

6. Landscape and Visual

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) considers the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character and visual amenity. Landscape and visual effects are interrelated but assessed separately. Landscape effects relate to changes to physical elements and the perceptual aspects of a landscape which contribute to its distinctive character. Visual effects relate to changes to views and visual amenity available to and experienced by people.
- 6.1.2 The likely significant landscape and visual effects arising from the Proposed Development have been assessed during the construction and decommissioning and operational phases of the Proposed Development. It is considered that the effects at decommissioning would be no greater than the effects identified at construction. Therefore, this project stage is considered to be no different to the findings of the construction phase assessment and is consequently not considered separately. The LVIA also considers potential cumulative effects of the Proposed Development in conjunction with other wind farms. The LVIA has been carried out by Chartered Landscape Architects in accordance with good practice guidance (set out within **Section 6.2** of this chapter) and consultation with statutory stakeholders.
- 6.1.3 The Development Site subject to this assessment is shown on **Figure 1.1**. A full description of the Proposed Development is provided in **Chapter 4: Project Description** and should be read in conjunction with the LVIA. The main components of the Proposed Development are shown on **Figure 1.2**.
- 6.1.4 This Chapter is supported by the following Appendices and Figures:
- **Appendix 6.1:** Landscape and Visual Methodology;
 - **Appendix 6.2:** Aviation Lighting;
 - **Appendix 6.3:** National Scenic Area Special Landscape Quality Assessment;
 - **Appendix 6.4:** Wild Land Assessment;
 - **Appendix 6.5:** Landscape Assessment; and
 - **Appendix 6.6:** Visual Assessment.
 - **Figure 6.1:** Site Location and LVIA Study Area;
 - **Figure 6.2:** Topography;
 - **Figure 6.3a:** Landscape Designations and Zone of Theoretical Visibility;

- **Figure 6.3b:** Detailed Study Area Landscape Designations and Zone of Theoretical Visibility;
 - **Figure 6.4a:** Landscape Character Types and Blade Tip Zone of Theoretical Visibility;
 - **Figure 6.4b:** Detailed Study Area Landscape Character Types and Blade Tip Zone of Theoretical Visibility;
 - **Figure 6.5a:** Principal Routes and Blade Tip Zone of Theoretical Visibility;
 - **Figure 6.5b:** Detailed Study Area Principal Routes and Blade Tip Zone of Theoretical Visibility;
 - **Figure 6.6a:** Blade Tip Zone of Theoretical Visibility with Viewpoints (A3)';
 - **Figure 6.6b:** Blade Tip Zone of Theoretical Visibility with Viewpoints (A0)';
 - **Figure 6.7a:** Hub Height Zone of Theoretical Visibility with Viewpoints (A3)';
 - **Figure 6.7b:** Hub Height Zone of Theoretical Visibility with Viewpoints (A0)';
 - **Figure 6.8:** BESS Control Building Zone of Theoretical Visibility;
 - **Figure 6.9:** Aviation Lighting Zone of Theoretical Visibility;
 - **Figure 6.10:** Aviation Lighting Intensity Zone of Theoretical Visibility;
 - **Figure 6.11:** Cumulative Area of Search (60km);
 - **Figure 6.12:** Cumulative Schemes included in LVIA;
 - **Figure 6.13:** Cumulative Zone of Theoretical Visibility Scenario 1;
 - **Figure 6.14:** Cumulative Zone of Theoretical Visibility Scenario 2;
 - **Figure 6.15:** Cumulative Zone of Theoretical Visibility Scenario 3;
 - **Figure 6.16:** Cumulative Zone of Theoretical Visibility Aviation Lighting Scenario 1;
 - **Figure 6.17:** Cumulative Zone of Theoretical Visibility Aviation Lighting Scenario 2;
 - **Figure 6.18:** Cumulative Zone of Theoretical Visibility Aviation Lighting Scenario 3; and
 - **Figure 6.19:** BESS Outline Landscape Plan.
- 6.1.5 Visualisations for each of the visual assessment, including baseline photography and wirelines and/or photomontages, are contained in **Volume 3: Visualisations**.
- 6.1.6 The following terminology has been used throughout the assessment:
- **Landscape Character Types (LCT):** Areas of relatively homogenous landscape character. They are defined by the combination of physical and perceptual attributes that contribute to landscape context, character and value. Typical attributes include landform, land use, built development, vegetation, scale, pattern and perceptual qualities such as the sense of remoteness, naturalness and wildness.

- **Visual amenity:** Relates to the nature and pleasantness of views that people experience of their surroundings. Factors which contribute to an understanding of views and visual amenity include the level of openness or enclosure and the type and composition of elements.
- **Visual receptors:** Special interest or viewer groups who will have views of the Proposed Development. Visual receptors have been identified through desk study and fieldwork.
- **Representative and specific viewpoints:** Viewpoints selected to represent the experience of different types of visual receptors including residential dwellers, users of transport and recreational routes and other outdoor locations. Representative and specific viewpoints are located within publicly accessible locations and have been selected in consultation with NatureScot (NS) and The Highland Council (THC).
- **Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV):** A computer-generated map based on a 3D model of the Proposed Development and the topography within the surrounding landscape, which shows areas of land within which the Proposed Development will theoretically be visible.

- 6.1.7 Landscape and visual effects are interrelated with other environmental effects but are assessed separately. Historic features and ecological designations can have an influence on the perception and value of the landscape character or view. Potential effects on the cultural or heritage value of historic sites are assessed in **Chapter 7: Cultural Heritage**, and potential effects on ecological assets are assessed in **Chapter 8: Ecology**.
- 6.1.8 A number of recreational and tourist routes are identified as visual receptors within this chapter, and the effects on views are assessed. Impacts relating to tourism and social-economic aspects are considered in **Appendix 4.4**.
- 6.1.9 **Chapter 3: Evolution of Design** provides details of the design process, which has been influenced by landscape and visual considerations, including limiting effects on national designations and landscape and visual receptors.

6.2 Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

- 6.2.1 This section identifies and briefly describes legislation, policy and guidance of relevance to the assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects associated with the Proposed Development. Further details of planning policy are provided in the Planning Statement submitted to the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) as part of the Section 36 application.

Legislation

European Landscape Convention

- 6.2.2 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) (Council of Europe, 2000) was signed by the UK Government in 2006 and came into effect in March 2007. The ELC requires parties to

recognise landscape in law. It focuses specifically on landscape issues and highlights the importance of integration of landscape into areas of policy, to promote protection, management and planning of all landscapes including the assessment of landscape and analysis of landscape change.

- 6.2.3 The ELC defines landscape as “*an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/ or human factors*”. The ELC considers landscape as a whole (land or marine), from urban to rural areas, and whether special or degraded.

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997

- 6.2.4 Section 263A of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, provides for the designation and protection of National Scenic Areas (NSAs).

National Planning Policy

- 6.2.5 National planning policy relevant to landscape and visual matters includes:
- National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (Scottish Government, 2023);
 - Scottish Government Online Planning Guidance for Onshore Wind Turbines (Scottish Government, 2014); and
 - Planning Advice Note 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (PAN 60) (NatureScot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)), 2000).

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

- 6.2.6 NPF4 is a long-term strategy for Scotland identifying a national spatial strategy. NPF4 highlights the importance and value of landscape to Scotland and notes the importance of landscape in place making and sustaining local distinctiveness. The policies relating to landscape and visual amenity and pertinent to the Proposed Development are outlined below.
- Policy 4 sets out the principles to protect, restore and enhance natural assets. The policy states that development proposals which have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment will not be supported. Proposals that will affect a NSA will only be supported where “...*the objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the areas will not be compromised*”, or where “...*significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance.*”
 - In relation to effects on local landscape designations, Policy 4 states that developments will only be supported where they “...*will not have significant adverse effects on the integrity of the area or they qualities for which it has been identified...*” or where “...*significant adverse effects on the integrity of the area are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of at least local importance.*”

- 6.2.7 In relation to defined Wild Land Areas (WLA), Policy 4 states that development proposals will only be supported where they “...*will support meeting renewable energy targets...*”.

- 6.2.8 Policy 11 of NPF4 sets out that development proposals for all forms of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies, including onshore wind farms, will be supported. It also sets out the importance of demonstrating how design and mitigation have addressed potential landscape, visual and residential amenity impacts. The policy also recognises that significant landscape and visual effects are expected for some forms of renewable energy and “...*where impacts are localised and/or appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they will generally be considered acceptable...*”.
- 6.2.9 The above policies are considered to be relevant to the Proposed Development as:
- Part of the Proposed Development is located within the eastern edge of the Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA;
 - The Main Development Area is located at a distance of approximately 8.3 km from the Dornoch Firth NSA, with the Proposed Development likely to be visible from parts of the designated area; and
 - The Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA, the Ben Wyvis SLA, Ardrross Castle GDL and Skibo Castle GDL are located in the detailed 20 km study area and will have intervisibility with the Proposed Development.

Scottish Government Online Planning Guidance for Onshore Wind Turbines

- 6.2.10 Planning advice relating to onshore wind turbines, published May 2014, provides planning authorities with relevant guidance and key actions for the different stages of the planning process, from monitoring and evidence base to determining planning applications. The guidance sets out specific planning considerations in relation to the landscape impact of wind turbines and outlines factors influencing the visibility of wind farms. It states that “...*a cautious approach is necessary in relation to particular landscapes which are rare or valued, such as National Scenic Areas and National Parks*”.
- 6.2.11 In relation to the preparation of a landscape assessment, the guidance sets out the potential requirement for the preparation of Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) modelling and photo/video montages and states that guidance produced by SNH (now NatureScot) is expected to be followed.

Planning Advice Note 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (PAN 60)

- 6.2.12 The Planning Advice Note 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (PAN 60) as published by the Scottish Government in 2000. This document refers to safeguarding and enhancing landscape character as well as the use of published Landscape Character Assessments.

Local Planning Policy

- 6.2.13 The Proposed Development is within the Highland Council local authority area. The Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) was adopted in 2012 and sets out the spatial strategy and policies relating to the future development in the highlands region. The following section

highlights those policies which are relevant to landscape and visual considerations. It is important to note that where there is any incompatibility between the policies of HwLDP and NPF4, those within NPF4 will prevail until such time that the LDP is updated and/or replaced.

- **Policy 28** - Sustainable Design. This policy sets out a number of requirements for developments in relation to sustainable design, including sensitive siting in keeping with local character. It states that development will be assessed in terms of its impact on landscape and scenery.
- **Policy 36** - Development in the Wider Countryside. This policy seeks to ensure that all developments are sympathetic to the existing landscape patterns and character. It outlines a number of requirements such as to avoid incremental expansion of any one particular development type within a landscape whose distinct character relies on an intrinsic mix and range of characteristics.
- **Policy 51** - Trees and Development. This policy recognises the benefits of trees and woodland to the landscape character. It therefore ensures that proposals support the protection of existing trees and woodland.
- **Policy 57** - Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage. The policy sets out the criteria that development will be tested against; local and regionally important, nationally important, and internationally important, in terms of its natural and cultural heritage features. The following features are of relevance:
 - Local and regionally important - Special Landscape Areas (SLA), Settlement Setting, Amenity Trees, views over open water, Wild Areas, locally important croft land; and
 - Nationally important - Tree preservation orders, Inventories Gardens and Designed Landscapes, National Scenic Areas, National Park, Inventoried Ancient Woodland and Long-established woodland.
- **Policy 61** - Landscape. This policy seeks to ensure that new development reflects the landscape characteristics and special qualities in terms of its form, pattern and construction materials. It also encourages proposals to consider measures to enhance the landscape characteristics of the area.
- **Policy 67** - Renewable Energy Developments. The policy refers to all renewable energy developments and requires that they consider the significant effects and mitigation measures to a number of features, such as visual impacts and impacts on the landscape character of the surrounding area. This policy goes on to state that the design and location of proposals should reflect the scale and character of the landscape and seek to minimise landscape and visual impacts.

The Highland Council Supplementary Guidance

- 6.2.14 The Highland Council Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG) was published by THC in November 2016. The document sets out considerations in relation to

landscape and visual effects, including designated landscapes and key public and residential views. The document also sets out criteria that THC use as a framework and focus for assessing proposals. **Table 6.1** outlines the criteria and measures as set out within the published guidance.

Table 6.1 Criterion within THC Supplementary Guidance for Onshore Wind Energy

Criterion	Measure
1. Relationship between Settlements/Key locations and wider landscape respected.	The extent to which the proposal contributes to perception of settlements or key locations being encircled by wind energy development.
2. Key Gateway locations and routes are respected.	The extent to which the proposal reduces or detracts from the transitional experience of key Gateway Locations and routes.
3. Valued natural and cultural landmarks are respected.	The extent to which the proposal affects the fabric and setting of valued natural and cultural landmarks.
4. The amenity of key recreational routes and ways is respected.	The extent to which the proposal affects the amenity of key recreational routes and ways (e.g. core paths, Munros and Corbetts, Long Distance Routes etc.).
5. The amenity of transport routes is respected.	The extent to which the proposal affects the amenity of transport routes (tourist routes as well as rail, ferry routes and local road access).
6. The existing pattern of Wind Energy Development is Respected.	The degree to which the proposal fits with the existing pattern of nearby wind energy development, considerations include: • Turbine height and proportions, • density and spacing of turbines within developments, • density and spacing of developments, • typical relationship of development to the landscape. • previously instituted mitigation measures • Planning Authority stated aims for development of area.
7. The need for separation between developments and/or clusters is respected.	The extent to which the proposal maintains or affects the spaces between existing developments and/ or clusters.
8. The perception of landscape scale and distance is respected.	The extent to which the proposal maintains or affects receptors' existing perception of landscape scale and distance.
9. Landscape setting of nearby wind energy developments is respected.	The extent to which the landscape setting of nearby wind energy developments is affected by the proposal.
10. Distinctiveness of Landscape character is respected.	The extent to which a proposal affects the distinction between neighbouring landscape character types, in areas where the variety of character is important to the appreciation of the landscape.

- 6.2.15 The 2017 addendum to the OWESG has been considered within the drafting of the LVIA including when reviewing viewpoints however locations were discounted due to the limited and/or distant nature of potential visibility, indicating no potential for significant effects. The addendum sets out the landscape sensitivity for the Black Isle, Surrounding Hills and Moray Firth Coast which includes part of the initial 45 km study area but the Development Site is not located within. This includes reference to the Black Isle and Ben Wyvis which serve as important focal points in the landscape.

Guidance

- 6.2.16 This LVIA has been carried out with due reference to the following guidance and standards:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute, and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013);
- Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third edition (GLVIA3) Technical Guidance Note - 2024-01 (Landscape Institute, 2024);
- Assessing landscape value outside national designations, Technical Guidance Note 02/21, (Landscape Institute, 2021);
- Assessing the cumulative landscape and visual impact of onshore wind energy developments, (NatureScot, 2021);
- Guidance on Aviation Lighting Impact Assessment, (NatureScot, 2024);
- Visual Representation of Wind Farms, Version 2.2, (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2017);
- Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape, Guidance, Version 3a, (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2017);
- Spatial Planning for Onshore Wind Turbines – natural heritage considerations (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2015);
- Special Landscape Qualities – Guidance on assessing effects, (NatureScot, 2025);
- Assessing impacts on Wild Land Areas – technical guidance, (NatureScot, 2023);
- NatureScot pre-application guidance for onshore wind farms, (NatureScot, 2024); and
- Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments, (The Highland Council, 2016).

6.3 Consultation

6.3.1 **Table 6.2** provides a summary of the consultation relevant to the LVIA undertaken with stakeholders throughout the EIAR process, including through scoping and subsequent pre-application discussion.

Table 6.2 Summary of Consultation Responses in relation to Landscape and Visual

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of Response and Action Taken
THC (EIA Scoping Opinion, 16 th October 2024)	Confirmed that the general scope and approach to the LVIA set out in the EIA Scoping Report are satisfactory. The assessment should consider all aspects of the Proposed Development, including any on-site BESS, borrow pits etc. A separate volume of visualisations to THC standards, including single frame photomontages with 50mm and 75mm focal lengths should be provided.	Noted. The LVIA considers all elements of the Proposed Development as described in Chapter 4: Project Description . Visualisations to THC standards including a panoramic photomontage, baseline photo and matching wireline, and single frame photomontages at 50mm and 75mm focal lengths have been provided to THC.

