4 Carn a' Chuilinn

Baseline Description

6.11.33. This viewpoint is located at the summit of Carn a Chuillinn (816 m AOD), a Corbett that lies at the south-west edges of Monadhliath Mountains. It is accessed from the B862 and for part of the way via the Glendoe reservoir track before following a rough track to the foot of the summit. The route is relatively straightforward for much of the way with a short scramble to the summit. The summit is notable for the many small lochans that cover a large summit plateau with rocky outcrops and peat hag between the lochans.

6.11.34. Views are panoramic and can be summarised as: views west across the Great Glen and along Glen Garry, including views of Loch Garry and the distinctive profile of Ben Tee (also including the Millennium and Beineun Wind Farms); views north towards the northern part of the Great Glen with the profiles of Carn an t-Suidhe and Meall Fuar-mhonaidh recognisable in this view; a wide view arc to the east across the uplands of the surrounding Monadhliath mountains (including the nearby Stronelairg Wind Farm); and the view south across the upland plateau in which the site is located, backdropped by the Carn Dearg summits, with the Nevis range in the far distance beyond.

6.11.35. The Beauly Denny overhead line is a distinct feature in the views south and west as it spans across the upland plateau of the site area and then climbs up through the Corrieyairack Pass. Operational wind farms visible in the view include Beinneun and Extension, Millennium Group, Bhlaraidh, Stronelairg, Dunmaglass Estate, and Corriegarth.

Sensitivity

6.11.36. This viewpoint does not lie within a landscape designated for its scenic quality, is not on a recognised route or a signposted destination. This Corbett is however walked by hill walkers and there is a worn track much of the way to the summit after leaving the Glendoe Reservoir track. The value of this viewpoint is considered to be medium. Recreational walkers will have an appreciation of the surrounding landscape and will be focussed on views, operational wind turbines and the Beauly to Denny line slightly moderate susceptibility to change, however, the potential for cumulative effects potentially increases susceptibility to change. On balance, susceptibility to change is considered to be medium-high. In combining the medium value with the medium-high susceptibility, the sensitivity of receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be medium-high.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

- The Proposed Development turbines would be visible at 4.48 km to the nearest turbine to the west of the viewpoint.
- All of the Proposed Development turbines would be visible from this location including the bases of the towers.
- The access tracks and hardstands of all turbines would be visible from the summit albeit that the summit top screens 3 from view at the precise location of this viewpoint.
- All other Proposed Development infrastructure would not be visible.
- The proposed turbines theoretically occupy 26.7 degrees of the view.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change in the view resulting from the addition of wind turbines within relatively close proximity to the viewpoint.
- The Proposed Development turbines appear in front of the Carn Dearg hills and the core area of WLA 19 to the south, creating an additional man-made focus within its northern edges.
- The Proposed Development appears within a similar part of the view as the BDOHL, introducing a scale comparison and cumulative effect.
- The Proposed Development would increase the perception of a wind energy development in the landscape to the west in combination with the operational Beinneun and Millennium Group viewed to the west.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The presence of the existing tall structures of the BDOHL towers moderates the effect of the Proposed Development as large-scale infrastructure is already a key feature of the landscape in which the Proposed Development would be located.
- The rough moorland landcover and overall large upland scale of the landscape in the view west towards the Proposed Development provides a landscape context considered suitable for wind energy development of the type proposed.
- The Proposed Development would not interrupt the scenic views across the Great Glen or into Glen Garry.
- Whilst appearing in the foreground of the Carn Dearg hills, which the Nevis range appears beyond, the Proposed Development would not break this skyline of these distant hills.
- The presence of existing wind energy development in the view to the west slightly moderates the effect of the Proposed Development as it would not be entirely uncharacteristic in the view.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.37. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, the magnitude of change for the Proposed Development is considered to be medium-high.

Significance of Effect

6.11.38. The effect on recreational receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be **moderate-major and significant**. The viewpoint is within relatively close proximity to the Proposed Development and would introduce further large-scale structures in the view south including access tracks and turbine hardstands.

Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.11.39. The Millennium South consented development will appear in the view to the west. In itself the Millennium South development will increase the number of turbines already visible as part of the Millennium Group appearing to fill the gaps in the existing development which would have minimal change to the baseline scenario. The consented Bhlaraidh Extension will appear within close context to the operational Bhlaraidh development and from this location would notably increase the spread of development visible to the north. To the north-east, the Aberarder consented development will appear on the distant horizon beyond the operational Dunmaglass Estate and Corriegarth developments. Dell will appear to the north of the operational Stronelairg development, extending the horizontal spread of existing development in the view north-east. Whilst these consented developments further spread and slightly intensify the visual effect experienced from this view, when considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered similar to the assessment against the operational / under construction baseline. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be medium-high resulting in a **moderate-major and significant** effect in this scenario.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.11.40. The Bunloinn application would appear behind the Beinneun Extension to the south of the Millennium Group and Tomchrasky would appear to the north of the Millennium Group, extending its horizontal extent. The Corriegarth 2 application would appear within close context and in the foreground of the operational Corriegarth development in the distant view to the north-east, the turbines of which would appear larger in scale than the existing development. The Cloiche application would appear within close context to Stronelairg in views to the north-east. The Cloiche turbines would appear to wrap around the existing Stronelairg development extending the existing array of turbines to the south in this view, increasing its horizontal spread. The Cloiche development also extends to the south-west from Stronelairg which brings turbines within closer proximity to the viewpoint and to the Proposed Development. This scenario in itself would increase the perception of wind farm development occupying views and bring development closer to the viewpoint. The Proposed Development would further increase the spread of development at yet closer proximity and so would play a role in the overall intensification of the cumulative effect from this viewpoint. When considering these factors and the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered to increase compared to the operational / under construction and consented baseline. The magnitude of change is considered to be high resulting in a **major and significant** effect in this scenario.

Detailed Assessment - Viewpoint 5 Carn Dearg

Baseline Description

6.11.41. This viewpoint is located at the summit of Carn Dearg (768 m AOD), a hill which is part of a group of hills to the south and east of the Great Glen. This viewpoint is located within WLA 19. This Carn Dearg sits close to another Carn Dearg (816 m AOD) to the north-west and Carn Dearg Beag (680 m AOD) to the south-east.

6.11.42. It is accessed via Glen Roy and Glen Turret to the south via a relatively straightforward walk along a path through the steeply sloping and incised Gleann Eachach.

6.11.43. Views to the south are a key focus from the summit and feature a scenic view along Glen Roy with the distinctive mountain profile of the Nevis range creating a dramatic distant backdrop. The view east forms a similar focus along the upper Spey valley, including Loch Spey with the dramatic profiles of the Cairngorm mountains in the distance. Views to the west and north are of the long sloping profile of the other Carn Dearg.

6.11.44. The view to the north-east towards the site is across the northern area of WLA 19. The site area appears as an area of muted upland moorland in the distance viewed to the north-east along Coire Odhar Beag and between the slopes of Leac nan Uan and Glas Charn that frame the view. The upland bowl in which the site is within is exaggerated in this isolated view across the WLA 19. The BDOHL and towers can be seen cutting through this area. Operational wind farms visible in the view include Beinneun and Extension, Millennium Group and Bhlaraidh.

Sensitivity

6.11.45. This viewpoint does not lie within a landscape designated for its scenic quality but does lie within WLA 19. The viewpoint is not on a recognised or signposted route, however, the summit is a destination for hill walkers and there is a rough track from Glen Roy. The value of this viewpoint is considered to be medium-high. Recreational walkers will have an appreciation of the surrounding landscape and will be focussed on views. Whilst operational wind turbines and the BDOHL have a slight influence in reducing susceptibility, these are small elements in the view and on balance, susceptibility to change is considered to be medium-high. In combining the medium-high value with the medium-high susceptibility, the sensitivity of receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be medium-high.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

- The Proposed Development turbines would be visible at 5.42 km to the nearest turbine to the north-east of the viewpoint.
- All of the Proposed Development turbines would be visible from this location,1 as blade tip, 2 as hubs close to the horizon, 1 as most of tower visible and 4 visible to turbine base.
- The access tracks in the central portion of the site area would be visible along with 4 of the turbine hardstands. All other Proposed Development infrastructure would not be visible.
- The proposed turbines theoretically occupy 1.0 degrees of the view.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change in the view resulting from the addition of wind turbines at closer range than currently experienced.
- The Proposed Development turbines appear in front of the Monadhliath Hills in the northern area of WLA 19, creating an additional man-made focus within its northern edges.
- The Proposed Development appears within a similar part of the view as the BDOHL, introducing a scale comparison and cumulative effect.

- The Proposed Development would increase the perception of a wind energy development in the landscape to the north-east in combination with the operational Beinneun and Millennium Group viewed to the west and Bhlairadh to the north.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The presence of the existing tall structures of the BDOHL towers moderates the effect of the Proposed Development as large-scale infrastructure is already a key feature of the landscape in which the Proposed Development would be located.
- The rough moorland landcover and overall large upland scale of the landscape in the view north-east towards the Proposed Development provides a landscape context considered suitable for wind energy development of the type proposed.
- The Proposed Development would not interrupt the scenic views, considered to be a key focus, along Glen Roy to the south or along the Spey valley to the east.
- Views into the core areas of WLA 19 which correspond with these scenic views would also be unaffected by the Proposed Development.
- The distinctive mountain backdrop to the south and east including the Nevis range and Cairngorms mountains would be unaffected by the Proposed Development.
- Whilst appearing in the foreground context of the southern Monadhliath Hills the Proposed Development would not break this skyline of these distant hills.
- The presence of existing wind energy development in the view to the north, albeit as more distant, slightly moderates the effect of the Proposed Development as it would not be entirely uncharacteristic in the view.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.46. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, the magnitude of change for the Proposed Development is considered to be medium. Whilst key views from this location along the Roy and Spey valleys are unaffected, the Proposed Development would bring wind energy development closer to the viewer than currently experienced increasing the magnitude of change.

Significance of Effect

6.11.47. The effect on recreational receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be **moderate and significant** largely due to the high sensitivity of recreational receptors at this location balanced against the relative proximity of the Proposed Development.

Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.11.48. One of the Millennium South consented development turbines will appear in the view to the north-west within the same context as the other visible Millennium Group turbines having a minimal change to the baseline scenario. In itself the Millennium South development will increase the number of turbines already visible as part of the Millennium Group appearing to fill the gaps in the existing development. The consented Bhlaraidh Extension will appear within close context to the operational Bhlaraidh development and from this location will increase the spread of development visible to the north. To the north-east, the Dell consented development is theoretically visible as a very small blade tip but in reality will not be discernible. The introduction of the Proposed Development to the foreground view of Bhlaraidh and Bhlaraidh Extension would contrast in scale, however, this scale difference is easily understood due to perspective and would not disrupt the scale of the large scale landscape in the view.

6.11.49. On balance, when considering these factors and the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered to be broadly similar to the assessment against the operational / under construction baseline due to the contribution of the Proposed Development in this scenario. The cumulative magnitude of change is therefore considered to be medium in this scenario resulting in a **moderate and significant** effect.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.11.50. The Bunloinn application would be visible to the north-west appearing to extend the operational Beinneun and Extension developments. The Corriegarth 2 and Cloiche applications are theoretically visible as very small blade tips but in reality will not be discernible. When considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered similar to the assessment against the operational / under construction and consented baseline due to the contribution of the Proposed Development in this scenario. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be medium resulting in a **moderate and significant** effect.

Detailed Assessment - Viewpoint 6 Fort Augustus, Car Park Adjacent to A82

Baseline Description

6.11.51. This viewpoint is located at the northern edges of the Riggs Car Park in Fort Augustus on the pavement between the car park and the A82. The viewpoint is selected to represent residents and visitors within the Fort Augustus settlement and for road users on the A82. Views from this location are shortened by other built elements and trees along the road. However, views to the higher elevated hills that lie either side of the Great Glen are still obtained above and through gaps in these intervening elements within the settlement and these provide a scenic backdrop to the settlement and the viewpoint. The view to the west is across the car park. The view north and east is restricted by nearby trees, properties and garden vegetation apart from the view north-east along the A82 road corridor. The view south and towards the site is also restricted by nearby properties and trees but has a view between the tops of trees towards the hills that form the south-eastern edges of the Great Glen. The BDOHL towers are skylined as they cross Meall a Cholumain near the communications mast. There are no existing wind turbines in the view.

