Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual Impact

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum
BNG	British National Grid
CNP	Cairngorms National Park
CNPA	Cairngorms National Park Authority
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ELC	European Landscape Convention
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
GDL	Gardens and Designed Landscapes
GLVIA3	Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Third Edition
Ha	Hectares
HwLDP	Highland-wide Local Development Plan
IEMA	Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
IMFLDP	Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan
Km, m	Kilometres, metres
LCA	Landscape Character Assessment or Landscape Character Area (*depending on context)*
LCT	Landscape Character Type

LI	Landscape Institute
LVIA	Landscape and Visual impact assessment
NSA	National Scenic Area
NTS	Non-Technical Summary
OWESG	The Highland Council Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance
PPW	Planning Policy Wales
RVAA	Residential Visual Amenity Assessment
SLA	Special Landscape Area
SLQ	Special Landscape Quality
SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage (now NatureScot)
SPP	Scottish Planning Policy
THC	The Highland Council
VP	Viewpoint
WLA	Wild Land Area (or Wild Land Assessment depending on the context)
ZTV	Zone of Theoretical Visibility

6. Landscape & Visual Impact

6.1. Executive Summary

6.1.1. The Proposed Development is located in the Highlands of Scotland. The nearest main settlement is Grantown-on-Spey, located approximately 10 km to the south-east. The nearest roads are the B9007 that passes along the eastern boundary of the site and the A939, approximately 5 km to the east at its closest point and the A940, approximately 7 km to the east.

6.1.2. The design of the Proposed Development is the result of a considered iterative process which has sought to minimise landscape and visual effects whilst achieving the technical and commercial requirements to ensure project viability. Appropriate offsets from all properties and settlements have been maintained to ensure that no property would experience an overbearing visual impact. Mitigation has been designed into the proposed aviation lighting to reduce the intensity of the 2000 candela steady state lights in certain atmospheric conditions by reducing their intensity and attenuating the amount of vertical downwards lighting in order to reduce the visual impact experienced by receptors below the lights.

6.1.3. This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) identifies the likely significant effects arising from the Proposed Development on landscape character and visual amenity. In terms of effects on landscape character, the Proposed Development would result significant effects on parts of LCT 291 Open Rolling Upland and LCT 286 Narrow Wooded.

6.1.4. In relation to visual effects, it is accepted that the Proposed Development would be visible from some nearby properties, settlements as well as the surrounding road network and the nearby Dava Way. It has been assessed that there would be a significant visual effect at 7 of the 16 representative viewpoints during daylight hours, namely Viewpoint 1 – Carn Glas-choire; Viewpoint 3 – B9007 near Lochindorb; Viewpoint 4 - Creag Ealraich; Viewpoint 6 – Shore Road, Lochindorb; Viewpoint 9 – Gorton Hill; Viewpoint 13 – Minor road, near Dunearn Fort; and Viewpoint 16 – Knock of Braemoray. Of these viewpoints, it has been assessed that Viewpoint 1 – Carn Glas-choire; Viewpoint 3 – B9007 near Lochindorb; Viewpoint 4 - Creag Ealraich; Viewpoint 13 – Minor road, near Dunearn Fort; and Viewpoint 16 – Knock of Braemoray would also experience a significant effect during the hours of darkness.

6.1.5. There are no residential properties located within 2 km of the Proposed Development. Fourteen residential properties have been identified within 2 to 5 km of the Proposed Development. Of these Banchor, Drumlochan, Milltown, Dunearn Lodge, Lochindorb Lodge, and Refouble would experience significant effects during daylight hours and it has been assessed that only one of these, Banchor would experience significant effects during the hours of darkness.

6.1.6. The assessment of routes found that there would be no significant effects on recreational routes or the A940 or A939. However, road users travelling north along the B9007 would experience significant effects over a distance of approximately 2.9 km, while road users travelling south would experience significant effects over a distance of approximately 4.3 km, in the vicinity of the site.

6.1.7. In relation to cumulative landscape and visual effects, when each of the other consented wind farms (excluding Cairn Duhie which has been assessed as an in-planning scheme) are added into the assessment such that they are considered to already form part of the baseline it is considered that there would be no change to the previous assessment of the effects on landscape character which the Proposed Development would bring about. When other schemes in planning are also considered if the revised Cairn Duhie scheme were already present in the landscape, the extent of the significant effect brought about by the Proposed Development would reduce in a north-easterly direction down to approximately 4 km, as

beyond that point the existing influence of the revised Cairn Duhie scheme would be such as to render the additional effect of the Proposed Development non-significant.

6.1.8. In terms of the totality of effect on landscape character, were Proposed Development and each of the additionally proposed schemes consented alongside the existing Tom nan Clach scheme, the character of LCT 291 Open Rolling Upland area would become one which could be described as 'Open Rolling Upland with wind farms'. However, wind energy would not become the single dominant characteristic of LCT291, nor LCT 286 such that wind energy would become the single dominant characteristic these LCTs.

6.1.9. In relation to cumulative visual effects, when each of the other consented wind farms are added into the assessment such that they are considered to already form part of the baseline it is considered that there would be no change to the previous assessment of the effects on visual amenity which the Proposed Development would bring about. When other schemes in planning are also considered, there may be the potential for views of the Proposed Development in one direction and Cairn Duhie Wind Farm in the opposite direction, however this would be limited to a very small number of dwellings. The two schemes may also be seen successively, from locations along the A939, A940, the B9007 and the Shore Road Lochindorb, where significant 'sequential' cumulative visual effects are also identified for a short section of the routes if the Cairn Duhie Wind Farm were also to be constructed, above that which was reported in the main assessment of the route. There would be no significant sequential cumulative visual effects as a result of any of the other in planning schemes.

6.1.10. In terms of the totality of effect on visual amenity, it is not considered that the addition of the Proposed Development would be such as to result in the overall cumulative impact of turbines being dominant or oppressive in views from this area.

6.1.11. It is noted that localised significant effects on landscape character and visual amenity are inevitable as a result of commercial wind energy development anywhere in the UK. Whilst the LVIA identified some significant landscape and visual effects it is considered that the landscape has the capacity to accommodate the effects identified.

6.2. Introduction

6.2.1. This chapter presents a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of the Proposed Development. The purpose of an LVIA when undertaken in the context of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is to identify any likely significant landscape and visual effects arising as a result of the Proposed Development. An LVIA must consider both:

- effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right (the landscape effects); and
- effects on specific views and visual amenity more generally (the visual effects).

6.2.2. Therefore, this LVIA considers the potential effects of the Proposed Development upon:

- individual landscape features and elements;
- landscape character;
- specific views; and
- people who view the landscape.

6.2.3. In this chapter, landscape and visual effects are assessed separately although the procedure for assessing each of these is closely linked and follows *The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition* (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013).

6.2.4. The main objectives of the landscape assessment can be summarised as follows:

- to identify, evaluate and describe the baseline landscape character of the site and its surroundings and also any notable individual landscape features within the site;
- to determine the nature of the landscape receptor (i.e. the sensitivity of the landscape) through a consideration of its susceptibility to the type of development proposed and any values associated with it;
- to identify and describe any impacts of the Proposed Development in so far as they affect the landscape resource;
- to evaluate the nature of the landscape effects (i.e. the magnitude, duration and reversibility of the effect);
- to identify and describe mitigation measures that have been adopted to avoid, reduce and compensate for landscape effects;
- to evaluate the relative significance of residual landscape effects; and
- to determine which landscapes effects, if any, are significant.

6.2.5. The main objectives of the visual assessment are similar and can be summarised as follows:

- to identify, evaluate and describe the baseline visual context of the site and its surroundings with a focus on both specific views and the more general visual amenity experienced by people who have views of the site;
- to determine the nature of the visual receptor (i.e. the sensitivity of the viewpoint or person whose visual amenity is affected) through a consideration of the susceptibility of the viewpoint/person to the type of development proposed and any values associated with either the viewpoint or visual amenity experienced;
- to identify and describe any impacts of the development in so far as they affect a viewpoint or views experienced;
- to evaluate the nature of the visual effects (i.e. the magnitude, duration and reversibility of the effect);
- to identify and describe mitigation measures that have been adopted to avoid, reduce and compensate for visual effects;
- to evaluate the relative significance of residual visual effects; and
- to determine which visual effects, if any, are significant.

6.2.6. The LVIA also considers any cumulative landscape and visual effects which may arise as a result of the Proposed Development in conjunction with other wind farm developments.

6.2.7. The main LVIA presented in this chapter is supported by figures in **EIA Report Volume 2**, technical appendices in **Volume 3** and Visualisations in **Volume 4**.

6.2.8. The location of the Proposed Development and the study area for the LVIA is illustrated on **Figure 6.1**. For reference, other operational, consented and proposed wind farms within 45 km which are referred to throughout this chapter are illustrated on **Figure 6.26** and **Figure 6.27** shows other wind farms within 20 km.

6.2.9. This chapter is structured as follows:

- Legislation, Policy and Guidelines;
- Consultation;
- Assessment Methods and Significance Criteria;
- Baseline Conditions;
- Potential Effects;
- Mitigation;
- Residual Effects;
- Cumulative Effects;
- Summary; and
- References.

6.3. Legislation, Policy and Guidelines

European Landscape Convention, Adopted 2000

6.3.1. The European Landscape Convention (ELC) is the first international convention to focus specifically on the landscape as a resource in its own right. The convention promotes landscape protection, management and planning, as well as European co-operation on landscape issues. Signed by the UK Government in February 2006, the ELC became binding from March 2007. It applies to all landscapes, towns and villages, as well as open countryside; the coast and inland areas; and ordinary or even degraded landscapes, as well as those that are afforded protection.

6.3.2. The UK Government has stated that it considers the UK to be compliant with the ELC's requirements and in effect the principal requirements of the ELC are already enshrined in the existing suite of national policies and guidance on the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

6.3.3. 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.' (Council of Europe 2000)'

6.3.4. It is important to recognise that the ELC does not require the preservation of all landscapes although landscape protection is one of the core themes of the convention. Equally important though is the requirement to manage and plan future landscape change.

6.3.5. The ELC highlights the importance of developing landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and planning of landscapes. In this regard, NatureScot and the Highland Council (THC) have a suite of landscape character assessment and landscape capacity studies which enables decisions to be made with due regard to landscape character as promoted by the ELC.

Planning Policy

6.3.6. The following currently adopted planning policy documents were reviewed as part of the desk study for the LVIA:

- *National Planning Framework for Scotland 3* (NPF3) (2014);
- *Scottish Planning Policy* (SPP) (2014. Revised December 2020);
- *Planning Advice Note 60. Planning for Natural Heritage* (2000);
- *Highland-wide Local Development Plan* (2012); and
- *Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan* (2015).

6.3.7. The following supplementary guidance and technical reports which provide the evidence base for current planning policy were also reviewed:

- *Highland Council Onshore Wind Supplementary Guidance* (2016) and *Addendum* (2017);
- *Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas* (2011);
- *Moray Onshore Wind Energy Non-Statutory Guidance* (October 2020);
- *Moray Wind Energy Landscape Capacity Study* (2017);
- *Cairngorm Landscape Non-Statutory Guidance* (2021); and
- *Cairngorm Renewable Energy Non-Statutory Guidance* (2021).

6.3.8. A full and detailed consideration of national and local planning policy is contained in **Chapter 5**: Legislative and Policy Context of this EIA Report and in the accompanying **Planning Statement**. This section provides an overview of the local policies and designations of particular relevance to the landscape and visual issues considered in this chapter.

National Policy

6.3.9. *Scottish Planning Policy* (SPP) is the main policy document concerning land use planning. *Table 1: Spatial Frameworks* sets out a hierarchy of protection for environmental assets. *Group 1* areas are National Parks and National Scenic Areas identified as areas where wind farms will not be acceptable. *Group 2* areas include a range of ecological, cultural heritage and landscape designations, habitats and settled areas and are identified as areas of significant protection. *Group 3* areas are less constrained areas identified as areas with the potential for wind farm development.

6.3.10. The Proposed Development overlaps both *Group 2* and *Group 3* areas.

6.3.11. In relation to national designations *paragraph 212* of the SPP, sets out that:

"Development that affects a National Park, National Scenic Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest or a National Nature Reserve should only be permitted where:

- *the objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the area will not be compromised; or*
- *any 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."*

6.3.12. Gardens and Designed Landscapes are considered at *paragraph 148* which sets out that:

Planning authorities should protect and, where appropriate, seek to enhance gardens and designed landscapes included in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes and designed landscapes of regional and local importance.

6.3.13. *Paragraph 215* is concerned with areas of Wild Land and states that:

"In areas of wild land (see paragraph 200), development may be appropriate in some circumstances. Further consideration will be required to demonstrate that any significant

effects on the qualities of these areas can be substantially overcome by siting, design or other mitigation."

Local Policy

6.3.14. The Development Plan covering the Proposed Development is the *Highland–wide Local Development Plan* (adopted 2012) (HwLDP) and the *Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan* (adopted 2015) (IMFLDP). Onshore Wind Supplementary Guidance adopted in 2016 also forms part of the Development Plan documents and is considered in the guidance section below.

Highland-wide Local Development Plan (2012)

6.3.15. *Policy 67* of the HwLDP in relation to renewable energy developments, states:

"Renewable energy development proposals should be well related to the source of the primary renewable resources that are needed for their operation. The Council will also consider:

- *the contribution of the proposed development towards meeting renewable energy generation targets; and*
- *any positive or negative effects it is likely to have on the local and national economy;*
- *and will assess proposals against other policies of the development plan, the Highland Renewable Energy Strategy and Planning Guidelines and have regard to any other material considerations, including proposals able to demonstrate significant benefits including by making effective use of existing and proposed infrastructure or facilities.*
- *Subject to balancing with these considerations and taking into account any mitigation measures to be included, the Council will support proposals where it is satisfied that they are located, sited and designed such that they will not be significantly detrimental overall, either individually or cumulatively with other developments (see Glossary), having regard in particular to any significant effects on the following…[inter alia]*
- *natural, built and cultural heritage features;*
- *visual impact and impact on the landscape character of the surrounding area (the design and location of the proposal should reflect the scale and character of the landscape and seek to minimise landscape and visual impact, subject to any other considerations);*
- *amenity at sensitive locations, including residential properties, workplaces and recognised visitor sites (in or outwith a settlement boundary);*
- *the safety and amenity of any regularly occupied buildings and the grounds that they occupy- having regard to visual intrusion or the likely effect of noise generation and, in the case of wind energy proposals, ice throw in winter conditions, shadow flicker or shadow throw…*
- *the amenity of users of any Core Path or other established public access for walking, cycling or horse riding;*
- *tourism and recreation interests;*
- *land and water-based traffic and transport interests."*

6.3.16. In addition *to Policy 67, Policy 57* and *61* also give relevant advice.

6.3.17. *Policy 57* Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage sets out the tests against which development affecting natural, cultural and built heritage features must be assessed. It states that in relation to features of local, regional and national importance:

'All development proposals will be assessed taking into account the level of importance and type of heritage features, the form and scale of the development, and any impact on the feature and its setting, in the context of the policy framework detailed in Appendix 2. The following criteria will also apply:

For features of local/regional importance we will allow developments if it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that they will not have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment, amenity and heritage resource.

For features of national importance, we will allow developments that can be shown not to compromise the natural environment, amenity and heritage resource. Where there may be any significant adverse effects, these must be clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance. It must also be shown that the development will support communities in fragile areas who are having difficulties in keeping their population and services".

6.3.18. Policy 61 of the HwLDP is concerned with landscape. It states that:

"New developments should be designed to reflect the landscape characteristics and special qualities identified in the Landscape Character Assessment of the area in which they are proposed. This will include consideration of the appropriate scale, form, pattern and construction materials, as well as the potential cumulative effect of developments where this may be an issue. The Council would wish to encourage those undertaking development to include measures to enhance the landscape characteristics of the area. This will apply particularly where the condition of the landscape characteristics has deteriorated to such an extent that there has been a loss of landscape quality or distinctive sense of place. In the assessment of new developments, the Council will take account of Landscape Character Assessments, Landscape Capacity Studies and its supplementary guidance on Siting and Design and Sustainable Design, together with any other relevant design guidance."

Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (2015)

6.3.19. The IMFLDP is an area local development plan that along with the HwLDP and supplementary guidance forms the THC's Development Plan. It sets out planning policy and land allocations within settlements but does not advise specifically on wind energy development but does reference Special Landscape Areas as "regionally valuable landscapes", identifying that Policy 57 of the HwLDP provides protection for these areas.