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of Response and Action Taken
	Requirement for inclusion of four additional viewpoints: A9 northbound around Inverness, Great Glen Way north of Abriachan, A96 south of inner Moray Firth, and A836 north of Invershin. Expect the landscape assessment to consider THC's OWESG and include an assessment against the criterion set out at pages 19 and 20. THC prefers the term 'hours of darkness' over 'night-time' Request for Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) to be undertaken.	The final viewpoint locations have been agreed with THC and NS and include the following: - VP 12: A836 near Achinduich; - VP 16: A96; - VP 17: A9 near Milton of Leys; and - VP 18: Great Glen Way north of Abriachan. Further details on the viewpoints should be referred to within Section 6.5 below. OWESG has been used to inform the scope of the LVIA and guide design of the Proposed Development. An appraisal of the Proposed Development against the OWESG criteria, which is set out in Table 6.1 is provided in Section 6.7, below. The LVIA uses the term 'hours of darkness' throughout when considering potential effects relating to the aviation lighting included as part of the Proposed Development. Subsequent discussions with THC confirmed that RVAA was not required due to the offset distance (greater than 4 km) of the proposed turbines from the nearest residential properties with potential visibility.
NatureScot (NS) (EIA Scoping Opinion, 21 st October 2024)	Advised that an Assessment of Effects on the Special Landscape Qualities (AESLQ) of the Dornoch Firth NSA is required and should include consideration of effects of aviation lighting and cumulative effects. Advised that a Wild Land Assessment will be required for the Rhiddoroch-Beinn Dearg-Ben Wyvis WLA and should include consideration of effects of aviation lighting and cumulative effects. Ceislein Wind Farm should be included in the assessment of cumulative effects. Demonstration of mitigation through design, relating to reducing impacts on the Dornoch Firth NSA and the Rhiddoroch-Beinn Dearg-Ben Wyvis WLA should be detailed in the EIA Report	An AESLQ of the Dornoch Firth NSA is provided in Appendix 6.3. This includes consideration of daytime and night-time (hours of darkness) and cumulative effects. A Wild Land Assessment of the Rhiddoroch-Beinn Dearg-Ben Wyvis WLA is provided in Appendix 6.4. This includes consideration of daytime and night-time (hours of darkness) and cumulative effects. The list of cumulative schemes included in the LVIA has been agreed with NS and includes the pre-application stage Ceislein Wind Farm as set out in Section 6.10.1, below. Chapter 3: Evolution of Design provides a description of the design process for the Proposed Development. Embedded mitigation measures relevant to landscape and visual effects are outline in Section 6.6, below. Details of how design development has helped to reduce effects on Dornoch Firth NSA and on the Rhiddoroch-Beinn Dearg-Ben Wyvis WLA are set out in Appendix 6.3 and Appendix 6.4.
Ardross Community Council	Requested that the visual assessment for the Proposed Development uses the same viewpoints as those used for the	Table 6.3 provides details of the viewpoint locations included in the assessment. These have been selected based on the specifics of the Proposed Development and have been agreed

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of Response and Action Taken
(Scoping Opinion, 25 th September 2024)	previously proposed Glenmorie Wind Farm.	with THC and NS. The majority of the locations requested by Ardross Community Council have been included. With reference to the viewpoints previously used for the proposed Glenmorie Wind Farm, the viewpoints used are not the same intentionally due to the different schemes proposed, field work and consultation undertaken, however there are a number of similar locations. This includes Strath Rusdale, Carn Chuinneag, B9163 on the Black Isle, Boath Road, Bonar Bridge, Creich Cemetery, A949 near Ospisdale, A9 at Evelix, Dornoch, Cnoc Fyrish, Ben Wyvis and Beinn a' Chaisteil.
	Requested that the LVIA includes assessment of effects on wild land.	A Wild Land Assessment of the Rhiddoroch-Beinn Dearg-Ben Wyvis WLA is provided in Appendix 6.4 .
	Requested that the consented Strathory Wind Farm is included in all photomontages and visualisations.	Where visible, Strathory Wind Farm is shown within the cumulative wirelines provided for each assessment viewpoint (see Volume 3 and Section 6.5 'Future Baseline' of this chapter).
	Requested night-time visualisations for all assessment viewpoints.	In line with good practice and as agreed with THC and NS, hours of darkness visualisations have been prepared from three locations (Viewpoint 2, Viewpoint 7 and Viewpoint 10) and are presented in Volume 3 .
	Requested that an RVAA should be undertaken for any residential properties within 2km of the Proposed Development.	An assessment of potential landscape and visual effects relating to aviation lighting is provided in Appendix 6.2 . No residential properties have been identified within 4 km of the proposed turbines and therefore RVAA has been scoped out, as agreed with THC.
	Requested the inclusion of Ceislein Wind Farm in the cumulative assessment.	The cumulative schemes included in the LVIA are detailed in Section 6.10.1 , below and have been agreed with NS. The pre-application stage Ceislein Wind Farm has been included within the assessment and shown on cumulative wirelines provided in Volume 3 .
Mountaineering Scotland (Scoping Opinion, 26 th September 2024)	Confirmed agreement of the inclusion of viewpoints at Beinn a' Chaisteil and Ben Wyvis as representative of views experienced by hill walkers and requested that additional locations are included to represent upland recreational receptors. Suggested locations included: • Carn Chuinneag; • Beinn Tharsuinn; and • Carn Salachaidh.	Section 6.5 provides details of the viewpoint locations included in the assessment which were agreed with THC and NS. While Beinn Tharsuinn and Carn Salachaidh were considered they have not been included in the final list of viewpoints due to similar receptor types, direction of view and less representative than chosen viewpoints, such as Carn Chuinneag. Viewpoints on the summits of Carn Chuinneag (Viewpoint 1), Cnoc Fyrish (Viewpoint 4), Beinn a' Chaisteil (Viewpoint 6), Ben Wyvis (Viewpoint 9) and on the approach to Carn Ban (Viewpoint 11) provide a representative cross section of views experienced by hill walkers/ upland recreational receptors.

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of Response and Action Taken
Scotways (Scoping Opinion, 23 rd October 2024)	Recommended that impacts on users of rights of way and hill track routes which do not form part of the core path network are considered within the LVIA.	An assessment of potential visual effects is provided in Appendix 6.6 and summarised in this chapter in Section 6.8 . This includes consideration of a range of receptor types including recreational receptors on nearby core paths, rights of way and hill track routes (Dalnavie Drove Road and Glencalvie Lodge to Braeantra Track).
NS (meeting held on 17 th December 2024 and e-mail of 8 th January 2025)	Stated that design development since scoping stage goes some way to demonstrate design mitigation for the reduction in effects on the Dornoch Firth NSA and the Rhiddoroch-Beinn Dearg-Ben Wyvis WLA. Recommended consideration of further reduction of the horizontal and vertical extent of the proposal. Requested an additional viewpoint location from the approach to Carn Ban, following which NS agreed to the overall viewpoint locations. Confirmed agreement of the scope and approach to photomontages / wirelines, AESLQ, Wild Land Assessment, night-time assessment, scoping out of LCTs beyond 20 km and providing commentary within LVIA on sequential effects along key routes.	Additional design development was undertaken to further reduce effects on the NSA and WLA. This included reducing the number of turbines, reducing the tip height and micro siting of turbines to reduce prominence, improve visual composition and reduce horizontal extent in views from the NSA and WLA. Chapter 3: Evolution of Design provides a description of the design process for the Proposed Development. Details of how design development has helped to reduce effects on Dornoch Firth NSA and on the Rhiddoroch-Beinn Dearg-Ben Wyvis WLA are set out in Appendix 6.3 and Appendix 6.4. The visual assessment includes a viewpoint (Viewpoint 11: Carn Ban approach) at the location requested by NS. Figures VP11.2 to VP11.4 (Volume 3) provide visualisations from Viewpoint 11. The LVIA has been undertaken in accordance with the scope and approach agreed with NS.
THC (meeting held on 16 th January 2025)	Noted that it is clear that there are improvements to the design following the scoping layout. Recommended further design review, including consideration of turbine heights and improvement of composition from one of two viewpoints. Confirmed agreement of the viewpoint locations, approach and scope to sequential assessment and night-time (hours of darkness) assessment, and scoping out of LCTs beyond 20 km and RVAA.	Additional design development was undertaken to further reduce landscape and visual effects, including from Strath Rusdale and the Black Isle (relating to aviation lighting), including through reduction of the vertical and horizontal extent and limiting the number of aviation lights required. Chapter 3: Evolution of Design provides a description of the design process for the Proposed Development. The LVIA has been undertaken in accordance with the scope and approach agreed with THC.
NatureScot (email correspondence on 6 th May 2025)	Confirmed agreement of the proposed approach to the cumulative assessment (using three scenarios) and the shortlisted cumulative schemes. Requested that scoping stage schemes within 25km of the	The cumulative assessment provided in the LVIA has been undertaken based on the scope and approach agreed with NS, with consideration of the shortlisted schemes detailed in Section 6.10.1. Scoping stage wind farms identified within 25km of the Proposed

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of Response and Action Taken
	Proposed Development are shown on the cumulative wirelines but confirmed they do not need to be included in the cumulative assessment (with the exception of Ceislein Wind Farm, as above).	Development are indicated on the cumulative wirelines provided for each viewpoint in Volume 3 .

6.4 Approach and Methodology

Technical Scope

- 6.4.1 The LVIA aims to identify the likely significant landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development upon the Development Site and surrounding area.
- 6.4.2 The assessment forms part of an iterative process where, as potentially significant effects are identified, these inform the siting and design of the Proposed Development alongside consideration of other constraints. This process and the considerations which have informed it are described within **Chapter 3: Evolution of Design and Alternatives**. The final configuration of the Proposed Development which forms the basis of the assessment of effects is described in **Chapter 4: Project Description**.
- 6.4.3 When considering the potential changes that future development may have on the landscape and visual resource, it is necessary to identify those key elements of the landscape or view which make it distinctive or valued. Landscape effects can arise from changes to the physical components of the landscape, its character and how this is experienced or perceived. Visual effects can arise from changes to the composition of views through addition of new features and/or removal or obstruction of existing features. The visual assessment considers views from static locations and sequential views experienced from key transport and recreational routes.
- 6.4.4 Landscape and visual effects can be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse) and landscape effects direct, relating to changes to physical features, or indirect, relating to changes to perceptual aspects.
- 6.4.5 The Proposed Development includes aviation lighting on the nacelle of five of the turbines, in line with Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) requirements. Aviation lighting has the potential to contribute to landscape and visual effects and as such the LVIA include consideration of potential change experienced during the daytime and within hours of darkness.
- 6.4.6 The scoping process for the Proposed Development identified the potential for effects on the character and/or special qualities of the Dornoch Firth NSA and the Rhiddoroch – Ben Dearg – Ben Wyvis WLA. The LVIA therefore includes an AESLQ of the Dornoch Firth NSA and a Wild Land Assessment for the Rhiddoroch – Ben Dearg – Ben Wyvis WLA.

- 6.4.7 It is also necessary to consider potential cumulative effects of the Proposed Development with other similar developments in the vicinity. Cumulative effects arise from the additional changes brought about by one development in conjunction with those of another. The cumulative assessment includes other wind farms that are operational, consented / under construction or for which a consent application has been submitted and is not yet determined or is under appeal. The cumulative assessment also considers Ceislein Wind Farm which is at the pre-application stage. The cumulative assessment considers potential effects from static locations and from key routes and includes consideration of aviation lighting from key receptors.

Study Areas

- 6.4.8 An initial study area of 45 km from the outermost turbines has been used for the LVIA (refer to **Figure 6.1** as recommended by NatureScot guidance (Visual Representation of Wind Farms guidance). Preliminary desk and field-based survey and analysis, including the use of ZTVs and wirelines, indicated that potential for significant effects will largely be concentrated within a smaller area.
- 6.4.9 It should be noted that the computer model does not take into account surface features such as trees or woodland, buildings and other structures or local landform which can vary the ZTV locally and therefore the ZTV is not representative of visual effects in itself.
- 6.4.10 A detailed study area of 20 km from the outermost turbines has been used for the assessment on landscape character to ensure a targeted and proportionate approach focused on potential significant effects (as agreed with NatureScot and The Highland Council). Targeted assessment of national level landscape designations and identified representative viewpoints has been undertaken beyond this distance.
- 6.4.11 Details of the study areas for the AESLQ of the Dornoch Firth NSA and the Wild Land Assessment for the Rhiddoroch – Ben Dearg – Ben Wyvis WLA are provided in **Appendix 6.3: National Scenic Area Assessment of Effects on Special Landscape Qualities**, and **Appendix 6.4: Wild Land Assessment**.

Cumulative Assessment

- 6.4.12 An initial search area of 60 km from the Proposed Development was utilised for the cumulative assessment. Wind farms consisting of more than three turbines over 50 m within the search area were identified, as shown on **Figure 6.11**. A short list of wind developments to be included within the cumulative assessments, focused on those with the potential to contribute to significant cumulative effects (refer to **Section 7.1 'Cumulative Baseline'** within **Appendix 6.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology** for further details), was then identified through initial appraisal and consultation with THC and NS. Further details of the cumulative schemes included in the assessment are provided in **Section 6.10.1**, below.

Methodology

- 6.4.13 The following section provides an overview of the approach adopted for the LVIA. Further details of the assessment methodology are provided in **Appendix 6.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology**.

Assessment Process

- 6.4.14 The landscape and visual assessments have been undertaken in accordance with the approach and principles set out in GLVIA3 and with reference to the guidance listed in **Section 6.2** of this chapter. The terminology and approach differs slightly from that set out in **Chapter 2: Approach to EIA**, for example 'magnitude of effect' is used in the LVIA, rather than 'magnitude of impact'.
- 6.4.15 The assessments have been undertaken based on the following main steps:
- Establishment of the baseline;
 - Appreciation of the Proposed Development; and
 - Assessment of effects.

Establishment of the Baseline

- 6.4.16 A baseline study has been undertaken through a combination of desk-based research and site appraisal in order to establish the existing conditions of the landscape and visual resources within the identified initial 45 km and detailed 20 km study areas. The landscape baseline study identifies landscape designations within the initial 45 km study area and landscape character types within the detailed 20 km study area and describes their key characteristics and special qualities. A review of mapping and evaluation through use of ZTVs and wirelines and targeted site survey was used to identify potential visual receptors and viewpoint locations. The visual baseline provides a description of the nature of existing views and visual amenity for each of the identified viewpoints and receptor locations.

Appreciation of the Proposed Development

- 6.4.17 In order to be able to accurately assess the full extent of likely effects on landscape character and visual amenity it is essential to develop a thorough and detailed knowledge of the Proposed Development. This includes a comprehensive understanding of its location, nature and scale, and is achieved through a review of drawings, computer modelling and on-site appraisal. The LVIA includes consideration of all elements of the Proposed Development as detailed in **Chapter 4: Project Description**.

Assessment of Effects

- 6.4.18 The LVIA seeks to identify, predict and evaluate the significance of potential effects on landscape character and established views. The assessments are based on an evaluation of the sensitivity to change and the magnitude of effect for each landscape or visual receptor.

For clarity and in accordance with good practice, the assessment of potential effects on landscape character and visual amenity, although closely related, are undertaken separately.

- 6.4.19 GLVIA3 places a strong emphasis on the importance of professional judgement in identifying and defining the significance of landscape and visual effects. This LVIA has been undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects and professional judgement has been used in combination with structured methods and criteria to evaluate value, susceptibility, sensitivity, magnitude and significance of effect.
- 6.4.20 The LVIA recognises that landscape and visual effects can vary from one stage of a development to the next and therefore considers both the short-term temporary effects relating to construction and decommissioning, and longer term effects associated with the operational phase of the Proposed Development.

Assessment of Cumulative Effects

- 6.4.21 The assessment of cumulative effects follows a similar process to that described above, first identifying and describing the baseline, followed by an assessment of the magnitude of effect and significance of effect. However, as there is no certainty that consented or application stage schemes will be constructed, the cumulative baseline involves consideration of three theoretical scenarios, as follows:
- Scenario 1: The cumulative effects of the Proposed Development introduced into a baseline which includes wind farms which have been consented and/or are under construction (Garvary, Kirkan, Lochluichart Extension II, Meall Buidhe, Strath Oykel and Strathrory), in addition to existing operational schemes (Beinn nan Oighrean, Beinn Tharsuinn, Corriemoillie, Coire Na Cloiche, Lochluichart, Lochluichart Extension, Novar and Novar II);
 - Scenario 2: The cumulative effects of the Proposed Development introduced into a baseline which includes wind farms at the application stage (Abhainn Dubh, Acheilidh, Balblair, Carn Fearna), in addition to consented/ under construction and existing operational schemes; and
 - Scenario 3: The cumulative effects of the Proposed Development introduced into a baseline which includes the pre-application stage Ceislein Wind Farm in addition to those at application stage, consented/ under construction and existing.
- 6.4.22 The assessment of cumulative magnitude of effect and significance of effects involves consideration of the additional change resulting from the Proposed Development to each cumulative baseline scenario.

Assumptions and Limitations

- 6.4.23 Regarding limitations, no technical difficulties or practical issues were encountered in producing the landscape and visual assessment.

6.4.24 The assumptions and limitations of the assessment are summarised below, with further details provided in **Appendix 6.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology**:

- Duration of operational effects are assumed to be long-term, based on a 40-year operational lifespan of the Proposed Development;
- Graphics and visualisations have been provided to accompany the assessment. It is important that these are read in conjunction with the assessment text and should be viewed in the field and with an understanding of their inherent limitations;
- The hours of darkness baseline is based on targeted site survey within hours of darkness, coupled with daytime observations;
- Wind direction, weather and prevailing atmospheric conditions can all have an influence on the visibility and impression of wind turbines. The assessment adopts a 'worst case' approach to daytime effects which assumes clear weather conditions and good visibility. In relation to hours of darkness effects, a realistic worse case approach has been taken, highlighting the theoretical, but unlikely, scenario of the lights operating at peak intensity in clear conditions. This is then qualified with the more likely scenario of the lights operating in the lower intensity mode during clear conditions, and the higher intensity mode in poorer conditions;
- Commercial forestry is a common feature within the initial 45 km study area (as described in the '**Study Areas**' section above), including within the immediate vicinity of the Development Site. These areas are subject to cyclical felling, restocking and growth and therefore change over time, influencing the landscape character and views. The assessment assumes that this land use and management will continue to some degree and where possible takes account of identified planned felling;
- A cumulative cut-off date of 31st May 2025 was set to allow progress with the cumulative assessment and visualisations. Any subsequent changes to the cumulative baseline have not been considered. The cumulative assessment is based on the operational stage of the Proposed Development and other identified wind farms; and
- For the purposes of the visualisations, the BESS structures are indicated with a height of 3 m above a platform level of 370 m AOD, and the substation and control building area is indicated with a maximum height of 15 m above a platform level of 370 m AOD. This provides a worst case approach for the substation and control building area, based on a maximum design envelope, with the majority of structures including the control building likely to be considerably lower in height. Visibility of the substation and control building are therefore likely to be less than indicated in the visualisations.