Sensitivity

6.11.52. This viewpoint is not within any designated landscape. It lies at the edges of the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA but the views across the SLA are restricted by localised landscape elements. The view will have a localised value for residents and visitors within the settlement. Taking all of this into account, value is considered to be medium-high.

6.11.53. The viewpoint is located on the A82 which at this location has direct facing views towards the site when travelling southbound. The speed of the road is 30 mph although road users are likely to be travelling at slower speeds due to potential for emerging vehicles from the car park and nearby junctions. Taking this into account it is considered that the attention of road users is likely to remain focussed on the road and immediate settlement context rather than on the hills beyond. Taking this into account susceptibility for road users is considered to be medium-low. In combining the medium-high value with the medium-low susceptibility, the sensitivity of road users at this viewpoint is considered to be medium.

6.11.54. Some of the residential receptors within this lower elevated part of the settlement share a similar view to the viewpoint and they will have an appreciation of the landscapes in their views, including towards the site. Visitors to the area will also share this view. Susceptibility for visitors and residential receptors is considered to be high. In combining the medium-high value with the high susceptibility, the sensitivity of visitors and residents at this viewpoint is considered to be high.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

- The Proposed Development turbines would be visible at 7.85 km to the nearest turbine to the south of the viewpoint.
- 3 blade tips of the Proposed Development turbines would be visible from this location.
- All other Proposed Development infrastructure would not be visible from this location.
- The proposed turbines theoretically occupy 13.0 degrees of the view.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change in the view resulting from the visibility of wind turbine blades on the ridge above Fort Augustus to the south.
- The Proposed Development would introduce wind energy development to a view that currently has none visible.
- The Proposed Development blade tips would appear within a similar part of the view as the BDOHL line and Meall a Cholumain communications mast introducing scale comparison and cumulative effect.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The small amount of the Proposed Development visible would not be immediately apparent from this viewpoint.
- Due to the rotation of the blades not all blade tips would be visible at the same time above the ridge.
- The viewpoint is located where the Proposed Development would appear above the ridge, other sections of the A82 and areas of the car park do not share this unobstructed view and as such visitors and road users would only experience an unobstructed view from central Fort Augustus from a limited area local to the viewpoint.
- The presence of the existing tall structures of the BDOHL towers and Meall a Cholumain communications mast moderates the effect of the Proposed Development as large-scale infrastructure is already a key feature of the ridge to the south. The Proposed Development blade tips would appear smaller in size in comparison to these other infrastructure elements.
- The broad upland ridge beyond which the Proposed Development is located provides a large-scale landscape context and the visible blade tips would be diminutive to the scale of this intervening ridgeline.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.55. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, the magnitude of change for the Proposed Development is considered to be negligible.

Significance of Effect

6.11.56. The effect on residents and visitors at this viewpoint is considered to be **minor and not significant.** The effect on road users at this viewpoint is considered to be **minor and not significant.**

Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative Assessment (consented and application scenario)

6.11.57. No consented or application schemes would be visible from this viewpoint and as a result, there is no cumulative change and **no cumulative effect** in these scenarios.

Detailed Assessment - Viewpoint 7 Fort Augustus near Church Road

Baseline Description

6.11.58. This viewpoint is located within Fort Augustus in an elevated northern part of the settlement. It represents views from neighbouring properties and has been selected as a worst-case view from the settlement. Views from Church Road are relatively open to the south and across through surrounding trees and curtailed by the steeply sloping topography to the north. There are glimpsed views along the Great Glen from this location in the sense that the north facing hill slopes and summits on the southern side of the Great Glen create a wide horizon in views south. However, there are no views of lower elevated parts of the Great Glen and of the settlement below. The ridgeline horizon to the south is divided by Glen Tarff which appears in the centre of the visible part of the ridgeline seen from this location. Towards the site, the BDOHL towers are skylined along with the Meall a Cholumain communications mast. There are no existing wind turbines in the view.

Sensitivity

6.11.59. This viewpoint is not within any designated landscape, however, the view will have a localised value for residents. Fort Augustus lies at the edges of the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA but the views across the SLA from this location is restricted by intervening landscape elements within the settlement. Taking all of this into account, value is considered to be medium-high. Residential receptors within this elevated part of the settlement share a similar view to the viewpoint and they will have an appreciation of the landscapes in their views, including towards the site. Susceptibility for residential receptors is considered to be high. In combining the medium-high value with the high susceptibility, the sensitivity of residential receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be high.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

- The Proposed Development turbines would be visible at 8 km to the nearest turbine to the south of the viewpoint.
- 3 blade tips of the Proposed Development would be visible from this location.
- All other Proposed Development infrastructure would not be visible from this location.
- The proposed turbines theoretically occupy 12.0 degrees of the view.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change in the view resulting from the visibility of wind turbine blades on the ridge above Fort Augustus to the south.
- The Proposed Development would introduce wind energy development to a view that currently has none visible.
- The Proposed Development blade tips would appear within the same part of the view as the BDOHL towers and Meall a Cholumain communications mast introducing scale comparison and cumulative effect.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The very small amount of the Proposed Development visible would not be immediately apparent from this viewpoint.
- Due to the rotation of the blades not all blade tips would be visible at the same time above the ridge.

- The presence of the existing tall structures of the BDOHL towers and Meall a Cholumain communications mast moderates the effect of the Proposed Development as large-scale infrastructure is already a key feature of the ridge to the south.
- The Proposed Development blade tips would appear smaller in size in comparison to these other infrastructure elements.
- The viewpoint is located where the Proposed Development would appear above the ridge, not all properties on Church Road share this unobstructed view.
- The broad upland ridge beyond which the Proposed Development is located provides a large-scale landscape context and the visible blade tips would be diminutive to the scale of this intervening ridgeline.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.60. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, the magnitude of change for the Proposed Development is considered to be negligible.

Significance of Effect

6.11.61. The effect on receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be **minor and not significant.**

Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative Assessment (consented and application scenario)

6.11.62. No consented or application schemes would be visible from this viewpoint and as a result, there is no cumulative change and **no cumulative effect** in these scenarios.

Detailed Assessment - Viewpoint 8 Loch Lundie

Baseline Description

6.11.63. Loch Lundie is located on an elevated plateau to the north of Glen Garry and west of the Great Glen. It can be accessed via a long walk along a path from the A87 to the south, this path continues all the way around the loch connecting with the overhead line access tracks to the east, which continue all the way to Fort Augustus. The loch is flanked by large scale forestry plantations to the east and south which provide a sense of containment in this otherwise exposed landscape context. Several small woods are also found at the loch edges creating a more intimate context near the outflow of the loch on its southern edges. Views east and south from this location are focussed on the immediate context of the loch itself with the dramatic backdrop of the southern steep sloping sides of the Great Glen as a backdrop. An overhead line that connects to the Auchteraw substation to the north passes to the east and south of Loch Lundie, bringing infrastructure into a wide part of the visual context surrounding the loch. Views to the north and west are limited by the nearby steep sloping landform of Meall Chrom Dhoire. There are no operational wind energy developments in the existing view.

Sensitivity

6.11.64. This viewpoint does not lie within a landscape designated for its scenic quality, and the value of this viewpoint is considered to be medium-low. Recreational walkers will have an appreciation of the surrounding landscape and will be focussed on views, however, the overhead line and towers in relatively close proximity is considered to moderate susceptibility to change. On balance, susceptibility to change is considered to be medium-high. In combining the medium-low value with the medium-high susceptibility, the sensitivity of receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be medium.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

- The Proposed Development turbines would be visible at 8.43 km to the nearest turbine to the east of the viewpoint.

- 7 of the 8 turbines would be visible, 4 as blade tips, 2 as blades with hubs close to the horizon and 1 with the top of tower visible.
- All other Proposed Development infrastructure would not be visible from this location.
- The proposed turbines theoretically occupy 9.0 degrees of the view.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change in the view resulting from the visibility of wind turbines blades on the ridge to the east with some of the blades breaking the horizon.
- The Proposed Development would introduce wind energy development to a view that currently has none visible.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The reduced visibility of the Proposed Development due to intervening landform moderates the visual effect.
- Due to the rotation of the blades not all blade tips would be visible at the same time above the ridge.
- The presence of the existing tall structures of the overhead line towers in the foreground view moderates the effect of the Proposed Development as large-scale infrastructure is already a key feature of the ridge to the south.
- The viewpoint is located where visibility of the Proposed Development is at its worst and other parts of Loch Lundie (or the paths that encircle it) would not experience the same level of visibility of the Proposed Development.
- The broad upland ridge beyond which the Proposed Development is located provides a large-scale landscape context and the visible turbines would be diminutive to the scale of this intervening ridgeline.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.65. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, the magnitude of change for the Proposed Development is considered to be medium-low.

Significance of Effect

6.11.66. The effect on receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be **moderate-minor and not significant.**

Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative Assessment (consented and application scenario)

6.11.67. No consented or application schemes would be visible from this viewpoint and as a result, there is no cumulative change and **no cumulative effect** in these scenarios.

Detailed Assessment - Viewpoint 9 A82 North of Fort Augustus

Baseline Description

6.11.68. This viewpoint is located to the north of Fort Augustus on the A82. The A82 is a busy road with fast moving traffic and the viewpoint location makes use of a small layby. It has been selected to represent road users travelling south towards Fort Augustus and should be noted that road users would not experience this view travelling north as the site would be behind them. The view to the north and east is restricted by steep forested slopes and roadside trees. The view to the south and west is across the southern end of Loch Ness, edges of the Fort Augustus settlement and the north facing hill slopes and summits on the southern side of the Great Glen.

6.11.69. The Culachy Estate and wooded Glen Tarff can be seen in the view towards the site area. The steep sides of the Great Glen combined with the open water of Loch Ness emphasise the visual focus towards Fort Augustus in this view, with a glimpse to the high mountains that appear beyond Fort Augustus (Ben Tee the most recognisable of these). The BDOHL towers are skylined on the southern side of the Great Glen and can be seen dropping down into the Fort Augustus area. The Meall a Cholumain communications mast is also a distinctive feature on the southern ridgeline. There are no existing wind turbines in the view.

Sensitivity

6.11.70. This viewpoint is within the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA with views across the southern end of the designation. Value is considered to be medium-high. The viewpoint is located on the A82 which at this location has direct facing views towards the site when travelling southbound. The speed of the road is 60mph and this relatively straight section of road is generally fast moving. Whilst the view may be experienced for longer duration when in the layby, it is considered that the attention of road users is likely to remain focussed on the road due to the speed of travel and only a glimpsed view in the direction of Fort Augustus is possible at speed. Taking this into account susceptibility for road users is considered to be medium-low. In combining the medium-high value with the medium-low susceptibility, the sensitivity of road users at this viewpoint is considered to be medium.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

- The Proposed Development turbines would be visible at 9.21 km to the nearest turbine to the south of the viewpoint.
- 4 blade tips of the Proposed Development would be visible from this location.
- All other Proposed Development infrastructure would not be visible from this location.
- The proposed turbines theoretically occupy 4.0 degrees of the view.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change in the view resulting from the visibility of wind turbine blades on the ridge to the south of Fort Augustus and above the Culachy Estate.
- The Proposed Development would introduce wind energy development to a view that currently has none visible.
- The Proposed Development blade tips would appear within the same part of the view as the BDOHL towers and Meall a Cholumain communications mast introducing scale comparison.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The very small amount of the Proposed Development visible would not create a new visual focus.
- Due to the rotation of the blades not all blade tips would be visible at the same time above the ridge and users of the A82 would only experience this view for a short duration.
- The presence of the existing tall structures of the BDOHL towers and Meall a Cholumain communications mast moderates the effect of the Proposed Development as large-scale infrastructure is already a key feature of the ridge to the south which would appear comparable in size.
- The broad upland ridge beyond which the Proposed Development is located provides a large-scale landscape context and the visible blade tips would be diminutive to the scale of this intervening ridgeline.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.71. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, the magnitude of change for the Proposed Development is considered to be negligible.

Significance of Effect

6.11.72. The effect on receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be **minor and not significant.**

Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative Assessment (consented and application scenario)

6.11.73. No consented or application schemes would be visible from this viewpoint and as a result, there is no cumulative change and **no cumulative effect** in these scenarios.