Guidance

Highland Council Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (2016) and Addendum (2017)

6.3.20. THC adopted their *Onshore Wind Supplementary Guidance* in 2016, which also forms part of the Development Plan.

6.3.21. The Proposed Development is situated within both a *Group 2* and *Group 3* area for the purposes of *Table 1 in Scottish Planning Policy*, and so within an area within which wind farms may be appropriate in some circumstances.

6.3.22. *Pages 18-20* of the Supplementary Guidance list ten landscape and visual factors to which the Council will have regard when assessing proposals. They set out key considerations of the Council that the developer should be aware of and take account of in progressing the design and assessment of the proposals. This matter is addressed further separately in the **Planning Statement**.

6.3.23. An *Addendum Supplementary Guidance: 'Part 2b Highland Strategic Capacity'* was adopted in 2017 and looks at six geographical areas in relation to their strategic capacity for wind energy development. For each of the six study areas the addendum identifies the strategic capacity, the landscape sensitivity, key views, key routes and gateways before appraising each of the landscape character areas within the study area, identifying key views, routes the character area's landscape sensitivity (susceptibility) to wind energy development.

6.3.24. The Proposed Development is located in the Black Isle, Surrounding Hills and Moray Firth Study Area and specifically within the BL10 Tom nan Clach, Lochindorb to Airdrie Mill, South of River Findhorn area.

6.3.25. In relation to key views, the appraisal identifies that the area forms part of the *"part of the layered landscape visible in long views from the North, while not in itself being a key focus within the views."*

6.3.26. The appraisal identifies views from the minor road on the south-eastern shore of Lochindorb as a 'Key View' which allows views of Lochindorb Castle, backdropped by rolling uplands. This view is considered further at Viewpoint 6.

6.3.27. The appraisal also notes the B9007, the A939, the A940 and the Dava Way as key routes crossing through this area. Views from these key routes are represented by Viewpoints 3, 8 and 15, 16 and 7 respectively.

6.3.28. In terms of landscape character sensitivity (susceptibility), the appraisal attributes a score of 1 to large scale wind farms and a score of 2 to access infrastructure (1 being most susceptible to change). Nonetheless, it notes that *"the nature of the landscape itself is not inherently incompatible with wind energy development".*

6.3.29. In terms of the area's strategic capacity, the appraisal also identifies some scope for medium to large development:

- *"where well designed and contained;*
- *where design respects spacing and scale of existing development pattern;*
- *where development would not detract from Key Characteristics and Special Qualities of the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA; and*
- *where development respects borrowed views to more distant hills in the north."*

6.4. Consultation

6.4.1. Throughout the scoping exercise, and subsequently during the ongoing EIA process, relevant organisations were contacted with regards to the Proposed Development. **Table 6.1** outlines the consultation responses received in relation to landscape and visual matters.

Table 6.1 – List of Consultee Responses

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Action
Energy Consents Unit (1 April 2021)	… all additional viewpoints requested by other scoping responses are considered in full	Full consideration given to all consultee requested additional viewpoints. Further consultation has been carried post-scoping with THC, Moray Council and Nature Scot issued 11 May 2021 setting out the response and justification for inclusion of additional viewpoints where considered appropriate.
	.. that THC request for the study radius is expanded to 45 km to accommodate visual impact assessments of North Sutor and Hilton of Cadboll. Scottish Ministers also expect that the request from the Highland Council of the reinstatement of viewpoints near Lymore on the A939 and Ptarmigan and summit at Cairngorm is fulfilled.	The study area has been expanded to 45 km line with the request from Highland Council. It was also agreed to include a viewpoint at Lymore on the A939. Given the distances from the Proposed Development to both Ptarmigan and Cairngorm are over 30 km, the proposed turbines would be barely perceptible, and any effects would not be considered significant. It is therefore not considered that the inclusion of viewpoints from Ptarmigan and Cairngorm is proportionate or necessary. This was set out in the post-scoping correspondence to consultees dated 11 May 2021.
The Highland Council (24/03/21)	… the council expects the EIAR to consider the landscape and visual impact of the development.	Included at **Chapter 6** of this EIAR.
	… the Council's position that it is not possible to use panoramic images for the purposes of visual impact assessment. The Council, while not precluding the use of panoramic images, require single frame images with different focal lengths taken with a 35 mm format full frame sensor camera – not an 'equivalent.' The focal lengths required are 50 mm and 75 mm.	Visualisations have been produced in accordance with both NatureScot Visual *Representation of Wind Farms* guidance and THC *Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments* and accompany the EIA Report at **Volume 3**.
	… the assessment should include the expected impact of on-site borrow pits and access roads, despite the fact that the principal structures will be a primary concern.	The impact of on-site borrow pits, access roads and other such ancillary development has been considered in the assessment of effects on landscape character and specifically within the section on construction and operation effects on landscape features. The ancillary infrastructure as has also been considered within the assessment of visual effects.
	...when assessing the impact on recreational routes please ensure that all core paths, the national cycle network, long distance trails are assessed. It should be noted that these routes are used by a range of receptors.	All recreational routes within the study area were reviewed for the potential for significant effects to occur. The approach to assessing the effects of the Proposed Development on receptors using such routes has focussed on routes where receptors are more likely to experience significant effects.

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Action
	The 35 km radius omits the opinion given at preapplication that viewpoints should be included for assessment of impacts on Visual Resource and perception of Landscape at -North Sutor, within the Sutors of Cromarty, Rosemarkie and Fortrose SLA -Hilton of Cadboll on the NCR 1. Expansion of the Study Area to 45 km in the north and inclusion of these locations for visual impact assessment is recommended.	The study area has been expanded to 45 km line with the request from THC. Given the distances from the Proposed Development (North Sutor over 30 km and Hilton of Cadboll over 35 km, the proposed turbines are barely perceptible, and any effects would not be considered significant. This was set out in the post-scoping response to consultees dated 11 May 2021.
	It is noted that several viewpoint locations have been dropped since the preapplication stage, despite apparent visibility and presence of sensitive receptors.: - Viewpoint near Lymore on the A939, where it forms part of the Highland National Tourist Route in the CNP, at 306520, 824088 which appeared at Pre-Application is no longer included. - Viewpoint at the Ptarmigan; and - Summit at Cairngorm Reinstatement of these locations to ensure that the interests of tourism and recreation are fully addressed in the assessment, unless the assessor presents clear justification for the omissions, is recommended.	Ptarmigan and Cairngorm are situated over 30 km from the Proposed Development. As such the proposed turbines would be barely perceptible and any effects would not be considered significant. This was set out in the post-scoping response to consultees dated 11 May 2021. In relation to the request for an additional viewpoint at Lymore on the A939 this has been included (see Viewpoint Assessment at **Appendix 6.5** and **Volume 3 Visualisations**. It is located on the Highland National Tourist Route in the Cairngorms National Park and given that it is located within 20 km of the Proposed Development, there is greater potential for receptors to experience a significant effect.
	… the three viewpoints (3, 6, 8) proposed for dark hour visualisations are all within around 7km of the proposed development. THC suggest that a more distant viewpoint for dark hours is included, potentially from Kind Steps (sic) which shows hub visibility in the Pre-application ZTV.	Through the ongoing design process and the adoption of a cardinal lighting scheme where only Turbines 1, 3 14, 15 and 17 would be lit, only up to two lit turbines would be visible in theory from Kingsteps. However, at approximately 20 km distance any effects would barely noticeable and would not be considered significant. As such an additional visualisation from this location has not been included.
	The assessors should bear in mind that at these latitudes many of the winter ‘dark hours’ are not during the ‘night time’ but during people’s working and commuting day. Therefore, the terms ‘Hours of darkness’ and ‘dark hours’ are preferred.	Referred to as such in this chapter.

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Action
	NatureScot in their guidance make reference to 30 minutes after sunset being an appropriate time for photography. However, the further north the slower the transition from technical sunset to actual darkness in the summer, and the faster in the winter. Therefore it is recommended that the appropriate photography window be decided according to the time of year photography is carried out and should be based around the end of 'Civil Twilight' rather than sunset.	This has been noted.
NatureScot (09/03/21)	… advise the LVIA to focus on providing a thorough and considered assessment of the likely effects on relevant Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) of the Cairngorms National Park/ Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA.	An assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development on the relevant SLQs of the National Park has been included at **Appendix 6.6**. Consideration of the special qualities of the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA is set out in the main LVIA text.
	... assessment should also consider the likely effects of turbine lighting, and how this may impact on the experience of the SLQs within the National Park. The assessment should focus on a subset of relevant SLQs, and we are happy to advise on a draft list to assist with this.	Consideration of the effects of turbine lighting on the relevant SLQs has been included in **Appendix 6.6**.
	content that the Cairngorms WLA 15, which lies wholly within the CNP boundary, need not require a separate assessment of effect. We are also content to scope out the need for further assessment on the effects on WLA 20 therefore a separate wild land assessment will not be required.	A separate assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development on WLAs has not been included.
	Require the inclusion of two additional locations for likely visibility of the proposal and provide some brief comments on other viewpoints below: - Huntly's Cave area near CNP boundary NJ020335 - Nethy Bridge NJ010205 - VP3 B9007 near Lochindorb 294275, 838065 - is this Carn nan Clach Garbha NH945346? - VP4 Creag Ealraich 294314, 830462 - agreed - VP11 Creagan a Chaise 310249, 824219 - agreed - VP12 Craiggowrie 296293, 813417 - possibly move to Meall a'Bhuachaille Cairn NH991115	Viewpoint 12 has been relocated to Meall a'Bhuachaille Cairn in line with this request. Viewpoint 3 has been taken from the B9007 and not Carn nan Clach Garbha. A justification for omitting the suggested VP location at Nethy Bridge, noting its limited potential visibility was set out in set out in the response to consultees dated 11 May 2021. An additional viewpoint at the Huntly's Cave area, near the CNP boundary was considered for inclusion. However, through design evolution theoretical visibility from this area is no longer available. As such this viewpoint has not been included in the assessment.

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Action
	From the three night time visuals that have been proposed; whilst there are two that will likely capture the effects on the SLA within which the proposal lies, it would be helpful to also include one which captures any likely effects from within the Park.	Through the ongoing design process and the adoption of a cardinal lighting scheme where only Turbines 1, 3 14, 15 and 17 would be lit, there would be minimal visibility of lit turbines from within the Park. The main area of predicted visibility is at the Hills of Cromdale at approximately 20 km distance. Any effects would barely noticeable and would not be considered significant. As such this has not been included.
	… lighting can affect people's experience and enjoyment of darkness/ dark skies and of sunset and sunrise views, they recommend that these effects should be carefully considered, including in the assessment of effects on the SLQs of the Cairngorms National Park, and that mitigation is employed wherever possible.	The effects of the proposed turbine lighting have been considered in the assessment of the effects on the SLQs of the CNP included at **Appendix 6.6**.
	There are a number of wind farms within close proximity, in addition the differing heights of the various wind farms are resulting in some requiring aviation lighting whilst the majority are not. This may result in an increasingly confusing array of turbines in the area which are not designed to fit in the landscape. Very careful consideration should be given both the siting and design of this wind farm to ensure best fit with the landscape as it evolves. Detail on which proposals are to be included within the cumulative baseline should be sought from both The Highland Council and Moray Council for completeness.	The consideration of landscape and visual matters has informed the design process as set out in the **Chapter 2**.
Moray Council (02/03/21)	… the search area assessment of potential cumulative impacts to be extended from 20 km to at least 35 km due to several significant wind farms operational/consented/yet to be determined beyond 20 km in Moray that should be taken account of when considering cumulative impacts.	Cumulative schemes up to 60 km have been initially considered in the assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects. The assessment then focussed on a study area of 45 km, which was increased from 35 km following consultation with THC.
	… an extension to Berry Burn windfarm is at application stage and is not shown in the cumulative impact information	This has been included.
	Requests the following viewpoints (in addition to the LVIA viewpoints identified in table 4.2): - One viewpoint from the Forres/Findhorn/Kinloss area – this area appears to be the most populated area where all	Consideration was given to a viewpoint location in the Forres/Findhorn/Kinloss area. However, at approximately 28 km distance from the Proposed Development any effects would be barely perceptible and would not be

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Action
	turbines could be visible from (noting the ZTV provided with the request). Suggest a viewpoint is taken from Findhorn, adjacent to the war memorial on the B9011 (304128, 864172) - A viewpoint from the summit of the Knock of Braemoray (301132, 841766) - A viewpoint from the summit of Ben Rinnes (325503, 835459) - A940, layby above Kerrow (300046, 841888)	considered significant. This was set out in the post-scoping response to consultees dated 11 May 2021. The suggested viewpoint locations at the layby to the north of Kerrow on the A940 and the location at the summit of Knock of Braemoray are located in close proximity to one another. With reference to the ZTV included at **Figure 6.2**, the layby would have reduced theoretical visibility compared to the higher summit to its east where there is theoretical visibility of all turbines. A viewpoint was therefore included from the summit of Knock Braemoray, where greater theoretical visibility is predicted (refer to **Figure6.52**). The summit of Ben Rinnes is situated over 30 km to the east of the Proposed Development with a number of other wind farms closer to the suggested viewpoint location. Given the distance from the viewpoint and the greater influence of the nearer wind farms this has not been included in the assessment. This was set out in the post-scoping response to consultees dated 11 May 2021.
Cairngorms National Park Authority (11/02/21)	*Policy 3.3a* of the current *Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan* (2017 – 2024) is therefore relevant in relation to the potential for effects on the Special Landscape Qualities and landscape character of the National Park from wind farm development outwith the National Park.	This is noted.
	In accordance with CNPA casework agreement with NS, NS provide advice on the potential effects of development outside the National Park on the Special Landscape Qualities and landscape character of the National Park. We therefore have no other comments to make at this stage and refer you and the applicant to their advice.	Further consultation with NatureScot concerning the approach to the assessment the effects on SLQs and NS provided draft guidance, in correspondence dated 17 March 2021 which has been used as the basis for the assessment.

6.5. Assessment Methods and Significance Criteria

Types of Impacts Considered in the LVIA

6.5.1. The primary source of best practice for LVIA in the UK is *"The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3)* (Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013)."

6.5.2. The LVIA presented in this chapter has been undertaken in accordance with the principles established in this document. It must however be acknowledged that GLVIA3 establishes guidelines not a specific methodology. The preface to GLVIA3 recognises that:

> *"This edition concentrates on principles and processes. It does not provide a detailed or formulaic 'recipe' that can be followed in every situation – it remains the responsibility of the professional to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the task in hand."*

6.5.3. The methodology for this assessment has therefore been developed specifically for this LVIA to ensure that it is appropriate and fit for purpose.

6.5.4. Consideration has also been given to the following documents:

- *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*, (2014) Natural England;
- *Guidelines for Landscape Character Assessment*, (2002) Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH);
- *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland: Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity*, (2002) The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH);
- *Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments* (March 2012) SNH;
- *Siting and Design of Wind farms in the Landscape, Version 3* (February 2017) SNH;
- *Visual Representation of Wind farms – Version 2.2* (February 2017), SNH;
- *General pre-application and scoping advice for onshore wind farms. Guidance*. (September 2020) NatureScot;
- *LI Technical Guidance Note 2/19. Residential Visual Amenity Assessment* (RVAA) (March 2019) Landscape Institute;
- *LI Advice Note 02/17 Visual representation of development proposals* (March 2017) Landscape Institute;
- *Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas* (THC, 2011); and
- *Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments* (July 2016) The Highland Council.

Scope of the Assessment

6.5.5. The LVIA assesses both the long-term effects relating to the operational lifetime of the Proposed Development and the short-term temporary effects associated with the construction of the Proposed Development.

6.5.6. Where appropriate, the LVIA also considers any residual effects once the proposed wind turbines have been decommissioned and removed (assumed to be 35 years from the date of completed construction).

6.5.7. The LVIA considers both direct and indirect landscape and visual effects. It not only assesses the impacts associated with the turbines but also any related impacts resulting from the construction compound, borrow pits, underground cabling, site tracks, substation, energy storage facility, and access roads.