6.5 Baseline Conditions

6.5.1 This section provides an overview and summary of the current landscape and visual baseline conditions.

Landscape Character

Overview

Landform and Hydrology

- 6.5.2 The landform and topography of the Development Site is of a large scale and is characterised by its upland location, ranging in elevation from approximately 340 m above ordnance datum (AOD) in the southeast to approximately 838 m AOD at Carn Chuinneag in the north-west (refer to **Figure 6.2**).
- 6.5.3 In the north-west, the Development Site comprises the northern slopes of Carn Chuinneag where the landform slopes steeply from the hill summits (at approximately 838 m AOD and approximately 830 m AOD) down towards the Diebidale River at Glen Diebidale (located outside the Development Site). Further to the north, the land raises to Carn Dubh (approximately 474 m AOD) before sloping again to watercourse, Salachie Burn, which largely defines the northern boundary of the Development Site up to Lochan a' Chairn.
- 6.5.4 The landform within the mid-section of the Development Site is influenced by the southern valley sides of Abhainn Glac an t-Seilich, sloping from the higher ground in the south-west (Clach nam Ban at approximately 552m AOD) to the watercourse to the north-east.
- 6.5.5 The landform associated with the eastern part of the Development Site is set at slightly lower elevations, and the topography is sloping and influenced by the watercourse, Black Water, and southern valley sides of Strath Rusdale.
- 6.5.6 The landscape of the wider detailed 20 km study area comprises considerable variation in landform and elevation and includes the coastal areas associated with the Cromarty Firth to the south-east and Dornoch Firth to the north-east at the lowest elevations and rolling landform between the coastal areas and the uplands to the west. The inland areas comprise further expansive uplands with mountains, such as Ben Wyvis (approximately 1046 m AOD), mountainous areas, straths and valleys, carved by numerous small tributaries and rivers including the River Carron, River Oykel and River Shin.

Movement and Connectivity

- 6.5.7 Principal routes should be referred to on **Figures 6.5a and 6.5b**. There are no adopted public roads within the Development Site, with the exception of a small section where the Existing Forestry Access Track connects to the U1907 (also known as Strath Rusdale Road) to the west of Ardrross. However, there are several forestry tracks and local residential tracks along the proposed access, and hill tracks along the northern boundary and northern part of the Development Site which may be used by pedestrians or cyclists for recreational purposes. The detailed 20 km study area contains a network of A and B class and local roads, often focused along the coast and valley floors, with main roads, generally located towards the outer limits of the study area.

- 6.5.8 There are a number of identified recreation routes within the detailed 20 km study area, including a network of core paths. The majority of these are located close to settlement and typically at lower elevations, although a small number extend into the uplands. There is one identified recreational route (Glencalvie Lodge to Braeantra Track) located within the north of the Development Site, on an estate track to the south of Carn Dubh and towards Strath Rusdale. A second right of way (Dalnavie Drove Road) runs between Strath Rusdale and Ardgay and passes in close proximity to the east of the Development Site. A third is located further south near to Loch Morie and Loch Glass (Boath to Wyvis Lodge right of way). These rights of way and the wider core path network are shown on **Figure 6.5b**.

Land Use, Built Form and Vegetation

- 6.5.9 Within the Development Site, land cover is predominantly upland grassland and moorland vegetation. Rough grazing is the predominant land use, although there is a small pocket of coniferous woodland plantation in the north and more expansive areas of commercial forestry along the lower slopes in the south. Tracks and deer and stock fences are also present within parts of the Development Site.
- 6.5.10 Settlement and development across the wider detailed 20 km study area is concentrated along the coasts and lowlands at Dingwall, Alness, and along the A9 to the south-east, and at Ardgay and Bonar Bridge and settlements along the 'A' Roads to the north-west. Settlement becomes more scattered and dispersed on the mid slopes associated with agricultural land uses. The uplands and higher elevations are largely unsettled, with land uses comprising commercial forestry and a number of wind farms of varying scales. Overhead lines and other electrical infrastructure are also present within the study area, both within the upland and more lowland landscapes.

Landscape Designations

- 6.5.11 Landscapes can be recognised as of national or local importance and designated or provided protection through statute, development plans or other documents. The following identifies nationally recognised or designated landscapes within the initial 45 km study area and confirms those considered in the detailed assessment. The locations of designated landscapes are shown on **Figures 6.3a** and **6.3b**.

National Scenic Areas

- 6.5.12 The following four NSAs have been identified within the initial 45 km study area as indicated on **Figure 6.3a**:
- Assynt – Coigach NSA in the north-west (approximately 32.95 km from the MDA);
 - Dornoch Firth NSA in the north-east (approximately 8.33 km from the MDA);
 - Glen Strathfarrar NSA in the south (approximately 41.96 km from the MDA); and
 - Wester Ross NSA in the west (approximately 38.28 km from the MDA).

- 6.5.13 With the exception of the Dornoch Firth NSA, all NSAs are located at considerable distance from the Proposed Development and outside of the detailed 20 km study area, with no potential for significant effects and therefore are not considered further in this assessment.
- 6.5.14 The Dornoch Firth NSA is located within the north of the detailed 20 km study area and comprises a varied landscape centred on and surrounding the inner and outer extents of the Dornoch Firth and the adjacent Loch Migdale. The outer firth is relatively broad and open, particularly to the east of the A9 / Dornoch Bridge where it extends out to the North Sea. By contrast, the inner firth is narrower and exhibits a greater sense of enclosure provided by woodland and forestry and the surrounding hills. The water of the firth and movements of the tides are central to the character of this landscape, with a continually changing scene of mudflats and sands, shallows and deeper water. The surrounding context consists of a series of different landscapes, transitioning from the firth and the shoreline to alluvial flats and lowland farmland, woodland and pasture on lower slopes, forestry, woodland and rough grassland on mid slopes and more open grassland and moorland on the rounded hills and uplands beyond.
- 6.5.15 A description of the relevant special landscape qualities of the Dornoch Firth NSA is provided in **Appendix 6.3**.

Gardens and Designed Landscapes

- 6.5.16 Historic Environment Scotland (HES) maintain an inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscape (GDL) consisting of historic designed landscapes considered to be of national value.
- 6.5.17 The following 22 inventory GDLs have been identified within the initial 45 km study area as indicated on **Figure 6.3a**:
- Aldourie Castle GDL
(approximately 43.44 km from the MDA);
 - Ardross Castle GDL
(approximately 8.66 km from the MDA);
 - Balnagown Castle GDL
(approximately 21.26 km from the MDA);
 - Beaufort Castle GDL
(approximately 36.73 km from the MDA);
 - Brahan GDL (approximately 23.87 km from the MDA);
 - Castle Leod GDL
(approximately 20.90 km from the MDA);
 - Cawdor Castle GDL
(approximately 43.34 km from the MDA);
 - Cromarty House GDL
(approximately 28.07 km from the MDA);
 - Culloden House GDL
(approximately 38.61 km from the MDA);
 - Dalcross GDL (approximately 40.33 km from the MDA);

- Dochfour GDL (approximately 40.64 km from the MDA);
- Dundonnell GDL (approximately 38.34 km from the MDA);
- Dunrobin Castle GDL (approximately 34.58 km from the MDA);
- Fairburn GDL (approximately 27.46 km from the MDA);
- House Of The Geanies GDL (approximately 34.00 km from the MDA);
- Leckmelme GDL (approximately 34.41 km from the MDA);
- Leys Castle GDL (approximately 41.29 km from the MDA);
- Novar GDL (approximately 14.04 km from the MDA);
- Rosehaugh GDL (approximately 28.05 km from the MDA);
- Skibo Castle GDL (approximately 17.64 km from the MDA);
- The Fairy Glen GDL (approximately 28.78 km from the MDA); and
- Tomnahurich Cemetery GDL (approximately 38.05 km from the MDA).

6.5.18 With the exception of Ardross Castle GDL and Skibo Castle GDL, all are located outside of the extent of the ZTV and/or at considerable distance from the Proposed Development and outside of the detailed 20 km study area, with no potential for significant effects and therefore are not considered further in this assessment.

6.5.19 A description of the baseline landscape characteristics and qualities of Ardross Castle GDL and Skibo Castle GDL are provided in **Appendix 6.5: Landscape Assessment**.

Wild Land Areas

6.5.20 WLAs are not a statutory designation but are identified by NatureScot as important to the Scottish landscape and are described as:

“the most extensive areas in Scotland where wildness is best expressed” (NatureScot, 2023).

6.5.21 The following seven WLAs have been identified within the initial 45 km study area as indicated on **Figure 6.3a**:

- Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA (edge of WLA partially within MDA).
- Reay - Cassley WLA (approximately 21.19 km from the MDA);
- Fisherfield - Letterewe - Fannichs WLA (approximately 22.63 km from the MDA);
- Central Highlands WLA (approximately 29.57 km from the MDA);
- Ben Klibreck - Armine Forest WLA (approximately 33.22 km from the MDA);
- Foinaven - Ben Hee WLA (approximately 37.20 km from the MDA); and
- Inverpolly – Glencanisp WLA (approximately 40.74 km from the MDA);

- 6.5.22 With the exception of the Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA, all WLAs are located at considerable distance from the Proposed Development and are outside of the detailed 20 km study area, with no potential for significant effects and therefore are not considered further in this assessment.
- 6.5.23 The Rhiddoroch – Beinn Dearg – Ben Wyvis WLA covers an extensive area of uplands, with high mountains towards the north and rounded hills and plateau further south. The hills and mountains are divided by a series of deep and steep sided glens, often with a strong sense of enclosure. Land use is primarily deer stalking and rough grazing, although also includes power generation and forestry. Tracks and occasional estate buildings tend to be focused along the base of glens and can locally influence the impression of remoteness and isolation while also providing access points for recreation. The core areas towards the interior and western parts of the WLA tend to exhibit the strongest wild land attributes, particularly where there is a perceived connection and continuation with other nearby WLAs. The fringes of the WLA tend to be at least locally influenced by infrastructure and development, including A roads and associated traffic at lower elevations and wind farm development within adjacent uplands.
- 6.5.24 A description of the relevant qualities and landscape value of the Rhiddoroch – Beinn Dearg – Ben Wyvis WLA is provided in **Appendix 6.4: Wild Land Assessment**.

Special Landscape Areas

- 6.5.25 Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) are local landscape designations identified by THC and are provided protection through the HwLDP. The following eight SLAs have been identified within the initial 45 km study area, as indicated on **Figure 6.3a**:
- Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA (approximately 1.04 km from the MDA);
 - Ben Wyvis SLA (approximately 7.66 km from the MDA);
 - Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA (approximately 25.41 km from the MDA);
 - Sutors of Cromarty, Rosemarkie and Fort George SLA (approximately 27.92 km from the MDA);
 - Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA (approximately 32.98 km from the MDA);
 - Ben Kilbreck and Loch Choire SLA (approximately 40.21 km from the MDA);
 - Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA (approximately 42.95 km from the MDA); and
 - Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA (approximately 46.06 km from the MDA).
- 6.5.26 With the exception of the Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA and Ben Wyvis SLA, all are located at considerable distance from the Proposed Development and outside of the detailed 20 km study area, with no potential for significant effects and therefore are not considered further in this assessment. THC has published citations of the SLA, identifying their key characteristics and special qualities (The Highland Council, 2011).

Landscape Character Types

- 6.5.27 NatureScot has published a national landscape character assessment (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2019) for Scotland, identifying a series of areas of consistent and recognisable landscape character, known as LCTs. The locations and extents of LCTs within the initial 45 km and detailed 20 km study areas are shown on **Figure 6.4a** and **Figure 6.4b**.
- 6.5.28 The following 11 LCTs are located within the detailed 20 km study area and included within the detailed assessment:
- LCT 329: Rounded Mountain Massif;
 - LCT 330: Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty;
 - LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland;
 - LCT 139: Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland;
 - LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland;
 - LCT 145: Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting;
 - LCT 146: Coastal Farmland & Woodlands;
 - LCT 328: Rugged Mountain Massif - Ross & Cromarty;
 - LCT 339: Inland Strath;
 - LCT 341: Forest Edge Farming; and
 - LCT 346: Open Farmed Slopes.
- 6.5.29 A baseline description of the character of each of the above LCTs is provided in **Appendix 6.5: Landscape Assessment**. It should be noted that the Development Site lies within LCT 329: Rounded Mountain Massif and LCT 330: Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty.
- 6.5.30 The following five LCTs are also located within the detailed 20 km study area but have been excluded from detailed assessment. In each case and as indicated on **Figure 6.6** and confirmed through targeted field survey, there will be very little or no visibility of the Proposed Development from the parts of these LCTs found within the detailed 20 km study area and therefore no potential for significant effects.
- LCT 140: Sandy Beaches and Dunes;
 - LCT 331: Rounded Rocky Hills - Ross & Cromarty;
 - LCT 343: Coastal Shelf;
 - LCT 345: Farmed and Forested Slopes - Ross & Cromarty; and
 - LCT 347: Open Steep Farmed Slopes.

Visual Amenity

Visual Receptors

- 6.5.31 Visual receptors are the people at locations within the initial 45 km and detailed 20 km study areas who will potentially be affected by changes to views or visual amenity as a result of the Proposed Development. Visual receptors can be static or dynamic and include the following types:
- Residential, comprising those in settlements and residential dwellings;
 - Recreational, including those visiting hill summits and users of walking and cycling routes; and
 - Road users, including users of the local transport network.
- 6.5.32 Potential visual receptors have been identified through desktop modelling, including the use of ZTVs and targeted field survey. Receptors and locations outside of the extent of the ZTVs (**Figures 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8**) have not been considered further within the visual assessment due to a lack of potential visibility and therefore no potential for significant adverse effects resulting from the Proposed Development.

Residential Receptors

- 6.5.33 Settlement within the initial 45 km study area is generally found at lower elevations and towards the coast and is concentrated in the east alongside the Beauly Firth, Inner Moray Firth, Cromarty Firth and Dornoch Firth. This includes the larger city of Inverness as well as several smaller settlements, such as Nairn, Dingwall, Dornoch and Alness. There are also a range of small clusters and scattered individual properties across the initial 45 km study area, which are again predominantly within lower lying eastern areas. Within the western part of the initial 45 km study area, residential properties are generally sparse and typically located along inland glens and lowland areas, often close to the main transport routes, such as the A835 to the west of Dingwall.
- 6.5.34 Analysis of the ZTVs (**Figures 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8**) and targeted site survey have indicated that the majority of the settlements and scattered properties located within the detailed 20 km study area will not have visibility of the Proposed Development. This includes the settlements of Ardgay and Ardross, located within 10 km of the MDA.
- 6.5.35 The following settlements and areas of scattered properties are located within the ZTV and detailed 20 km study area:
- **Strath Rusdale, Boath and Lealty:** A number of scattered residential properties are found along the base and lower slopes of Strath Rusdale and on the lower slopes between Boath and Lealty to the south. These receptors are represented in the assessment by Viewpoint 2 (Strath Rusdale) and Viewpoint 3 (Lealty Lodge), as detailed in **Table 6.3**.

- **Bonar Bridge (including Migdale and Tulloch):** The settlement of Bonar Bridge is located in the north-east of the detailed 20 km study area, with the core area on the lower slopes along the A836 and A949 at the western end of the Dornoch Firth. The settlement extends up the slopes to the east, become more scattered and including Migdale and Tulloch. These receptors are represented in the assessment by Viewpoint 7 (Bonar Bridge, Migdale Hospital), as detailed in **Table 6.3**.
 - **Whiteface and Ospisdale:** A small number of scattered properties are located along the north side of the Dornoch Firth to the west of Spinningdale. Most are on the lower slopes alongside the A949, although with a few properties on lower ground towards the firth or on more elevated slopes to the north. These receptors are represented in the assessment by Viewpoint 13 (A949, Ospisdale), as detailed in **Table 6.3**.
 - **Alness:** A larger settlement in the south-east of the detailed 20 km study area, the majority of which is outside the extent of the ZTV, as shown on **Figures 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8**. Site survey has indicated that potential visibility of the Proposed Development from other parts of the settlement will also be heavily restricted by intervening trees, woodland and forestry and built form.
 - **Other scattered properties and farmsteads:** A small number of scattered and isolated residential properties are also found towards the northern and southern extents of the detailed 20 km study area. These include properties along the A836 north of Invershin, as represented by Viewpoint 12 (A836 near Achinduich), and to the south of the Cromarty Firth and east of Resolis, as represented by Viewpoint 10 (B9136 near Resolis and Balblair). There are also a small number of scattered and isolated properties along the straths and glens inland from Ardgay, as represented by Viewpoint 5 (Croick).
- 6.5.36 Other settlements within the initial 45 km study area with potential for distant visibility, as indicated by the ZTVs (**Figures 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8**), include Dornoch (represented by Viewpoint 15), those to the south of the Inner Moray Firth between Inverness and Nairn (Viewpoints 16 and 17) and scattered properties to the south of the Beaully Firth (Viewpoint 18).

Recreational Receptors

- 6.5.37 There are a range of recreation routes and locations within the detailed 20 km and initial 45 km study areas. Many of these are located at lower levels in and around settlements, but also include hill walking routes and summits within the uplands. The following recreational receptors have been identified within the detailed 20 km study area:
- **Summits and hill walking:** Upland landscape define much of the detailed 20 km study area and as such there are a range of hillwalking routes and popular hill summits. This includes the Munro of Ben Wyvis (Viewpoint 9) and adjacent Corbett of Little Wyvis towards the south, and the Corbetts of Carn Chuinneag (Viewpoint 1) within the centre, and Beinn a'Chaisteil (Viewpoint 6) and Carn Ban (represented by Viewpoint 11) in the west. The lower elevation, Cnoc Fyrish (Viewpoint 4) is located to the south-east of the

detailed 20 km study area and is a popular viewpoint with scenic views over the Cromarty Firth and Black Isle.

- **Long Distance Routes:** A section of National Cycle Network Route 1 is located within the south of the detailed 20 km study area and with additional routes on the Black Isle further south. These routes are predominantly located outside of the ZTV. The northern part of the Great Glen Way is located within the south of the initial 45 km study area, crossing elevated ground north of Abriachan (represented by Viewpoint 18) and descending towards Inverness.
- **Core paths:** The core path network is predominantly found within the eastern part of both the initial 45 km and detailed 20 km study area. The majority are located at relatively low elevations, typically close to the coast and around or between settlements. Core path users within 5 km of the Development Site include a path to the Cnoc Fyrish Monument to the north-west of Alness (Fyrish Path), several paths near to Ardross Castle (Dam Wood, Dublin to Ardross Mains and Tollie to Lealty Path), the path leading to the summit of Carn Dubh (Strathrusdale – Glencalvie and Glencalvie - Gleann Mor - Strathvaich - Black Bridge) and a path along Strath Cuileannach leading near to Croick Church Cemetery (Croick – Glen Einig).
- **Local recorded rights of way:** Recreational users along local recorded rights of way are varied across the detailed 20 km study area. Within 5 km of the Development Site, the routes include the heritage paths 'Glencalvie Lodge to Braeantra Track' and the 'Dalnavie Drove Road'. The heritage paths extend predominantly across the upland and hill landscape north and north-west from Strath Rusdale towards Glencalvie and the Dornoch Firth. Both routes lie partially within the Development Site. Routes within 5 km also includes the Boath to Wyvis Lodge right of way which runs west from Boath and along the southern shore of Loch Morie before climbing and crossing a low point on the ridge to the south and descending towards Wyvis Lodge at the end of Loch Glass.