Detailed Assessment - Viewpoint 10 An Suidhe

Baseline Description

6.11.74. This viewpoint is located on the summit of Carn an t-Suidhe to the north of the B862 and is accessed via a short walk from the An Suidhe car park and scenic viewpoint. The car park is a popular stopping point for tourists including coaches in the summer months and views from this summit are panoramic with many making the short walk to the summit.

6.11.75. The view west and north-west is partly obscured by the rocky landform of Beinn a Bhacaidh with some of the more distant summits of the central highlands to either side beyond. The view to the north is dominated by the scenic and elevated view across the landscape of Strath Errick and Loch Mhor. The Great Glen is noticeable in this view as a strong linear feature that appears to break the successive layers of ridges more definitively, with the more distant steep sloping northern sides of the Great Glen beyond. To the east the view is across the upland glen of the Cumrack Burn and the steep slopes of the Carn a Bhreabadair ridge, the lower slopes of which have small clumps of woodlands following the many incised burn corridors adding to the scenic interest. The view to the south-west is a scenic view across Loch Tarff with the Great Glen stretching out in the backdrop of this view. The mountain ridges to the west of Loch Lochy including Sean Mheall and Ben Tee create a distinctive mountain backdrop to the Great Glen on the distant horizon in this long view.

6.11.76. The view to the south and towards the site is across a foreground view of the upland glen of the Cumrack Burn which has scattered trees and small woodland clumps at the bottom of the surrounding rocky slopes and along incised burn channels. The rocky profiles of the hills immediately surrounding the glen of the Cumrack Burn which gradually reduce in elevation towards Loch Tarff are distinctive in this view. The profile of Carn Clach nan Fearna creates a particular focus within close context to Loch Tarff. The backdrop of higher mountains in the distance includes the Braeroy hills such as Carn Dearg.

6.11.77. Operational wind farms visible in the view include Beinneun and Extension, the Millennium Group, Dunmaglass Estate and Corriegarth. The BDOHL is visible to the south but only partly visible at distance between the closer hill forms and rocky topography that intervenes.

Sensitivity

6.11.78. This viewpoint is within the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA and is on the South Loch Ness Trail with nearby parking area. The value of this viewpoint is therefore considered to be high. Recreational users will have an appreciation of the surrounding landscape and will be focussed on views including south towards the site area. Susceptibility to change is considered to be high. In combining the high value with the high susceptibility, the sensitivity of receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be high.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

- The Proposed Development turbines would be visible at 11.06 km to the nearest turbine to the south of the viewpoint.

- 6 of the 8 Proposed Development turbines would be visible from this location. 4 as blade tips beyond intervening topography and the other 2 as hubs close to the intervening ridge of Carn Clach nan Fearna.
- All other Proposed Development infrastructure would not be visible.
- The proposed turbines theoretically occupy 6.0 degrees of the view.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- The Proposed Development appears within a part of the panorama that does not currently have wind energy development within it and so would increase the spread of wind turbines seen in the wider panorama increasing the cumulative effect when considering the baseline wind energy visible in the view.
- The Proposed Development turbines would appear in an upland area that lies beyond the intervening hill form of Carn Clach nan Fearna with two of the Proposed Development turbines appearing immediately behind this hill, detracting from its presence as a focus to the south in views across the glen of Cumrack Burn.
- The Proposed Development would appear in front of the distant Carn Dearg hills and WLA19, creating a new man-made focus in views towards this area.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The majority of the Proposed Development turbines are screened by intervening landform and the visible partially visible turbines would appear in the distance beyond the hills and ridges of the immediate landscape context of this viewpoint.
- The Proposed Development turbines would appear behind the intervening hill form of Carn Clach nan Fearna and whilst detracting from its presence as a focal point, the Proposed Development is clearly set within the upland beyond the hill form.
- The Proposed Development would not encroach on the scenic views across Loch Tarff to the south-west and the scenic and elevated view across the landscape of Strath Errick and Loch Mhor would be unaffected.
- The Proposed Development would not interrupt the scenic views across the Great Glen or to more distant hills to the south-west that form the distinct mountain backdrop.
- The presence of existing wind energy development in the view to the west and north-east, slightly moderates the effect of the Proposed Development as it would not be entirely uncharacteristic in the view.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.79. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, the magnitude of change for the Proposed Development is considered to be low.

Significance of Effect

6.11.80. The effect on recreational receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be **moderate-minor and not significant.** The Proposed Development turbines would appear behind the intervening hill form of Carn Clach nan Fearna and whilst detracting from its presence as a focal point, the Proposed Development is clearly set within distant upland and would not encroach on the scenic views across Loch Tarff or interrupt the scenic views across the Great Glen including the distinct mountain backdrop.

Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.11.81. The Millennium South consented development will appear in the view to the west. In itself the Millennium South development will increase the number of turbines already visible as part of the Millennium Group appearing to fill the gaps in the existing development which will have minimal change to the baseline scenario. The consented Bhlaraidh Extension will appear within close context to the operational Bhlaraidh development and from this location will notably increase the spread of development visible to the north. To the east, the Aberarder

consented development will appear beyond the operational Dunmaglass Estate development appearing as additional turbines on the distant horizon. Whilst these consented developments slightly intensify the visual effect experienced from this view, when considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered similar to the assessment against the operational / under construction baseline due to the contribution of the Proposed Development. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be low resulting in a **moderate-minor and not significant** effect in this scenario.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.11.82. The Corriegarth 2 application would appear within close context and in the foreground of the operational Corriegarth development in the distant view to the east, the turbines of which would appear larger in scale than the existing development and increase the extent of horizon currently occupied by Corriegarth. Whilst these application developments slightly intensify the visual effect experienced from this view, when considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered similar to the assessment against the operational / under construction and consented baseline due to the contribution of the Proposed Development in this scenario. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be low resulting in a **moderate-minor and not significant** effect in this scenario.

Detailed Assessment - Viewpoint 11 Great Glen Way, Carn an Doire Mhoir

Baseline Description

6.11.83. This viewpoint is located on an elevated section of the Great Glen Way, on the northern slopes of the Great Glen at a stopping point on the route which features a small bench. The Great Glen Way is a very popular long distance walking route. This particular section rises up from Fort Augustus and crosses the south-western flank of the high ridge between the Great Glen and Glen Moriston before dropping down to Invermoriston further to the north. Whilst parts of this section are within forestry, the immediately surrounding ridge has an open and exposed character and views to the east and south are panoramic with a clear focus on the views along the Great Glen and across Loch Ness. From this particular location Fort Augustus is clearly visible which is considered the principal focus given that it is not as apparent from other sections of the route due to localised terrain. Views to the west and north are curtailed by the higher elevated parts of the ridge.

6.11.84. The view south and towards the site is across the southern end of Loch Ness, Fort Augustus and the Caledonian Canal with Loch Lochy and further parts of the Great Glen clearly visible in the distance. Glen Tarff and the Culachy Estate are clearly visible as a deep notch in the southern side of the Great Glen. The part of the site where the proposed development turbines would be located is not visible from this location due to the leading ridge above Glen Tarff which intervenes. Both the towers and overhead lines of the BDOHL are clearly visible from this location in contrast with the dark and muted colour of the moorland upland of the site and surrounding landscape. Meall a Cholumain is a particularly notable landform feature to the south of Fort Augustus in this view and the communications mast and BDOHL towers crossing this and the valley floor of the Great Glen are noticeable man-made features. Operational wind farms visible in the view include Corriegarth, Dunmaglass Estate, Farr and the Millennium Group.

Sensitivity

6.11.85. This viewpoint is within the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA and is on a section of the Great Glen Way which is accessed via nearby parking off the A82. The value of this viewpoint is therefore considered to be high. Recreational users will have an appreciation of the surrounding landscape and will be focussed on views including south towards the site area. Susceptibility to change is considered to be high. In combining the high value with the high susceptibility, the sensitivity of receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be high.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

- The Proposed Development turbines would be visible at 10.26 km to the nearest turbine to the south of the viewpoint.
- All of the Proposed Development turbines would be visible from this location , 1 as blade tip, 1 with a hub close to the horizon, and 6 with most of the towers visible with turbine bases screened by landform.
- The section of access track that leads from the site entrance and follows the BDOHL would be partly visible from this location. Turbine hardstands, BESS and substation would be screened behind landform local to the site area.
- The proposed turbines theoretically occupy 10.0 degrees of the view.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change in the view resulting from the addition of wind turbines to the upland that lies beyond and to the south of the Great Glen and the southern edges of Loch Ness.
- The Proposed Development would appear close to the horizon, with turbine blade breaking the skyline.
- Whilst not immediately behind the view of Fort Augustus, the Proposed Development would appear in the same part of the panorama as this key focus of the view creating an additional focus on the upland beyond.
- The Proposed Development appears within a part of the panorama that does not currently have wind energy development within it and so would increase the spread of wind turbines seen in the wider panorama increasing the cumulative effect when considering the baseline wind energy visible in the view.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The Proposed Development would appear in the distant view and the turbines would occupy a relatively small part of the view south, whilst blades would appear to break the skyline, this is not unusual for the area as other wind farm developments are also skylined and an indicator that the Proposed Development is set well back into the upland.
- Views to the north and south are channelled along the Great Glen however, it is clear from this viewpoint that the Proposed Development is set back within the broad upland that lies beyond the ridges and steep slopes of the Great Glen.
- The muted upland moorland and overall large upland scale of the distant landscape of the site area provides a landscape context considered suitable for wind energy development of the type proposed.
- The Proposed Development would be seen within the close context of other visibly noticeable infrastructure such as Meall a Cholumain communications mast and BDOHL towers and as such would not introduce large scale infrastructure into this distant upland view south.
- Whilst the Proposed Development creates an additional focus in the same part of the view as Fort Augustus, the turbines appear set well back into the upland and away from the leading ridgeline of the Great Glen which forms the dramatic backdrop to this settlement. It is considered therefore that the setting of Fort Augustus would not be eroded by the introduction of the Proposed Development.

- Whilst not in the same part of the panorama, the existing wind energy development in the view such as the Millennium Group, Stronelairg and Bhlaraidh provides an existing wind energy baseline, within which the Proposed Development would not be entirely uncharacteristic.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.86. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, the magnitude of change for the Proposed Development is considered to be medium-low.

Significance of Effect

6.11.87. The effect on recreational receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be **moderate and not significant.** Whilst the viewpoint is sensitive, the setting of Fort Augustus is considered to not be eroded and the Proposed Development would be viewed in the distance and set back into the larger upland beyond.

Cumulative Assessment (consented and application scenario)

6.11.88. No consented or application schemes would be visible from this viewpoint and as a result, there is no cumulative change and **no cumulative effect** in these scenarios.

Detailed Assessment - Viewpoint 12 B862 An Suidhe Car Park

Baseline Description

6.11.89. This viewpoint is located on an elevated stretch of the B862 to the east of Loch Tarff, this section of the B862 is on part of GWMR. The location is a marked scenic viewpoint on OS maps and the large roadside parking area is a popular stopping point for tourists including coaches in the summer months. Views are panoramic and distant to the north due to the elevation of this section of the road. This northern view largely includes the lower elevated Strath Errick and Loch Mhor towards the distant landscape of Duntelchaig and provides a particularly scenic outlook from this location, considered to be the principal view direction. To the east the view is across the upland glen of the Cumrack Burn and the steep slopes of the Carn a Bhreabadair ridge, the lower slopes of which have small clumps of woodlands following the many incised burn corridors adding to the scenic interest. The view west is limited by the landform of An Suidhe, albeit that An Suidhe is also the focus of attention for those who have stopped here to walk up to the summit.

6.11.90. The view to the south and towards the site is a view framed by the slopes of Carn an t-Suidhe and the steep sloping Carn a Bhreabadair ridge. It is an upland view across moorland covered, often jagged, hills with a backdrop of higher mountains beyond. The profile of Carn Clach nan Fearna creates a distinctive foreground focus with the Braeroy hills such as Carn Dearg in the distance to the east of it and the mountain ridges to the west of Loch Lochy including Sean Mheall and Ben Tee in the distance to the west of it. There are no existing windfarms in the view south with Corriegarth and Dunmaglass Estate in the view north.