6.5.8. Consideration has been given to seasonal variations when assessing the visibility of the Proposed Development.

6.5.9. The LVIA also considers any cumulative effects arising in conjunction with other wind farm schemes in the study area, as defined below. Best practice guidelines identify two principal types of cumulative visual impact:

- combined visibility – where the observer is able to see two or more developments from one viewpoint; and
- sequential visibility – where two or more sites are not visible at one location but would be seen as the observer moves along a linear route, for example, a road or public right of way.

6.5.10. The guidelines state that 'combined visibility' may either be 'in combination' (where two or more sites are visible from a fixed viewpoint in the same arc of view) or 'in succession' (where two or more sites are visible from a fixed viewpoint, but the observer is required to turn to see the different sites). Both types are discussed in this LVIA. The published GLVIA3 also indicates a difference in emphasis between sequential effects that are frequent and those which are occasional.

6.5.11. In relation to both the effects of the Proposed Development alone and the cumulative effects with other wind farm schemes in the study area, both beneficial (positive) and adverse (negative) effects are considered. Wind farms give rise to a wide spectrum of opinions, ranging from strongly negative to strongly positive, with a wide range of opinions lying somewhere between these two positions. Some people view wind turbines as incongruous or industrial structures whilst others view them as aesthetically pleasing, elegant structures and a positive response to climate change. This spectrum of opinion has come to be referred to in relation to wind farms as the concept of valency. For the avoidance of doubt, in considering the effects of the Proposed Development, a precautionary approach to the assessment has been adopted and it is assumed that, unless specifically stated otherwise, the effects of the proposal will be adverse in nature even though it is acknowledged that, for some people, the impacts could be considered to be beneficial.

Study Area

6.5.12. The initial study area for the landscape and visual impact assessment is 45 km radius from the turbines in all directions. The extent of this study area is illustrated in **Figure 6.1**. Initial site work informed by analysis of preliminary ZTVs indicated that any significant landscape and visual effects are likely to occur within a much narrower radius from the site; therefore, the level of assessment work in this LVIA incrementally decreases with distance from the site, with the greatest focus of assessment being within broadly 20 km of the site. The intention is that the detail of the LVIA remains proportional to the likely significance of effects, as advocated in GLVIA3.

6.5.13. In terms of cumulative effects, the intention has again been that assessment work is proportional to the likelihood of significant effects arising. The approach adopted in the cumulative LVIA has been to focus on other wind farms which are either operational, under construction, consented or the subject of a full planning application and which have the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects when considered in combination with the Proposed Development. Rather than simply considering every other wind farm within a set distance of the Proposed Development, the approach has been to focus the assessment on those sites which have the potential to given rise to significant cumulative effects. Further details of this approach are set out in the cumulative impact assessment (**Section 6.10**).

Landscape Assessment Methodology

6.5.14. A baseline landscape assessment was carried out to determine the current features and character of the landscape within and surrounding the site.

- The baseline landscape assessment involved firstly a review of desk material including:
- Ordnance Survey maps at 1:250,000; 1:50,000; 1:25,000 and 1:10,000 scales;
- Aerial photographs of the site and surrounding area;
- Topography;
- Current & historical land use;
- Geology and soil maps;
- Historic Parks and Designated Landscapes;
- Relevant planning policy;
- Relevant landscape sensitivity/capacity studies;
- Relevant landscape character assessments; and
- Relevant Historic Landscape Character Assessments.

6.5.15. Field visits have been conducted in a variety of weather conditions and at different times of the year during the pre-application stage. Surveys have been undertaken between April and November 2021.

6.5.16. The baseline assessment identified the existing landscape features on the site, and in the immediate vicinity, and how these elements combine to give the area a sense of landscape character. Plans and construction details of the Proposed Development were used to determine the impacts of the scheme on landscape features and character.

6.5.17. The LVIA firstly assesses how the Proposed Development would impact directly on any existing landscape features or elements (e.g. removal of trees etc.).

6.5.18. The LVIA then considers impacts on landscape character with reference to landscape character areas/types identified in published landscape character documents.

Visual Assessment Methodology

6.5.19. Potential visual receptors of the Proposed Development were identified by interpretation of digitally generated ZTVs (see **Table 6.2** for an explanation of ZTVs and how they were produced).

Table 6.2 - Production of ZTVs

Production of Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Maps
A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) illustrates the extents from which a feature would theoretically be visible within a defined study area. ZTVs are generated assuming a 'bare ground' terrain model. This means that the ZTVs presented within this LVIA have been generated from topographical data only and they do not take any account of vegetation or the built environment which may screen views of the development. It is, as such, a 'worst case' zone of visual influence and considerably over-emphasises the actual visibility of the proposed scheme. In reality trees, hedges and buildings may restrict views of the development from many of the areas rendered as within the ZTV. A further assumption of the ZTV is that climatic visibility is 100 % (i.e. visibility is not impeded by moisture or pollution in the air). In reality, such atmospheric conditions are relatively rare in this part of the country. Mist, fog, rain and snow are all common weather occurrences, which would regularly restrict visibility of the development from some of the areas within the ZTV; this being an incrementally more significant factor with distance from the site. Atmospheric pollution is not as significant as it is in other parts of the country but is still present and would also restrict actual visibility on some occasions, again more so with distance from the site. The ZTVs were generated using Resoft WindFarm. The programme used topographical height data (OS Terrain 50) to build a terrain model. The programme then renders the model using a square grid to illustrate whether the turbines would be visible in each 50 m x 50 m square on the grid for a specified distance in every direction from the site.

Production of Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Maps

Digital ZTVs have been prepared to illustrate the theoretical visibility of the turbine for a radius of 35 km around the site. Two sets of ZTVs have been produced, the first shows visibility of the turbines at hub height and the second shows visibility of the turbines to blade tip when the blade is at its highest possible position. Enlargements of the ZTVs have also been produced.

Cumulative ZTVs have been produced to show locations where the ZTVs of two or more operational, consented or proposed wind turbine sites overlap (in certain cases a number of wind farms which are at the same stage in development have been grouped together). In the cumulative ZTVs one colour has been used to illustrate the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development and a second colour to illustrate the visibility of a second site. Where the ZTVs of the two sites overlap a third colour has been used to illustrate this potential cumulative visual influence.

It should be noted that there are several limitations to the use of ZTVs. For a discussion of these limitations please refer to Visual Representation of Wind farms – Version 2.2 (NatureScot). In particular, it should be noted that the ZTV plans simply illustrate theoretical visibility and do not imply or assign any level of significance to those areas identified as being within the ZTV. The ZTVs are a tool to assist the Landscape Architect to identify where the site would potentially be visible from. The assessment of landscape and visual effects in this chapter does not rely solely on the accuracy of the ZTVs. The ZTVs have been ground proofed and professional judgement has been used to evaluate the significance of effects.

6.5.20. A selection of viewpoints was identified and agreed with statutory consultees to represent a range of views and viewer types as discussed in *Visual Representation of Wind farms – Version 2.2* (NatureScot) and in *Paragraphs 6.16-6.20* of GLVIA3.

6.5.21. The viewpoints cover a variety of different character areas, are in different directions from the site and are at varying elevations. Some of the viewpoints are intended to be representative of the visual experience in a general location whereas other viewpoints illustrate the view from a specific or important vantage point. The viewpoints are located at a range of distances from the Proposed Development to illustrate the varying magnitude of visual impacts.

6.5.22. Visualisations were produced for each of the viewpoints; these are presented in **Volume 3** of this EIA Report. An explanation of how they were produced and information to be read in conjunction with the visualisations is provided in **Appendix 6.2**.

6.5.23. Each of the representative viewpoints was visited to gain an understanding of the sensitivity of the viewpoint receptors and to make professional judgements on the likely visual effects arising from the Proposed Development. Furthermore, the entire extent of the study area was visited to appreciate visibility of the development as receptors move throughout the landscape.

6.5.24. The viewpoints were used as the starting point for considering the effects on visual receptors within the entire study area. The visual assessment does not rely solely on the viewpoint assessments to determine the significance of effects on different visual receptor groups throughout the study area. It should be recognised that the viewpoints illustrated in the LVIA simply represent a series of snapshots from a small selection of the locations within the study area from where the Proposed Development will be visible. Following the viewpoint assessment, the LVIA considers the effect on visual amenity throughout the study area with reference to different visual receptor groups at varying distances from the site.

Assessment Criteria

6.5.25. The purpose of an LVIA when produced in the context of an EIA is to identify any significant landscape and visual effects within the study area to assist the determining authority in deciding the acceptability of the scheme under consideration.

6.5.26. In accordance with the GLVIA3, the level (relative significance) of an effect is ascertained by considering in tandem the nature (sensitivity) of the baseline landscape or visual receptor and

the nature (magnitude) of change as a result of the Proposed Development. These two judgements are described as very high, high, medium, low or very low.

6.5.27. The relative significance of landscape or visual effects is described as major, major/moderate, moderate, moderate/minor, minor or minor/no effect. No effect may also be recorded where the effect is so negligible. Professional judgement is then employed to determine whether the effect is significant or not. Those effects described as major, major/moderate and in some cases moderate may be regarded as significant.

6.5.28. The detailed assessment criteria used to determine landscape and visual sensitivity, magnitude of change and significance of effect are set out in **Appendix 6.1**.

Residual Effects

6.5.29. Best practice for EIA in general terms requires that the significance of potential effects be assessed, mitigation proposals identified (if a significant effect is identified) and the residual effect (with mitigation in place) then re-assessed to demonstrate the effectiveness of the mitigation proposed.

6.5.30. In the case of LVIA for wind farms this presents two interrelated problems:

- Potential effects cannot be meaningfully assessed in the absence of an assumed layout; and
- Landscape and visual mitigation principally focuses on refinement of the site layout ('mitigation by design').

6.5.31. The approach taken in this study has therefore been to build landscape and visual mitigation into the final layout (refer to **Chapter 2**). Mitigation has been taken into account as part of the iterative design process but as this mitigation is integral to the final layout, there is no difference between the assessed effects reported in the main body of this chapter and the residual effects.

Limitations to the Assessment

6.5.32. The assessment of effects within this LVIA has been derived through the use of publicly available information only. Within such a large study area it is unfeasible to visit every single location from which the Proposed Development might be visible as illustrated on the ZTVs. The authors of the LVIA have, however, spent a considerable length of time 'in the field' and visited all important viewpoints and locations within the study area.

6.5.33. Limitations to the use of ZTVs are set out in **Table 6.2** above and the limitations in relation to photography, wireframes and photomontages are also set out in **Appendix 6.2**.

6.6. Baseline Conditions

6.6.1. For the avoidance of doubt all distances are approximate and have been measured from the asset to the nearest proposed turbine unless otherwise stated.

Site Location

6.6.2. The Proposed Development is location in the Highlands of Scotland. The site is centred at approximately British National Grid (BNG) 293063, 835639. The closest main settlements to the proposed turbines are Grantown-on-Spey, located approximately 10 km to the south-east, Nethy Bridge located approximately 14 km to the south south-east, Inverness approximately 25 km to the north-west, Nairn approximately 17 km to the north and Forres approximately 22 km to the north-east.

6.6.3. The nearest main highways are the A9 between Inverness and Aviemore, situated approximately 12.1 km to the south-west. The A939 connecting Grantown-on-Spey and Nairn on the southern coast of the Moray Firth is situated approximately 7.1 km to the east. The A940

branches off the A939 at Dava, approximately 7.2 km to the east of the Proposed Development and continues in a broadly northerly direction leading to Forres.

6.6.4. The B9007 is the nearest road to the Proposed Development, passing along the eastern edge of the site boundary and approximately 0.91 km to the east of the nearest proposed turbine.

6.6.5. The location of the Proposed Development site is illustrated at **Figure 6.1** and the layout of the site is shown on **Figure 1.2**.

Landscape Designations

6.6.6. A review of all landscape designations within the 45 km study area has been undertaken Landscape designations are illustrated on **Figure 6.4**.

International/National Landscape Designations

6.6.7. There are no international landscape designations covering the site or located within the 45 km study area.

6.6.8. There are no national landscape designations covering the site. However, the Cairngorms National Park (CNP) is situated approximately 2.8 km to the south of the nearest turbine, as shown on **Figures 6.4** and **6.5** along with the designated sites.

National Parks

6.6.9. The *National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000* (the "National Parks Act") allowed the creation of National Parks in Scotland. The act states the aims of the National Parks are:

- *conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;*
- *promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area;*
- *promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public; and*
- *promote sustainable economic and social development of the areas' communities.*

6.6.10. Where these aims conflict the relevant National Park Authority must prioritise the first of these aims.

6.6.11. The CNP was established in September 2003 and extended in 2010. The Park is divided into landscape character areas (LCAs) which are in turn underpinned by the Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) which are the qualities that combine to define the landscapes of the National Park.

6.6.12. SNH (now NatureScot) Commissioned *Report No. 375 "The Special Landscape Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park"* defined the SLQs which are as follows:

- **General Qualities**
  - Magnificent mountains towering over moorland, forest and strath;
  - Vastness of space, scale and height;
  - Strong juxtaposition of contrasting landscapes;
  - A landscape of layers, from inhabited straths to remote uninhabited upland;
  - 'The harmony of complicated curves'; and
  - Landscapes both cultural and natural.
- **The Mountains and Plateaux**
  - The unifying presence of the central mountains;
  - An imposing massif of strong dramatic character;
  - The unique plateaux of vast scale, distinctive landforms and exposed, boulder strewn high ground;
  - The surrounding hills;

  - The drama of the deep corries;
  - Exceptional glacial landforms; and
  - Snowscapes.
- **Moorlands**
  - Extensive moorland, linking the farmland, woodland and the high tops; and
  - A patchwork of muirburn.
- **Glens and Straths**
  - Steep glens and high passes;
  - Broad, farmed straths;
  - Renowned rivers; and
  - Beautiful lochs.
- **Trees, Woods and Forests**
  - Dark venerable pine forest;
  - Light and airy birch woods;
  - Parkland and policy woodlands; and
  - Long association with forestry.
- **Wildlife and Nature**
  - Dominance of natural landforms;
  - Extensive tracts of natural vegetation;
  - Association with iconic animals;
  - Wild land; and
  - Wildness.
- **Visual and Sensory Qualities**
  - Layers of receding ridge lines;
  - Grand panoramas and framed views;
  - A landscape of many qualities;
  - Dark skies;
  - Attractive and contrasting textures; and
  - The dominance of natural sounds.
- **Culture and History**
  - Distinctive planned towns;
  - Vernacular stone buildings;
  - Dramatic, historical routes;
  - The wistfulness of abandoned settlements;
  - Focal cultural landmarks of castles, distilleries and bridges; and
  - The Royal connection.
- **Recreation**
  - A landscape of opportunities;
  - Spirituality.

6.6.13. Section 11 of the National Parks Act requires a National Park Authority to prepare and submit to Scottish Ministers a National Park Plan. The National Park Plan for Cairngorms National Park is currently the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017 – 2022 adopted 2017 (the 'Partnership Plan'). A draft of the next proposed Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan was published for public consultation on 23 September 2021. The consultation period runs to 17 December 2021.

6.6.14. The Partnership Plan is relevant to the Proposed Development notwithstanding that the Proposed Development is located outwith Cairngorms National Park. Of particular relevance is

policy 3.3(a) which provides: "*increasing renewable energy generation, especially biomass and hydro, that is compatible with conserving the special qualities of the National Park and maintaining the integrity of designated sites. Large-scale wind turbines are not compatible with the landscape character or special landscape qualities of the National Park. They are inappropriate within the National Park o where outside the Park they significantly adversely affect its landscape character or special landscape qualities*;

6.6.15. Section 14 of the National Park Act states that The Scottish Ministers (and a National Park authority, a local authority and any other public body or office-holder) must, in exercising functions so far as affecting a National Park, have regard to the National Park Plan.

6.6.16. Given the relatively close proximity of the Proposed Development to the National Park, the effects on it, its landscape character and the SLQs are considered further within the assessment at **Appendix 6.6**.

National Scenic Areas

6.6.17. Two National Scenic Areas (NSA) are situated within the boundary of the CNP, namely The Cairngorms Mountains NSA and the Deeside and Lochnagar NSA.

6.6.18. The Cairngorms Mountains NSA is situated approximately 19.5 km to the south of the Proposed Development. *SNH Report 374* sets out the Special Qualities of the NSAs. However, in the case of the Cairngorms Mountains NSA, its SLQs are set out in *SNH Report 375*, as described above.