Road users

6.5.38 There is a relatively well developed network of transport routes within the detailed 20 km and initial 45 km study areas, principally following the coasts and along glens and crossing more lowland areas. The following four principal routes have been identified within the detailed 20 km and initial 45 km study areas:

- **A9:** This is the main north-south route through the initial 45 km study area, connecting between Inverness in the south and towards Brora in the north-east. The road typically follows close to the coast, although goes inland where it crosses the Black Isle. Views experienced by those travelling south on the A9 are represented by Viewpoint 14, and those travelling north by Viewpoint 17.
- **A96:** This is a key route east-west route in the south of the initial 45 km study area, connecting between Inverness and settlements on the south side of the Inner Moray

Firth. The road typically follows close to the coast through lowland farmland. Views from the A96 are represented by Viewpoint 16.

- **A836:** This route provides an alternative inland north-south route within the northern part of the initial 45 km study area between Tain and Lairg and beyond. The route initially follows the southern coast of the Dornoch Firth before crossing to the north at Bonar Bridge and passing along the Kyles of Sutherland and along Achany Glen and northwards from Lairg. Southbound views from this road are represented by Viewpoint 12.
- **A949:** This is a relatively short east-west connection between Dornoch and Bonar Bridge in the north of the initial 45 km study area. The route generally follows close to or immediately along the north coast of the Dornoch Firth. Views from this route are represented by Viewpoints 8 and 13.

Viewpoints

6.5.39 **Table 6.3** provides details of the 18 specific and representative viewpoints that form the basis for the visual assessment, the locations of which are shown on **Figures 6.6** and **6.7**. The viewpoints have been selected to provide a representative selection of receptor types and locations, focused on the detailed 20 km study area but also including a small number of more distant locations within the initial 45 km study area. The final list of viewpoints has been informed by targeted site survey and feedback received from a number of consultees at the scoping stage and have been agreed with THC and NS.

6.5.40 A selection of wirelines and photomontages has been presented for each of the viewpoints in **Volume 3: Visualisations**. Wirelines have been produced for all viewpoints. Photomontages have been produced for all viewpoints except viewpoints 5 and viewpoints 14-18 due to distance and the nature of potential visibility of the Proposed Development. This approach has been agreed with THC and NS.

Table 6.3 Viewpoints

VP Ref	Location	Grid Reference (easting / northing)		Reason for Selection
1	Carn Chuinneag	248364	883333	Representative of recreational receptors on the hill summit. Within Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA
2	Strath Rusdale	258898	875398	Representative of residential properties along Strath Rusdale, recreational receptors along the 'Dalnavie Drove Road' local recorded right of way and road users along unnamed road.
3	Boath Road near Lealty Lodge	259840	873435	Representative of nearby scattered residential receptors and users of the local core path network. At boundary of Ardross Castle GDL.
4	Cnoc Fyrish	260750	869800	Recognised scenic viewpoint, representative of recreational receptors. Also representative of users of the local core path network.

VP Ref	Location	Grid Reference (easting / northing)		Reason for Selection
5	Croick	246033	891452	Representative of residential receptors along southern part of Strath Cuileannach, visitors to Croick Cemetery and users of the local core path network.
6	Beinn a' Chaisteil	236989	880101	Representative of recreational receptors in the uplands to the west. Within Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA and Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA.
7	Bonar Bridge, Migdale Hospital	261608	891500	Representative of residential receptors at Bonar Bridge. Within Dornoch Firth NSA.
8	Creich Cemetery off the A949	263545	889320	Representative of visitors to Creich Cemetery and road users along the A949. Within Dornoch Firth NSA.
9	Ben Wyvis	246308	868382	Representative of recreational receptors on the hill summit. Within Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA and Ben Wyvis SLA.
10	B9163 near Resolis and Balblair	268424	865994	Representative of scattered residential receptors south of the Cromarty Firth and road users along the B9163 on the Black Isle.
11	Approach to Carn Ban	233429	885585	Representative of recreational receptors close to the summit of Carn Ban. Within Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA and Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA.
12	A836 near Achinduich	258021	900105	Representative of residential receptors at Achinduich and road users along the A836.
13	A949 near Ospisdale	272001	889512	Representative of road users on the A949. Within Dornoch Firth NSA and on boundary of Skibo Castle GDL.
14	A9 near Evelix	277449	891922	Representative of road users on the A9 travelling south.
15	Dornoch	280012	889500	Representative of residential and recreational receptors at Dornoch.
16	A96	279482	851839	Representative of road users along the A96.
17	A9 Northbound	270272	842618	Representative of road users on the A9 travelling north.
18	Great Glen Way	256105	839081	Representative of recreational users along the Great Glen Way.

- 6.5.41 Three of the above viewpoints (Viewpoints 2, 7 and 10) also form the basis of the visual assessment of aviation lighting during hours of darkness as agreed with THC and NS. The hours of darkness viewpoints were selected to represent residential receptors within the surrounding landscape, including from Strath Rusdale, Bonar Bridge (within the Dornoch Firth NSA) and on the Black Isle. Further details are provided in **Appendix 6.2: Aviation Lighting**.

Future Baseline

- 6.5.42 Predicting the future baseline involves a degree of speculation and uncertainty as acknowledged at paragraph 5.33 in GLVIA3. It requires projecting forward any trends in change and considering how they may affect the landscape over time. The nature of the future baseline is influenced by a combination of natural and human processes, including climate

change. Proposed and consented development proposals are also able to influence the future baseline and those that are wind farm proposals are discussed in relation to the cumulative schemes (refer to **Section 6.10.1**). Other future development proposals may also influence the future baseline, including a proposed 400kV connection between Spittal and Beaully which would lie within the initial 45 km and detailed 20 km study areas and cross to the north-west of Strath Rusdale, to the east of the Development Site.

- 6.5.43 The landscape across the initial 45 km and detailed 20 km study areas is variable but includes uplands and hills, mountains, straths and glens and lowland farmland which can be more open or wooded. The vegetation across the initial 45 km and detailed 20 km study areas, including blocks of native woodland, will continue to mature but the inherent character and contrast between the more sparsely vegetated upland areas and more open farmed lowland areas is unlikely to substantially change. Forestry operations, which involves different stages of felling and re-growth, are apparent across the landscape and are likely to continue to influence the future baseline. Localised changes to the type of forestry, in part due to climate change and threat of disease, are likely to occur. Some areas of forestry that have been recently felled will not be restocked, in favour of peatland restoration and this scenario may be repeated with other areas of felling in the future.
- 6.5.44 As highlighted by the number of schemes included within the cumulative assessment, and current policy and energy targets, wind farms and other energy infrastructure schemes are likely to come forward. It is therefore likely that energy related infrastructure has the potential to expand in this area. Taking into account the age of some of the existing wind farms within the initial 45 km and detailed 20 km study areas, such as Beinn Tharsuinn and Novar, it is probable that re-powering and/or decommissioning of sites will also occur in the future.
- 6.5.45 In summary, the future baseline in the absence of the Proposed Development is likely to be broadly similar to the current baseline although with the likelihood of further energy related infrastructure in the vicinity of the Development Site and within the wider landscape.

6.6 Embedded Mitigation

- 6.6.1 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. Further details of the design approach and process are provided in **Chapter 3: Evolution of Design**.
- 6.6.2 A number of mitigation measures have been introduced in order to reduce the likely landscape and visual effects, as set out below, including access works and site infrastructure. Such measures have been developed with reference to the design strategy which is also referred to below.

Design Strategy

6.6.3 The general design strategy for the principal elements of the Proposed Development has been informed by the following objectives relating to landscape and visual effects:

- To reduce adverse effects on nationally designated or values landscapes, and from both principal and smaller settlements, as far as practicable;
- To provide a turbine layout with a simple form, which relates to the underlying topography of the Development Site and surrounding uplands and reduces effects on the character of the landscape;
- To achieve a balanced composition of the turbines against the landscape and/or skyline and in relation to other cumulative wind farm developments from key receptor locations;
- To create a design that takes account of the relevant national, regional and local policy context as far as possible; and
- To respond to the various key landscape and visual constraints identified through survey, consultation and assessment.

6.6.4 It is important to note that these objectives are only part of the design process and must be balanced with a number of other objectives and constraints, including other environmental considerations and technical and commercial viability.

Site Specific Design Mitigation Measures

6.6.5 Various iterations of the turbine layout were considered as part of the design process, as described in **Chapter 3: Evolution of Design**. These layouts were tested through a combination of modelling and analysis, informed by site survey, with landscape and visual considerations being important factors in guiding design. In particular, potential effects on the Dornoch Firth NSA, the Rhiddoroch – Ben Dearg – Ben Wyvis WLA and nearby residential properties have been key factors which have informed the design process.

6.6.6 Landscape and visual constraints were applied to exclude turbines from specific areas of the Development Site, principally the areas of higher ground in the north and west to help reduce visibility from the NSA and WLA, and south of Carn Cas nan Gabhar and Coire a Chapuill to allow turbines to be positioned behind the ridge landform when seen from Strath Rusdale and reduce the horizontal extent when viewed from the east and west.

6.6.7 Other key landscape and visual design measures have included:

- Reduction in the number of proposed turbines from 23 down to 13 and reduction of the maximum tip heights from 220m down to 180m or 200m, helping to lessen the vertical and horizontal extent of the Proposed Development and increase the offset distance to settlement;

- Positioning of the proposed turbines and other elements of the Proposed Development to make use of topography to reduce visibility and strengthen the physical and visual separation from key receptors, including the NSA, WLA and nearby residential properties such as those at Strath Rusdale, Boath and Lealty;
- Micro siting of turbines to reduce stacking and/or notable gaps within the layout, including from key viewpoints within the NSA, WLA and along Strath Rusdale;
- Considered approach to aviation lighting strategy, minimising the number of turbines requiring visible lights to five, omitting mid tower lights, use of low intensity (200 candela) settings in periods of good visibility, and use of directional units to limit apparent intensity from lower elevations. These measures have been agreed with the CAA
- The substation and battery storage compounds have been located at lower elevation to reduce the nature and extent of potential landscape and visual effects.

6.6.8 The location and management of construction activities have been carefully considered to reduce landscape and visual effects. Ground disturbance on-site will be restricted as far as practicable. Any materials excavated will be retained on the Development Site and retained top soil will be used on areas to be re-vegetated following the construction phase. The widened bends of the access tracks will be partially covered with topsoil and allowed to regenerate.

Mitigation of Access Works and Site Infrastructure

6.6.9 The main access to the Development Site will be along the Existing Forestry Access Track which leaves the local road network west of Ardross, principally travelling through coniferous forestry plantation.

6.6.10 As with the proposed wind turbines, the access track modifications and other associated works have been designed using an iterative process in order to reduce potential environmental effects. The key embedded mitigation measures are as follows:

- Use, upgrade and widen of 11.8 km Existing Forestry Access Track, reducing the need to create new tracks and potential required removal of landscape features to facilitate new access;
- Reduce loss of trees along the access track, and where possible reinstate planting and trees that require to be removed to reduce long term effects, and/or provide compensatory planting for areas that cannot be replanted;
- Limit the length and width of new temporary and permanent tracks and where practical use locally won material to construct tracks to appear similar to existing forestry, estate and wind farm tracks in the vicinity;
- Drainage infrastructure located and aligned with natural landforms;

- Borrow pit search areas to be reinstated and re-vegetated where appropriate (one currently in use by FLS likely to continue as such);
- Localised earthworks and planting adjacent to the BESS to help reduce longer term effects; and
- Peatland restoration which is likely to include measures to reduce degradation and encourage re-establishment of peat-forming vegetation through rewetting by use of dams in drainage channels, reduce erosion and encourage revegetation of eroded and bare peat, and reduce grazing pressures to facilitate restoration.

6.6.11 Further details on the proposed peatland restoration are provided in **Appendix 8.6: Outline Habitat Management Plan** (oHMP).

6.7 Appraisal of Proposed Development against THC Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance

6.7.1 This section provides an appraisal of the Proposed Development against the guidance criteria set out in OWESG (The Highland Council, 2016).

Table 6.4 Appraisal of Proposed Development against OWESG criteria

Criterion, Measure and Threshold	Appraisal
Criterion 1. Relationship between Settlements/Key locations and wider landscape respected. Measure The extent to which the proposal contributes to perception of settlements or key locations being encircled by wind energy development. Threshold Development should seek to achieve a threshold where: Turbines are not visually prominent in the majority of views within or from settlements/ Key Locations or from the majority of its access routes.	The Proposed Development has been sited and designed to reduce potential visual effects on settlement as far as possible. As indicated by the ZTVs (Figures 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8), the majority of settlements and principal transport routes within the initial 45 km and detailed 20 km study areas will gain little or no visibility of the Proposed Development. This ensures that the Proposed Development will not be visually prominent in a majority of views from settlements/ key locations or their access routes and will result in little or no influence on the relationships between settlements and the wider landscape. The nearest residential properties with potential visibility of the Proposed Development are located within Strath Rusdale, approximately 4 km south-east of the Main Development Area. The proposed turbines have been set back from the edge of Strath Rusdale and beyond an upland ridge, increasing the sense of separation and providing partial screening. A small number of properties at the southern end of Strath Rusdale and at Boath and Lealty further south have views of the existing Novar and Novar II wind farms to the south-east. The separation between these schemes and the Proposed Development is such that there will be little impression of being 'encircled' by wind farms. The Proposed Development is considered to be in accordance with the guidance relating to this criterion.
Criterion 2. Key Gateway locations and routes are respected. Measure The extent to which the proposal reduces or detracts	None of the key gateway locations identified within the OWESG are found within the detailed 20 km study area. Parts of several of the identified the key routes are located within the detailed 20 km study area. However, in each case there would be very little or no visibility of the Proposed Development such that it would not detract from the experience of those parts of the routes.

Criterion, Measure and Threshold	Appraisal
from the transitional experience of key Gateway Locations and routes. Threshold Development should seek to achieve a threshold where: Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise detract from landscape characteristics which contribute the distinctive transitional experience found at key gateway locations and routes.	A key gateway location and route is situated within the initial 45 km study area. This is along the A9 northbound, where the Easter Ross mountains become apparent (near Inverness, as represented by Viewpoint 17), and where there is a sense of arrival at the Inner Moray Firth and Inverness. The Proposed Development will be visible in the background from this section of the A9 but will be barely perceptible at a distance of approximately 42 km, partially screened by landform and seen in the context of existing wind farms. Therefore, it is considered that there will not be a perceptible change to this key gateway location. There is also potential for visibility of the Proposed Development from short sections of the A9 southbound, including at Evelix (as represented by Viewpoint 14). The Proposed Development would appear as a small and distant feature, at greater than 20 km, and occupying a small part of wider views, resulting in only limited change. The ZTV (Figure 6.5) also indicates potential visibility of the Proposed Development from parts of the A96 to the east of Inverness (as represented by Viewpoint 16). Views north from the A96 are often partially limited and screen and where more open views are possible the Proposed Development will appear as a very distant feature in the background at approximately 38 km, with little influence on the overall experience or views from the route. As a result of the limited and distant nature of potential visibility the Proposed Development will have little or no influence on the experience of the key gateways and routes, therefore meeting the threshold relating to this criterion.
Criterion 3. Valued natural and cultural landmarks are respected. Measure The extent to which the proposal affects the fabric and setting of valued natural and cultural landmarks. Threshold Development should seek to achieve a threshold where: The development does not, by its presence, diminish the prominence of the landmark or disrupt its relationship to its setting.	Natural and cultural landmarks identified in OWESG and located within the detailed 20 km study area include Ben Wyvis and the Fyrish Monument. Ben Wyvis The large-scale mass of Ben Wyvis is particularly evident and has a notable presence within views from the south. This includes from the Black Isle, Inverness and settlements along the inner Moray Firth. Although the Proposed Development will be partially visible in broad views north and north-west from localised parts of the Black Isle (Viewpoint 10) and from the south of the Inner Moray Firth (Viewpoint 16), near Inverness (Viewpoint 17) and south of the Beaully Firth (Viewpoint 18), it will appear separated from and will not diminish the prominence of Ben Wyvis as a landmark feature of disrupt its relationship to its setting. The Proposed Development will also be seen in the context of other existing wind farms on the broad upland ridge east of Ben Wyvis. Fyrish Monument In relation to the Fyrish Monument, although the Proposed Development will be visible from the summit of Cnoc Fyrish (Viewpoint 4) it will not be visible from the monument itself due to screening by foreground landform. The Proposed Development will also not be visible in key views towards the monument and therefore will not diminish the prominence of the monument or disrupt its relationship to its setting. Other landmarks A number of other landmarks identified within the supplementary guidance, such as Fort George and Chanonry Point, are within the initial 45 km study area but are at and experienced from low elevations generally outside of the ZTV and as such will not be affected by the Proposed Development.