Sensitivity

6.11.91. This viewpoint is within the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA. It is a recognised viewpoint location and is on the South Loch Ness Trail. The viewpoint is also on GWMR which has a cultural value. The value of this viewpoint is therefore considered to be medium-high. Both road users visiting this scenic viewpoint and recreational users will have an appreciation of the surrounding landscape and will be focussed on views. Whilst visitors will have an appreciation of the wider panorama, the principal view to the north is in the opposite direction to the proposed change, slightly reducing susceptibility to change. Taking this into account susceptibility of visitors is considered to be medium-high. In combining the medium-high value with the medium-high susceptibility, the sensitivity of receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be medium-high.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

- The Proposed Development turbines would be visible at 11.59 km to the nearest turbine to the south of the viewpoint.
- 4 of the 8 Proposed Development turbines would be visible from this location. 2 as very small blade tips beyond intervening topography and the other 2 as half of towers visible.
- All other Proposed Development infrastructure would not be visible.
- The proposed turbines theoretically occupy 6.0 degrees of the view.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- The Proposed Development appears within a part of the panorama that does not currently have wind energy development within it and so would introduce development into the view south.
- The Proposed Development turbines would appear in an upland area that lies beyond Glean Curachain, creating a new focus along this glen.
- The Proposed Development would appear in front of the distant Carn Dearg hills and WLA19, creating a new man-made focus in views towards this area.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The majority of the Proposed Development turbines are screened by intervening landform and the visible partially visible turbines would appear in the distance beyond the hills and ridges of the immediate landscape context of this viewpoint.
- The Proposed Development turbines would appear behind the immediate landscape context of rocky hill slopes and clearly set within the upland beyond.
- The scenic and elevated view north considered the principal view, across the landscape of Strath Errick and Loch Mhor towards Duntelchaig would be unaffected by the Proposed Development.
- The presence of existing wind energy development in the view to the north-east, slightly moderates the effect of the Proposed Development as it would not be entirely uncharacteristic in the view.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.92. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, the magnitude of change for the Proposed Development is considered to be low.

Significance of Effect

6.11.93. The effect on receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be **moderate-minor and not significant.** The Proposed Development turbines would appear behind the immediate landscape context of rocky hill slopes, clearly set within the upland beyond and the principal view to the north would be unaffected.

Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.11.94. The consented Bhlaraidh Extension will appear within close context to the visible blade tips of the operational Bhlaraidh development and from this location would notably increase the spread of development visible to the north-west. To the east, the Aberarder consented development will appear beyond the operational Dunmaglass Estate development appearing as additional turbine blade tips on the distant horizon. When considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered broadly similar to the assessment against the operational / under construction baseline due to the contribution of the Proposed Development in this scenario. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be low resulting in a **moderate-minor and not significant** effect in this scenario.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.11.95. The Bunloinn application would appear within the same part of the panorama to the south of Beinneun and Extension in this view. The Corriegarth 2 application would appear within close context and in the foreground of the operational Corriegarth development in the view east, the turbines of which would appear larger in scale than the existing development and increase the extent of horizon currently occupied by Corriegarth such that it breaks across the backdrop of an intervening hill. Whilst these application developments slightly intensify the visual effect experienced from this view, when considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered similar to the assessment against the operational / under construction baseline due to the contribution of the Proposed Development in this scenario. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be low resulting in a **moderate-minor and not significant** effect in this scenario.

Detailed Assessment - Viewpoint 13 Burach

Baseline Description

6.11.96. This viewpoint is located on the summit of Burach (607 m AOD) close to the summit cairn. There is no waymarked route to Burach which can be reached by crossing nearly 2 km of open rocky moorland slopes from the elevated route of the Great Glen Way to the south-east. The large cairn indicates that the summit is frequented by hill walkers. Burach is found on the high ridge between the Great Glen and Glen Moriston, the surrounding ridge has an open and exposed character and views to the surrounding landscape are panoramic with a clear focus on the views along the Great Glen.

6.11.97. Views to the west include Glen Moriston and the large plateau landscape of Balmacaan (including Bhlaraidh Wind Farm) backdropped by the more mountainous landscapes of the western Highlands. To the north, views are across the rocky ridgeline of hills that forms the northern sides of the Great Glen, with Meall Fuar-mhonaidh a notable landform on this ridge. To the east, the view is across the Great Glen and Loch Ness and also offers an elevated view of Strath Errick, backclothed by the Monadhliaths.

6.11.98. The view south and towards the site is across the southern end of Loch Ness, Fort Augustus and the Caledonian Canal with Loch Lochy visible in the distance. Glen Tarff and the Culachy Estate are clearly visible as a deep notch in the southern side of the Great Glen. The site can be seen on more elevated upland beyond the leading ridge above Glen Tarff. The broad upland moorland of the site and surrounding area can be seen between successive ridges that gradually increase in elevation towards the Monadhliath mountains beyond. Both the towers and overhead lines of the BDOHL are clearly visible from this location in contrast with the dark and muted colour of the moorland upland of the site and surrounding landscape. The Meall a Cholumain communications mast is also visible close to the site area. Operational wind farms visible in the view include Stronelairg, Corriegarth, Dunmaglass Estate, Farr, Bhlaraidh, Beinneun and the Millennium Group.

Sensitivity

6.11.99. This viewpoint is within the southern edges of the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA. The location is not a signposted destination or on a recognised route. The value of this viewpoint is considered to be medium-high. Recreational walkers will have an appreciation of the surrounding landscape and will be focussed on views. Operational wind turbines in the surrounding view slightly moderates susceptibility to change. Taking this into account, susceptibility to change is considered to be medium-high. In combining the medium-high value with the medium-high susceptibility, the sensitivity of receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be medium-high.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

- The Proposed Development turbines would be visible at 12.58 km to the nearest turbine to the south of the viewpoint.
- All of the Proposed Development turbines would be visible from this location.
- The access tracks and hardstands are theoretically visible but at this distance are not readily perceived. All other Proposed Development infrastructure would not be visible.
- The proposed turbines theoretically occupy 9.0 degrees of the view.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change in the view resulting from the addition of wind turbines to the upland that lies beyond and to the south of the Great Glen and the southern edges of Loch Ness.
- Whilst not immediately behind the view of Fort Augustus, the Proposed Development would appear in the same part of the panorama as this key focus of the view creating an additional focus on the upland beyond.
- The Proposed Development appears within a part of the panorama that does not currently have wind energy development within it and so would increase the spread of wind turbines seen in the wider panorama increasing the cumulative effect when considering the baseline wind energy visible in the view.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The Proposed Development would appear in the distant view occupying a relatively small part of the view south.
- Views to the north and south are channelled along the Great Glen however, it is clear from this viewpoint that the Proposed Development is set back within the broad upland that lies beyond the ridges and steep slopes of the Great Glen.
- The muted upland moorland and overall large upland scale of the distant landscape of the site area provides a landscape context considered suitable for wind energy development of the type proposed.
- Whilst the Proposed Development creates an additional focus in the same part of the view as Fort Augustus, the turbines appear set well back into the upland and away from the leading ridgeline of the Great Glen which forms the dramatic backdrop to this settlement. It is considered therefore that the setting of Fort Augustus would not be eroded by the introduction of the Proposed Development.
- Whilst not in the same part of the panorama, the existing wind energy development in the view such as the Millinium Group, Stronelairg and Bhlaraidh provides an existing wind energy baseline, within which the Proposed Development would not be entirely uncharacteristic.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.100. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, the magnitude of change for the Proposed Development is considered to be medium-low.

Significance of Effect

6.11.101. The effect on recreational receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be **moderate and not significant.** Whilst the Proposed Development would create an additional cumulative focus in the view south, it would occupy a relatively small part of the southern panorama, it would be set back within the broad upland that lies beyond the ridges and steep slopes of the Great Glen and away from the leading ridgelines that form the backdrop to Fort Augustus.

Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.11.102. The consented Millennium South development will appear to the south-west within close proximity to the operational Millennium Group. The consented Bhlaraidh Extension will appear within close context to the operational Bhlaraidh development and from this location would substantially increase the spread of development visible to the north-west. To the east, the Aberarder consented development will appear beyond the operational Dunmaglass Estate development appearing to extend the operational development on the horizon. To the south-east Dell will appear within the context of the Stronelairg operational development but will be slightly more conspicuous above the horizon than the existing visible turbines. In itself the introduction of these developments will further intensify the effect experienced from this location, particularly in relation to the Bhlaraidh Extension. When considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered to increase slightly due to the increased awareness of wind energy development in the multiple facets of the view, which the Proposed Development is a contributing factor. Taking this into account, the magnitude of change is considered to increase to medium resulting in a **moderate and significant** effect in this scenario.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.11.103. The Bunloinn application would appear within the same part of the panorama to the west of Beinneun in this view and Tomchrasky would appear further west, more separated from the existing turbines on the northern side of Glen Moriston. The Corriegarth 2 application would appear within close context and in the foreground of the operational Corriegarth development in the view east, the turbines of which would appear larger in scale than the existing development and increase the extent of horizon currently occupied by Corriegarth. The Cloiche application would further expand on the operational Stronelairg and consented Dell developments, appearing to fill gaps in the spread of development to the south-east. Whilst these application developments further intensify the visual effect experienced from this view, when considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered similar to the assessment against the operational / under construction and consented baseline due to the contribution of the Proposed Development in this scenario. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be medium resulting in a **moderate and significant** effect in this scenario.

Detailed Assessment - Viewpoint 14 Ben Tee

Baseline Description

6.11.104. This viewpoint is located on the summit of Ben Tee (901 m AOD) close to the summit cairn. There are well established routes to the summit either from Kilfinnan in the Great Glen or through forestry in a longer route from the A87 in Glen Garry. Ben Tee is at a central point in the Great Glen and its elevation and conical summit provide long panoramic views up and down the Great Glen.

6.11.105. Views to the south and west are across the dramatic mountain ranges and deep straths and glens of the central highlands. Views to the north are across Glen Garry and towards the operational turbines of Beinneun and the Millennium Group on the opposite side of this wide wooded glen. The view north-east is a long view along the Great Glen that includes Loch Ness and is a key focus for views from this location. To the east the view is across the Great Glen, albeit that the view of the glen floor and Loch Lochy is mostly obscured from the summit by the intervening and lower elevated upland plateaux that contain the northern sides of the Great Glen. To the east, the successive folds of upland hills, glens and ridges on the southern side of the Great Glen portray a large scale upland landscape. The Corrieyairack Pass can

be distinguished amongst this landform pattern in the distance to the east along with a distant view of the BDOHL, which although distant provides a marker for identifying the site area in this large scale landscape.

6.11.106. Beinneun and Extension and the Millennium Group wind farms are seen on the opposite side of Glen Garry to the north. In the distance other operational wind farms visible in the view include Corrimony, Bhlaraidh, Farr, Dunmaglass Estate, Corriegarth and Stronelairg.

Sensitivity

6.11.107. This viewpoint is located at the edges of the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA. The route up to Ben Tee is well established and provides hillwalkers with panoramic and elevated views along the Great Glen. Value is considered to be high. Recreational walkers will have an appreciation of the surrounding landscape and will be focussed on views including towards the site area in the distant view south. Operational wind turbines in the view slightly moderates susceptibility to change but also introduces the possibility of cumulative effects. On balance, susceptibility to change is considered to be medium. In combining the high value with the medium susceptibility, the sensitivity of receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be medium-high.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

- The Proposed Development turbines would be visible at 13.41 km to the nearest turbine to the east of the viewpoint.
- All of the Proposed Development turbines would be visible from this location with varied degree of tower visibility
- The access tracks and hardstands are theoretically visible for 1-2 turbines but at a distance of 13 km are not readily perceived. All other Proposed Development infrastructure would not be visible.
- The proposed turbines theoretically occupy 8.0 degrees of the view.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change in the view resulting from the addition of wind turbines to the upland that lies beyond and to the east of the Great Glen in this view.
- The Proposed Development would bring wind turbines closer in the view east than currently experienced.
- The Proposed Development would increase the spread of wind turbines seen in the wider panorama increasing the cumulative effect when considering the baseline wind energy visible in the view.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The Proposed Development would appear in the distant view occupying a small part of the view east.
- Whilst the Proposed Development would create an additional focus in the view east, it would be set back within the broad upland that lies beyond the ridges and steep slopes of the Great Glen that frame and channel views along the Great Glen.
- The muted upland moorland and overall large upland scale of the distant landscape of the site area provides a landscape context considered suitable for wind energy development of the type proposed.
- The existing wind farm development of Stronelairg immediately behind the site area and whilst not in the same part of the panorama, the existing wind energy development in relatively close proximity to the north including the Millennium Group and Beinneun and Extension provides a strong existing wind energy baseline, within which the Proposed Development would not be entirely uncharacteristic.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.108. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, the magnitude of change for the Proposed Development is considered to be medium-low.