6.6.19. Therefore, effects on the NSA will be as part of the assessment of effects on the National Park.

Local Landscape Designations

Special Landscape Areas

6.6.20. THC has identified 27 Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) which it notes are landscapes identified to protect and enhance landscape qualities and promote their enjoyment. For each of the SLAs THC has produced citations contained within the '*Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas*' (2011) which set out the key landscape and visual characteristics, special qualities, sensitivity to change and potential for landscape enhancement and other interests.

6.6.21. The Proposed Development is situated within the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA. It is described as:

"Location and Extent:

This area covers most of the higher moorland which separates the Cawdor-Ferness-Beachans area of Nairn district from Strathspey to the south and the route of the A9 to the west. It incorporates the continuous moors of Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava and extends from Carn nan Tri-tighearnan in the west to Lang Hill and Carn Kitty in the east.

Overview:

This landscape comprises high rolling moorland, which has a consistency of character derived from gentle gradients, limited relief, and management of much of the area as grouse moor. Although this moorland is not as extensive as other moorlands further north, it is valuable for being located mid-way between a number of settlements and for being easily accessible via several roads which pass through the area.

Elements of human intervention are evident within this landscape, most obviously in the form of tracks, fences, muirburn patterns and fencing. However, it retains a strong sense of tranquillity as well as some wildness qualities, which are emphasised by an almost complete absence of built structures."

6.6.22. The citation sets out its key landscape and visual characteristics as:

- Rounded slopes leading to summits of relatively uniform height with a large expanse of elevated, undulating blanket bog, and moorland smooth and heather clad. Woodland cover is limited in extent and there are few buildings or structures;
- Where buildings do exist, they are of a distinct estate architectural character;
- The strongly horizontal composition of elements is dominated by the sky and moorland, and a simple and prominent skyline in between. Occasional foci do exist, however, such as small craggy hills, lochans and lodges;
- Views across the undulating moorland offer wide, open horizons and broad panoramas in all directions, providing visual connectivity with the higher mountain ranges to the north, west and south;
- The heather moors are defined by distinctive, geometric muirburn patterns which create an abstract mosaic of colour and texture across the slopes, and identify this as partly a manmade landscape where land management for grouse shooting is the primary activity;
- There are isolated fragments of native pine-birch woodland scattered across the area. This is an attractive feature which serves (by contrast) to emphasise the dominance of the horizontal dimension and unbroken skylines that predominate across the open landscape;
- The moorland plateau is dissected by a series of incised river valleys, many of which are flanked by estate access tracks leading into the moorland core. Distinctive rocky outcrops occur and the more steep-sided valleys, such as that of the River Findhorn at Drynachan, offer enclosed and intimate relief from the surrounding expansive moorland;
- The limited network of public roads through the area, lack of habitation and other built features and open character convey a sense of remoteness and isolation. This is reinforced by the notable consistency of this character throughout its extent. There is a strong sense of tranquillity in many parts of this landscape;
- Some access tracks are cut into the slope, resulting in visible excavation and consequent erosion; and
- Lochindorb stands out as the only major tract of open water in the area (largest surface body of water in East Highland plus whole of Grampian Region) and has the added interest of a ruined castle on an island in the middle. The loch has low-lying shores and is fringed with pockets of sheltered pastoral farmland, offering a pleasant contrast to the dominant surrounding moorland.

6.6.23. The citation also sets out its Special Qualities as:

- A Sense of Solitude, Views over Heather Moorland, and Big Skies
  - Expansive views and broad panoramas across open, rolling moorland and vast skies instil a boundless sense of scale and space, enhanced by the consistency of moorland cover and landform character;
  - A narrow, deep section of the Findhorn river valley at Streens offers enclosed and intimate relief in contrast to the elevated and exposed moorland. Elsewhere, valleys frame views to Lochindorb;
  - Land management practices create distinctive abstract muirburn patterns, accentuated by ever-changing weather and light patterns;
  - The limited extent of tree cover and human habitation creates a simple yet powerful moorland image of tranquillity, simplicity and isolation which is emphasized by Lochindorb and its ruined castle;
  - Where buildings exist, these are of a distinctive estate character. Also building remains from preclearance farmsteads, with enclosures, head dykes and associated field systems and improved landform one of the few built and 'managed' elements within the landscape. These engender a strong atmosphere which can arouse contemplative emotions of past human endeavour and hardship; and
  - The long, fairly straight routes through this landscape allow an easy appreciation of the openness and simplicity of the landscape. These are typically lined with permanent

snow poles which serve to reinforce the impression that this is a landscape exposed to adverse weather.

6.6.24. The citation identifies its sensitivity to change as follows:

- The undifferentiated moorland landscape, characterised by expansive horizons and broad panoramas may be diminished by further features which break up the composition;
- The sense of isolation, extensive panoramas and impression of wildness could be compromised by the introduction of further buildings or other structures;
- The consistency of appearance of the moorland character could be damaged by variation in land management practices that led to significant changes in the balance of ground cover types;
- The introduction of further woodland or forest development in areas of open moorland, remote from watercourses, which would break up the continuity of land cover and interrupt or obstruct views; and
- Key landscape management priorities should be to protect it from fragmentation and encroachment by unsympathetic forms of development which could disrupt the wide and uncluttered horizontal views.

6.6.25. Given that the Proposed Development is situated within the SLA, effects on it are considered further within this chapter.

6.6.26. The Sutors of Cromarty, Rosemarkie and Fort George SLA is situated over 20 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development. This area of intersecting firths and pointed headlands stretches from Port An Righ (just south of Shandwick) across the Sutors at the mouth of the Cromarty Firth, along the north-eastern edge of the Black Isle to take in Chanonry Point, then across the inner Moray Firth to take in Fort George and Whiteness Head.

6.6.27. With reference to the blade tip Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) at **Figure 6.2**, while it is acknowledged that there is some theoretical visibility from the SLA, due to its distance from the Proposed Development any effects would be very limited and would not be considered significant. As such effects on this SLA are not considered further within the assessment.

6.6.28. The Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA overlaps the south-western part of the study area and is situated over 25 km from the Proposed Development. With reference to the blade tip Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) at **Figure 6.2**, no theoretical visibility is predicted and as such effects on this SLA are not considered further within the assessment.

Wild Land Areas (WLA)

6.6.29. The Proposed Development is not located within a Wild Land Area (WLA). The nearest WLA is Area 20 Monadhliath situated approximately 18.6 km to the south-west of the Proposed Development. With reference to the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 6.2**, no theoretical visibility is predicted and as such effects on this WLA are not considered further within the assessment.

6.6.30. The Cairngorms WLA (Area 15) is situated approximately 20 km to the south of the Proposed Development within the boundary of the CNP and overlaps with the Cairngorms Mountains NSA.

6.6.31. With reference to the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 6.6**, there is limited theoretical visibility from the northern part of the WLA. At such distance from the Proposed Development any effects would not be considered significant.

6.6.32. Furthermore, the consultation response received from NatureScot (see **Section 6.4** above for further detail) also confirmed that separate wild land assessments of WLA 15 and WLA 20 were not required.

Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDL)

6.6.33. There are 26 GDLs located within the 45 km study area, with the nearest, Castle Grant, situated approximately 10.4 km to the south-east of the Proposed Development.

6.6.34. However, of the GDL located within the 20 km detailed study area, with reference to **Figure 6.6** showing landscape designations within 20 km overlaid with the blade tip ZTV, there is only very limited theoretical visibility from two GDLs, Regulas situated approximately 16.4 km to the north north-east and Darnaway Castle approximately 17.2 km to the north north-east. Actual visibility is restricted by surrounding forestry and given the respective distances from the Proposed Development, any effects would not be considered significant. As such effects on GDLs are not considered further within the assessment.

Published Landscape Character Descriptions

6.6.35. A review was undertaken of the following published sources of information regarding regional and local landscape character, landscape value and landscape capacity:

- *SNH National Landscape Character Assessment*, 2019;
- *Highland Council Onshore Wind Supplementary Guidance* (2016) and Addendum (2017);
- *Moray Wind Energy Landscape Capacity Study* (2017);
- *Cairngorm Renewable Energy Non-Statutory Guidance* (2021).

6.6.36. At this point, for clarity, it is necessary to distinguish between two terms that are frequently used in published guidance and this chapter. They originate from the '*Guidelines for Landscape Character Assessment'* (Countryside Agency and NatureScot, 2002):-

- Landscape Character Types (LCTs) are defined as tracts of landscape, which have a generic unity of character due to the particular combinations of landform, land cover, pattern and elements. The same landscape character type can occur at several different locations throughout a study area; and
- Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) are defined as discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape character type and can only occur at a single location.

National Landscape Character Types

6.6.37. In March 2019, SNH published an updated set of Landscape Character Type boundaries and descriptions, which includes mapping and descriptions which supersede earlier documents. Relevant landscape character types of relevance to the site are set out below.

National Landscape Character Types Covering the site

6.6.38. The proposed turbines and all associated development are located within LCT 291 Open Rolling Upland. The 'Key Characteristics' of this area are defined by NatureScot as follows:

- High, rolling moorland with gentle gradients and limited relief in the west becomes hillier in the eastern reaches;
- Simple, rolling landscape of heather moorland and grassland, with few plantations or structures, and the contrasting setting it provides for the occasional farmed valleys at the margins and close to roads;
- Interest provided by occasional natural and built point features in the simple landscape, such as lochans, summits, small farms, stone bridges, crofts and abandoned shielings;
- General lack of modern structures (pylons, wind turbines, masts and houses), particularly in the central area close to roads and the Dava Way, from where most people experience the area. However due to the openness of this landscape there are views to commercial wind energy development in neighbouring areas to the east;

- Elevated, open and expansive views across the landscape, and long distance views from the edge of the plateau to the north and south. Difference in extent and focus of views between east and west;
- Sense of remoteness from lack of roads and built development, coupled with abandoned buildings, rail lines and historic roads;

6.6.39. The character description notes the LCT as an '*elevated and expansive undulating plateau of rolling moorland with a series of rounded, broad gently sloping hills of relatively low height with some notable hills such as Hill of Braemoray'*. The description also notes the large loch and ruined castle at Lochindorb. It also notes the distant views across the Moray Basin and to the coast, along with the landmark hills on the fringes of the area. The description notes that Knock of Braemoray forms a prominent foci in in the western part of the LCT and from the A940.

6.6.40. As noted above, The '*Highland Council Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance'*, November 2016, considered this part of the landscape within its analysis of the sensitivity of the 'Black Isle, Surrounding Hills and Moray Firth Coast' landscape. The study identified a series of Landscape Character Types and this site lies within 'BL10: Tom na Clach, Lochindorb to Airdrie Mill, South of River Findhorn', which is described as an 'elevated and expansive undulating plateau with rounded hills rising to around 100-200 m above the general level of the plateau'.

6.6.41. The analysis of the 'Landscape Sensitivity' of the BL10 Area identified a score of '1' for Large Scale Wind Farm development (on a scale of 1-4, with 1 being the most susceptible to change).

Other National Landscape Character Types to be assessed

6.6.42. In order to consider the indirect effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character National LCTs within 45 km of the Proposed Development have been illustrated at **Figure 6.7**, and those located within the 20 km detailed study area are illustrated at **Figure 6.8**. The LCTs within 20 km have also been overlaid with the ZTV at **Figure 6.9**.

6.6.43. All LCTs located between 35 km and 45 km have been scoped out of any further assessment, as it is considered that there would be no potential for significant effects to arise at this distance

6.6.44. An initial sieving exercise has been undertaken to determine which LCTs would have the potential for significant effects to arise and would therefore require detailed consideration in this chapter. The intention has been to ensure that the level of attention given to each character type is proportionate to the likelihood of significant effects arising. The discussion below summarises the process followed in deciding which character types have the potential to experience significant effects and hence to scope out various character types from further consideration.

6.6.45. As set out in **Appendix 6.3** all LCTs present within the 35 km Study Area have been subject to this initial sieving exercise. The findings of this exercise are presented at **Table 1** of **Appendix 6.3**.

6.6.46. The LCTs considered in detail in this chapter are:

- LCT 122 Mountain Massif – Cairngorms;
- LCT 123 Smooth Rounded Hills - Cairngorms
- LCT 128 Forested Upland Fringe
- LCT 286 Narrow Wooded Valley - Moray & Nairn;
- LCT 290 Upland Moorland and Forestry – west of Ardlach; and
- LCT 291 Open Rolling Upland.

Local Landscape Description and Character Appraisal

6.6.47. A plan illustrating the landscape features/elements within the site and its immediate context (5 km radius of the turbines) is provided in **Figure 6.11**. The following discussion provides an overview of the physical and perceptual characteristics of the site and immediately surrounding landscape without particular reference to published landscape character types.

Topography

6.6.48. Topography within 45 km of the Proposed Development is illustrated in **Figure 6.10**.

6.6.49. The Proposed Development is situated on a gently sloping plateau that is surrounded by higher ground along its western, southern and eastern sides, forming a bowl around the site. The plateau falls is a broadly northerly direction from an elevation of approximately 360 m AOD at the south-western corner of the site and 380 m at the south-eastern corner, to approximately 280 m in the north-western corner of the site and approximately 300 m in its north-eastern corner.

6.6.50. The site is enclosed along its western edge by the hills of Creag a' Bhothain (398 m AOD), Carn na Sguabaich (466 m AOD), Carn Mòr, Carn Tòrr Mheadhin (545 m AOD), Carn an t-Sean-liathanaich (633 m AOD). This higher ground sweeps around the southern edge of the site, encompassing the high ground of Carn Gruamach (633 m AOD), Carn Glas-choire (659 m AOD, Viewpoint 1), the saddle of Cnapan a' Choire Odair Mhòir, Carn Mheadhoin and Carn Allt Laoigh and reducing in elevation towards the eastern edge of the site.

6.6.51. This ridge of high ground around the southern edge of the site separates the upland moorland plateau landscape to the north, from the Dulnain Valley to the south.

6.6.52. To the east, the narrow ridge of Carn nan Chach Garbha slopes down along the eastern edge of the site, separating it from the basin within which Lochindorb sits. Cam Ruigh Chorrach (484 m AOD) bounds the south-eastern side of the loch, with Hill of Aitnoch (413 m AOD) bordering the north-eastern corner of the site and to the north of Lochindorb.

6.6.53. This sweeping area of high ground that encloses the site forms part of the Monadhliath Mountains that extend in north-easterly direction through the study area from an elevation of approximately 707 m AOD at the south-western edge of the study and falling to an elevation of approximately 205 m AOD at the north-eastern edge of the study area.

6.6.54. The River Spey valley to the south-east of the site, separates this area of higher ground to the north-west from the highly prominent Cairngorm Mountains to the south-east that extend through the south-eastern part of the study area.

6.6.55. Overall, the topography of the site and its immediate environs is characterised as a sloping plateau enclosed by higher ground to the west, south and east.

Watercourses and Drainage

6.6.56. The Proposed Development is sited on a sloping plateau and is crossed by Leonach Burn, along the western edge of the site and Tomlachlan Burn in the centre of the site. These two burns flow in a broadly south to north direction towards the River Findhorn. The river flows in a broadly north-easterly direction off the Monadhliath Mountains in the south-western part of the study area and passes approximately 1 km to the north of the Proposed Development.

6.6.57. This river continues to flow in a broadly north-easterly direction towards Forres, eventually outfalling into the Moray Firth at Findhorn Bay. The river is fed by numerous small burns that flow down from the higher ground, joining the river at various points.

6.6.58. Elsewhere within the study area, the River Spey is the other main watercourse, flowing through the southern part of the study area at the foot of the Cairngorm Mountains, passing through

Aviemore, and continuing north-east towards Grantown-on-Spey and to Charlestown of Aberlour at the eastern edge of the study area.

6.6.59. Apart from these two main watercourses there are also several notable lochs present within the study area that include Lochindorb approximately 2.8 m to the east of the site and Loch Duntelchaig, approximately 26 km to the west of the Proposed Development and Loch Ness that overlaps the western edge of the 35 km study area.

Vegetation

6.6.60. The site of the Proposed Development occupies an area of approximately 1,458 hectares (ha) that is comprised entirely of heather moorland and rough grassland, with occasional small shrubs and trees dotted intermittently along the edge of the B9007 that borders the eastern edge of the site.

6.6.61. Much of the wider 20 km study area also comprises extensive areas of heather moorland, although there are large tracts of coniferous woodland extending across the northerly sloping hills that extend down towards the Moray Firth and the Findhorn Valley that extends through the 20 km study area in a south-west to north-east direction.