Criterion, Measure and Threshold	Appraisal
	The Proposed Development is considered to meet the threshold set out in the guidance relating to this criterion.
Criterion 4. The amenity of key recreational routes and ways is respected. Measure The extent to which the proposal affects the amenity of key recreational routes and ways (e.g. core paths, Munros and Corbetts, Long Distance Routes etc.). Threshold Development should seek to achieve a threshold where: Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of key routes and ways.	As indicated on Figure 6.5b, there will be very little or no visibility of the Proposed Development from the majority of the Core Paths and long-distance routes, such as the Great Glen Way (Viewpoint 18) and National Cycle Network routes found within both the initial 45 km and detailed 20 km study areas. However, there is potential for greater visibility of the Proposed Development from a number of hill summits, including from Ben Wyvis (Viewpoint 9), Carn Chuinneag (Viewpoint 1) and Cnoc Fyrish and from less frequented hills further west, including Beinn a' Chaisteil (Viewpoint 6). While the Proposed Development will be predominantly screened from the majority of the paths and typical walking routes to the hill summits, there will be more open views from the summits. Existing wind farms are visible from each of the summits, providing a context to change. Locally significant effects are also anticipated on sections of two local rights of way / hill tracks (the 'Glencalvie Lodge to Braeantra Track' and the 'Dalnave Drove Road') which pass in close proximity to the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development is considered to be largely in accordance with the guidance and threshold relating to this criterion. While there is potential for significant effects on views from a small number of hill summits and sections of two local rights of way/ hill tracks, change will generally be limited to relatively small parts of the extensive views available from the routes and summits. The Proposed Development will have little or no influence on the views and will not overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of the identified core paths and Long Distance Routes.
Criterion 5. The amenity of transport routes is respected. Measure The extent to which the proposal affects the amenity of transport routes (tourist routes as well as rail, ferry routes and local road access). Threshold Development should seek to achieve a threshold where: Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of transport routes.	Visibility from transport routes As indicated by the ZTVs (Figures 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8), there will be little or no visibility of the Proposed Development from the majority of the principal transport routes used by local communities and visitors, including the A9, railways and the North Coast 500. Where views of the Proposed Development are available, they tend to be from more distant locations and/or partially screened by intervening topography and/or foreground vegetation (refer to Viewpoints 8, 12, 13, 14, 16 and 17). Effects on transport routes The detailed assessment provided in Appendix 6.6 includes consideration of effects on key transport routes. No significant effects on key transport routes are identified and as such the Proposed Development will not overwhelm or significantly detract from the visual appeal of the routes. The Proposed Development is considered to be consistent with the guidance and meets the threshold relating to this criterion.
Criterion 6. The existing pattern of Wind Energy Development is Respected.	<u>Existing pattern</u> There are several existing wind farms within the vicinity of the Development Site, including Beinn Tharsuinn and Beinn nan Oighrean and Coire na Cloiche to the east and Novar and Novar II to the south, and Strathory under construction as indicated on Figure 6.12.

Criterion, Measure and Threshold	Appraisal
Measure The degree to which the proposal fits with the existing pattern of nearby wind energy development, considerations include: • Turbine height and proportions, • density and spacing of turbines within developments, • density and spacing of developments, • typical relationship of development to the landscape. • previously instituted mitigation measures • Planning Authority stated aims for development of area. Threshold Development should seek to achieve a threshold where: The proposal contributes positively to existing pattern or objectives for development in the area.	In relation to the pattern of these developments, there are similarities in their siting, being located within a similar upland landscape of large-scale rounded hills and generally being set back from the coast and initial line of hills. The layout designs have also been influenced by the underlying topography. However, there are key differences, including in turbine height, and therefore turbine spacing, numbers of turbines, separation distance between the developments and their position within the landscape. In these respects there is no clear existing pattern. <u>Degree to which the proposal fits with the existing pattern of nearby wind energy development</u> The Proposed Development is located within an area of similar landscape character to the existing schemes and Strathrory and is sited inland away from the coast, therefore limiting potential change on the majority of settlement and transport routes. The design process has removed turbines from higher ground and ensures the layout relates to the underlying landform and topography. The proposed Development also makes use of adjacent higher landform to help reduce potential visibility and effects from the west, similar to the approach taken for Strathrory and, to an extent, Novar. The design process has led to a reduction in the heights of the turbines such that they are similar to Strathrory and other recently consented schemes within the broader context. A reduction in the number of turbines has also been made, helping to reduce the apparent horizontal extent, in response to feedback from THC and NS. The Proposed Development is considered to be largely in accordance with the guidance relating to this criterion, and consistent with characteristics and approaches taken for other recently consented and/or under construction schemes.
Criterion 7. The need for separation between developments and/ or clusters is respected. Measure The extent to which the proposal maintains or affects the spaces between existing developments and/ or clusters. Threshold Development should seek to achieve a threshold where: The proposal maintains appropriate and effective separation between developments and/ or clusters.	Spaces between existing developments and/ or clusters As highlighted above, there are several existing wind farms within the vicinity of the Development Site. These form a series of distinct clusters of wind turbines of varying size and form, each clearly separated by intervening landform and other landscape features and/ or by virtue of distance. Extent to which the proposal maintains or affects the spaces between existing developments and/or clusters The location of the Proposed Development represents a similar distance between the existing wind farms and retains separation due to intervening landform changes, including Bad a Bhathaich and Meall Mor. While there is a relationship with these nearby wind farms the separation distance is sufficient that they appear as separate entities, reflecting the existing broad pattern of wind development, located within the upland landscape. The Proposed Development is considered to be in accordance with the guidance relating to this criterion.
Criterion 8. The perception of landscape scale and distance is respected. Measure The extent to which the proposal maintains or affects	Extent to which the proposal maintains or affects receptors' existing perception of landscape scale and distance The perception of landscape scale and distance is considered to be respected due to the location of the Proposed Development on the edge of the Easter Ross mountains within the context of existing wind farms. The Proposed Development is set within a large-scale landscape which reduces the perception of the scale of the wind turbines.

Criterion, Measure and Threshold	Appraisal
receptors' existing perception of landscape scale and distance. Threshold Development should seek to achieve a threshold where: The proposal maintains the apparent landscape scale and/or distance in the receptors' perception.	Design iterations Measures taken as part of the design process have helped to reduce influence on the perception of scale and distance. This has included avoiding more elevated parts of the Development Site, reducing the height and number of turbines and using existing landform to provide an element of containment and/or increased sense of separation from nearby smaller scale landscapes. The layout also makes use of landform screening to limit locations from which the full height of the proposed turbines can be appreciated. The Proposed Development is considered to be largely in accordance with the guidance relating to this criterion.
Criterion 9. Landscape setting of nearby wind energy developments is respected. Measure The extent to which the landscape setting of nearby wind energy developments is affected by the proposal. Threshold Development should seek to achieve a threshold where: Proposal relates well to the existing landscape setting and does not increase the perceived visual prominence of surrounding wind turbines.	Extent to which the landscape setting of nearby wind energy developments is affected by the proposal The setting of nearby wind farms (including Coire na Cloiche, Novar, Novar II and Beinn Tharsuinn and Beinn an Oighrean) is considered to be respected due to the separation from the Proposed Development. The sense of separation is strengthened by landform changes and topographic features between the existing schemes and the Development Site. The Proposed Development is within a large scale upland landscape and makes use of landform features to provide an element of screening and containment and therefore relates well to the existing landscape character and setting. While adding a further wind farm into the landscape, the Proposed Development will not increase the perceived visual prominence of surrounding wind turbines. The Proposed Development is considered to be in accordance with the guidance relating to this criterion.
Criterion 10. Distinctiveness of Landscape character is respected. Measure The extent to which a proposal affects the distinction between neighbouring landscape character types, in areas where the variety of character is important to the appreciation of the landscape. Threshold Development should seek to achieve a threshold where: Integrity and variety of Landscape Character Areas are maintained.	Distinctiveness of local landscape The Proposed Development is located within a large-scale upland landscape at the transition between two LCTs (LCT 329: Rounded Mountain Massif and LCT 330: Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty). Both of these LCTs have an existing context of wind farm development. Extent to which a proposal affects the distinction between neighbouring landscape character types Design development has increased the physical and visual separation from the nearby inland strath landscape, ensuring the Proposed Development is set back beyond an upland ridge and therefore clearly within the upland landscape, similar to other existing wind farms. The Proposed Development also makes use of landform screening to limit potential influence on the more remote landscapes to the west and from the lowland landscapes along the glens and coasts to the north, east and south. The Proposed Development reinforces the existing broad pattern of wind farms being located within the upland landscapes, while limiting impacts on lower lying, coastal and settled landscapes and therefore maintains the overall integrity and variety of LCTs found within the study area. The Proposed Development is considered to be in accordance with the guidance relating to this criterion.

6.8 Potential Significant Effects

- 6.8.1 This section provides a summary of the assessment of effects on the relevant landscape and visual receptors at construction and decommissioning and operation with reference to hours of darkness also. It is considered that the effects at decommissioning would be no greater than the effects identified at construction. Therefore, this project stage is considered to be no different to the findings of the construction phase assessment and is consequently not considered separately. The detailed assessment of the assessment of effects including the reasoned justification is contained within **Appendix 6.2, Appendix 6.3, Appendix 6.4, Appendix 6.5 and Appendix 6.6.**

Construction and Decommissioning

Landscape Designations

Dornoch Firth NSA

- 6.8.2 The Proposed Development will be located outside of the NSA and at a distance of approximately 8.3 km at the closest point and as such potential change will be indirect. The sensitivity of the 'the contrast between the enclosed west and the expansive east' SLQ is considered to be **medium** with a **very low** magnitude of effect. The sensitivity of the 'inhabited surrounds within a wilder backdrop of hills and moors' SLQ is considered to be **high** with a **very low** magnitude of effect. The sensitivity of the 'Migdale, a microcosm of the wider Dornoch Firth' SLQ is considered to be **high** with a **very low** magnitude of effect.
- 6.8.3 The detailed assessment provided in **Appendix 6.3** identifies that construction (and decommissioning) of the Proposed Development will result in **negligible adverse** (not significant) effects on each of the three SLQs included in the assessment and on the wider NSA as a whole. This is a result of the majority of construction (and decommissioning) being screened from the NSA.

Garden and Designed Landscapes

- 6.8.4 The majority of the GDLs identified within the initial 45 km study area are located outside of the ZTV and as such will not be affected by the Proposed Development. However, the ZTVs and site survey have indicated potential for indirect change on the Ardross Castle GDL and Skibo Castle GDL.
- 6.8.5 In relation to Ardross Castle GDL, the sensitivity is considered to be **high** with a **very low** magnitude of effect. The detailed assessment provided in **Appendix 6.5** identifies that potential indirect change will be limited to a relatively small area in the western part of the GDL and largely relate to movement of vehicles on a short section of the Existing Forestry Access Track, with no change anticipated from the core area around the castle. The limited extent and the indirect and temporary nature and short duration of change indicate a **negligible adverse** (not significant) effect during construction (and decommissioning).
- 6.8.6 In relation to Skibo Castle GDL, the sensitivity is considered to be **high** with a **very low** magnitude of effect. The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.5**) identifies that the separation

distance (approximately 18 km) and screening from intervening landform will result in very little or no perceptible change and a **negligible adverse** (not significant) effect from temporary construction (and decommissioning) activity.

Rhiddoroch – Ben Dearg – Ben Wyvis WLA

- 6.8.7 The Proposed Development will be partially located within the eastern fringe of this WLA and therefore with potential for both direct and indirect change. One of the four ‘Key Attribute and Qualities’ *‘Long and deep penetrating glens with steep, arresting side slopes that limit views, some containing access routes and clearly influenced by estate management’* is scoped out of the assessment due to the characteristics and intervisibility (further information contained in **Appendix 6.4**).
- 6.8.8 The sensitivity of the ‘a range of awe-inspiring massive, high rounded hills and plateaux, as well as steep rocky peaks and ridges, offering elevated panoramas’ ‘Key Attribute and Quality’ is considered to be **high** with a **low** magnitude of effect. The sensitivity of the ‘a very large interior with a strong sense of remoteness and sanctuary that seems even more extensive where appearing to continue into neighbouring wild land areas’ ‘Key Attribute and Quality’ is considered to be **high** with a **very low** magnitude of effect. The sensitivity of the ‘rocky hills, cnocan and peatland slopes that appear simple and awe-inspiring at a broad scale, but harbour intricate features at a local level, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude’ ‘Key Attribute and Quality’ is considered to be **high** with a **very low** magnitude of effect.
- 6.8.9 The detailed assessment provided in **Appendix 6.4** identifies that both direct and indirect change will be limited to a localised extent and generally focused towards the less sensitive eastern fringe. The assessment concluded that construction (and decommissioning) of the Proposed Development will result in **negligible adverse** (not significant) effects on two of the ‘Key Attributes and Qualities’ (‘a very large interior with a strong sense of remoteness and sanctuary that seems even more extensive where appearing to continue into neighbouring wild land areas’ and ‘rocky hills, cnocan and peatland slopes that appear simple and awe-inspiring at a broad scale, but harbour intricate features at a local level, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude’) considered and on the wider WLA.
- 6.8.10 The assessment concluded that construction (and decommissioning) will also result in a **minor adverse** (not significant) effect on aspects of one of the ‘Key Attributes and Qualities’, which is ‘a range of awe-inspiring massive, high rounded hills and plateaux, as well as steep rocky peaks and ridges, offering elevated panoramas’. While there may be a greater level of change within the MDA and immediate surroundings, the vast majority of the WLA, including the more sensitive interior and the lower lying glens, will be unaffected.

Special Landscape Areas

- 6.8.11 Two SLAs, Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA and Ben Wyvis SLA are located within the detailed 20 km study area. In both cases the sensitivity is considered to be **high** with a **very low** magnitude of effect.

- 6.8.12 The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.5**) identifies that the majority of construction (and decommissioning) activity within the Main Development Area will be screened from the majority of both SLAs due to intervening landform, such that there will be very little or no perceptible change, resulting in **negligible adverse** (not significant) effects during construction (and decommissioning).

Landscape Character Types

- 6.8.13 The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.5**) identifies that construction (and decommissioning) activity will predominantly be screened from the majority of the detailed 20 km study area and resulting in very little perceptible change, and **negligible adverse** (not significant) effects on the following LCTs during construction (and decommissioning):
- LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland (**high** landscape sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect);
 - LCT 145: Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting (**high** landscape sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect);
 - LCT 146: Coastal Farmland & Woodlands (**high** landscape sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect);
 - LCT 328: Rugged Mountain Massif - Ross & Cromarty (**high** landscape sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect);
 - LCT 341: Forest Edge Farming (**medium** landscape sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect); and
 - LCT 346: Open Farmed Slopes (**medium** landscape sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect).
- 6.8.14 There will also be **negligible adverse** (not significant) effects on the majority of LCT 139: Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland (**high** landscape sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect), and LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland (**medium** landscape sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect), although with locally greater change in an area south from Carn Salachaidh and a few locations along the boundary of the LCT near Carn Chuinneag for LCT 139.
- 6.8.15 Construction (and decommissioning) activity associated with the Proposed Development will occur within the fringes of the remaining three LCTs resulting in both direct and indirect change. The direct changes will include temporary alteration to vegetation, earthworks required to facilitate construction and compounds. The indirect changes relate to influence of construction (and decommissioning) activity and movement on perceptual attributes, such as the sense of scale, remoteness and isolation. The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.5**) identifies **minor adverse** (not significant) effects on LCT 329: Rounded Mountain Massif (**high** landscape sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect), and LCT 330: Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty (**medium** landscape sensitivity and **low** magnitude of

effect), during construction (and decommissioning) due to the overall localised nature of change, concentrated on the fringes. **Minor adverse** (not significant) effects are also identified for LCT 339: Inland Strath (**high** landscape sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) as although indirect change is likely to be more widespread it will be largely related to activity along parts of the Existing Forestry Access Track, rather than in the Main Development Area, due to screening by landform.

Visual Receptors

Residential Receptors

- 6.8.16 Settlement and residential properties within the detailed 20 km study area are typically found at lower elevations and along the coast and the majority are outside the extent of the ZTVs (**Figures 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8**) and as such will not be affected by the Proposed Development.
- 6.8.17 The detailed assessment provided in **Appendix 6.6** identifies that there will be very little change and a **negligible adverse** (not significant) effect on residential receptors to the north, including Croick (Viewpoint 5) (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect), Bonar Bridge (Viewpoint 7) (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect), north of Invershin (Viewpoint 12) (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect), Whiteface and Ospisdale (Viewpoint 13) (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect), Dornoch (Viewpoint 15) (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect), and at Boath and Lealty (Viewpoint 3) (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) and between Resolis and Balblair on the Black Isle (Viewpoint 10) (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) to the south. This is primarily due to screening provided by intervening landform and/or vegetation, and in most cases also by the offset distance. **No change** is anticipated for residential properties to the south of the Beaully Firth and Inner Moray Firth (Viewpoint 16 (**low** sensitivity and **no change** magnitude of effect), Viewpoint 17 (**low** sensitivity and **no change** magnitude of effect) and Viewpoint 18 (**high** sensitivity and **no change** magnitude of effect)).
- 6.8.18 There is potential for greater change on properties along Strath Rusdale (Viewpoint 2) (**medium** sensitivity and **locally medium** (for two properties (Segama House and Lower Inchlumpie) **and overall low** magnitude of effect). Although construction (and decommissioning) within the Main Development Area will be predominantly screened by intervening landform from these properties, there is potential for at least partial visibility of construction (and decommissioning) activity along parts of the main access track, resulting in **minor adverse** (not significant) effects. A **moderate adverse** (significant) effect is anticipated for two properties (Segama House and Lower Inchlumpie) which are located immediately adjacent to the access track.

Recreational Receptors

- 6.8.19 A range of hill summits, including Munros and Corbetts are located within the detailed 20 km and initial 45 km study areas. The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.6**) identifies that there will be **moderate adverse** (significant) effects on views from Carn Chuinneag (Viewpoint 1)

(**high** sensitivity and **medium** magnitude of effect) during construction (and decommissioning) due to the close proximity to and location elevated above the Main Development Area. There will be more limited and localised change and a **minor adverse** (not significant) effect on views from Ben Wyvis (Viewpoint 9) (**very high** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) and very limited change and **negligible adverse** (not significant) effects on views from the summit of Cnoc Fyrish (Viewpoint 4) (**very high** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect), Beinn a' Chaisteil (Viewpoint 6) (**high** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) and nearby Beinn Tharsuinn, and the approach to Carn Ban (Viewpoint 11) (**high** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) due to screening by intervening landform.