Significance of Effect

6.11.109. The effect on recreational receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be **moderate and not significant.** Whilst the Proposed Development would create an additional cumulative focus in the view east, it would only occupy a small part of the panorama, it would be set back within the broad upland that lies beyond the ridges and steep slopes of the Great Glen and would be a distant feature of the view.

Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.11.110. The consented Millennium South development will appear to the north within close proximity to the operational Millennium Group. The consented Bhlaraidh Extension will appear within close context to the operational Bhlaraidh development and from this location would increase the spread of development visible to the north. To the north-east, the Aberarder consented development will appear beyond the operational Dunmaglass Estate development within the same visual extent and Dell will appear within the context of the Stronelairg operational development slightly extending the spread of development. In itself the introduction of these developments will only slightly intensify the effect experienced from this location. When considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered to be broadly similar to the assessment against the operational / under construction baseline due to the contribution of the Proposed Development in this scenario. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be medium-low resulting in a **moderate and not significant** effect in this scenario.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.11.111. The Bunloinn application would appear to the west of Beinneun and Extension to the north in this view with only the tips of the Tomchrasky application appearing behind Beinneun and Extension. In the distance to the north-east, the Corriegarth 2 application would appear within close context and in the foreground of the operational Corriegarth development and the Cloiche application would further expand on the operational Stronelairg and consented Dell developments. Whilst these application developments slightly intensify the visual effect experienced from this view, when considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered similar to the assessment against the operational / under construction and consented baseline due to the contribution of the Proposed Development in this scenario. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be medium-low resulting in a **moderate and not significant** effect in this scenario.

Detailed Assessment - Viewpoint 15 Meall Dubh

Baseline Description

6.11.112. This viewpoint is located on the summit of Meall Dubh (788 m AOD) close to the summit cairn. There is currently no obvious footpath or recognised / waymarked route to Meall Dubh, albeit that the large cairn indicates interest in the summit by hill walkers. Meall Dubh is found on the high ridge between Glen Garry and Glen Moriston and to the west of Great Glen, the surrounding ridge has an open and exposed character and views to the surrounding landscape are panoramic.

6.11.113. Views to the north include Glen Moriston, the large plateau landscape of Balmacaan backdropped by the more mountainous landscapes that lie to the north of Glen Affric and Glen Strathfarrar. To the west, views are also across high hills and mountain ranges of the central and western Highlands particularly notable are the mountains either side of Loch Cluanie. To the south, the view is dominated by the striking form of Ben Tee with its apron of forestry covering the lower slopes within Glen Garry.

6.11.114. To the east the view is across the Great Glen although the intervening and exposed moorland of nearby ridges restricts views into the Great Glen itself. Towards the site, to the south-east only the top of the steep north facing slopes of the Great Glen are visible, including the Meall a Cholumain communications mast. The broad upland moorland of the site and surrounding area can be seen between successive ridges that gradually increase in elevation towards the Monadhliath mountains beyond.

6.11.115. The BDOHL towers can be seen to the south-east crossing the site area before becoming skylined on the elevated ridge of the Corrieyairack Pass. The Millennium Wind Farm is in the foreground view to the east with some blades visible beyond the nearby ridge to the south-east in the direction of the site. Beinneun Wind Farm is visible in close proximity to the south-west, albeit that it is obscured by the summit cairn in the viewpoint photography. In the distance other operational wind farms visible in the view include Stronelairg, Corriegarth, Dunmaglass Estate, Farr and Bhlaraidh.

Sensitivity

6.11.116. This viewpoint does not lie within a landscape designated for its scenic quality, is not on a recognised route or a signposted destination. The value of this viewpoint is considered to be medium-low. Recreational walkers will have an appreciation of the surrounding landscape and will be focussed on views, however, operational wind turbines in the view moderate susceptibility to change. Taking this into account, susceptibility to change is considered to be medium-high. In combining the medium-low value with the medium-high susceptibility, the sensitivity of receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be medium.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

- The Proposed Development turbines would be visible at 14.36 km to the nearest turbine to the east of the viewpoint.
- All of the Proposed Development turbines would be visible from this location 3 as top half of tower visible and the others with only the bases obscured by landform. Two of the turbines are closely overlapping from this location.
- The access tracks and hardstands would be screened behind landform local to the site area. All other Proposed Development infrastructure would also not be visible.
- The proposed turbines theoretically occupy 5.0 degrees of the view.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change in the view resulting from the addition of wind turbines to the upland that lies beyond and to the east of the Great Glen.
- Whilst the viewpoint is surrounded by close proximity wind turbines, the Proposed Development appears within a part of the panorama that does not currently have wind energy development, extending the influence of turbines to a different part of the view and increasing the cumulative effect.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The Proposed Development would appear in the distant view and the turbines would occupy a relatively small part of the view east.

- It is clear from this viewpoint that the Proposed Development is set back within the broad upland that lies beyond the ridges and steep slopes of the Great Glen.
- The muted upland moorland and overall large upland scale of the distant landscape of the site area provides a landscape context considered suitable for wind energy development of the type proposed.
- The Proposed Development would be seen within the close context of other visibly noticeable infrastructure such as Meall a Cholumain communications mast and BDOHL towers and as such would not introduce large scale infrastructure into this distant upland view east.
- The close proximity of other large scale wind energy development within the immediate context of the viewpoint moderates the degree of visual; influence that the Proposed Development would have.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.117. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, the magnitude of change for the Proposed Development is considered to be low.

Significance of Effect

6.11.118. The effect on recreational receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be **minor and not significant.**

Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.11.119. To the north-east, the consented Bhlaraidh Extension will appear within close context to the operational Bhlaraidh development and from this location will slightly extend the spread of development visible to this part of the panorama. The Aberarder consented development will appear beyond the operational Dunmaglass Estate development only slightly extending the operational development on the horizon. The consented Millennium South development will appear to the east within close proximity to the turbines of the operational Millennium Group and at very close proximity to the viewpoint location. The consented Dell development will appear in the distance to the east within the context of the Stronelairg operational development extending its horizontal spread close to the horizon. Whilst these consented developments will slightly intensify the visual effect experienced from this view, they will also further moderate the visual effect when considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario. On balance, the level of change is considered similar to the assessment against the operational / under construction baseline. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be low resulting in a **minor and not significant** effect in this scenario.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.11.120. To the east, the Corriegarth 2 application would appear within close context and in the foreground of the operational Corriegarth development and the Cloiche application would further expand on the operational Stronelairg and consented Dell developments. The Bunloinn application would appear within the same part of the panorama to the west of the summit as the Beinneun and Extension development and the Tomchrasky development would appear in views to the north in relatively close proximity. The summit top and cairn obscures Beinneun and therefore also Bunloinn from view, however, these developments are still considered an important part of this scenario.

6.11.121. The presence of existing wind energy development in close proximity to this viewpoint location moderates the effect of the Proposed Development as it would not be entirely uncharacteristic in the view, the Bunloinn and Tomchrasky developments would add to this close proximity spread of development further moderating the effect. On balance, when considering these

factors and the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered to reduce slightly compared to the assessment against the operational / under construction and consented baseline. The cumulative magnitude of change is however still considered to be low in this scenario resulting in a **minor and not significant** effect.

Detailed Assessment - Viewpoint 16 A87, Loch Garry

Baseline Description

6.11.122. This viewpoint is located on the A87. The location is a recognised and signposted scenic viewpoint location including parking layby, OS maps have marked the view as having a south to south-west focus. This viewpoint represents road users travelling eastbound and visitors to the scenic viewpoint. Located on an elevated section of the A87 (245 m AOD), the scenic viewpoint takes advantage of views south-west to Inchlaggan and along Glen Garry towards Knoydart, the primary focus for scenic views from this location. The panorama also includes an elevated view south across Glen Garry / Loch Garry towards Ben Tee and its lower elevated forested slopes. Views to the north, and west along the A87 are curtailed by steep sloping forestry. Views east towards the site are along the A87 and are framed by the forestry and trees that line this section of the road. The site area is part of the distant backdrop of hills in this view and is located beyond the steep slopes that are found along the south-east edge of Loch Oich with the higher hills of the Aberchalder Forest beyond. There are no operational wind farms in the view from this location.

Sensitivity

6.11.123. This viewpoint is not located within or close to a designated landscape. It is however a recognised and signposted viewpoint location which has localised value for tourists and visitors who stop to appreciate the view. The value of this viewpoint is therefore considered to be medium-high.

6.11.124. This section of the A87 is relatively straight and other than stopping motorists, road users are likely to be travelling at speeds of around 60 mph. Eastbound road users are directly facing the site area, however, this is a relatively short section of road and the distant view east is only available for a short section of road viewed at fast speeds. On balance, susceptibility of road users at this location is considered to be medium-low.

6.11.125. Visitors to this scenic viewpoint will have an appreciation of the surrounding landscape and will be focussed on views. Whilst visitors will have an appreciation of the wider panorama, the principal view south-west along Glen Garry is in the opposite direction to the proposed change and the view east towards the site from the viewpoint area (away from the road carriageway) is partially obscured by roadside forestry trees, reducing susceptibility to change. Taking this into account susceptibility of visitors is considered to be medium-high.

6.11.126. For road users, the combination of the medium-high value and medium-low susceptibility results in a medium sensitivity. For visitors to the scenic viewpoint, the combination of the medium-high value and medium-high susceptibility results in a medium-high sensitivity.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

- The Proposed Development turbines would be visible at 15.97 km to the nearest turbine to the east of the viewpoint.
- All of the Proposed Development turbines would be visible from this location, one as a blade tip, four as hubs close to the horizon and three with the top half of tower visible. Due to intervening forestry that lines the road three of these turbines are partially obscured.

- The access tracks and hardstands would not be visible from this location. All other Proposed Development infrastructure would also not be visible.
- The proposed turbines theoretically occupy 6.9 degrees of the view.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change in the view resulting from the addition of wind turbines to the framed and distant view to the east.
- The Proposed Development would introduce wind turbine development to a view that currently has none visible.
- The Proposed Development turbines would create a new focus in view to the east that is framed by roadside trees.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The Proposed Development would appear in the distant view and proposed turbines would appear as relatively small features within this distant view.
- The muted upland moorland and overall large upland scale of the distant landscape of the site area provides a landscape context considered suitable for wind energy development of the type proposed.
- Whilst the Proposed Development creates an additional focus to the east the turbines appear set well back into the upland and away from the steep slopes that are found along the south-east edge of Loch Oich.
- The proposed turbines would be backdropped by a simple upland horizon and would not break the distant skyline.
- Whilst visitors to this scenic viewpoint will have an appreciation of the surrounding landscape and will be focussed on view
- The principal view south-west along Glen Garry or south across Glen Garry / Loch Garry towards Ben Tee would be unaffected by the Proposed Development.
- Receptors at this scenic viewpoint only have open views to the east and towards the site on arrival from the roadside as the viewing area itself has a partially screened view to the east which would substantially limit the degree to which the Proposed Development may be seen from this location.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.127. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, it is considered that the magnitude of change varies for road users and visitors to the scenic viewpoint. The magnitude of change for road users is considered to be medium-low and whilst the Proposed Development appears within a framed view along the direction of travel it would appear in the distant view in a broad upland, set back from steeper valley slopes, backdropped by a simple ridge of higher hills. The magnitude of change for visitors to the scenic viewpoint are considered to experience a negligible magnitude of change as the principal view would be unaffected and the view east from the scenic viewing area is screened limiting the duration and opportunity for any disruption to their experience as a result of the Proposed Development.

Significance of Effect

6.11.128. The effect on road users is considered to be Moderate-Minor and Not Significant, the effect would be experienced for a relatively short duration. The effect on visitors to this viewpoint is considered to be **minor and not significant.**

Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.11.129. No consented schemes will be visible from this viewpoint and as a result, there is no cumulative change and **no cumulative effect** in this scenario.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.11.130. To the east, the Cloiche application would be seen as three very small blade tips on the distant horizon. In itself this would have little influence on the view and when considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered to be minimal. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be negligible for road users and visitors resulting in a **minor and not significant** in this scenario.