6.6.62. To the south of the site, there are further large areas of coniferous plantation woodland at lower elevations within the Spey Valley that extends through the south-eastern part of the 20 km study area.

Built Infrastructure

6.6.63. The site does not feature any built infrastructure due to its elevated moorland location. However, an existing moorland access track leads off the B9007, passing along the north-western edge of Carn nam Clach Garbha and passing through the southern edge of the site. The track then heads north before passing along the western edge of the site along the eastern edge of Leonach Burn. A further access track associated with the existing Tom na Clach Wind Farm to the west of the site, leads from the B9007 and passes through the northern edge of the site.

6.6.64. Within the wider landscape, there are numerous individual farmsteads and small groups of properties, villages and occasional small towns, situated mainly within the more settled valley landscapes, although there are some more remote and isolated properties on the raised upland plateaux associated with the small holdings, game keeping or management of the moorland.

6.6.65. The primary routes crossing through the 20 km comprise the A9, approximately 12 km to the south-west of the Proposed Development, the A95 situated approximately 11.6 km to the south-east passing through Strath Spey, the A938 approximately 9 km to the south, the A939 approximately 6.9 km to the east. There are also several B roads including the B9007 that passes along part of the eastern edge of the site and numerous minor roads that connect with the primary routes and provide access through the area. The Highland Main Line railway passes through the south-western part of the study area linking Inverness in the north with Perth to the south. The railway line follows a similar route to the A9 road.

6.6.66. Within the wider landscape there are several consented and operational wind farms as shown at **Figures 6.26** and **6.27**. The nearest operational wind farm to the site is Tom nan Clach Wind Farm situated approximately 5 km to the west comprising 13 turbines with a blade tip height of 125 m. Other operational wind farms include Moy Wind Farm approximately 11.8 km to the west and Farr Wind Farm approximately 17.9 km to the south-west. The consented Cairn Duhie Wind Farm is situated approximately 5.8 km to the north-east of the site, to the north-east of the B9007 and Hill of Aitnoch. This scheme is currently subject to a Section 36 application to the Scottish Government that was submitted in March 2021. The consented scheme comprises 20 turbines with a blade tip height of 110 m. In comparison, the revised proposal comprises 16 turbines with a blade tip height of 149.9 m.

Sensory and Perceptual Characteristics

6.6.67. The site comprises open moorland situated on a large-scale upland plateau, backed by low hills. It has a simple form, with a strong horizontal emphasis. This open, upland landscape combined with its moorland vegetation, lack of tree cover within the site and the fringe of hills to the west and south and the relatively juvenile woodland plantation to the north-east of the B9007 results a strong perception of openness and space.

6.6.68. Apart from the B9007 to the east of the site, a couple of access tracks that snake across the moorland and the existing Tom nan Clach Wind Farm to the west, there is little built form with the immediate vicinity of the site resulting in a perception of remoteness.

6.6.69. However, the moorland landscape also reflects the cultural importance of the landscape that has been shaped by human influences over thousands of years through its management and use for sport and recreation and for upland grazing.

6.6.70. The landscape's simple, open form allows broad sweeping views across it in all directions which extend west towards the chain of low hills that fringe the western edge of the plateaux and the hills to the south and east, with few prominent focal points within the vicinity of the site.

6.6.71. Existing large-scale wind farms at Tom nan Clach and within the wider landscape are an existing component of views across the landscape.

Forces for Future Change in the Landscape

6.6.72. The moorland on which the site is located is subject to seasonal changes in colour as the heather flowers. It is also subject to change through traditional forms of moorland management, which may over time change such as by introducing longer rotations between burning, or changes to vegetation resulting from re-wetting or rewilding which encourage greater habitat diversity.

6.6.73. To the east of the site and the B9007 is a large area of relatively young conifer woodland that will also influence the perceptual qualities of the landscape within the immediate vicinity of the site as it matures.

6.6.74. Within the wider landscape, there are several commercial wind energy developments consented, in planning or being considered at scoping which, if consented, would alter the existing nature of the landscape..

6.6.75. In addition to the consented or proposed development within the vicinity of the site it is widely recognised that climate change will have an impact on the future character of the Scottish landscape through changes to weather conditions that will in turn result in changes to vegetation that will affect the intrinsic character of the landscape.

Visual Receptors

6.6.76. With reference to the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 6.2**, despite the height of the proposed turbines (185 m to blade tip) the broad bowl within which the site is located restricts the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development to a principal area extending approximately 5 km to the south, 10 km to the north-west and 20 km to the north, north-east and south-east. Beyond these distances visibility is much more patchier and intermittent with no further visibility to the west (north through to south) and some patchy visibility towards the Moray coastline and within the Cromdale Hills to the south-east and within the more elevated parts of the Cairngorms.

6.6.77. It was determined that there was no potential for the Proposed Development to result in any significant visual effects at distances over 20 km from the site, and furthermore, that with distance from the site, the likelihood of significant visual effects occurring incrementally decreases. Therefore, whilst the primary study area for this LVIA extends out to 45 km and the

various figures which accompany this report illustrate a 45 km study area, sensitive visual receptors are identified with a decreasing level of detail with distance from the site.

6.6.78. Interpretation of the ZTVs (**Figure 6.2** and **Figures 6.14 to 6.17**) assisted identifying potentially sensitive visual receptors of the Proposed Development. Principal visual receptors within the surrounding landscape are illustrated at **Figures 6.12 and 6.13** and are identified below.

Residential Receptors and Settlements

6.6.79. Residential visual receptors have been identified in bands of distance from the nearest turbine with a greater level of detail provided in relation to those properties nearest to the Proposed Development, although it is recognised that there may be views from individual properties and clusters of properties throughout the wider study area.

6.6.80. With reference to the blade tip ZTVs at **Figure 6.2** and **Figures 6.14 to 6.17** only those properties or settlements with theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development have been identified below. Those settlements with no theoretical visibility have not been considered further within this chapter. Residential receptors are also shown on **Figure 6.11**.

Residential Properties within 2 km

6.6.81. Ongoing design development of the scheme and the reduction in the number of proposed turbines from 36 to 17, has resulted in no residential properties now being present within 2 km of the proposed turbines.

Residential Properties and Settlements within 2 to 5 km

6.6.82. Beyond 2 km of the Proposed Development, the nearest residential properties are:

- Banchor – approximately 3.2 km to the north north-west.
- Drumlochan – approximately 3.6 km to the north north-east;
- Dulsie – approximately 3.7 km to the north;
- Dulsie Cottage – approximately 3.4 km to the north;
- Dunearn Lodge – approximately 2.5 km to the north north-east;
- Knockandhu – approximately 2.6 km to the north-east;
- Little Aitnoch – approximately 4.6 km to the north-east;
- Lochindorb Lodge – approximately 3.2 km to the east;
- Milltown - approximately 3.8 km to the north north-east;
- Refouble – approximately 2.9 km to the north-east;
- The Kennels, Glenferness – approximately 4.8 km to the north north-east; and
- Tirriemore – approximately 3.6 km to the east.

6.6.83. Due to the relative remoteness of the site there are no settlements located within 5 km from the site.

Settlements within 5 to 10 km

6.6.84. There are no settlements situated between 5 and 10 km from the site. However, there are several small clusters of properties with theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development. These are:

- Dava - approximately 7.3 km to the east north-east; and
- Ferness – approximately 7.7 km to the north north-east.

Settlements 10 to 15 km

6.6.85. Although there are several larger settlements within this distance band from the site comprising Boat of Garten, Carrbridge, Grantown-on-Spey, Nethy Bridge, and Tomatin none have theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.

Settlements 15 to 20 km

6.6.86. The coastal town of Nairn is situated approximately 17.7 km to the north of the site. The southern parts of the settlements of Boat of Garten and Nethby Bridge overlap into this distance band but do not experience any theoretical visibility of the development as noted above.

Settlements beyond 20 km

6.6.87. Beyond 20 km there a several settlements with some theoretical visibility of the development. These comprise:

- Findhorn – approximately 28.2 km to the north north-east;
- Forres – approximately 21.6 km to the north north-east; and
- Kinloss - approximately 27 km to the north north-east.

6.6.88. An initial sieving exercise has been undertaken of the identified properties and settlements to determine which have the potential for significant effects to arise and would therefore require detailed consideration in this chapter. The intention has been to ensure that the level of attention given is proportionate to the likelihood of significant effects arising. The findings of the initial sieving exercise are presented at **Table 2** of **Appendix 6.4**.

6.6.89. This sieving exercise identified that all individual properties within 2 to 5 km and settlements within 5 and 10 km have the potential to be significantly affected. The effects on these receptors are considered further at **Section 6.7**.

Core Paths

6.6.90. Within the 45 km study area there are numerous core paths, the majority of which are concentrated around Loch Ness, approximately 35 km to the west, around Inverness, approximately 25 km to the north-west, around Nairn on the Moray coast, approximately 20 km to the north and to the north of Inverness around the Cromarty Firth.

6.6.91. Core paths considered within this assessment are shown overlaid with the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 6.13**.

Core Paths within 5 km

6.6.92. There are no core paths located within 5 km of the Proposed Development.

Core Paths within 5 to 10 km

6.6.93. The only core path located within 5 and 10 km of the Proposed Development is the Dava Way core path (THC Reference BS05.01 and Moray DA01 – DA05) is situated approximately 7.4 km to the east at its closet point.

Core Paths within 10 to 20 km

6.6.94. Core paths with theoretical visibility located within 10 to 20 km of the Proposed Development comprise:

- Core path BS05.01 - Dava Way, located approximately 7.4 km to the east;
- Core path NA01.01 - Auldearn to Newmill by Lethen Road Wood, located approximately 16.5 km to the north near Auldearn;
- Core path NA04.07 - Nairn to Auldearn, located approximately 17.7 km to the north near between Nairn and Auldearn;
- Core path NA04.08 - Tradespark Wood link, located approximately 18.8 km to the north north-west at Nairn;
- Core path NA04.09 - Newton Path to shore, located approximately 19.0 km to the north north-west at Nairn;

- Core path NA04.10 - Nairn Harbour to Forres through Culbin Forest, located approximately 19.6 km to the north north-west at Nairn;
- Core path NA04.11 - Tiraluin path, located approximately 18.8 km to the north north-west at Nairn;
- Core path NA04.12 - Altonburn path, located approximately 19.1 km to the north north-west at Nairn;
- Core path NA04.13 - Delnies Circular, located approximately 18.6 km to the north north-west at Nairn; and
- Core path NA04.20 - Moss-side Broadley Road, located approximately 17.8km to the north north-west at Nairn.

6.6.95. An initial sieving exercise has been undertaken to determine which core paths have the potential for significant effects to arise and would therefore require detailed consideration in this chapter. The intention has been to ensure that the level of attention given to each core path is proportionate to the likelihood of significant effects arising. The findings of the initial sieving exercise are presented at **Table 3** of **Appendix 6.4**.

6.6.96. This sieving exercise identified that the following routes have the potential to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development:

- Core path Dava Way, at Dava.

6.6.97. The effects on this core path are considered at **Section 6.7**.

Recreational Routes

6.6.98. There are no recreational or long-distance walking routes (Scotland's Great Trails) within the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Development. The nearest long-distance walking route is the Dava Way, a 38 km walking route between Grantown-on-Spey and Forres. The route passes through the eastern part of the study area.

6.6.99. With reference to the Principal Visual Receptors overlaid with the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 6.13** there are two sections of the route with predicated theoretical visibility, near Dava and further north at Beachans. There is potential for significant effects to occur near Dava but not near Beachans due to the increased distance from the Proposed Development and the additional screening provided by woodland cover in this section of the route. Therefore, potential effects on the Dava Way at Dava are considered further in this assessment.

6.6.100. The Speyside Way and the Moray Coastal Trail also cross through parts of the 45 km study area. The initial sieving exercise presented at **Appendix 6.4 Table 3**, identified that there is no potential for effects on the Speyside Way and very limited potential for effects from the Moray Coastal Trail, with no effects considered to be significant. As such these routes are not considered further within the assessment.

6.6.101. In terms of long-distance cycling routes that pass through the 45 km study area, National Cycle Network Route (NCNR) 7 connecting Sunderland and Inverness passes to the south-west of the Proposed Development following the A9 corridor and the Schlod Pass approximately 10 km to the south-west of the Proposed Development. With reference to at **Figure 6.13** there is no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.

6.6.102. National Cycle Network Route (NCNR) 1 from Dover in England to the Highlands of Scotland passes along the Moray Coast through the northern part of the study area, approximately 12.4 km to the north north-west of the Proposed Development near Piperhill. There is also theoretical visibility along the short sections of the route between Nairn and Kinloss. However, due to distances of between 18 km and to approximately 30 km from the Proposed Development and its perpendicular orientation from the route it is considered that there would be very limited potential for any effects to occur, with views likely to be screened by extensive

forestry plantation on the sloping hills to the south. Any effects would be very minimal and would not be considered significant.

6.6.103. Effects on Cycle Routes are not considered further within the assessment.

Road and Rail Network

6.6.104. An extensive network of major and minor roads traverses through the landscape within the 45 km study area.

A Roads

6.6.105. There are no motorways located within the 45 km study area, but other main routes include:

- A9 passes approximately 10.4 km to the south-west of the Proposed Development;
- A82 passes through the western edge of the study area along the shore of Loch Ness, approximately 28 km from the Proposed Development;
- A86 passes approximately 40 km to the south-west of the Proposed Development near Kingussie;
- A95 passes approximately 12.2 km to the south-east of the Proposed Development near linking Aviemore, Grantown-on-Spey and Charlestown of Aberlour;
- A96 passes through the northern part of the study area along the Moray Coast between Inverness, Nairn, Forres and Elgin;
- A831, A832, A833, A834, A835, A862 are all located in the north-western part of the study area to the north-west of Inverness at over 30 km from the Proposed Development;
- A920 is situated approximately 40 km to the east of the Proposed Development between Dufftown and Huntly;
- A938 passes approximately 10 km to the south of the Proposed Development between Carrbridge and Grantown-on-Spey;
- A939 passes to the east of the Proposed Development linking Nairn in the north and Grantown-on-Spey to the south. It passes approximately 5 km to the east of the Proposed Development at its closest point near Aitnoch;
- A940 leads off the A939 at Dava, approximately 7 km to the east of the Proposed Development and continues in a northerly direction towards Forres; and
- A941 passes through the eastern part of the 45 km study area between Elgin and Rhynnie (outwith the study area) and is approximately 39 km to the east of the Proposed Development at its closest point.

B Roads

6.6.106. Within the 20 km detailed study area there are a number of B roads that comprise:

- B9007 passing along the eastern edge of the site;
- B970 situated approximately 13 km to the south-east of the Proposed Development between Boat of Garten and Speybridge;
- B9102 situated approximately 12 km to the south-east of the Proposed Development between Grantown-on-Spey and Charlestown of Aberlour;
- B851, B9006, B9039, B9090, B9091 and B9092 over 15 km to the north of the Proposed Development between Inverness and Nairn;
- B9154 between Craggie and Moy, approximately 13 km to the west of the Proposed Development; and
- B9153 south of Carrbridge, approximately 12 km to the south of the Proposed Development.

Minor Roads

6.6.107. There is an extensive network of minor roads throughout the wider 45 km study area and the 20 km detailed study area. Of particular relevance to the assessment is the minor road passing along the shoreline of Lochindorb between the B9007 and the A939. Effects on this road are considered further within the assessment.

Railways

6.6.108. The Highland Line passes through the western part of the study area following the A9 corridor through the Schold Pass, approximately 12.4 km to the south-east at its closest point. The volunteer run Strathspey Railway linking Aviemore, Boat of Garten and Broomhill passes approximately 13.1 km to the south-east of the Proposed Development at its closest point.

6.6.109. An initial sieving exercise has been undertaken to determine which roads with theoretical visibility have the potential for significant effects to arise and would therefore require detailed consideration in this chapter. The intention has been to ensure that the level of attention is proportionate to the likelihood of significant effects arising. The findings of the initial sieving exercise are presented at **Table 4** of **Appendix 6.4**.

6.6.110. This sieving exercise identified that the following routes have the potential to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development:

- A939;
- A940; and
- B9007.