- 6.8.20 In many cases, construction (and decommissioning) of the Proposed Development will be screened from the majority of the walking routes to the identified hill summits. In relation to the Fyrish Monument, the assessment identifies that the Proposed Development will not be visible in views from or towards the monument itself due to screening by topography.
- 6.8.21 There are a small number of long distance recreational routes within the initial 45 km study area, the majority of which are outside the ZTV (**Figure 6.5**) and/or distant, with no potential for significant effects. There will also be little or no visibility of construction (and decommissioning) of the Proposed Development from the majority of core paths within the detailed 20 km study area, and including those within 5 km of the Development Site. The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.6**) identifies there will be **negligible adverse** (not significant) effects on two core paths (Tollie to Lealty, and Dam Wood forestry track) (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) located in close proximity to the main access track, a **negligible adverse** (not significant) effect on the Boath to Wyvis Lodge right of way (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) due to limited visibility by intervening landform, and **no change** for the Great Glen Way (Viewpoint 18) (**high** sensitivity and **no change** magnitude of effect) due to screening by topography and the considerable distance (greater than 38 km from the Main Development Area). Greater change, and a **moderate adverse** (significant) effect is anticipated on sections of two rights of way (Glencalvie Lodge to Braeantra Track and Dalnavie Drove Road) (**medium** sensitivity and **medium** magnitude of effect), located close to and with views of construction (and decommissioning) within the Main Development Area.

Road users

- 6.8.22 The majority of main road and transport routes within the initial 45 km study area are found along the coast, straths and glens and are predominantly outside of the extent of the ZTV (**Figure 6.5**). The detailed assessment has considered four A roads, the A949 (Viewpoints 8 (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) and 13 (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect)) and A836 (Viewpoint 12) (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) in the north, the A96 (Viewpoint 16) (**low** sensitivity and **no change** magnitude of effect) in the south and the A9 in both the north (Viewpoint 14) (**low** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) and south (Viewpoint 17) (**low** sensitivity and **no change** magnitude of effect).

- 6.8.23 The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.6**) identifies that there will be very little or no change on views experienced from each of the identified routes during construction (and decommissioning), resulting in a **negligible adverse** (not significant) effect for the A949 and A836, and **no change** for the A96 and A9.

Operation

Landscape Designations

Dornoch Firth NSA

- 6.8.24 Initial appraisal informed by desk-based research and targeted site survey identified little or no potential for the Proposed Development to influence the characteristics of four of the seven defined SLQs of the NSA (see Table 4.1 in **Appendix 6.3**). The Proposed Development will be located outside of the NSA and at a distance of approximately 8.3 km and as such potential change will be indirect.
- 6.8.25 The sensitivity of the ‘the contrast between the enclosed west and the expansive east’ SLQ is considered to be **medium** with a **very low** magnitude of effect. The sensitivity of the ‘inhabited surrounds within a wilder backdrop of hills and moors’ SLQ is considered to be **high** with a **low** magnitude of effect. The sensitivity of the ‘Migdale, a microcosm of the wider Dornoch Firth’ SLQ is considered to be **high** with a **low** magnitude of effect.
- 6.8.26 The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.3**) identifies that the Proposed Development will result in **negligible adverse** (not significant) effects on one of the identified SLQ (‘The contrast between the enclosed west and the expansive east’), and **minor adverse** (not significant) effects on the remaining two SLQs (‘Inhabited surrounds within a wilder backdrop of hills and moors’ and ‘Migdale, a microcosm of the wider Dornoch Firth’) carried through to detailed assessment, and on the wider NSA as a whole during operation, both in the daytime and in hours of darkness.

Garden and Designed Landscapes

- 6.8.27 Two GDLs (Ardross Castle GDL and Skibo Castle GDL) are located within the detailed 20 km study area and extents of the ZTV (**Figure 6.3**). The detailed assessment provided in **Appendix 6.5** identifies there will be no potential change to physical features or characteristics of the GDLs, and the extent of potential indirect change will be limited by mature woodland and intervening topography.
- 6.8.28 In relation to Ardross Castle GDL, the sensitivity is considered to be **high** with a **low** magnitude of effect. Indirect change will be focused on a relatively small area towards the south and western edge of the GDL from which the existing Novar and Novar II wind farms are visible. The Proposed Development will be screened from the core area around the castle and will not influence views from or towards the castle from other parts of the GDL. On this basis and considering the location of the Proposed Development within a clearly distinct and separate landscape, the level of effect during operation will be **minor adverse** (not

significant). The hours of darkness assessment (**Appendix 6.2**) also identifies limited and localised change and a **negligible adverse** (not significant).

- 6.8.29 In relation to Skibo Castle GDL, the sensitivity is considered to be **high** with a **low** magnitude of effect. The Proposed Development will appear as a relatively distant feature (greater than 18 km from the nearest turbine) within the extensive upland landscape to the west and will be at least partially screened from the core area around the castle due to intervening landform and mature trees. While the Proposed Development may have a localised influence on aspects of the distant setting of the GDL it will result in only a limited change to the perceptual qualities, indicating a **minor adverse** (not significant) effect during operation. The hours of darkness assessment (**Appendix 6.2**) identifies more limited and localised change and a **negligible adverse** (not significant) effect due to the distance from the Proposed Development.

Rhiddoroch – Ben Dearg – Ben Wyvis WLA

- 6.8.30 The Proposed Development will be partially located within the eastern fringe of the WLA and therefore with potential for both direct and indirect change. One of the four 'Key Attribute and Qualities' *'Long and deep penetrating glens with steep, arresting side slopes that limit views, some containing access routes and clearly influenced by estate management'* is scoped out of the assessment due to the characteristics and intervisibility (further information contained in **Appendix 6.4**).
- 6.8.31 The sensitivity of the 'a range of awe-inspiring massive, high rounded hills and plateaux, as well as steep rocky peaks and ridges, offering elevated panoramas' 'Key Attribute and Quality' is considered to be **high** with a **low** magnitude of effect and **locally medium** magnitude of effect. The sensitivity of the 'a very large interior with a strong sense of remoteness and sanctuary that seems even more extensive where appearing to continue into neighbouring wild land areas' 'Key Attribute and Quality' is considered to be **high** with a **low** magnitude of effect. The sensitivity of the 'rocky hills, cnocan and peatland slopes that appear simple and awe-inspiring at a broad scale, but harbour intricate features at a local level, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude' 'Key Attribute and Quality' is considered to be **high** with a **low** magnitude of effect.
- 6.8.32 The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.4**) identifies that the Proposed Development will result in **locally moderate adverse** (significant effects) on small part of the eastern fringe of the WLA in relation to aspects of one of the defined 'Key Attributes and Qualities' ('a range of awe-inspiring massive, high rounded hills and plateaux, as well as steep rocky peaks and ridges, offering elevated panoramas') and in the hours of darkness. There will be localised partial alteration of perceptual attributes within the MDA and from more elevated parts of the surrounding area, particularly within the eastern part of the WLA. Effects on the wider extent of that 'Key Attribute and Quality' and on the remaining two 'Key Attributes and Qualities' ('a very large interior with a strong sense of remoteness and sanctuary that seems even more extensive where appearing to continue into neighbouring wild land areas' and 'rocky hills,

cnocan and peatland slopes that appear simple and awe-inspiring at a broad scale, but harbour intricate features at a local level, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude') considered, and the wider WLA will be **minor adverse** (not significant) during daytime and hours of darkness. This is largely as a result of change being focused towards the eastern fringes of the WLA and away from the more remote interior to the west.

Special Landscape Areas

- 6.8.33 Two SLAs (Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA and Ben Wyvis SLA) are located within the detailed 20 km study area. Both are considered to be of **high** sensitivity and with a **low** magnitude of effect.
- 6.8.34 The Proposed Development will be outside of both SLAs and as such potential change will be indirect, relating to the influence of visibility of the proposed turbines on perceptual aspects of the landscape. As indicated by the ZTVs (**Figures 6.3, 6.7 and 6.8**) the extent and nature of indirect change will be limited to localised parts of both SLAs, from which existing wind farms are an existing feature of the surrounding landscape. The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.5**) identifies that while the Proposed Development will add to the influence of wind farms within the uplands to the east and/or north of the SLA, it will have relatively limited and localised influence on perceptual attributes, resulting in **minor adverse** (not significant) effects on both SLAs. Similarly, effects on both SLAs during hours of darkness are also anticipated to be **minor adverse** (not significant), as set out in **Appendix 6.2**.

Landscape Character Types

- 6.8.35 As indicated by the ZTVs (**Figures 6.4, 6.7 and 6.8**), the Proposed Development will be predominantly screened from large parts of the detailed 20 km study area, limiting the potential for effects on landscape character. The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.5**) identifies that the Proposed Development will result in **negligible adverse** (not significant) effects on LCT 328: Rugged Mountain Massif - Ross & Cromarty (**high** landscape sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect), LCT 341: Forest Edge Farming (**medium** landscape sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect), and LCT 346: Open Farmed Slopes (**medium** landscape sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) due to the limited and/or distant nature of change and context of existing wind farms. There will be slightly greater change and **minor adverse** (not significant) effects on LCT 139: Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland (**high** landscape sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect), LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland (**high** landscape sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect), LCT 145: Farmed and Forested Slopes (**high** landscape sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) with Crofting and LCT 146: Coastal Farmland & Woodlands (**high** landscape sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) as a result of a slightly greater, although still limited, extent of potential indirect change.
- 6.8.36 The Proposed Development will be partially located within the fringes of LCT 329: Rounded Mountain Massif (**high** landscape sensitivity and **locally medium and overall low** magnitude of effect) and LCT 330: Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty (**medium** landscape sensitivity and **locally medium and overall low** magnitude of effect) and in close

proximity to part of the fringe of LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland (**medium** landscape sensitivity and **locally medium and overall low** magnitude of effect) locally influencing the character of the landscape and resulting in a **locally moderate adverse** (significant) effect within the Main Development Area and the nearby inward facing slopes. For LCT 330 this will also include ancillary infrastructure directly within the LCT including the BESS, substation and control building. These effects will be confined to relatively small parts of these LCTs, with more limited sense of change and **minor adverse** (not significant) effects on the wider extents and overall impression of the character of each of the LCTs.

- 6.8.37 Slightly greater change is anticipated on the small area of LCT 339: Inland Strath (**high** landscape sensitivity and **medium** magnitude of effect) found within the detailed 20 km study area along Strath Rusdale. During the operational phase, there will be very limited and localised direct change to parts of this LCT where upgrades have been made to the access track and potential for localised loss of trees. Indirect change will be more widespread and although the position of the turbines set behind the initial upland ridge increases the sense of separation and somewhat reduces the impression of change, the Proposed Development will add to the existing context of wind farms within the surrounding uplands. Although borderline, the assessment has taken a precautionary approach and identified a **moderate adverse** (significant) effect on the character of this LCT.
- 6.8.38 The hours of darkness assessment presented in **Appendix 6.2** identifies that the aviation lighting associated with the Proposed Development will result in **negligible adverse** (not significant) effects on LCT 146: Coastal Farmland & Woodlands (**medium** hours of darkness sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect), LCT 341: Forest Edge Farming (**low** hours of darkness sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect), and LCT 346: Open Farmed Slopes (**low** hours of darkness sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) due to the limited and/or distant nature of change and context of existing light sources within the hours of darkness baseline. Slightly greater change and **minor adverse** (not significant) effects during hours of darkness are identified for LCT 139: Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland (**high** hours of darkness sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect), LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland (**medium** hours of darkness sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect), LCT 145: Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting (**medium** hours of darkness sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) and LCT 328: Rugged Mountain Massif - Ross & Cromarty (**high** hours of darkness sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect).
- 6.8.39 Greater change and a **locally moderate adverse** (significant) effect on parts of LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland (**medium** hours of darkness sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect), LCT 329: Rounded Mountain Massif (**high** hours of darkness sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) and LCT 330: Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty (**medium** hours of darkness sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) are anticipated within the Main Development Area and immediate vicinity. In each case, effects on the wider extents and overall character of the LCTs will be **minor adverse** (not significant) due to the limited extent of potential change and influence from existing light sources. Although

borderline, taking a precautionary approach, hours of darkness effects on the small area of LCT 339: Inland Strath (**medium** hours of darkness sensitivity and **medium** magnitude of effect) located within the detailed 20 km study area will be **moderate adverse** (significant) due to the increased influence of lighting relative to the baseline.

Visual Receptors

Residential Receptors

- 6.8.40 As identified above, the majority of settlements and residential properties within the detailed 20 km study area are outside the extent of the ZTVs (**Figure 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8**) and as such will not be affected by the Proposed Development.
- 6.8.41 The detailed assessment provided in **Appendix 6.6** identifies that there will be very little change and a **negligible adverse** (not significant) effect on residential receptors along the straths and glens to the north-west, including from Croick (Viewpoint 5) (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) and along the A836 north of Invershin (Viewpoint 12) (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect), from Dornoch (Viewpoint 15) (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) to the north-east, and from the south of the Beauly Firth and Inner Moray Firth (Viewpoints 16 to 18) due to screening by topography and/or the distant nature of potential change. **Minor adverse** (not significant) effects will occur on views from residential receptors at and around Bonar Bridge (Viewpoint 7) (**medium** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect), Whiteface and Ospisdale (Viewpoint 13) (**medium** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) in the north, and between Resolis and Balblair on the Black Isle (Viewpoint 10) (**medium** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) to the south as a result of slightly greater, although still distant, visibility of the Proposed Development.
- 6.8.42 There is potential for greater change and a **moderate adverse** (significant effect) to be experienced from a small number of properties along Strath Rusdale (Viewpoint 2) (**medium** sensitivity and **medium** magnitude of effect) and towards Lealty Lodge (Viewpoint 3) (**medium** sensitivity and **medium** magnitude of effect). While the position of the turbines beyond the ridgeline increases the sense of separation and reduces their apparent height, they will occupy an important part of the view along the strath and represent a notable change. It is important to note that views and potential effects on views from many of the residential properties will often be more restricted in nature due to orientation of the property and/or screening by foreground vegetation.
- 6.8.43 The hours of darkness assessment presented in **Appendix 6.2** provides an assessment of visual effects of visible aviation lighting proposed on the nacelle of five of the turbines. The assessment is focused on three locations (Viewpoint 2: Strath Rusdale (**medium** hours of darkness sensitivity and **medium** magnitude of effect), Viewpoint 7: Bonar Bridge (**medium** hours of darkness sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect), and Viewpoint 10: B9163 near Resolis and Balblair (**low** hours of darkness sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect)), each of which are representative of residential receptors. The lighting intensity ZTV (**Figure 6.10**) indicates that from many locations within the detailed 20 km study area where the

lighting will be visible, the apparent intensity of the lights will be much reduced. The assessment identifies that there will be **moderate adverse** (significant) effects at Strath Rusdale (Viewpoint 2), with reduced change and **minor adverse** (not significant) effects at Bonar Bridge (Viewpoint 7). The hours of darkness baseline from properties between Resolis and Balblair (Viewpoint 10) is heavily influenced by existing light sources, and as such the addition of up to five additional lights will have little influence on the view, resulting in a **negligible adverse** (not significant) effect.

Recreational Receptors

- 6.8.44 As indicated by the ZTVs (**Figures 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8**) theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is relatively limited, particularly from lower slopes, coasts and glens where recreational routes and receptors are concentrated.
- 6.8.45 The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.6**) identifies that there will be **major adverse** (significant) effects on views from Carn Chuinneag (Viewpoint 1) (**high** sensitivity and **high** magnitude of effect) during operation due to the close proximity to the Proposed Development. These effects would be limited to views in one direction, with no change to views towards Ben Wyvis to the south and the expansive uplands to the north and west and from the majority of the route to the summit from Glencalvie. The hours of darkness assessment (**Appendix 6.2**) includes an appraisal of Viewpoint 1 (**medium** hours of darkness sensitivity), identifying the potential for significant effects, although it is acknowledged that very few people are likely to be at this location in hours of darkness.
- 6.8.46 There will be relatively open visibility of the proposed turbines from the summits of Cnoc Fyrish (Viewpoint 4) (**very high** sensitivity and **medium** magnitude of effect), Beinn a' Chaisteil (Viewpoint 6) (**high** sensitivity and **medium** magnitude of effect) and Ben Wyvis (Viewpoint 9) (**very high** sensitivity and **medium** magnitude of effect), from which they will occupy a small part of the expansive views. Although borderline, the detailed assessment has taken a precautionary approach and identified **moderate adverse** (significant) effects for each location. In relation to the Fyrish Monument, the assessment identified that the Proposed Development will not be visible in views from or towards the monument itself due to screening by topography. The hours of darkness assessment (**Appendix 6.2**) includes an appraisal of each of these viewpoints (**medium** hours of darkness sensitivity for Viewpoints 4, 6 and 9) , identifying that effects are unlikely to be significant.
- 6.8.47 Reduced change and **minor adverse** (not significant) effects are identified for hill summits to the north of Beinn a' Chaisteil, including the nearby Beinn Tharsuinn and from the approach to Carn Ban (Viewpoint 11) (**high** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) due the influence of existing wind farms in the same part of the view and increased screening by intervening topography. The Proposed Development will be screened from the summit of Carn Ban and as such there will be no discernible change from that location. The hours of darkness assessment (**Appendix 6.2**) includes an appraisal of Viewpoint 11 (**medium** hours of darkness sensitivity), identifying that effects are unlikely to be significant.

- 6.8.48 There are a small number of long-distance recreational routes and greater number of core paths within the initial 45 km and detailed 20 km study areas, the majority of which are outside the ZTV (**Figure 6.5**) and/or distant, with no potential for significant effects. The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.6**) identifies there will be **negligible adverse** (not significant) effects on views from the Great Glen Way (Viewpoint 18) (**high** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) due to limited and very distant nature of visibility and the context of existing wind farms in the same part of the view. There will be a **minor adverse** (not significant) effects on views from the Boath to Wyvis Lodge right of way (**medium** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) as the Proposed Development will be a notable new feature in elevated sections of the route, adding to the existing influence of wind farms in the surrounding uplands, with a reduced sense of change from the majority of the route. The Proposed Development will be partially visible from a short section of one core path (Tollie to Lealty) (**medium** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) within 5 km of the Development Site, although approximately 10 km from the nearest proposed turbine. Intervening landform, mature trees and woodland limit visibility from most of the route and as such effects will be **minor adverse** (not significant).
- 6.8.49 Greater change, and a **moderate adverse** (significant) effect is anticipated on sections of two rights of way (Glencalvie Lodge to Braeantra Track and Dalnavie Drove Road) (**medium** sensitivity and **medium** magnitude of effect), where they pass in close proximity to and with open views of much of the Proposed Development. For receptors along the Glencalvie Lodge to Braeantra Track, this will include close range views of the proposed turbines as well as ancillary infrastructure including the BESS, substation and control building representing a locally pronounced change. There will be more limited or no visibility of the Proposed Development from most sections of these routes.