Detailed Assessment - Viewpoint 17 Meall Fuar-mhonaidh

Baseline Description

6.11.131. This viewpoint is located on the summit of Meall Fuar-mhonaidh (699 m AOD) close to the summit cairn. The walk to the summit is from the north and is a relatively straightforward with a gradual climb from the car park at Grotaig. The relative ease of this walk makes it popular with visitors. Panoramic views across much of Loch Ness are a key feature of the panorama and more distant views across the mountainous landscapes of the study area form a dramatic backdrop to this view.

6.11.132. The view south towards the site is across the southern half of Loch Ness and whilst the southern edges of Loch Ness are evident, Fort Augustus is not visible due to other intervening hills on the northern side of the loch. The Culachy Estate can be made out in the distant view due to the contrasting colour of the estate woods and grounds with the more subdued surrounding moorland.

6.11.133. The BDOHL towers are just discernible in this distant view as they cross the site area and the mast near Sron na Muic can also be seen to the south. Operational wind farms visible in the wider panorama include Stronelairg, Corriegarth, Dunmaglass Estate, Farr, Bhlaraidh, Beinneun and the Millennium Group.

Sensitivity

6.11.134. This viewpoint is located within the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA and overlooks key aspects of the SLA including a panorama that includes much of Loch Ness. The route up Meall Fuar-mhonaidh is also signposted and parking is provided. Value is considered to be high. Recreational walkers will have an appreciation of the surrounding landscape and will be focussed on views including towards the site area in the distant view south. Operational wind turbines in the view slightly moderates susceptibility to change but also introduces the possibility of cumulative effects. On balance, susceptibility to change is considered to be medium-high. In combining the high value with the medium susceptibility, the sensitivity of receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be high.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

- The Proposed Development turbines would be visible at 22.16 km to the nearest turbine to the south of the viewpoint.
- All of the Proposed Development turbines would be visible from this location.
- The access tracks and hardstands are theoretically visible but are not readily perceived due to distance. All other Proposed Development infrastructure would not be visible.
- The proposed turbines theoretically occupy 5.0 degrees of the view.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change in the view resulting from the addition of wind turbines to the upland that lies beyond and to the south of the Great Glen and Loch Ness in this view.
- Whilst not immediately behind the view of Fort Augustus and the southern end of Loch Ness, the Proposed Development would appear in the same part of the panorama as this key focus of the view creating an additional focus.

- The Proposed Development appears within a part of the panorama that does not currently have wind energy development within it and so would increase the spread of wind turbines seen in the wider panorama increasing the cumulative effect when considering the baseline wind energy visible in the view.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The Proposed Development would appear in the distant view occupying a small part of the view south and would only be seen in periods of very good visibility.
- Whilst the Proposed Development would create an additional focus in the view south, it would be set back within the broad upland that lies beyond the ridges and steep slopes of the Great Glen that frame and channel views along the Great Glen and provide the dramatic backdrop to the setting of Fort Augustus.
- The muted upland moorland and overall large upland scale of the distant landscape of the site area provides a landscape context considered suitable for wind energy development of the type proposed.
- Whilst not in the same part of the panorama, the existing wind energy development in the view such as the Millennium Group to the south-west and Stronlairg to the south-east but also Bhlaraidh at closer range to the west provides an existing wind energy baseline, within which the Proposed Development would not be entirely uncharacteristic.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.135. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, the magnitude of change for the Proposed Development is considered to be low.

Significance of Effect

6.11.136. The effect on recreational receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be **moderate-minor and not significant**. Whilst judged to be of high sensitivity the low magnitude of change results in a not significant effect. The Proposed Development would create an additional cumulative focus in the view south, however, it would only occupy a small part of the southern panorama, it would be set back within the broad upland that lies beyond the ridges and steep slopes of the Great Glen and would be a distant feature of the view.

Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.11.137. The consented Millennium South development will appear to the south-west within close proximity to the operational Millennium Group. The consented Bhlaraidh Extension will appear within close context to the operational Bhlaraidh development and from this location will appear to bring development closer and at a larger scale than the operational development notably increasing its influence on this viewpoint given its proximity at around 5 km. To the east, the Aberarder consented development will appear beyond the operational Dunmaglass Estate development appearing to extend the operational development on the horizon. To the south-east Dell will appear within the context of the Stronelairg operational development but will be slightly more conspicuous above the horizon than the existing visible turbines. In itself the introduction of these developments will further intensify the effect experienced from this location, particularly in relation to the Bhlaraidh Extension. On balance, when considering these factors and the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered to increase slightly compared to the assessment against the operational / under construction baseline but not enough to increase the degree of magnitude. The cumulative magnitude of change is therefore considered to be medium-low resulting in a **moderate and not significant** effect in this scenario.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.11.138. The Bunloinn application would appear within the same part of the panorama as Beinneun and Extension in the view south extending development to the west in this view and Tomchrasky would appear beyond and to the east of Bhlaraidh. These schemes would appear to narrow the gap between the Beinneun and Bhlaraidh developments. The Corriegarth 2 application would appear within close context and in the foreground of the operational Corriegarth development in the view east, the turbines of which would appear larger in scale than the existing development and increase the extent of horizon currently occupied by Corriegarth with several turbines appearing above the horizon unlike the existing turbines. The Cloiche application would further expand on the operational Stronelairg and consented Dell developments, appearing to notably extend the spread of development on the horizon to the south-east with the Cloiche turbines appearing larger and more visible than the Stronelairg turbines, many of which are behind intervening landform. These application developments further contribute to the increased awareness of wind energy development in multiple facets of the view, albeit that they would appear within the same context as the operational and consented development. When considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered to be similar to that of the operational / consented baseline due to the contribution of the Proposed Development to this scenario. Taking this into account, the magnitude of change is considered to be medium-low resulting in a **moderate and not significant** effect in this scenario.

Detailed Assessment - Viewpoint 18 Toll Creagach

Baseline Description

6.11.139. This viewpoint is located at the summit of Toll Creagach (1054 m AOD), a mountain connected to a string of munros in the Fasnakyle Forest area, including Tom a Choinnich (1112 m AOD) and Carn Eighe (1183 m AOD). It is accessed via the Chisolme Bridge car park in Glen Affric and a long walk through Gleann nam Fiadh and Allt Toll Easa. The summit is often reached as part of a longer walk across these connected munros.

6.11.140. Views across Glen Affric are a key feature of the panorama to the south and west. To the north the coastline of the Moray Firth can be seen beyond intervening hills. To the east the broad upland plateau of the Balmacaan Forest stretches out towards the Great Glen which can be identified as a strong linear feature that appears to break the successive layers of ridges more definitively, with the more distant uplands and Monadhliath Mountains beyond. To the west, views are across Loch Mullardoch and the mountain ranges of the western Highlands.

6.11.141. The site area appears in the view east as an area of muted upland moorland in the distance beyond the distant forested slopes of the Inchnacardoch Forest. The BDOHL and towers can be seen cutting through this area and more prominently in the foreground across the plateau between Dundreggan and Guisachan. Operational wind farms visible in the view include Stronelairg, Corriegarth, Bhlaraidh, Corrimony, Dunmaglass Estate, Farr, Beinneun and the Millennium Group.

Sensitivity

6.11.142. This viewpoint is located within the Glen Affric NSA and WLA 24 - Central Highlands and overlooks key aspects of the NSA including a panorama of Glen Affric. Value is considered to be high. Recreational walkers will have an appreciation of the surrounding landscape and will be focussed on views including east towards the site area.

6.11.143. Operational wind turbines in the view moderates susceptibility to change as wind turbines are not uncharacteristic in the distant views to the east. Susceptibility to change is considered to be medium. In combining the high value with the medium susceptibility, the sensitivity of receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be medium-high.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

- The Proposed Development turbines would be visible at 32.23 km to the nearest turbine to the east of the viewpoint.
- All of the Proposed Development turbines would be visible from this location.
- The access tracks and hardstands are theoretically visible but are not readily perceived due to distance. All other Proposed Development infrastructure would not be visible.
- The proposed turbines theoretically occupy 1.0 degrees of the view.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change in the view resulting from the addition of wind turbines to the east of the Great Glen.
- The Proposed Development appears within a similar part of the view as the Beinneun and Millinium Group and would increase the spread of development in this part of the panorama.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The Proposed Development would appear in the distant view to the east and would only be seen in periods of very good visibility as a small feature of the overall panorama.
- The scenic views across and along Glen Affric to the south and west would be unaffected by the Proposed Development.
- The muted upland moorland and overall large upland scale of the distant landscape of the site area provides a landscape context considered suitable for wind energy development of the type proposed.
- The existing development in close context such as the Beinneun and Millinium Group wind farms but also other developments at closer or similar distances such as Bhlaraidh and Stronelairg provide a strong existing wind energy baseline, within which the Proposed Development would not be uncharacteristic.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.144. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, the magnitude of change for the Proposed Development is considered to be negligible.

Significance of Effect

6.11.145. The effect on recreational receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be **minor and not significant**. The Proposed Development would appear as a small feature in a distant view within close context to existing wind turbines. Key parts of the panorama within the NSA, for which the viewpoint is valued, would be unaffected by the Proposed Development.

Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.11.146. To the east, the Aberarder consented development will appear beyond the operational Dunmaglass Estate development appearing to extend the operational development on the horizon. The consented Bhlaraidh Extension will appear within close context to the operational Bhlaraidh development slightly extending and overlapping with the operational turbines in the view. Dell will appear within a central position within the horizontal extent of the visible Stronelairg operational development turbines.

6.11.147. The consented Millennium South development will appear to the south-east within close proximity to the operational Millennium Group. Given the locations of these developments close to existing distant development, their influence will be minimal. When considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the magnitude of change is therefore considered to be negligible resulting in a **minor and not significant** effect in this scenario.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.11.148. The Bunloinn application would appear to the south of Beinneun and Extension in this view but is very restricted and Tomchrasky would appear in the foreground of Beinneun and Extension with a slight separation between them. The Corriegarth 2 and Cloiche applications would appear within close context to the existing Corriegarth and Stronelairg development respectively. These application developments further contribute to the increased awareness of wind energy development, however, the distance from these schemes and their locations within the same part of the panorama as existing and consented schemes moderates their influence. When considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the magnitude of change is therefore considered to be negligible resulting in a **minor and not significant** effect in this scenario.

Detailed Assessment - Viewpoint 20 Meallan Odhar

Baseline Description

6.11.149. This viewpoint is located in an isolated glen in the Aberchalder Forest area, to the east of Loch Oich and the Great Glen. It was selected in consultation with NatureScot to represent views from within WLA 19 at closer proximity to the Proposed Development than Viewpoint 5 Carn Dearg. The viewpoint can be accessed via tracks that traverse the south-east steep sided slopes of the Great Glen from Aberchalder which sits at the head of Loch Oich. The view to the north, east and south from this location is contained by the moorland covered slopes of the isolated glen and the location has a secluded quality, appropriate for its location at the edges of the WLA. Views to the north-west are more open and include a glimpse of Glen Buck which is a shallow glen that runs parallel with the Great Glen but at higher elevation, the ridge of hills found along the south-east side of the Great Glen and in the wind farm covered hills and ridges of the Beinneun Forest. Operational wind farms in the view include the Millinium Group and Beinneun.

Sensitivity

6.11.150. This viewpoint is not within a designated landscape recognised for its scenic quality albeit that it lies at the edges of WLA 19. The value of this viewpoint is therefore considered to be medium. Recreational users of this route will have an appreciation of the surrounding landscape and will be focussed on views, largely focussed to the west across more open parts of the view. Susceptibility to change is considered to be high. In combining the medium value with the high susceptibility, the sensitivity of recreational receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be medium-high.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

- The Proposed Development turbines would be visible at 1.72 km to the nearest turbine to the north-east of the viewpoint.
- 6 of the 8 Proposed Development turbines would be visible from this location. Two as top of towers visible above the horizon, one as hub close to the horizon, one as blade only, one as very small blade tip (which would be barely discernible) and one as almost all tower visible.
- All other Proposed Development infrastructure would not be visible.