6.6.111. Additionally, effects on the minor road, Shore Road at Lochindorb are considered further within the assessment.

6.6.112. The effects on these routes are considered at **Section 6.7** below.

Recreation and Tourism

6.6.113. Within the 45 km study area the Cairngorm National Park is one of the main tourism destinations attracting thousands of visitors each who visit to appreciate its dramatic scenery, participate in a range of winter and summer sports, and appreciate its dark sky qualities at the Cairngorms Dark Sky Park.

6.6.114. The Dark Sky Park is situated to the south-east of the Cromdale Hills between Glenlivet and Tomintoul and extends south-eastwards to the Ladder Hills. With reference to the lit turbine hub height ZTV at **Figure 6.X**, there is very limited theoretical visibility of the lit turbine hubs from the Dark Sky Park. Situated over 19.4 km to the south-east of the Proposed Development, with numerous other light sources within the intervening landscape comprising farms, properties and settlements such as Grantown-on-Spey, any effects would be very limited and would not be considered significant. As such effects on the Dark Sky Park are not considered further within the assessment.

6.6.115. Other main destinations for tourism include Loch Ness and the Moray Coast to the north. With reference to the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 6.2** there is no predicted theoretical visibility from Loch Ness and therefore it is not considered further. There is predicted visibility from the Moray Coast between Nairn and Kinloss. However, at over 20 km to the north of the Proposed Development any effects would be minimal and not significant.

6.6.116. Effects on the Special Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park which underpin its designation are considered further within **Appendix 6.6**.

Assessment Viewpoints

6.6.117. The following table sets out the viewpoints considered as part of this assessment. These viewpoints have been derived through desk-based, on-site analysis, interpretation of ZTVs and through consideration of the viewpoints used in the assessment of other nearby wind farms. The assessment viewpoints have also been consulted on with THC, Moray Council and NatureScot.

6.6.118. Following submission of the request for a scoping opinion and subsequent further design iteration and a further reduction in the number of proposed turbines down to 17, the viewpoint from the Huntly's Cave area has not been included within the assessment. This is because there is no longer any predicted theoretical visibility from this area.

6.6.119. The viewpoints are representative of the range of views towards the Proposed Development. They are not intended to cover every single view but are representative of a range of distances from the site and receptor types (e.g. residents, walkers, road users) and have been used to inform the assessment of effects on landscape character, the visual assessment, the cumulative assessment, the assessment of effects from routes and the assessment of effects on the Special Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park.

6.6.120. **Table 6.3** identifies the 16 assessment viewpoints. The locations of these viewpoints are illustrated on **Figures 6.2 and 6.3**.

Table 6.3 – Assessment Viewpoints

VP no.	Location	OS Grid Reference	Approx. Distance to nearest turbine	Receptor Type
1	Carn Glas-choire	289147, 829164	5.76 km	Walkers
2	Minor Road north of Drynachan	286582, 840960	6.78 km	Road users
3	B9007 near Lochindorb	294274, 838059	0.9 km	Road users
4	Creag Ealraich	294315, 830467	3.78 km	Walkers
5	Meall a' Bhreacraibh	280015, 835296	11.88 km	Walkers
6	Shore Road Lochindorb	298223, 837166	4.7 km	Road users and visitors
7	Dava Way	300956, 838477	7.48 km	Walkers
8	A939 at Milestone	296698, 843721	6.94 km	Road users
9	Gorton Hill	301124, 829535	9.03 km	Walkers
10	Beinn Mhor	299342, 828170	0.86 km	Walkers
11	Creagan a Chaise	310420, 824179	19.75 km	Walkers
12	Meall a'Bhuachaille Cairn	299090, 811543	23.28 km	Walkers

VP no.	Location	OS Grid Reference	Approx. Distance to nearest turbine	Receptor Type
13	Minor Road, near Dunearn Fort	293563, 840498	2.85 km	Road users
14	Ardclach Bell Tower	295376, 845329	8 km	Visitors
15	Lymore on the A939	306520, 824088	16.61 km	Road users
16	Summit of the Knock of Braemoray	300946, 841412	8.36 km	Walkers

6.6.121. An initial sieving exercise has been undertaken to determine which viewpoints would have the potential for significant effects to arise and would therefore require detailed consideration in this chapter.

6.6.122. The intention has been to ensure that the level of attention given to each viewpoint is proportionate to the likelihood of significant effects arising. The findings of the initial sieving exercise are presented at **Table 1** of **Appendix 6.4**.

6.6.123. This sieving exercise identified that the following viewpoints have the potential to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development:

- Viewpoint 1 – Carn Glas-choire;
- Viewpoint 3 – B9007 near Lochindorb;
- Viewpoint 4 – Creag Ealraich;
- Viewpoint 6 – Shore Road, Lochindorb;
- Viewpoint 7 – Dava Way;
- Viewpoint 8 – A939 at Milestone;
- Viewpoint 9 – Gorton Hill;
- Viewpoint 10 – Beinn Mhor;
- Viewpoint 11 – Creagan a Chaise;
- Viewpoint 12 – Meall a' Bhuachaille Cairn;
- Viewpoint 13 – Minor road, near Dunearn Fort; and
- Viewpoint 14 – Ardclach Bell Tower.

6.6.124. **Appendix 6.5** provides a baseline description of the view from each assessment viewpoint identified in the initial sieving process as having the potential to experience significant effects, followed by a detailed analysis and assessment of the effects.

6.7. Potential Effects

6.7.1. Following a brief summary of the Proposed Development, this section of the LVIA considers the effects of the Proposed Development on the physical features of the site (landscape fabric), landscape character, and visual amenity. It considers the effects at three different stages in the lifetime of the Proposed Development:

- during construction of the Proposed Development;
- during the operational lifetime of the Proposed Development; and
- during decommissioning of the Proposed Development after 30 years of operation.

6.7.2. Effects during the first and third of these phases are considered to be temporary and would have a short duration. Effects associated with the operational phase of the Proposed Development are considered to be long-term, reversible effects.

Project Description

6.7.3. A detailed description of the Proposed Development is set out in **Chapter 3**. The Proposed Development description below summarises those details of the Proposed Development that have particular relevance to this LVIA.

6.7.4. The Proposed Development will principally comprise the following visible features which may have an impact on landscape character or visual amenity:

- 17 wind turbines up to 185 m to blade tip. The proposed turbines are three bladed horizontal axis machines; the finish and colour of the turbines will be semi-matt and pale grey in colour);
- associated transformers and switchgear at each turbine as well as an energy storage system;
- site access off the B9007;
- on-site access tracks;
- crane hardstandings adjacent to each turbine;
- underground cabling;
- on-site substation and maintenance building;
- energy storage facility;
- temporary construction compound;
- laydown area;
- potential excavations/borrow workings; and
- permanent meteorological mast.

6.7.5. The Proposed Development will re-use and share the existing infrastructure from the operational Tom nan Clach Wind Farm where possible, this includes the site entrance and access track from the B9007 across the northern boundary of the site.

Effects during Construction on Existing Landscape Features

6.7.6. As identified in the baseline section, the existing landscape features present on the site are:

- Moorland;
- Minor watercourses; and
- Existing access tracks.

6.7.7. The Proposed Development will be accessed via two existing access points that lead west from the B9007. The northerly access utilises the existing access for Tom nan Clach Wind Farm, while the southerly access, 2.5 km to the south utilises an existing access off the B9007.

6.7.8. From the north, new access tracks will commence to the west of Tom nan Clach Burn leading from the existing wind farm access track with approximately 14.5 km of new access tracks being constructed.

6.7.9. The construction phase would result in the removal of moorland vegetation and other such ground-level vegetation, through the construction of access tracks, borrow pits, turbine foundations, crane pads, a substation, control building, battery storage, a temporary construction compound and watercourse crossings. Underground electricity cables will generally follow access tracks.

6.7.10. Moorland vegetation would be removed to allow construction of foundations for the various elements. Soils stripped as part of the establishment works will be stored appropriately for use during reinstatement works on completion of construction activities.

6.7.11. Three borrow pits have been proposed which would result in the temporary disturbance of the ground. As they are located on the western side of localised high ground within the site, in the

northern part of the site and two on the western side of the ridge of high ground, Carn nan Clach Garbha at the south-eastern corner of the site but would not result in additional visual effects beyond the site.

6.7.12. The sensitivity of the moorland vegetation is considered to be low-medium. The site is situated within the Drynachan, Lochindrob and Dava Moors SLA which increases it landscape value. Although it is noted as a characteristic landscape element in the character description of the Open Rolling Upland LCT (LCT 291), within which the site sits, it is a partly man-made element that has evolved over time through the area's ongoing management as grouse moorland for sport. The ongoing change and modification resulting from moorland management practices, lowers its susceptibility.

6.7.13. The moorland would experience a medium magnitude of change resulting from the construction of new access tracks, laydown areas, crane pads and turbine foundations, affecting a small part of the overall moorland, with large areas of open moorland to the west and east of the site remaining. The overall level of effect on the moorland resulting from the Proposed Development is considered to be **moderate minor**, which is not considered to be significant.

6.7.14. Watercourses are judged to have a moderate sensitivity as they are susceptible to changes which affect their course or their quality. The proposed turbines have been located away from watercourse channels. Therefore, it is only where new internal access tracks cross these landscape features where there is potential for construction effects to occur. At present a total of 9 new crossings are proposed. Effects on the minor watercourses crossing the site would be limited and controlled through best-practice construction and environmental practices, such that there would be no greater than a low magnitude change and a **moderate minor** level of effect which would not be significant.

6.7.15. The existing access tracks are man-made elements, with the northerly track forming part of the access track to Tom nan Clach Wind Farm. As such the existing access tracks are judged to have low value and susceptibility and an overall low sensitivity. Only a small proportion of the tracks would need upgrading (estimated at **Chapter 3** as 5.58%) resulting in only a low magnitude of change a **minor** level of effect that would not be considered significant.

Summary of effects on existing landscape features

6.7.16. The Proposed Development would result in no greater than a **moderate minor** level of effect to existing landscape features on the site, with none of the effects considered significant.

Assessment of Effects on Landscape Character

6.7.17. The LCTs covering the study area are shown on **Figures 6.7 and 6.8** and LCTs within 20 km of the Proposed Development overlaid with the ZTV at **Figure 6.9**.

6.7.18. As explained in the baseline section at **paragraph 6.6.40**, an initial filtering process has been carried of the National Landscape Character Types (LCT) which has identified in addition to Open Rolling Upland LCT (LCT 291) in which the Proposed Development is sited, a further four LCTs that have the potential to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development. These are (**Table 6.4**):

Table 6.4 – Landscape Character Types considered in the assessment

Landscape Character Type	Location relative to the Proposed Development
LCT 122 Mountain Massif - Cairngorms	Extensive LCT occupying Cairngorms Mountains approximately 23.6 km to the south the Proposed Development
LCT 123 Smooth Rounded Hills - Cairngorms	Situated along the eastern fringes of the Cairngorm Mountains approximately 17 km to the south-east of the Proposed Development

Landscape Character Type	Location relative to the Proposed Development
LCT 128 Forested Upland Fringe	Broad area to the south of Nethy Bridge situated approximately 14 km to the south south-east of the Proposed Development at its closest point
LCT 286 Narrow Wooded Valley - Moray & Nairn	Situated within the Findhorn Valley, extending from approximately 1.4 km to the north of the Proposed Development to over 20 km.
LCT 290 Upland Moorland and Forestry	Area encompassing Newlands of Fleenas Wood to the west of Ardclach, situated approximately 3.8 km from the Proposed Development
LCT 291 Open Rolling Upland	Covers the site and extends approximately 5 km to the south, 15 km to the north-west and to over 20 km north-east

Sensitivity of Landscape Character to Wind Energy Development

6.7.19. The first stage in assessing the effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character is to evaluate the sensitivity of the landscape across the study area to the type of change proposed at the site. As indicated within GLVIA3, sensitivity of landscape character should be determined through a consideration of both susceptibility to change and any values associated with the landscape.

6.7.20. The overall sensitivity of landscape character is essentially an expression of a landscape's ability to accommodate a particular type of change, either directly within that landscape, or indirectly in a separate part of the wider landscape with which there is some degree of intervisibility. It varies depending on the physical and perceptual attributes of the landscape including but not necessarily limited to: scale; degree of openness; landform; existing land cover; landscape pattern and complexity; the extent of human influence in the landscape; the degree of remoteness/wildness; perception of change in the landscape; the importance of landmarks or skylines in the landscape; intervisibility with and influence on surrounding areas; condition; rarity and scenic quality of the landscape, and any values placed on the landscape, including any designations that may apply. For the wider landscape, where only indirect effects on landscape character would have the potential to occur, the key element which defines the susceptibility of that landscape to the proposed development is the degree of intervisibility with the landscape in which the development is proposed. In some cases, the importance of intervisibility with surrounding landscapes will be specifically listed as a characteristic of published landscape character areas. However, even where this is not explicitly stated, there will always be some degree of visual relationship between a landscape and its wider surroundings, and this matter is therefore considered in the field during the site work which is undertaken to help inform the judgements of susceptibility for each part of the landscape. However, it is recognised that where views of the surrounding landscape are not listed as a key characteristic of a landscape, it would not be expected that a proposed development in that separate adjoining landscape would be able to impact on the key characteristics of that first area.

6.7.21. The discussion below analyses the susceptibility and value of each of the LCTs taken forward into the assessment stage, and then combines these to provide an overall judgement of sensitivity. This analysis takes account of the *Highland Council Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance* (OWESG), as discussed further below, and was also informed by further desk and field study.

Highland Council Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (2016) and Addendum (2017)

6.7.22. THC OWESG and Addendum considers the landscape sensitivity to large-scale wind farms, small individual turbines and access infrastructure. Presently, the development guidance includes landscape sensitivity appraisals and strategic capacity conclusions for a number of areas. It uses the 2019 National Landscape Character Areas and refines or groups these as appropriate and assigns a reference code and a geographic place name to identify Landscape Character Areas within the Landscape Character Type.

6.7.23. The study considers characteristics such as landform, complexity, land cover, habitation and enclosure in order to inform a judgement of landscape sensitivity, ascribing a score of one to four, where one is most susceptible. It also considers other factors such as key views, key routes, gateways, visual receptors and current wind energy development before making a judgement about the area's potential for wind energy development.

6.7.24. It is also important to note that the judgement within the OWESG is a judgement concerning how sensitive each character type is to wind energy development being deployed within that specific unit. As noted previously, this is not necessarily the same as being of a particular sensitivity to wind farm development in an adjacent or distant character unit, which may only result in indirect effects on landscape character. The sensitivity of the character unit to wind energy development in an adjoining or distant character unit would typically be lower. This is because at any given location in a landscape, whilst features of the wider landscape do help to characterise that area, the physical features and perceptual characteristics of the landscape in the immediate vicinity have a far greater impact on character and one's sense of landscape character than distant features, no matter how tall they may be.

6.7.25. Therefore, whilst the OWESG was a useful tool to help inform the consideration of the susceptibility and value of the LCTs set out below, it should be noted that the findings of the OWESG have not been adopted verbatim. Rather the approach taken has been to seek to provide a sensitivity rating for each area in line with the approach advocated in GLVIA3, whilst taking the OWESG into consideration.

LCT 122 Mountain Massif – Cairngorms

6.7.26. The part of this LCT falling within 35 km of the Proposed Development is situated over 23 km to the south of the site and extends to include the high peaks of Cairn Gorm, Ben Avon, Cairn Toul and Braeriach. It is a massive scale landscape, with dramatic, exposed high peaks and boulder strewn summits that afford long-range views to adjacent landscapes, separated by deep glens that provide a contrasting sense of enclosure and seclusion. The area has a distinct alpine character, with low-growing vegetation and a general absence of trees, few settlements but with infrastructure associated with its use a winter resort. It is a remote and distinctive mountainous area with a strong wild character.

6.7.27. The value of the LCT is assessed as very high. It is a large-scale landscape with a distinctive mountainous form situated within part of a nationally designated landscape that is a highly popular destination visited for its dramatic scenery and its outdoor recreation opportunities.

6.7.28. The susceptibility of the LCT, as a result of its intervisibility with the Proposed Development, is assessed as very high. The LCT is considered to be highly susceptible to indirect effects that could affect its perceptual qualities.

6.7.29. The value of the LCT combined with its susceptibility to the Proposed Development results in the LCT having an overall very high sensitivity.