Road users

- 6.8.50 The majority of main road and transport routes within the initial 45 km and detailed 20 km study areas are predominantly outside of the extent of the ZTV (**Figure 6.5**) and where potential visibility may occur it tends to be to localised and/or distant parts of the routes. The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.6**) identifies that there will be very little change and **negligible adverse** (not significant) effects on views from the A836 (Viewpoint 12) (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect), the A96 (Viewpoint 16) (**low** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) and the A9 southbound (Viewpoint 14) (**low** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) and northbound (Viewpoint 17) (**low** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect). Slightly greater change and **minor adverse** (not significant) effects are anticipated for users of A949 (Viewpoint 13) (**medium** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) travelling west.

Summary of Effects

- 6.8.51 A summary of the assessment of effects, taking account of the embedded mitigation is provided in **Table 6.5**.

Table 6.5 Potential Construction (and Decommissioning) and Operational Impacts and Residual Effects

Phase	Predicted Effects	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect
Dornoch Firth NSA				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	High	Very Low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character	High	Low	Minor adverse (not significant)
Ardross Castle GDL				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	High	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character	High	Low	Minor adverse (not significant)
Skibo Castle GDL				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	High	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character	High	Low	Minor adverse (not significant)
Rhiddoroch – Beinn Dearg – Ben Wyvis WLA				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	High	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character	High	Locally medium Overall low	Locally moderate adverse (significant) Overall minor adverse (not significant)
Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	High	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character	High	Low	Minor adverse (not significant)

Phase	Predicted Effects	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect
Ben Wyvis SLA				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	High	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character	High	Low	Minor adverse (not significant)
LCT 329: Rounded Mountain Massif				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	High	Low	Minor adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character	High	Locally medium Overall low	Locally moderate adverse (significant) Overall minor adverse (not significant)
LCT 330: Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Medium	Low	Minor adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character	Medium	Locally medium Overall low	Locally moderate adverse (significant) Overall minor adverse (not significant)
LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Medium	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character	Medium	Locally medium Overall low	Locally moderate adverse (significant) Overall minor adverse (not significant)
LCT 139: Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	High	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)

Phase	Predicted Effects	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect
Operation	Effect on landscape character	High	Low	Minor adverse (not significant)
LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	High	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character	High	Low	Minor adverse (not significant)
LCT 145: Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	High	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character	High	Low	Minor adverse (not significant)
LCT 146: Coastal Farmland & Woodlands				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	High	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character	High	Low	Minor adverse (not significant)
LCT 328: Rugged Mountain Massif - Ross & Cromarty				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	High	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character	High	Low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
LCT 339: Inland Strath				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	High	Low	Minor adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character	High	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
LCT 341: Forest Edge Farming				

Phase	Predicted Effects	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Medium	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character	Medium	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
LCT 346: Open Farmed Slopes				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Medium	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character	Medium	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 1: Carn Chuinneag				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	High	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	High	High	Major adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 2: Strath Rusdale				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Locally medium (two properties) and generally low (viewpoint and other properties)	Locally moderate adverse (significant) Generally minor adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 3: Boath Road near Lealty Lodge				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 4: Cnoc Fyrish				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Very high	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	Very high	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)

Phase	Predicted Effects	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect
Viewpoint 5: Croick				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 6: Beinn a' Chaisteil				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	High	Very low	Minor adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	High	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 7: Bonar Bridge, Migdale Hospital				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Low	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 8: Creich Cemetery off the A949				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 9: Ben Wyvis				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Very high	Low	Minor adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	Very high	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 10: B9163 near Resolis and Balblair				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Low	Minor adverse (not significant)

Phase	Predicted Effects	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect
Viewpoint 11: Approach to Carn Ban				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	High	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	High	Low	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 12: A836 near Achinduich				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 13: A949 near Ospisdale				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Low	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 14: A9 near Evelix				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Low	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	Low	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 15: Dornoch				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 16: A96				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Low	None	No change (not significant)

Phase	Predicted Effects	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	Low	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 17: A9 Northbound				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Low	None	No change (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	Low	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 18: Great Glen Way				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	High	None	No change (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	High	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Tollie to Lealty Core Path				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Low	Minor adverse (not significant)
Dam Wood Forest Track Core Path				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	No Change	No change (not significant)
Glencalvie Lodge to Braeantra Track				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
Dalnavie Drove Road				

Phase	Predicted Effects	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
Boath to Wyvis Lodge Right of Way				
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Very low	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	Medium	Low	Minor adverse (not significant)

6.9 Additional Mitigation Measures

Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

- 6.9.1 The majority of mitigation measures are embedded as part of the design process, as described in **Section 6.6**, above.
- 6.9.2 There is little potential for additional measures to be adopted that will result in a change to the identified landscape and visual effects. However, there is potential for localised alteration of landform and inclusion of scrub planting adjacent to the BESS (as indicated on **Figure 6.19**) to help locally reduce the sense of change and improve the fit into the landscape. Over time this may help to locally reduce the effects of the BESS on views from the nearby recreational route, although will not result in a reduction in the visual effects experience from the route as other elements of the Proposed Development, most notably the proposed turbines will remain visible.

6.10 Residual Effects

- 6.10.1 As mitigation is primarily embedded in the design of the Proposed Development the residual effects are the same as those described in **Section 6.7** above.

6.11 Cumulative Effects

- 6.11.1 The following section provides an assessment of potential cumulative landscape and visual effects.

Cumulative Baseline

- 6.11.2 The initial step of the cumulative assessment is to establish the cumulative baseline context through identification of existing and proposed wind farms within a broad 60 km study area, as shown on **Figure 6.11**. Analysis was then undertaken to refine this list in order to ensure a proportionate approach focused on those schemes with the potential to contribute to significant cumulative effects (refer to **Section 7.1** 'Cumulative Baseline' within **Appendix 6.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology** for further details)
- 6.11.3 **Table 6.6** provides details of the shortlist of wind farms to be included in the cumulative assessment and the location of each is shown on **Figure 6.12**. The shortlist of cumulative schemes was agreed in consultation with NS and THC.

Table 6.6 Wind Farms included in Cumulative Assessment

Scheme Name	Status (as of 31/05/2025)	No. of Turbines	Blade Tip Height (m)	Approximate Distance from Main Development Site (km)	CLVIA Scenario
Abhainn Dubh	Application	9	149.9	13.1	2 & 3
Acheilidh*	Application	12	230	20.6	2 & 3
Balblair*	Application	8	200	16.0	2 & 3
Beinn nan Oighrean	Operational	2	99.5	6.1	1, 2 & 3
Beinn Tharsuinn	Operational	17	111	6.4	1, 2 & 3
Carn Fearna*	Application	9	200	19.9	2 & 3
Ceislein*	Pre-application	11	250	9.5	3
Corriemoillie*	Operational	17	125	20.8	1, 2 & 3
Coire Na Cloiche	Operational	13	100	3.8	1, 2 & 3
Garvary*	Consented	24	180	18.9	1, 2 & 3
Kirkan*	Consented	17	175	19.1	1, 2 & 3
Lochluichart*	Operational	17	125	22.8	1, 2 & 3
Lochluichart Extension	Operational	6	125	22.2	1, 2 & 3
Lochluichart Extension II	Consented	5	149.9	20.9	1, 2 & 3
Meall Buidhe	Consented	8	149.9	11.2	1, 2 & 3
Novar	Operational	34	62	7.1	1, 2 & 3
Novar II	Operational	16	100.5	8.5	1, 2 & 3
Strath Oykel*	Consented	11	200	15.6	1, 2 & 3
Strathrory*	Consented (under construction)	7	180	9.1	1, 2 & 3

* Cumulative scheme includes visible aviation lighting.

- 6.11.4 The list of cumulative schemes comprises wind farms at different stages of development, including those which, as of 31st May 2025, are already in operation, are consented and/or under construction and are at the application stage awaiting determination. Wind farms at the scoping or pre-application stage are generally not considered in the cumulative assessment, due to the indicative nature of these schemes and the lack of certainty they will progress to the application stage. However, the pre-application stage Ceislein Wind Farm (also being developed by RWE) has been included at the request of NS and Ardross Community Council. No other types of development have been identified for inclusion in the cumulative assessment.

6.11.5 The effects of the Proposed Development in the context of existing operational wind farms are presented in the LVIA baseline and assessment (**Sections 6.5 and 6.8**). No detailed consideration is given to the lifespan of existing wind farms as it is anticipated that the Proposed Development will be constructed before the consent of these wind farms expires and they are decommissioned and/or repowered. As there is no certainty that consented or application stage schemes, or the pre-application stage Ceislein Wind Farm will be constructed, the assessment of cumulative effects is based on three cumulative baseline scenarios, as follows:

- Scenario 1: The cumulative effects of the Proposed Development introduced into a baseline which includes wind farms which have been consented and/or are under construction (Garvary, Kirkan, Lochluichart Extension II, Meall Buidhe, Strath Oykel and Strathrory) in addition to existing operational schemes (Beinn nan Oighrean, Beinn Tharsuinn, Corriemoillie, Coire Na Cloiche, Lochluichart, Lochluichart Extension, Novar and Novar II);
- Scenario 2: The cumulative effects of the Proposed Development introduced into a baseline which includes wind farms at the application stage (Abhainn Dubh, Acheilidh, Balblair, Carn Fearna), in addition to consented/ under construction and existing operational schemes; and
- Scenario 3: The cumulative effects of the Proposed Development introduced into a baseline which includes the pre-application stage Ceislein Wind Farm in addition to those at application stage, consented/ under construction and existing.

6.11.6 Cumulative ZTVs are provided within **Figures 6.13, 6.14 and 6.15** and aviation lighting cumulative ZTVs are provided within **Figures 6.16, 6.17 and 6.18**.

6.11.7 A series of cumulative wirelines from visual assessment viewpoints are provided in **Volume 3: Visualisations** to help understanding of the cumulative baselines. Although not included in the assessment, at the request of NS the cumulative wirelines also show scoping stage schemes identified within 25 km of the Proposed Development. This includes the following schemes:

- Beinn Tharsuinn Repower;
- Braelangwell;
- Coille Beith;
- Glasa;
- Inveroykel; and
- Novar Repower.

Summary of Cumulative Assessment

- 6.11.8 The following provides a high-level summary of cumulative effects resulting from the addition of the Proposed Development to the cumulative baselines described above. The detailed assessment are contained within **Appendix 6.2, Appendix 6.3, Appendix 6.4, Appendix 6.5 and Appendix 6.6.**

Landscape Designations

Dornoch Firth NSA

- 6.11.9 The Proposed Development will be located outside of the NSA and at a distance of approximately 8.3 km and as such potential cumulative change will be indirect. The Proposed Development will have no influence on the majority of the defined SLQs of the NSA, which typically relate to physical characteristics.
- 6.11.10 The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.3**) identifies that the Proposed Development will result in **negligible adverse** (not significant) cumulative effects on one of the identified SLQ ('the contrast between the enclosed west and the expansive east') (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect), and **minor adverse** (not significant) cumulative effects on the remaining two SLQs considered ('inhabited surrounds within a wilder backdrop of hills and moors' (**high** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) and 'Migdale, a microcosm of the wider Dornoch Firth' (**high** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect)), and on the wider NSA as a whole, for each of the cumulative scenarios both during the daytime and in hours of darkness.

Garden and Designed Landscapes

- 6.11.11 Two GDLs (Ardross Castle GDL and Skibo Castle GDL) are located within the detailed 20 km study area and extents of the ZTVs (**Figures 6.3, 6.7 and 6.8**). The detailed assessment provided in **Appendix 6.5** identifies there will be no change to physical features or characteristics of the GDLs, and the extent of potential indirect cumulative change will be limited by mature woodland and intervening topography.
- 6.11.12 In relation to Ardross Castle GDL (**high** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect), the existing Novar and Novar II wind farms and consented/ under construction Strathory Wind Farm will have an influence on the cumulative baseline in each scenario. The introduction of Ceislein Wind Farm to scenario 3 will add to the influence, including from the core area around the castle. Potential cumulative change resulting from the Proposed Development will be focused on a relatively small area towards the south and west edge of the GDL. The Proposed Development will be screened from the core area and will not increase the extent of the GDL potentially influenced by wind farms. The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.5**) identifies relatively limited additional change and a **minor adverse** (not significant) cumulative effect for each of the three cumulative scenarios. The hours of darkness assessment (**Appendix 6.2**) reaches similar conclusions, identifying limited and localised cumulative change and a **negligible adverse** (not significant) cumulative effect for each of the cumulative scenarios.

- 6.11.13 In relation to Skibo Castle GDL (**high** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect), the cumulative baseline in each scenario includes the existing Beinn Tharsuinn and the consented/ under construction Stathrory schemes within the uplands to the south. The remaining cumulative schemes will be predominantly screened from the GDL and as such will contribute very little to the cumulative baseline. The Proposed Development will appear as a relatively distant feature (greater than 18 km from the nearest turbine) and will be at least partially screened from the core area around the castle due to intervening landform and mature trees. The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.5**) identifies that the Proposed Development will add an additional wind farm into the distant hills, appearing similar to but separate from the cumulative schemes and resulting in a **minor adverse** (not significant) cumulative effect in relation to each scenario. The hours of darkness assessment (**Appendix 6.2**) identifies slightly reduced change and a **negligible adverse** (not significant) cumulative effect for each of the cumulative scenarios.

Rhiddoroch – Ben Dearg – Ben Wyvis WLA

- 6.11.14 The Proposed Development will be partially located within the eastern fringe of the WLA. The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.4**) identifies that with respect to each of the cumulative scenarios the Proposed Development will result in **locally moderate adverse** (significant) cumulative effects on small parts of the WLA in relation to aspects of one of the defined 'Key Attributes and Qualities' ('a range of awe-inspiring massive, high rounded hills and plateaux, as well as steep rocky peaks and ridges, offering elevated panoramas') (**high** sensitivity and **locally medium and overall low** magnitude of effect) and in the hours of darkness. Cumulative effects on the wider extent of that 'Key Attribute and Quality' and on the remaining two 'Key Attributes and Qualities' ('a very large interior with a strong sense of remoteness and sanctuary that seems even more extensive where appearing to continue into neighbouring wild land areas' (**high** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) and 'rocky hills, cnocan and peatland slopes that appear simple and awe-inspiring at a broad scale, but harbour intricate features at a local level, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude' (**high** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect)) considered, and the wider WLA, will be **minor adverse** (not significant) during daytime and hours of darkness for each of the cumulative scenarios.

Special Landscape Areas

- 6.11.15 Two SLAs (Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA and Ben Wyvis SLA) are located within the detailed 20 km study area. As indicated by the ZTVs (**Figures 6.3, 6.7 and 6.8**) the extent and nature of indirect change from the Proposed Development will be limited to localised parts of both SLAs. The detailed assessment is provided in **Appendix 6.5**.
- 6.11.16 In relation to the Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA (**high** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect), the identified cumulative schemes increase the context of wind farms to the east, north and south, adding to their influence on the SLA and particularly more elevated locations. The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.5**) identifies that while the Proposed Development will locally add to the influence of wind farms within the uplands to the east of the SLA, the additional change will be relatively limited, resulting in **minor adverse** (not

significant) cumulative effects for each scenario. The hours of darkness assessment (**Appendix 6.2**) identifies more limited cumulative change and **negligible adverse** (not significant) cumulative effects for each of the cumulative scenarios, with the vast majority of the SLA unaffected.

- 6.11.17 In relation to the Ben Wyvis SLA (**high** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect), the cumulative baseline in scenario 1 will add to the influence of existing wind farms to the west and north-east and to some degree to the north. The addition of the application schemes in scenario 2 will further increase the influence of wind farms such that the SLA will be partially surrounded. Ceislein will add slightly to that impression in scenario 3. The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.5**) identifies that while the Proposed Development will locally add to the influence of wind farms within the uplands to the north, the additional change will be relatively limited, resulting in **minor adverse** (not significant) cumulative effects for each scenario. The hours of darkness assessment (**Appendix 6.2**) reaches similar conclusions, identifying relatively localised additional change and a **minor adverse** (not significant) cumulative effect for each of the cumulative scenarios.

Landscape Character Types

- 6.11.18 As indicated by the ZTVs (**Figures 6.4, 6.7 and 6.8**), the Proposed Development will be predominantly screened from large parts of the detailed 20 km study area, limiting the potential for cumulative effects on landscape character. The detailed assessment is contained within **Appendix 6.5**.

Cumulative assessment for LCT 328: Rugged Mountain Massif - Ross & Cromarty, LCT 341: Forest Edge Farming, and LCT 346: Open Farmed Slopes

- 6.11.19 The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.5**) identifies that the Proposed Development will result in **negligible adverse** (not significant) cumulative effects on LCT 328: Rugged Mountain Massif - Ross & Cromarty (**high** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect), LCT 341: Forest Edge Farming (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect), and LCT 346: Open Farmed Slopes (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) due to the limited and/or distant nature of additional change and influence of the cumulative schemes on the baseline in each scenario.

Cumulative assessment for LCT 139: Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland, LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland, LCT 145: Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting and LCT 146: Coastal Farmland & Woodlands

- 6.11.20 There will be slightly greater change and **minor adverse** (not significant) cumulative effects on LCT 139: Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland (**high** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect), LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland (**high** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect), LCT 145: Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting (**high** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) and LCT 146: Coastal Farmland & Woodlands (**high** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) as a result of a localised increase in the extent of influence of wind farms in each scenario.