- The proposed turbines theoretically occupy 30.5 degrees of the view.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change in the view resulting from the addition of wind turbines within close proximity to the north-east of the viewpoint.
- The Proposed Development would introduce wind energy development to a part of the panorama that currently has none visible.
- The Proposed Development would introduce large scale wind energy development to an area that has a secluded characteristic in keeping with its location at the edges of WLA 19.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The view to the west which is considered the focus of views from this location would be unaffected by the Proposed Development.
- The rough moorland landcover and overall large upland scale of the landscape in the view north, east and south, including towards the Proposed Development provides an upland landscape context considered suitable for wind energy development of the type proposed.
- The restricted view of the Proposed Development turbines moderates the magnitude of change experienced.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.151. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, the magnitude of change for the Proposed Development is considered to be high. Whilst the focus of the views to the west would be unaffected, the Proposed Development is in close proximity and the secluded character of this location is affected as a result of the introduction of large scale development to this view.

Significance of Effect

6.11.152. The effect on recreational receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be **major and significant** largely due to the close proximity to the Proposed Development.

Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.11.153. The Millennium South consented development turbines will appear in the view to the west within the same context as the other visible Millennium Group turbines having a minimal change to the baseline scenario. When considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered similar to the assessment against the operational / under construction baseline due to the contribution of the Proposed Development to this scenario. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be medium-high resulting in a **moderate-major and significant** effect in this scenario.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.11.154. The Bunloinn application would be visible to the west appearing to extend the operational Beinneun and Extension developments. When considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, the level of change is considered similar to the assessment against the operational / under construction and consented baseline due to the contribution of the Proposed Development to this scenario. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be medium-high resulting in a **moderate-major and significant** effect in this scenario.

Detailed Assessment - Viewpoint 21 Beauly Denny Track

Baseline Description

6.11.155. This viewpoint is located on the Beauly Denny Track immediately to the north of the Proposed Development. It was selected in consultation with NatureScot to represent views from within WLA 19 primarily to allow an accessible night-time assessment to be undertaken but is also considered here to provide further assessment of the north-east area of WLA 19 in which the Proposed Development is located. The viewpoint can be accessed via tracks that serve the BDOHL via the Culachy estate to the north. The views in all directions are across a wide bowl shaped moorland plateau that is contained by the rocky hills that are found at its edges. The landscape is simple in its texture and large in scale. The BDOHL and towers and the track that follows them, cut through this simple landscape character bringing man-made elements into the heart of this wide bowl shaped plateau that has a strong and dynamic man-made influence on the character of this landscape. Views to the wider landscape beyond the plateau is limited and there are no operational wind farms visible from this location.

Sensitivity

6.11.156. This viewpoint is not within a designated landscape recognised for its scenic quality albeit that it lies at the edges of WLA 19. The value of this viewpoint is therefore considered to be medium. Recreational users of this route will have an appreciation of the surrounding landscape and will be focussed on views including across the site area which is in close proximity. The close proximity of the existing overhead line towers has a moderating influence on susceptibility and it should also be noted that this track is not a known recreational route and its purpose is to service the overhead line and towers. Taking all of this into account, susceptibility to change is considered to be medium-high. In combining the medium value with the medium-high susceptibility, the sensitivity of recreational receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be medium-high.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

- The Proposed Development turbines would be visible at 0.92 km to the nearest turbine to the south of the viewpoint.
- All of the Proposed Development turbines would be visible from this location. One as a blade tip and the others as various amount of towers visible with two visible to base.
- The access tracks and hardstands of two turbines would be visible. All other Proposed Development infrastructure would not be visible.
- The proposed turbines theoretically occupy 47.0 degrees of the view.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change in the view resulting from the addition of wind turbines within close proximity to the viewpoint.
- The Proposed Development appears within a similar part of the view as the BDOHL, introducing a potential scale comparison and cumulative effect.
- The Proposed Development would introduce wind energy development to a view that currently has none visible.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The view from this location is not particularly scenic and has no particular focus other than the BDOHL and towers.
- The presence of the existing tall structures of the BDOHL towers moderates the effect of the Proposed Development as large-scale infrastructure is already a key feature of the view and on any perception of remoteness that would otherwise occur in this upland bowl.

- The rough moorland landcover and overall large upland scale of the landscape in the view south towards the Proposed Development provides a landscape context considered suitable for wind energy development of the type proposed.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.157. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, the magnitude of change for the Proposed Development is considered to be high. This is largely due to the close proximity of the Proposed Development turbines.

Significance of Effect

6.11.158. The effect on recreational receptors at this viewpoint is considered to be **major and significant.** The viewpoint is within close proximity to the Proposed Development which would introduce further large scale structures to this area.

Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative Assessment (consented and application scenario)

6.11.159. No consented or application schemes would be visible from this viewpoint and as a result, there is no cumulative change and **no cumulative effect** in these scenarios.

Detailed Assessment - A87 sequential assessment

Baseline Description

6.11.160. The A87 connects the Great Glen and the A82 at Invergarry to Skye in the western Highlands. It is a key connecting and scenic route through Kintail to the western coastal and island landscapes of Scotland. The route itself largely follows straths and glens or lochsides and as such theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is limited to a section of the road between the Glen Garry viewpoint and Invergarry. In response to THC's consultation request, a series of wirelines have been prepared for this section of the route at approximately every 1-1.5 km at key locations to provide an understanding of the theoretical visibility. These 10 wireline locations are organised west to east as it would only be eastbound road users who would experience a visual effect, as follows - A87 VP1, Loch Garry (LVIA Viewpoint 16); A87 VP2, near Allt a' Bhiora crossing; A87 VP3, near Daigean; A87 VP4, junction with minor road to Tomdoun; A87 VP5, parking near Coille Achaidh Luachraich; A87 VP6, near Leacan Dubha access; A87 VP7, near Blar an Eas; A87 VP8, near White Bridge parking; A87 VP9, Craigard; and A87 VP10, Invergarry. See wireline visualisations on **Figures 6.47a-j**.

Sensitivity

6.11.161. The A87 is not located within a designated landscape and value is considered to be medium recognising that at the Glen Garry viewpoint, which has localised value for tourists and visitors who stop to appreciate the view, value is increased slightly. This section of the A87 is winding in places but has long straight sections and road users are likely to be travelling at speeds of around 50-60 mph. Eastbound road users are directly facing the site area with views framed by forestry, however, given the speed of the road and the extent of tree cover along the route distant views east are only available for short sections of road viewed at fast speeds. On balance, susceptibility of road users is considered to be medium-low. In combining the medium value and medium-low susceptibility, sensitivity is considered to be medium.

Assessment (including operational and under construction cumulative sites)

Description of change:

6.11.162. Theoretical visibility along this section of route is greatest to the west of Leacan Dubha to the Loch Garry viewpoint, beyond which there is no visibility to the west. This section is within forestry and in reality the only sections with actual visibility are as follows – a short section of around 200 m to the east of the Glen Garry viewpoint; a glimpse through a gap in the treeline at a forestry access track near Allt a Bhiora; a 500 m straight section to the east of Allt na Bhiora that is aligned with the Proposed Development, with potential to gain sight of 1-3 turbines in the narrow gap between forested road edges; and the section of road between the forestry access near Daigean and the access to parking 700 m to the east.

6.11.163. Between Leacan Dubha and Invergarry theoretical visibility is more limited and patchy with much less of the Proposed Development turbines being theoretically visible. In reality, visibility throughout this lower elevated section is also limited by roadside trees and forestry with the exception of a short section (approximately 450 m) near Craigard to the west of Invergarry where the view across the floor of Glen Garry opens up. From this area, the Proposed Development is viewed as 2-3 blade tips above the distant upland ridge to the east.

Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- Change in the view resulting from the addition of wind turbines to the framed view to the east from elevated and distant parts of the A87.
- Where visible, the Proposed Development would introduce wind turbine development to a view that currently has none visible.
- The Proposed Development turbines would create a new focus in view to the east that for some sections that have visibility is framed by roadside trees and forestry.

Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The Proposed Development would be screened from the vast majority of theoretically visible sections of this road by intervening forestry.
- When visible, the Proposed Development would appear in the distance and proposed turbines would appear as relatively small features within available views.
- The muted upland moorland and overall large upland scale of the distant landscape of the site area to the east provides a landscape context considered suitable for wind energy development of the type proposed.
- Whilst the Proposed Development creates an additional focus to the east the turbines appear set well back into the upland and away from the steep slopes that are found along the south-east edge of Loch Oich, which are also visible from elevated sections of the road.
- Where visible, the proposed turbines would be backdropped by a simple upland horizon and would not break the distant skyline.
- Where views are more open along this route, the principal view south-west along Glen Garry or south across Glen Garry / Loch Garry towards Ben Tee would be unaffected by the Proposed Development.

Magnitude of Change

6.11.164. Taking into account the description of change and the factors of magnitude described above, it is considered that the magnitude of change is considered to be medium-low. Whilst the Proposed Development appears at certain points within a framed view along the direction of travel it would only do so for a very short duration due to the short sections affected. Where visible the Proposed Development would appear at distance, located in a broad upland, set back from steeper valley slopes, backdropped by a simple ridge of higher hills.

Significance of Effect

6.11.165. The effect on road users is considered to be **moderate-minor and not significant**, and this effect would be experienced for a relatively short duration.

Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative Assessment (consented scenario)

6.11.166. No consented schemes would be visible from this viewpoint and as a result, there is no cumulative change or and **no cumulative effect** in this scenario.

Cumulative Assessment (application scenario)

6.11.167. The Cloiche application would only be visible as small blade tips from the most elevated sections of the A87, close to the Glen Garry viewpoint. The Bunloinn and Tomchrasky developments would be visible from the section of A87 to the north of the theoretical visibility extent of the Proposed Development. Bunloinn would be visible when travelling in both directions along this route and Tomchrasky visible only when travelling westbound and for much of this section obscured by forestry. When road users are eastbound Bunloinn and the Proposed Development would be experienced in sequence. Bunloinn in itself would introduce substantial levels of visibility in the view west from the A87 and then would drop out of view further to the east on approach to the Glen Garry viewpoint when the visibility of the Proposed Development would occur as described above. There is no simultaneous visibility of these developments on this route, however, there is a sequential cumulative effect to the A87 when the Proposed Development is considered in this scenario. When considering the introduction of the Proposed Development to this scenario, therefore, the level of change in this scenario is considered to increase when compared to the assessment against the operational / under construction baseline. This is largely due to the extended effect along the A87 resulting from the introduction of Bunloinn overlooking Loch Loyne but also due to the contribution of the Proposed Development which contributes to this extended view of wind farm development. Taking this into account, the sequential cumulative magnitude of change is considered to be medium resulting in a **moderate and not significant** cumulative effect.

6.12. Summary

6.12.1. The LVIA has assessed the potential for significant landscape and visual effects over a 45 km study area and includes detailed assessment of landscape and visual receptors that have been found to have the potential for significant effects.

Landscape Effects

6.12.2. The Proposed Development is located on an upland landscape (LCT 236 Smooth Moorland Ridges) which has an overall large scale and upland characteristics considered to be suitable for wind farm development. The areas of moorland required to be removed in the construction and operation of the Proposed Development would be very limited in relation to the total area on the site, elsewhere within the LCT 236 Smooth Moorland Ridges upland landscape and also when considered alongside the large areas of moorland within neighbouring LCTs and in the wider landscape. The physical landscape effects of the Proposed Development on this landscape element is considered to be **minor and not significant**.

6.12.3. The LVIA has found that significant landscape character effects would be localised and contained to the landscape character of the site area and immediately surrounding upland landscape (within approximately 5 km of the Proposed Development). Significant effects would occur within the host character area LCT 236 Smooth Moorland Ridges. Significant effects would also occur within LCT 221, Rolling Uplands – Inverness.

6.12.4. Such significant effects would arise largely due to the close proximity and clear visibility of the Proposed Development but also take account of the interaction with the visibility and potential cumulative effects with other existing turbines in this area.

6.12.5. At greater distances, the effect on landscape character would not be significant due to - the level of screening from intervening landform such as hill summits, upland ridgelines and large areas of interconnecting mountainous uplands that combine to contain or limit the degree of visibility of the Proposed Development from the wider landscape. Existing wind energy development within the baseline landscape also moderates the effect on particular LCAs where it intervenes or forms part of the underlying characteristic of an area.