LCT 123 Smooth Rounded Hills – Cairngorms

6.7.30. The part of this LCT falling within 35 km of the Proposed Development is situated approximately 17 km to the south-east. It provides the north-eastern foothills of the higher Cairngorm Mountains. It is characterised by its gently sloping, smooth rounded landform, dissected by small burns and broad glens, with scattered tree cover on the valley floors and geometric conifer plantations, occasional remote settlements and estate houses while still providing a perception of openness and remoteness. The LCT extends to include the Hills of Cromdale to the south-east of Grantown-on-Spey.

6.7.31. The value of the LCT is assessed as very high. It is a large-scale landscape, with a strong sense of remoteness and openness with panoramic views available from roads and from walking routes on the hills that provide opportunities for recreation.

6.7.32. The susceptibility of the LCT, as a result of its intervisibility with the Proposed Development, is assessed as very high. The LCT is considered to be highly susceptible to indirect effects that could affect its perceptual qualities.

6.7.33. The value of the LCT combined with its susceptibility to the Proposed Development results in the LCT having an overall very high sensitivity.

LCT 128 Forested Upland Fringe

6.7.34. The part of the LCT brought forward into detailed assessment is situated to the south of Nethy Bridge and is approximately 14 km to the south south-east of the Proposed Development. The area is located on the northern fringe of the Cairngorm Mountains, with a ridge of high ground along its south-western flanks. Sitting below the high ground, the area is situated above the valley floor, has a more intimate scale, and is extensively forested which creates a sense of seclusion.

6.7.35. The value of the LCT is assessed as very high. It is a small to medium-scale landscape, situated within a nationally designated landscape, with numerous recreation opportunities throughout the Abernathy Forest and around Loch Garten.

6.7.36. The susceptibility of the LCT, as a result of its intervisibility with the Proposed Development, is assessed as medium to very high. While the lower-lying wooded areas are considered to have a lower susceptibility on account of the enclosure and reduced intervisibility with adjacent LCTs, the areas of high ground along its south-western edge that includes the Meall a' Bhuachaille (Viewpoint 12) are considered to be more highly susceptible to in direct effects due to the available views to adjacent LCTs.

6.7.37. The value of the LCT combined with its susceptibility to the Proposed Development results in the LCT having an overall very high sensitivity.

LCT 286 Narrow Wooded Valley - Moray & Nairn

6.7.38. The LCT is situated approximately 1.4 km to the north of the Proposed Development, extending to over through the Findhorn Valley. The LCT follows the narrow, river valley which winds its way through the landscape resulting in a variety of geological features along its course. The valley is predominantly wooded with a range of species and ages, punctuated with small pockets of pasture and managed farmland, with few roads and occasional stone bridges providing crossing points over the river. The OWESG notes that the LCT marks that transition from upland moorland forestry to the open rolling upland, while also noting that the LCT is generally hidden from view outwith its own boundary.

6.7.39. The value of the LCT is assessed as medium, rising to high in the south. It is an intimate-scale landscape, with extensive wooded valley sides. The southern part of the LCT west of Dunearn overlaps with the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA, which is indicative of increased scenic qualities, elevating the value of this part of the LCT to high.

6.7.40. The susceptibility of the LCT, as a result of its intervisibility with the Proposed Development, is assessed as high. The intimate scale of the landscape, together with its enclosed nature and general absence of modern development increases its susceptibility.

6.7.41. The value of the LCT combined with its susceptibility to the Proposed Development results in the LCT having an overall medium high sensitivity.

LCT 290 Upland Moorland and Forestry

6.7.42. The part of the LCT brought forward into detailed assessment sits to the north of the Findhorn Valley at approximately 3.8 km to the north of the Proposed Development. The area is characterised by its broad rounded hills and lower interior that provides the transition from the Rolling Farmland and Forests to the north. The area is predominantly forestry, interspersed with areas of pasture. The high points of Lethen Bar in the north-eastern part of the LCT and Cairn na Caillich form prominent focal points within the area, shrouded with large-scale forestry blocks. Apart from the A939 that crosses through the northern part of the area there are relatively few roads and only a few properties that are widely scattered across the area.

6.7.43. The value of the LCT is assessed as medium. It is not covered by a landscape designation that would indicate particular scenic qualities, however, it has a perception of remoteness and ruggedness.

6.7.44. The susceptibility of the LCT, because of its intervisibility with the Proposed Development, is assessed as high. The intimate scale of the landscape, together with its enclosed nature and general absence of modern development increases its susceptibility.

6.7.45. The value of the LCT combined with its susceptibility to the Proposed Development results in the LCT having an overall medium sensitivity in the northern part and medium high sensitivity in the southern part.

LCT 291 Open Rolling Upland

6.7.46. This LCT comprises two parts. The larger of the two, in which the Proposed Development is located, extends from the Strathdearn Hills in the west and into Moray, while the smaller part is located to the north-west across the Findhorn Valley. The is characterised as a large-scale upland moorland landscape with a gently rolling profile. It comprises heather moorland and grassland and has a sense of remoteness due to the lack of built development and roads. It has a relatively remote interior due to higher hills on the edges of the interior that restrict visibility into the inner area from adjacent areas. Tom nan Clach Wind Farm is located within the western edge of the LCT, while the consented Cairn Duhie Wind Farm is situated within the northern part of the LCT to the north of Dava (considered further within the cumulative assessment). The existing Pauls Hill and Clash Gour wind farms are also located within the eastern part of the LCT. The existing Moy Wind Farm is located within an adjacent LCT near the smaller unit of this LCT.

6.7.47. The value of the LCT is assessed as medium in the north, rising to high in the south which overlaps with the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA, which is indicative of increased scenic qualities, elevating the value of this part of the LCT to high.

6.7.48. The susceptibility of the LCT, as a result of the direct effects resulting from the Proposed Development, is assessed as high. The Proposed Development would be located directly within the larger part of this LCT and would have the potential to result in the loss of some landscape elements. It would also have the potential to impact on the visual characteristics of the LCT, However, the area's susceptibility is moderated to a degree by the presence of existing wind farm development, access tracks and associated infrastructure which influence its baseline character thereby reducing the area's susceptibility to the introduction of further wind turbines.

6.7.49. The value of the LCT combined with its susceptibility to the Proposed Development results in the LCT having an overall high sensitivity. The OWESG notes that the LCT is most susceptible to large scale wind farms, yet also acknowledges that the nature of the landscape is not inherently incompatible with wind energy development.

Summary of Landscape Character Sensitivity

Table 6.5 – Landscape Character Sensitivity

Landscape Character Type	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
LCT 122 Mountain Massif - Cairngorms	Very high	Very high	Very high
LCT 123 Smooth Rounded Hills - Cairngorms	Very high	Very high	Very high
LCT 128 Forested Upland Fringe	Very high	Medium, rising to very high	Very high
LCT 286 Narrow Wooded Valley - Moray & Nairn	Medium, rising to high	High	High
LCT 290 Upland Moorland and Forestry	Medium	High	Medium high
LCT 291 Open Rolling Upland	**Medium, rising to high**	**High**	**High**

Bold text indicates the Proposed Development is located within the character type

Effects on Landscape Character during Construction

6.7.50. The 17 proposed turbines, crane pads, construction compounds, substation, control room and energy storage facility and borrow pits are all located in the Open Rolling Upland landscape character type (LCT291). This would result in direct effects on landscape character during construction on only this LCT.

6.7.51. As noted above and with reference to **Figure 1.2** access to the Proposed Development will be via two existing accesses from the B9007. The northerly access will follow the existing Tom nan Clach Wind Farm access track as far as the western bank of Tom nan Clach Burn. This section of track is existing and there will be no requirement to upgrade this section track. Therefore, no additional direct effects on the character of this part of the LCT are anticipated.

6.7.52. Approximately 14.5 km of new access tracks will be constructed heading south from the existing Tom nan Clach track, providing access to the 17 proposed turbines. Furthermore, a short section of track leading from the southern access point off the B9007 will require upgrading. Therefore, some additional direct effects on the character of this part of the LCT will occur.

6.7.53. During the construction phase, there will be the temporary presence of cranes on the site and the movement of other construction traffic, consistent with the creation of access tracks, hardstandings and turbine bases.

6.7.54. However, effects resulting from construction activities would be localised to the Open Rolling Upland LCT and would be contained by the high ground to the west, south and east that forms the edges of the raised bowl within which the Proposed Development is located.

6.7.55. Effects during construction on landscape character will increase incrementally through the construction phase as more turbines, foundations, hardstandings and ancillary elements are constructed. Construction activities would move from turbine location to turbine location and, as activities increased in one location, they would be decreasing at locations where construction had finished.

6.7.56. Cranes would be involved in the erection of the turbines, but these would be onsite for a relatively short period during the overall construction phase. The cranes would form noticeable vertical features in the landscape for a short period of time but would be a relatively diminutive visual component compared with the turbines being erected.

6.7.57. As previously discussed, there would be no significant effects on any existing landscape features. Overall, it is considered that whilst there would be localised areas of high magnitude of change directly, there would be an overall medium low magnitude of change upon the part of the Open Rolling Moorland LCT (LCT291) the Proposed Development is sited in. Construction activities would occur in a relatively small part of the moorland with cranes visible for a relatively short period of the overall construction programme. This would result in no greater than a **moderate minor** temporary additional effect on the LCT, above that set out for the operational phase, which would not be significant.

6.7.58. There will be a low magnitude of additional change as a result of construction activities on the smaller part of LCT 291 situated to the north-west of the Findhorn Valley with the only visible construction being cranes, resulting in no greater than a **minor**, temporary effect which would be not significant.

6.7.59. In terms of indirect effects on other landscape character types, there will be a very low magnitude of change upon LCT 122 Mountain Massif, Cairngorms, LCT 123 Smooth Rounded Hills – Cairngorms, LCT 128 Forested Upland Fringe, LCT 286 Narrow Wooded Valley - Moray & Nairn and LCT. The only visible construction elements would be cranes which would be seen in the context of the existing Tom nan Clach turbines and of the turbines being erected. This would result in no greater than a **minor** temporary effect which would be not significant.

6.7.60. Construction effects would be temporary, short term and non-permanent.

Effects on Landscape Character during the Operational Phase

6.7.61. The effects on landscape character are discussed below in relation to each landscape character type brought forward from the initial sieving exercise (see Appendix 6.3) and as identified in **Table 6.5** above. The magnitude of change on landscape character as a result of the Proposed Development has been determined using professional judgement based on the following factors:

- The percentage of the character type from where the site would theoretically and actually be visible;
- The distance between the character type and the site;
- The likely prominence of the turbines from the character type taking account of existing locally dominant characteristics in the character type; and
- The degree to which the physical and perceptual characteristics of the landscape would change as a result of the Proposed Development.

6.7.62. To aid the consideration of effects on landscape character, the ZTV has been overlaid on the character types within 20 km of the site, which is shown at **Figure 6.9**.

6.7.63. Beyond the immediate environs of the site, the ground level components of the Proposed Development would not be discernible due to the gently rolling landform. Therefore, impacts on landscape character, as experienced in the wider landscape, arise largely in relation to the introduction of the 17 proposed turbines into the landscape and the resultant impact on the perceptual experience of landscape character.

6.7.64. It is noted that in general, the magnitude of change in landscape character will incrementally decrease with distance from the turbines as they become gradually less prominent. Some of the character types considered in this assessment extend from close to the Proposed Development out to beyond 30 km from the site. A summary of the effects on landscape character is presented in **Table 6.6**. Note that for all character types stated within this table, the duration of the Proposed Development is considered to be long-term and reversible.

LCT 122 Mountain Massif – Cairngorms

6.7.65. This LCT is a situated over 23 km to the south of the Proposed Development. It is situated away from the site and no infrastructure will be located in this area. Therefore, any effects discussed below are indirect.

6.7.66. With reference to the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 6.2** and the landscape character types illustrated on **Figure 6.7**, theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is limited to the high ground and north facing slopes of Braeriach, Cairn Gorm and Ben Avon with no theoretical visibility predicted from the majority of the LCT. From these areas of high ground all the proposed turbines would be visible, but none of the associated infrastructure would be discernible.

6.7.67. The Proposed Development introduces an additional wind farm into the broad panoramic views out from these areas of high ground which are an important component of the character of the LCT. However, the proposed turbines would introduce a very small change across a very small proportion of the overall view. The Proposed Development would be back-clothed against landform to the north of the site, with none of the turbines extending above the horizon of view. It would appear distinct and separate from other existing wind farms present within the view, allowing views through to the distant hills and preventing the distant views becoming characterised by wind farms.

6.7.68. During daylight hours, due to the distance of the LCT from the Proposed Development the degree of visual change introduced would be so small that it would not strongly influence the overall character of available views out that are only available from the highest areas within the LCT. The magnitude of change has been assessed as very low, resulting in a **moderate minor effect** that is considered **not significant**.

6.7.69. During the hours of darkness, the scale of the effect would be reduced further as only the five lit turbines (Turbines 1, 3, 14, 15 and 17) would be visible in theory as illustrated at **Figure 6.24**. This shows that only the highest peaks have theoretical visibility of between three and five of the lit turbines. The north facing slopes towards the northern edge of the LCT would only have theoretical visibility of between 1 and 2 lit turbines. The lit turbines would appear as very faint pale red dots in the distant landscape. However, the lit turbines would be visible at considerable distance and would appear beyond the intervening landscape which does have numerous fixed light sources that comprise isolated properties, farm buildings and larger settlements such as Grantown-on-Spey, as well as transient light sources such as vehicles passing through the area. The magnitude of change has been assessed as **very low**, resulting in a **minor effect** on account of the further reduction in visibility that is considered **not significant**.

LCT 123 Smooth Rounded Hills – Cairngorms

6.7.70. This LCT is a situated approximately 17 km to the south of the Proposed Development. It is situated away from the site and no infrastructure will be located in this area. Therefore, any effects discussed below are indirect.

6.7.71. With reference to the landscape character types overlaid with the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 6.9**, theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development across the ZTV is very patchy and generally limited to the Hills of Cromdale along the northern edge of the LCT, with its north-west slopes that face towards the Proposed Development. Further areas of theoretical visibility occur, also in the north-western part of the LCT at Baddoch (568 m AOD) and in the Braes of Abernethy

which also face in a north-westerly direction towards the site. There are other limited areas of theoretical visibility between 30 and 35 km from the Proposed Development at Liath Bheinn (664 m AOD) and Craig Veann (711 m AOD).

6.7.72. The Proposed Development introduces an additional wind farm into the sweeping views that are available across the Spey Valley from the north-western part of the LCT. The proposed turbines would introduce a small change across a small to medium proportion of the view. The Proposed Development would be back-clothed against landform to the north of the site, with none of the turbines extending above the horizon of view. It would appear separate from the existing Tom nan Clach turbines and would appear slightly more prominent due to its closer proximity to this LCT. However, the change would occur in a landscape which is already in part influenced by existing wind farm development.

6.7.73. During daylight hours, due to the distance of the LCT from the Proposed Development the degree of visual change introduced would be small, yet noticeable but would not strongly influence the overall character of available views which are only available from a small overall proportion of the LCT. The magnitude of change has been assessed as low, resulting in a **moderate effect** that is considered **not significant**.

6.7.74. During the hours of darkness, the scale of the effect would be reduced further as only the five lit turbines (Turbines 1, 3, 14, 15 and 17) would be visible in theory as illustrated at Figure 6.24. This shows that only the north-western ridgeline of the Hills of Cromdale and the highest peaks have theoretical visibility of between three and five of the lit turbines. The lit turbines would appear as faint pale red dots in the distant landscape. However, the lit turbines would be visible at considerable distance and would appear beyond the intervening landscape which does have numerous fixed light sources that comprise isolated properties, farm buildings and larger settlements such as Grantown-on-Spey which will have a greater influence on views during dark sky hours. Transient light sources, such as vehicles passing through the area will also be visibility intermittently. The magnitude of change has been assessed as very low, resulting in a **minor effect** that is considered **not significant**.

LCT 128 Forested Upland Fringe

6.7.75. This part of the LCT is a situated approximately 14 km to the south south-east of the Proposed Development. It is situated away from the site and no infrastructure will be located in this area. Therefore, any effects discussed below are indirect.