Cumulative assessment for LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland, LCT 329: Rounded Mountain Massif and LCT 330: Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty

- 6.11.21 The Proposed Development will be partially located within the fringes of LCT 329: Rounded Mountain Massif (**high** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) and LCT 330: Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty (**medium** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) and in close proximity to part of the fringe of LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland (**medium** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect). With the exception of Carn Fearn, all of the identified cumulative schemes are located within these LCTs and as such wind farms will be a characteristic of the landscape in each of the cumulative baseline scenarios. While the Proposed Development will locally increase the influence of wind farms at the fringes of these landscapes the additional change will be relatively limited and the cumulative effect will be **minor adverse** (not significant) for each scenario.

Cumulative assessment for LCT 339: Inland Strath

- 6.11.22 In relation to the small area of LCT 339: Inland Strath (**high** sensitivity and **medium** magnitude of effect) found within the detailed 20 km study area along Strath Rusdale, the consented/ under construction and application stage schemes will be screened by topography and as such the cumulative effect in scenarios 1 and 2 will be the same as that reported in the main assessment, **moderate adverse** (significant). In scenario 3 Ceislein will be a notable feature in close proximity to the south-west from the southern part of the LCT, locally altering the baseline. The Proposed Development will be less prominent and with increased sense of separation from the LCT but will extend the influence of wind farms across much of this LCT resulting in a **moderate adverse** (significant) cumulative effect.

Hours of darkness cumulative assessment for LCT 146: Coastal Farmland & Woodlands, LCT 341: Forest Edge Farming and LCT 346: Open Farmed Slopes

- 6.11.23 The hours of darkness assessment presented in **Appendix 6.2** identifies that the aviation lighting associated with the Proposed Development will result in **negligible adverse** (not significant) cumulative effects on LCT 146: Coastal Farmland & Woodlands (**medium** hours of darkness sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect), LCT 341: Forest Edge Farming (**low** hours of darkness sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect), and LCT 346: Open Farmed Slopes (**low** hours of darkness sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) due to the limited and/or distant nature of additional change and context of light sources within the existing and cumulative baseline for each scenario.

Hours of darkness cumulative assessment for LCT 139: Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland, LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland, LCT 145: Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting and LCT 328: Rugged Mountain Massif - Ross & Cromarty

- 6.11.24 Slightly greater change and **minor adverse** (not significant) cumulative effects during hours of darkness are identified for LCT 139: Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland, LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland (**medium** hours of darkness sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect), LCT 145: Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting (**medium** hours of

darkness sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) and LCT 328: Rugged Mountain Massif - Ross & Cromarty in relation to each scenario.

Hours of darkness cumulative assessment for LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland, and LCT 329: Rounded Mountain Massif and LCT 330: Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty

- 6.11.25 Greater change and **locally moderate adverse** (significant) cumulative effect are identified on a very small part of LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland (**medium** hours of darkness sensitivity and **locally medium and overall low** magnitude of effect), and small parts of LCT 329: Rounded Mountain Massif (**high** hours of darkness sensitivity and **locally medium and overall low** magnitude of effect) and LCT 330: Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty (**medium** hours of darkness sensitivity and **locally medium and overall low** magnitude of effect), within and in the immediate vicinity of the Main Development Area, for each scenario. In each case, cumulative effects on the wider extents and overall character of the LCTs will be **minor adverse** (not significant) due to the limited extent of additional change and influence from light sources within the existing and cumulative baselines for each scenario.

Hours of darkness cumulative assessment for LCT 339: Inland Strath

- 6.11.26 For LCT 339: Inland Strath (**medium** hours of darkness sensitivity and **medium** magnitude of effect), there will be **no cumulative effects** during hours of darkness in relation to scenarios 1 and 2 due to lack of influence from the identified cumulative schemes. However, in scenario 3 the aviation lights on Ceislein Wind Farm will locally alter the hours of darkness baseline in the southern part of the LCT. The aviation on the Proposed Development is likely to be slightly less prominent but will increase the extent of influence across much of this LCT resulting in a **moderate adverse** (significant) cumulative effect.

Visual Receptors

Cumulative assessment for Residential Receptors

- 6.11.27 As identified above, the majority of settlements and residential properties within the detailed 20 km study area are outside the extent of the ZTVs (**Figures 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8**) and as such will not be affected by the Proposed Development.
- 6.11.28 For the majority of properties along Strath Rusdale the detailed assessment provided in **Appendix 6.6** identifies there will be no visibility of the consented or application schemes or Ceislein such that the effects in relation to each cumulative scenario will be as reported in the main assessment, **moderate adverse** (significant). With reference to other residential receptors, Ceislein will be visible and have a strong influence on views south from a small number of properties around Inchlumpie (Viewpoint 2) (**medium** sensitivity and **medium** magnitude of effect). Strathrory will be visible to the north-east from near Lealty Lodge (Viewpoint 3). From these locations, the Proposed Development will add a further, although less notable, development into views north, resulting in a **moderate adverse** (significant) cumulative effect.

- 6.11.29 In relation to properties north of the Dornoch Firth, including around Bonar Bridge (Viewpoint 7) (**medium** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) and at Whiteface and Ospisdale (Viewpoint 13) (**medium** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect), the main change to the existing baseline will be the addition of the consented/under construction Strathrory into the expansive panorama to the south. The consented Meall Buidhe may also be visible from properties around Bonar Bridge. The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.6**) identifies that addition of the Proposed Development to each of the scenarios will result in a **minor adverse** (not significant) cumulative effect.
- 6.11.30 For properties between Resolis (Viewpoint 10) (**medium** sensitivity and **low** magnitude of effect) and Balblair on the Black Isle the cumulative schemes will add further wind farms along the expansive upland ridge to the south of the Cromarty Firth. In most instances, with the exception of Ceislein, the cumulative schemes appear as relatively small and contained clusters, influencing small parts of the view. The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.6**) identifies the Proposed Development will be relatively distant additional feature, occupying a small part of the view and resulting in a **minor adverse** (not significant) cumulative effect in each scenario.
- 6.11.31 The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.6**) identifies that there will be no cumulative change experienced from residential receptors along the straths and glens to the north-west, including from Croick (Viewpoint 5) (**medium** sensitivity and **no change** magnitude of effect).
- 6.11.32 From the majority of the residential properties along the A836 north of Invershin (Viewpoint 12) (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) there will be a barely discernible additional change and a **negligible adverse** (not significant) due to the potential for partial visibility of existing wind farms to the south. The Proposed Development will add an additional small feature into distant views and will be largely screened by intervening topography.
- 6.11.33 In relation to properties in Dornoch (Viewpoint 15) (**medium** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) and those to the south of the inner Moray Firth (Viewpoint 16) (**low** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect), around Inverness (Viewpoint 17) (**low** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) and south of the Beaully Firth (Viewpoint 18) (**high** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) the detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.6**) identifies that the Proposed Development will result in very limited additional change and a **negligible adverse** (not significant) cumulative effect for each scenario. Due to the distance of greater than 20 km and no potential for significant effects, these receptors have not been considered in the hours of darkness assessment.

Hours of darkness cumulative assessment for Residential Receptors

- 6.11.34 The hours of darkness assessment presented in **Appendix 6.2** provides an assessment of cumulative visual effects of visible aviation lighting during hours of darkness resulting from the addition of the Proposed Development to each of the cumulative scenarios. The assessment is focused on three locations (Viewpoint 2: Strath Rusdale, Viewpoint 7: Bonar

Bridge, and Viewpoint 10: B9163 near Resolis and Balblair), each of which are representative of residential receptors.

- 6.11.35 The assessment identifies that there will be no cumulative hours of darkness effects on receptors at Strath Rusdale (Viewpoint 2) (**medium** hours of darkness sensitivity and **none** for scenarios 1 and 2 and **medium for scenario 3** magnitude of effect) for scenarios 1 and 2 due to no visibility of aviation lighting on the cumulative schemes. However, in scenario 3 the aviation lighting on Ceislein will be locally visible and the addition of the Proposed Development there will result in **moderate adverse** (significant) cumulative effects on a small number of residential receptors at and immediately south of the viewpoint. The majority of residential receptors within Strath Rusdale will experience no cumulative effects.
- 6.11.36 No cumulative hours of darkness effects are anticipated for Bonar Bridge (Viewpoint 7) (**medium** hours of darkness sensitivity and **none** magnitude of effect) due to lack of visibility of aviation lighting on the identified cumulative schemes. The hours of darkness baseline from properties between Resolis and Balblair (Viewpoint 10) (**low** hours of darkness sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) is heavily influenced by light sources within the existing and cumulative baseline such that the addition of up to five additional lights at a distance of approximately 20 km will have little influence on the view, resulting in **negligible adverse** (not significant) effects for each scenario.

Cumulative assessment for Recreational Receptors

- 6.11.37 As indicated by the ZTVs (**Figures 6.3, 6.6 and 6.7**) theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is relatively limited, particularly from lower slopes, coasts and glens where recreational routes and receptors are concentrated.
- 6.11.38 The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.6**) identifies that there will be **major adverse** (significant) cumulative effects on views from Carn Chuinneag (Viewpoint 1) (**high** sensitivity and **high** magnitude of effect) in each scenario due to the close proximity to the Proposed Development.
- 6.11.39 Taking a precautionary approach, **moderate adverse** (significant) cumulative effects are identified for Beinn a' Chaisteil (Viewpoint 6) (**high** sensitivity and **medium** magnitude of effect) and Ben Wyvis (Viewpoint 9) (**very high** sensitivity and **medium** magnitude of effect). In both cases the Proposed Development will be seen in the same part of the views as other cumulative schemes but will be slightly closer to and increase the influence of wind farms on that part of the view.
- 6.11.40 For Cnoc Fyrish (Viewpoint 4) (**very high** sensitivity and **medium** magnitude of effect for scenarios 1 and 2 and **low** for scenario 3) the detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.6**) identifies a **moderate adverse** (significant) cumulative effect in relation to scenarios 1 and 2 and a reduced level of additional change and **minor adverse** (not significant) cumulative effect for scenarios 3. In relation to the Fyrish Monument, the assessment identifies that the Proposed Development will not be visible in views from or towards the monument itself due to screening by topography.

- 6.11.41 Reduced change and a negligible adverse (not significant) cumulative effects is identified for the approach to Carn Ban (Viewpoint 11) (**high** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) due to the limited nature of visibility of the Proposed Development, its location in the same part of the view as an existing wind farm and the increased prominence of other wind farms in the baseline. The Proposed Development will not result in any discernible change on the nearby summit of Carn Ban.
- 6.11.42 There are a small number of long distance recreational routes and greater number of core paths within the initial 45 km and detailed 20 km study areas, the majority of which are outside the ZTV (**Figure 6.5**) and/or distant, with no potential for significant cumulative effects. The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.6**) identifies that due to the distance and limited nature of visibility, the Proposed Development will result in **negligible adverse** (not significant) cumulative effects on views from the Great Glen Way (Viewpoint 18) (**high** sensitivity and **very low** magnitude of effect) in each scenario. As indicated by the aviation lighting ZTV (**Figure 6.9**) there will be no visibility of the aviation lighting from the Great Glen Way.
- 6.11.43 In relation to the Tollie to Lealty core path, Strathrory Wind Farm will be visible from sections of the route, adding to the influence of wind farms in each of the cumulative scenarios. In scenario 3 Ceislein Wind Farm will also be partially visible from part of the same part of the route, further increasing the influence of wind farms on the view. The Proposed Development will be partially visible from a similar short section of the route although intervening landform, mature trees and woodland will limit visibility from most of the route and as such cumulative effects will be **minor adverse** (not significant) for each scenario.
- 6.11.44 In relation to the Boath to Wyvis Lodge Right of Way, the Proposed Development will be partially from parts of the route, locally increasing the extent of visibility such that wind farms will be theoretically visible from the entire route. This will be reduced somewhat by woodland and forestry screening. The addition of the Proposed Development will represent a local intensification of wind farms from a short section of the route, from which existing wind farms are already a notable feature, and extend influence to a short additional section, with more limited or no change from much of the route. As such cumulative effects will be **minor adverse** (not significant) for each scenario.
- 6.11.45 Greater change, and **moderate adverse** (significant) cumulative effects are anticipated for sections of two rights of way (Glencalvie Lodge to Braeantra Track and Dalnavie Drove Road), where they pass in close proximity to and with open views of much of the Proposed Development. Similar cumulative effects are anticipated to occur in hours of darkness, although are likely to be experienced by relatively few people.

Cumulative assessment for Road users

- 6.11.46 The majority of main road and transport routes within the initial 45 km and detailed 20 km study areas are predominantly outside of the extent of the ZTV (**Figure 6.5**) and where potential visibility may occur it tends to be to localised and/or distant parts of the routes. The detailed assessment (**Appendix 6.6**) identifies that there will be very little additional change

and **negligible adverse** (not significant) cumulative and sequential effects on views from the A9, A96 and A836. Slightly greater change and **minor adverse** (not significant) cumulative and sequential effects are anticipated for users of the A949.

6.12 Summary and Conclusion

- 6.12.1 The design of the Proposed Development has been altered throughout the LVIA process in order to reduce potential effects on landscape receptors, including
- Dornoch Firth NSA;
 - Rhiddoroch – Ben Dearg – Ben Wyvis WLA;
 - Views and visual amenity from settlements and residential properties;
 - Recreational routes; and
 - The transport network.
- 6.12.2 The design process has also been informed by the guidance and criteria set out in OWESG and by feedback received from a range of consultees, and particularly THC, NS and local communities. This process has been successful in avoiding or reducing potential significant effects and aligning with the majority of the OWESG criteria.
- 6.12.3 As is the case with all proposed large scale wind farms, the assessment identifies a small number of significant landscape and visual effects, including to a localised part of the landscape and to views from residential properties in close proximity to the Proposed Development, and to a small number of hilltops and recreational routes.
- 6.12.4 Overall, the siting and design of the Proposed Development is such that the extent of potential visibility and therefore influence on views and landscape character is relatively limited, particularly from the settled coasts and lowlands towards the east and the more remote hills, glens and straths in the west. Therefore, although there will be some localised significant effects upon a small number of receptors, the effect of the Proposed Development on the landscape and visual resource of the detailed 20 km study area and wider context is not considered to be significant. The following **Table 6.7** provides a summary of the likely significant effects on receptors and the residual effects following the implementation of the mitigation measures.

Table 6.7 Summary of Potential Significant Effects of the Proposed Development

Receptor	Predicted Impacts	Embedded Mitigation	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect
Dornoch Firth NSA					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character		Minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)
Ardross Castle GDL					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character		Minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)
Skibo Castle GDL					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character		Minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)
Rhiddoroch – Beinn Dearg – Ben Wyvis WLA					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character		Locally moderate adverse (significant) Overall minor adverse	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Locally moderate adverse (significant)

Receptor	Predicted Impacts	Embedded Mitigation	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect
			(not significant)		Overall minor adverse (not significant)
Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character		Minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)
Ben Wyvis SLA					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character		Minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)
LCT 329: Rounded Mountain Massif					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character		Locally moderate adverse (significant) Overall minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Locally moderate adverse (significant) Overall minor adverse (not significant)
LCT 330: Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to	Minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)

Receptor	Predicted Impacts	Embedded Mitigation	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect
Operation	Effect on landscape character	minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Locally moderate adverse (significant) Overall minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Locally moderate adverse (significant) Overall minor adverse (not significant)
LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character		Locally moderate adverse (significant) Overall minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Locally moderate adverse (significant) Overall minor adverse (Not significant)
LCT 139: Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character		Minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)
LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character		Minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)
LCT 145: Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting					

Receptor	Predicted Impacts	Embedded Mitigation	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character		Minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)
LCT 146: Coastal Farmland & Woodlands					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character		Minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)
LCT 328: Rugged Mountain Massif - Ross & Cromarty					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character		Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)
LCT 339: Inland Strath					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character		Moderate adverse (significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Moderate adverse (significant)
LCT 341: Forest Edge Farming					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)

Receptor	Predicted Impacts	Embedded Mitigation	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect
Operation	Effect on landscape character	minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
LCT 346: Open Farmed Slopes					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on landscape character	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on landscape character		Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 1: Carn Chuinneag					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Moderate adverse (significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Moderate adverse (significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Major adverse (significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Major adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 2: Strath Rusdale					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Locally moderate adverse (significant) Generally minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Locally moderate adverse (significant) Generally minor adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Moderate adverse (significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Moderate adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 3: Boath Road near Lealty Lodge					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Moderate adverse (significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Moderate adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 4: Cnoc Fyrish					

Receptor	Predicted Impacts	Embedded Mitigation	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Moderate adverse (significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Moderate adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 5: Croick					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 6: Beinn a' Chaisteil					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Moderate adverse (significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Moderate adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 7: Bonar Bridge, Migdale Hospital					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 8: Creich Cemetery off the A949					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 9: Ben Wyvis					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to	Minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)

Receptor	Predicted Impacts	Embedded Mitigation	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect
Operation	Effect on visual amenity	minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Moderate adverse (significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Moderate adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 10: B9163 near Resolis and Balblair					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 11: Approach to Carn Ban					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 12: A836 near Achinduich					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 13: A949 near Ospisdale					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 14: A9 near Evelix					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)

Receptor	Predicted Impacts	Embedded Mitigation	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect
Viewpoint 15: Dornoch					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 16: A96					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	No change (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	No change (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 17: A9 Northbound					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	No change (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	No change (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 18: Great Glen Way					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	No change (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	No change (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Tollie to Lealty Core Path					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)
Dam Wood Forest Track Core Path					

Receptor	Predicted Impacts	Embedded Mitigation	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		No change (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	No change (not significant)
Glencalvie Lodge to Braeantra Track					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Moderate adverse (significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Moderate adverse (significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Moderate adverse (significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Moderate adverse (significant)
Dalnavie Drove Road					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Moderate adverse (significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Moderate adverse (significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Moderate adverse (significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Moderate adverse (significant)
Boath to Wyvis Lodge Right of Way					
Construction (and Decommissioning)	Effect on visual amenity	Careful siting and design of the Proposed Development and associated construction works to minimise visual impact in line with the Design Strategy.	Negligible adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Operation	Effect on visual amenity		Minor adverse (not significant)	N/A (All mitigation embedded)	Minor adverse (not significant)

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