6.12.6. The LVIA found that none of the landscape designations in the area would be significantly affected as a result of the Proposed Development. In respect of wild land, the Proposed Development is located within the northern part of WLA 19 and the Wild Land Impact Assessment found localised significant effects on the wildness qualities (WLQ2) of this WLA, localised to 3.5 km to the south of the Proposed Development. This is further addressed in **Appendix 6.2**.

Visual Effects

6.12.7. The assessment of effects on views is informed by a series of 21 agreed viewpoints that were selected to represent visibility from a range of receptors throughout the study area. The visual assessment has found significant effects at 6 viewpoint locations, as follows:

- A **major significant** visual effect was found for: Recreational receptors at - Viewpoint 1 Corrieyairack Pass; Viewpoint 2 General Wade's Military Road and Viewpoint 21 Beauly-Denny track.
- A **moderate-major significant** effect was found for: Recreational receptors at - Viewpoint 3 Corrieyairack Hill; Viewpoint 4 Carn a' Chuilinn; and Viewpoint 20 Meallan Odhar.
- A **moderate significant** effect was found for: Recreational receptors at Viewpoint 5 Carn Dearg,

6.12.8. Significant visual effects are found to extend to around 5.5 km to the south and 4.5 km to the north. The significant visual effects are largely as a result of closer proximity views from higher sensitivity recreational receptors. This is particularly relevant for hill walkers and recreational walkers on the Corrieyairack Pass and GWMR. For these receptors the Proposed Development would be in relatively close proximity.

6.12.9. Significant effects are predicted for representative night time Viewpoint 21 Beauly – Denny track as a result of both the 2000 cd aviation lighting scenario (in reality, it is extremely unlikely that 2,000 cd will ever be experienced at its full intensity as it will only operate when visibility is reduced by climatic conditions). The effect would reduce to not significant for the 200 cd scenario. For the other representative viewpoints, the effect of aviation lighting is assessed as not significant. Aviation lighting is addressed in Technical **Appendix 6.3**.

Cumulative Effects

6.12.10. There are no consented or application cumulative wind energy developments in close proximity to the Proposed Development. Where consented cumulative schemes are visible from key landscape and visual receptors, they would appear within a context and backdrop of existing wind energy development, substantially limiting their cumulative influence when considering the additional effect of the Proposed Development.

6.12.11. However, for some landscape and visual receptors the Proposed Development would contribute more notably to an increased awareness of cumulative wind energy development and significant cumulative effects were found to occur in both the consented and application

scenarios for - LCT 221, Rolling Uplands Inverness; Viewpoint 1 - Corrieyairack Pass; Viewpoint 3 Corrieyairack Hill; Viewpoint 4 Carn a' Chuilinn; Viewpoint 5 Carn Dearg; Viewpoint 13 Burach; and Viewpoint 20 Meallan Odhar.

6.12.12. As described in **Appendix 6.1** Methodology, the cumulative assessment set out in the LVIA assesses only the additional landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development, in the context of different cumulative baseline scenarios. It does not present an assessment of the combined effects of all of the relevant wind farms on the landscape and/ or visual receptors. Notwithstanding this and in relation to the combined effect, it is the authors' professional opinion that in broad terms, the Proposed Development would not alter the current perception of a 'landscape with wind farms' characteristic currently experienced within the central highlands and in the context of the Great Glen. The addition of the Proposed Development would result in the redefining of a localised area of upland landscape (focussed around the site area), including the northern part of WLA 19 as a 'wind farm landscape character type' at a localised level but not in the wider landscape context where the 'landscape with wind farms' characteristic would be maintained at the regional level and as such would not give rise to a perception of a 'wind farm landscape' in the central highlands.

Conclusion

6.12.13. The assessment has identified that the significant landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development would be contained within a localised area around the site and immediate landscape and visual context that surrounds it. Significant landscape character effects are assessed to occur within a maximum of 5 km from the nearest turbine of the Proposed Development. Significant visual effects have been identified as occurring out to a range of 5.5 km, however the majority of significant visual effects are contained within around 4 km of the nearest Proposed Development turbines. In landscape and visual terms, it is considered that there is scope for wind farm development within the broad upland landscape that is defined by LCT 236 Smooth Moorland Ridges and its neighbouring LCTs. There are a number of factors which have influenced this finding, as follows:

- The Proposed Development is compact and contained within a single upland landscape plateau which is surrounded by larger hills and uplands resulting in a ZTV that is not widespread, particularly within areas beyond approximately 10 km.
- Whilst significant effects have been found to occur within the northern part of WLA 19, these effects are localised and moderated by the existing influence of the BDOHL which already has an influence on the wild land qualities of a similar area that the Proposed Development would affect.
- The Proposed Development turbine layout has been designed to minimise significant effects on landscape and visual receptors by setting turbines back from the Great Glen and settled landscape of Fort Augustus and by arranging the turbines in a compact layout which for most views appears as a cohesive and consistently spaced grouping of turbines.
- As a result of the compact and well designed layout and an agreed reduced lighting scheme, the effects of visible aviation lighting have been minimised to very few locations where they would be visible by the local population including on nearby settlements and roads.
- The compact nature of the layout also results in a relatively small horizontal field of view and when viewing the Proposed Development from the wider landscape context, the Proposed Development would appear as a relatively small component of the very wide skyline formed by the broad upland plateau on which it is located.

6.12.14. On this basis, it is considered that the landscape is capable of accommodating the Proposed Development and that wider landscape and visual effects are relatively limited in extent and severity.

Table 6.12 –Summary of Effects

Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Operational / Under Construction Scenario		Consented Scenario		Application Scenario	
		Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effect	Cumulative Magnitude of Change	Significance of Cumulative Effect	Cumulative Magnitude of Change	Significance of Cumulative Effect
Physical Landscape Effects							
Moorland	Medium	Low	Minor / Not Significant	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Landscape Character Effects							
LCT 236, Smooth Moorland Ridges	Medium-High	High: localised within 3.5 km	**Major / Significant**	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant
		Medium: within 5 km	**Moderate / Significant**	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant
		Low: other areas	Minor / Not Significant	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant
LCT 221, Rolling Uplands - Inverness	Medium	High: localised (4 km north-east, 2 km north-west, 3 km south-east.)	**Moderate-Major / Significant**	High: localised (4 km north-east, 2 km north-west, 3 km south-east.)	**Moderate-Major / Significant**	High: localised (4 km north-east, 2 km north-west, 3 km south-east.)	**Moderate-Major / Significant**
		Low: other areas	Minor / Not Significant	Low: other areas	Minor / Not Significant	Medium-Low: other areas	Moderate-Minor / Not Significant
LCT 239, Interlocking Sweeping Peaks - Lochaber	Medium-High	Medium-Low	Moderate / Not Significant	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant

Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Operational / Under Construction Scenario		Consented Scenario		Application Scenario	
		Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effect	Cumulative Magnitude of Change	Significance of Cumulative Effect	Cumulative Magnitude of Change	Significance of Cumulative Effect
LCT 235, Broad Forested Strath	Medium	Low	Minor / Not Significant	Low	Minor / Not Significant	Medium-Low	Moderate – Minor / Not Significant
LCT 237, Rocky Moorland - Lochaber	Medium	Low	Minor / Not Significant	Low	Minor / Not Significant	Medium-Low	Moderate – Minor / Not Significant
LCT 220, Rugged Massif - Inverness	Medium	Medium-Low	Moderate – Minor / Not Significant	Medium-Low	Moderate – Minor / Not Significant	Low	Minor / Not Significant
LCT 225, Broad Steep-Sided Glen	Medium-High	Medium-Low	Moderate / Not Significant	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant
LCT 224, Farmed and Wooded Foothills	Medium-High	Low	Moderate – Minor / Not Significant	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant
Landscape Designations							
WLA 19: Braeroy - Glenshirra - Creag Meagaidh	Medium-Low	High- localised within 3.5 km	**Moderate / Significant**	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant
		Medium – other parts of the WLA study area	Moderate – Minor / Not Significant	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant
Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA	Medium-High	Medium-Low	Moderate / Not Significant	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant

Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Operational / Under Construction Scenario		Consented Scenario		Application Scenario	
		Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effect	Cumulative Magnitude of Change	Significance of Cumulative Effect	Cumulative Magnitude of Change	Significance of Cumulative Effect
Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA	High	Medium-Low	Moderate / Not Significant	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant
Visual Effects							
Viewpoint 1 - Corrieyairack Pass	High	High	**Major / Significant**	High	**Major / Significant**	High	**Major / Significant**
Viewpoint 2 General Wade's Military Road	High	High	**Major / Significant**	No Change	No Effect	No Change	No Effect
Viewpoint 3 Corrieyairack Hill	Medium-High	Medium-High	**Moderate-Major / Significant**	Medium-High	**Moderate-Major / Significant**	High	**Major / Significant**
Viewpoint 4 Carn a' Chuilinn	Medium-High	Medium-High	**Moderate-Major / Significant**	Medium-High	Moderate-Major / Significant	High	**Major / Significant**
Viewpoint 5 Carn Dearg	Medium-High	Medium	**Moderate / Significant**	Medium	**Moderate / Significant**	Medium	**Moderate / Significant**
Viewpoint 6 Fort Augustus, Car Park Adjacent to A82	High (Residential)	Negligible	Moderate-Minor / Not Significant	No Change	No Effect	No Change	No Effect
	Medium (road users)	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant	No Change	No Effect	No Change	No Effect
Viewpoint 7 Fort Augustus near Church Road	High	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant	No Change	No Effect	No Change	No Effect
Viewpoint 8 Loch Lundie	Medium	Medium-Low	Moderate-Minor / Not Significant	No Change	No Effect	No Change	No Effect

Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Operational / Under Construction Scenario		Consented Scenario		Application Scenario	
		Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effect	Cumulative Magnitude of Change	Significance of Cumulative Effect	Cumulative Magnitude of Change	Significance of Cumulative Effect
Viewpoint 9 A82 North of Fort Augustus	Medium	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant	No Change	No Effect	No Change	No Effect
Viewpoint 10 An Suidhe	High	Low	Moderate-Minor / Not Significant	Low	Moderate-Minor / Not Significant	Low	Moderate-Minor / Not Significant
Viewpoint 11 Great Glen Way, Carn an Doire Mhoir	High	Medium-Low	Moderate / Not Significant	No Change	No Effect	No Change	No Effect
Viewpoint 12 B862 An Suidhe Car Park	Medium-High	Low	Moderate-Minor / Not Significant	Low	Moderate-Minor / Not Significant	Low	Moderate-Minor / Not Significant
Viewpoint 13 Burach	Medium-High	Medium-Low	Moderate / Not Significant	Medium	**Moderate / Significant**	Medium	**Moderate / Significant**
Viewpoint 14 Ben Tee	Medium-High	Medium-Low	Moderate / Not Significant	Medium-Low	Moderate / Not Significant	Medium-Low	Moderate / Not Significant
Viewpoint 15 Meall Dubh	Medium	Low	Minor / Not Significant	Low	Minor / Not Significant	Low	Minor / Not Significant
Viewpoint 16 A87, Loch Garry	Medium (road users)	Medium-Low	Moderate-Minor / Not Significant	No Change	No Effect	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant
	Medium-High (visitors)	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant	No Change	No Effect	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant
Viewpoint 17 Meall Fuar-mhonaidh	High	Low	Moderate-Minor / Not Significant	Medium-Low	Moderate / Not Significant	Medium-Low	Moderate / Not Significant

Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Operational / Under Construction Scenario		Consented Scenario		Application Scenario	
		Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effect	Cumulative Magnitude of Change	Significance of Cumulative Effect	Cumulative Magnitude of Change	Significance of Cumulative Effect
Viewpoint 18 Toll Creagach	Medium-High	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant	Negligible	Minor / Not Significant
Viewpoint 20 Meallan Odhar	Medium-High	High	**Major / Significant**	High	**Major / Significant**	High	**Major / Significant**
Viewpoint 21 Beauly-Denny track	Medium-High	High	**Major/ Significant**	No Change	No Effect	No Change	No Effect
A87, sequential assessment	Medium	Medium-Low	Moderate-Minor / Not Significant	No Change	No Effect	Medium	Moderate / Not Significant

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