6.7.76. With reference to the landscape character types overlaid with the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 6.9**, theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development across the LCT encompasses a large central swathe of the Abernethy Forest which is predicted to have visibility of parts of between 1 and 4 turbines. Areas of greatest predicted visibility are very limited, patchy and restricted to several small patches located on the wooded slopes of Carn na Loinne (459 m AOD) in the northern part of the LCT, a broader area on the north-eastern slopes of Craiggowrie (687 m AOD), Creagan Gorm (732 m AOD) and Meall a' Bhuachaille (810 m AOD, and represented by Viewpoint 12) in the south-western part of the LCT and two small areas of limited visibility in heavily wooded areas at Carn a' Chnuic (506 m AOD) and Carn na Loinne (498 m AOD) in the south-eastern part of the LCT.

6.7.77. With reference to the wireline supporting Viewpoint 12 at **Figure 6.48**, the Proposed Development introduces an additional wind farm into the sweeping views that are available across the Spey Valley that area available from the south-western part of the LCT. The proposed turbines would introduce a very small change across a very small proportion of the view. The Proposed Development would be back-clothed against landform to the north of the site, with none of the turbines extending above the horizon of view and the change would occur in a landscape which is already in part influenced by existing wind farm development present on the horizon of the view that includes wind farms at Tom nan Clach, Paul's Hill and Rothes.

However, due to the distance from the LCT they appear as small, diminutive elements within broad, sweeping views across the valley.

6.7.78. During daylight hours, due to the distance of the LCT from the Proposed Development the degree of visual change introduced would be small and barely noticeable and would not strongly influence the overall character of available views which are only available from a very small overall proportion of the LCT. Actual visibility from the LCT will be greatly reduced than illustrated on the blade tip ZTV due to the extensive swathes of forestry within the central and northern parts of the LCT. The magnitude of change has been assessed as very low, resulting in no greater than a **moderate minor effect** that is considered **not significant**.

6.7.79. During the hours of darkness, the scale of the effect would be greatly reduced as only the five lit turbines (Turbines 1, 3, 14, 15 and 17) would be visible in theory as illustrated at **Figure 6.24**, limiting theoretical visibility to the wooded slopes of Carn na Loinne in the northern part of the LCT, a broader area on the north-eastern slopes of Craiggowrie, Creagan and Meall a' Bhuachaille in the south-western part of the LCT and two small areas of limited visibility in heavily wooded areas at Carn a' Chnuic and Carn na Loinne in the south-eastern part of the LCT.

6.7.80. Actual visibility will be further reduced by the extensive screening of the forestry plantations in some of these areas. Actual visibility is likely to be limited to high ground at Craiggowrie, Creagan and Meall a' Bhuachaille in the south-western part of the LCT. From these areas the lit turbines would appear as faint pale red dots in the distant landscape. However, the lit turbines would be visible at considerable distance and would appear beyond the intervening landscape which does have numerous fixed light sources that comprise isolated properties, farm buildings and larger settlements such as Grantown-on-Spey which will have a greater influence on views during dark sky hours. Transient light sources, such as vehicles passing through the area will also be visibility intermittently. The magnitude of change has been assessed as very low, resulting in a **minor effect** that is considered **not significant**.

LCT 286 Narrow Wooded Valley - Moray & Nairn

6.7.81. This part of the LCT is a situated approximately 1.4 km to the north of the Proposed Development. It is situated away from the site and no infrastructure will be located in this area. Therefore, any effects discussed below are indirect.

6.7.82. With reference to the landscape character types overlaid with the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 6.9**, theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development across the LCT encompasses a large proportion of the LCT. Within approximately 5 km there is extensive theoretical visibility from most of the LCT within the exception of the valley floor. Between approximately 5 km and 10 km predicted theoretical visibility is extensive but is patchier and beyond 10 km and in the remaining northerly reaches of the LCT theoretical visibility is very patchy and intermittent.

6.7.83. However, actual visibility will be greatly restricted compared with that shown on **Figure 6.9** due to extensive tree cover along the valley sides and to the north of the river between Banchor and Ardclach. This results in the part of the LCT where actual visibility is likely to be greatest being along the southern part of the LCT closer to the site between Torgarrow and Ballindore, represented by Viewpoint 13. North of Ballindore, tree cover is more extensive with fewer open areas which is likely to restrict visibility to glimpses of turbine blades seen above treetops, as illustrated at Viewpoint 14, **Figure 6.50**.

6.7.84. The Proposed Development introduces a wind farm into available southerly views which already includes the existing Tom nan Clach Wind Farm. The proposed turbines would introduce a large change across a moderate proportion of the view, with views south towards the top and narrowest side of the wind farm. The proposed turbines would appear above the more distant southerly hills, with some hubs, and parts of all blades appearing above the

skyline. This change would occur in a landscape which is already partly influenced by the existing nearby wind development.

6.7.85. During daylight hours, due to the proximity of the southern part of the LCT extending to approximately 5 km, the proposed turbines would introduce a large and prominent change that would strongly influence the character of available southerly views from the southern part of the LCT situated to the south of the river. This would result in a medium high magnitude of change and a **moderate major effect** that is considered to be **significant**.

6.7.86. At increased distances beyond 5 km and north of Ballindore extending to approximately 10 km, although there is also predicted visibility from much of this area, the more extensive tree cover will mean that actual visibility will be greatly reduced from that shown on **Figure 6.9**. With the increased distance and the screening provided by the tree cover the magnitude of change would reduce to medium with the effect judged to be **moderate** and **not significant**.

6.7.87. Beyond approximately 10 km theoretical visibility becomes much patchier and more intermittent. This area is also extensively forested, meaning that actual visibility will be greatly reduced from that shown on Figure 6.9. At this distance, it is considered that the magnitude of change would reduce to very low with effects judged to be no greater than **minor/no effect** and **not significant**.

6.7.88. During the hours of darkness, the scale of the effect would be greatly reduced as only the five lit turbines (Turbines 1, 3, 14, 15 and 17) would be visible in theory as illustrated at **Figure 6.24**. Within the southern part of the LCT to the south of Ballindore, Turbines 1 and 3 are sited at the northern edge of the Proposed Development in close proximity to this part of the LCT. This would introduce two small red dots into the dark sky, which given the relative remoteness of the area, is largely dark apart from the lights of the few isolated properties within this part of the LCT. The more distant lights of the Turbines 14, 15 and 17 would also be visible as faint pale red dots in the landscape. However, these would have less influence due to their increased distance from this part of the LCT. The magnitude of change during dark sky hours in this part of the LCT has been assessed as medium low, resulting in a **moderate effect** that is considered to be **significant**.

6.7.89. To the north of Ballindore between approximately 5 and 10 km the extensive tree cover would screen majority of views of the lit turbines during dark sky hours resulting in the magnitude of change being no greater than low, with effects assessed as **moderate minor** and **not significant**.

6.7.90. Beyond 10 km, theoretical visibility of the lit turbines is very patchy, with actual visibility considered to be greatly reduced by the extensive tree cover within the northern part of the LCT such that the magnitude of change during hours of darkness would be very low, with effects judged as **minor/no effect** and **not significant**.

LCT 290 Upland Moorland and Forestry

6.7.91. The part of the LCT brought forward into detailed assessment is a situated approximately 3.8 km to the north of the Proposed Development. It is situated away from the site and no infrastructure will be located in this area. Therefore, any effects discussed below are indirect.

6.7.92. With reference to the landscape character types overlaid with the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 6.9**, theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development across the LCT is mainly limited to the south-eastern fringes of the area, extending between Carn na Caillich, north-eastwards to Lethan Bar. However, actual visibility will be much less than predicted on **Figure 6.9** due to the extensive tree cover within this part of the LCT that will largely restrict views south towards the Proposed Development.

6.7.93. Although the Proposed Development introduces an additional wind farm in another LCT, it is considered that from most areas within this LCT the change will not be apparent due to the

existing tree cover which is likely to entirely screen the proposed turbines. Occasional narrow, funnelled views may be available between blocks of woodland. It is also recognised that depending on forestry management plans views may open up over time as areas are felled.

6.7.94. During daylight hours, given the highly restricted visibility with only very occasional views likely to be available, it is considered that the proposed turbines would introduce a very small change that would not influence the character of available southerly views. This would result in no greater than a low to very low magnitude of change and a **moderate minor effect** that is considered **not significant**.

6.7.95. During the hours of darkness, the scale of the effect would be reduced further as only the five lit turbines (Turbines 1, 3, 14, 15 and 17) would be visible in theory as illustrated at **Figure 6.24**. However, given the relative proximity of the LCT to the Proposed Development there is only a slight reduction in the extent of theoretical visibility. The lit turbines would appear as small red dots in an area with relatively few other light sources comprising widely separated isolated properties, farm buildings and very occasional transient light sources of vehicles passing along the A939 that crosses through the northern part of the LCT. However, given the extensive screening the magnitude of change has been assessed as very low, resulting in a **minor effect** that is considered **not significant**.

LCT 291 Open Rolling Upland

6.7.96. The 17 turbines and all associated infrastructure are located within the larger of the two parts of this character type that extends from the Strathdearn Hills in the west and into Moray.

6.7.97. With reference to the landscape character types overlaid with the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 6.9**, theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development across the LCT is extensive within 2 km of the Proposed Development with almost continuous coverage, apart from where the ridge of high ground at Carn nan Clach Garbha that extends along part of the south-eastern edge of the site restricts theoretical visibility from a section of the B9007 and part of the LCT to the east of the road.

6.7.98. Beyond 5 km theoretical visibility is patchier and more extensive theoretical visibility is restricted by the chain of hills that sweeps from the north-west, around the western and southern edges of the site. To the west, theoretical visibility extends to the hills of Creag a' Bhothain, Carn na Sguabaich, Carn Mòr and as far as the area in which the operational Tom nan Clach Wind Farm is located.

6.7.99. To the south, theoretical visibility extends to the hills comprising Carn Gruamach, Carn Glas-choire, Cnapan a' Choire Odair Mhòir, Carn Mheadhoin and Carn Allt Laoigh which restrict further visibility from the adjacent Rolling Uplands LCT to the south.

6.7.100. To the east, theoretical visibility is partially restricted by Carn nan Clach Garbha and by high ground to the south-east and north-east of Lochindorb comprising Carr Mòr, Carn nan Gabhar, Carn na h-Ath-aoil, Craig Tiribeg and by Hill of Aitnoch to the north-west of Lochindorb.

6.7.101. The proposed turbines will introduce direct effects on the LCT in the immediate vicinity of where they are located and indirect effects on the remaining parts of the LCT. The 17 turbines will introduce tall vertical structures that will extend to 185 m to blade tip. However, the Proposed Development is located within a remote, elevated upland bowl that is visually contained and generally not visible from adjacent landscapes. The character of the landscape is already influenced by the existing Tom nan Clach wind turbines situated approximately 5 km to the west.

6.7.102. During daylight hours, the proposed turbines would introduce a large and highly prominent change that would strongly influence the character of the LCT out to a distance of approximately 3 km to the west, beyond which the existing Tom nan Clach Wind Farm would have a much greater influence on the character of this part of the LCT. The Proposed Development would

also have a strong influence on the character of the LCT out to a distance of approximately and 6 km to the south and east. This would result in a **high magnitude of change** and a **major effect** that is considered to be **significant**. However, it should be noted that effects to adjacent LCTs that fall within this distance are assessed in the relevant sections above.

6.7.103. Beyond approximately 6 km to the east extending to approximately 10 km, theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development becomes much more patchy and more intermittent. From these areas, illustrated at Viewpoints 7 and 16, **Figures 6.43** and **6.52** respectively, the Proposed Development would introduce a low scale change, across a small to medium proportion of the overall view. The Proposed Development would be back-clothed against landform to the west of the site, with none of the turbines extending above the horizon of view. Due to the distance from the Proposed Development, it would not influence the overall character of this part of the LCT to the same degree and as such would result in a low magnitude of change and a **moderate effect** that is considered **not significant**.

6.7.104. Beyond 10 km, the eastern parts of the LCT are influenced to a greater degree by the existing wind farms at Pauls Hill and Berry Burn such that the magnitude of change resulting from the Proposed Development would be low to very low, resulting in a **minor effect** that is considered **not significant**.

6.7.105. During the hours of darkness, the scale of the effect would be reduced as only the five lit turbines (Turbines 1, 3, 14, 15 and 17) would be visible in theory as illustrated at **Figure 6.24**. Within 6 km the lights would appear as two small, separate groups in the dark sky. The northerly group would introduce two small red dots into the dark sky, while the southerly group would introduce a group of three lights. Given the relative remoteness of the area which is largely dark apart from the lights of the few isolated properties located within the LCT and the lights of vehicles travelling along the B9007 along the eastern edge of the site, the lit turbines would influence the character of this part of the LCT during dark sky hours. This would result in a medium magnitude of change, resulting in a **moderate major effect** that is considered **significant**.

6.7.106. Between 6 and 10 km to the east, theoretical visibility of the lights is much more patchy and limited to a few areas of higher ground. Given the limited theoretical visibility and the increased distance the lights would appear as small, faint red dots in the dark sky. The magnitude of change during the hours of darkness would be low to very, resulting in a **minor effect** that is considered **not significant**.

6.7.107. Beyond 10 km, theoretical visibility of the lit turbines is very patchy and as such their influence on the character of this part of the LCT would be greatly such that the magnitude of change during hours of darkness would be very low, with effects judged as **minor/no effect** and **not significant**.

6.7.108. With reference to the landscape character types overlaid with the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 6.9**, the main area of theoretical visibility in the smaller part of the LCT located to the north-west of the Proposed Development covers the east facing slopes of Carn a' Mhàis Leathain (520 m AOD) and Carn an Uillt Bhric (599 m AOD).

6.7.109. During daylight hours, the proposed turbines would introduce a noticeable change in a part of the LCT that is more strongly influenced by the closer proximity of the existing Tom nan Clach and Moy wind farms. This would result in a low medium magnitude of change and a **moderate effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.7.110. During the hours of darkness, the scale of the effect would be reduced further as only the five lit turbines (Turbines 1, 3, 14, 15 and 17) would be visible in theory as illustrated at Figure 6.24. However, given the openness of the LCT there is only a slight reduction in the extent of theoretical visibility. Given the limited theoretical visibility and the increased distance the lights would appear as small, faint red dots in the dark sky. The magnitude of change during the

hours of darkness would be no greater than low, resulting in a **moderate minor effect** that is considered **not significant**.

6.7.111. A summary table of the effects on landscape character is provided within **Table 6.6**.

Table 6.6 – Summary of Landscape Effects during Operation

		Daylight Hours			Hours of Darkness		
Landscape Character Type	**Sensitivity**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Level of Effect**	**Significant**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Level of Effect**	**Significant**
LCT 122 Mountain Massif - Cairngorms	Very high	Very low	Moderate minor	No	Very low	Minor	No
LCT 123 Smooth Rounded Hills - Cairngorms	Very high	Low	Moderate	No	Very low	Minor	No
LCT 128 Forested Upland Fringe	Very high	Very low	Moderate minor	No	Very low	Minor	No
LCT 286 Narrow Wooded Valley - Moray & Nairn – *South of Ballindore to 5 km*	Medium High	Medium High	**Moderate major**	**Yes**	Medium low	**Moderate**	**Yes**
North of Ballindore to 10 km	Medium	Medium	Moderate	No	Low	Moderate minor	No
Beyond 10 km	Medium	Low to very low	Minor	No	Very low	Minor/ no effect	No
LCT 290 Upland Moorland and Forestry	Medium high	Low to very low	Moderate minor	No	Very low	Minor	No
LCT 291 Open Rolling Upland *Within 3 km to the west, to the*	High	High	**Major**	**Yes**	Medium	**Moderate major**	**Yes**

		Daylight Hours			Hours of Darkness		
Landscape Character Type	**Sensitivity**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Level of Effect**	**Significant**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Level of Effect**	**Significant**
southern boundary of the LCT and 6 km east							
Between 6 km and 10 km to the east	High	Low	Moderate	No	Low to very low	Minor	No
Beyond 10 km to the east	High	Low to very low	Minor	No	Very low	Minor/ no effect	No
LCT 291 Open Rolling Upland *Beyond 3 km to the north-west*	High	Low medium	Moderate	No	Low	Moderate minor	No

Bold text indicates a significant effect

Effects on Landscape Character during Decommissioning

6.7.112. It is acknowledged that there would be some additional temporary effects during decommissioning of the Proposed Development after 35 years, over and above those assessed under the heading of operational effects above. The effects resulting from decommissioning activities will be localised and relatively incidental when viewed in the context of the wind farm being removed.

6.7.113. The effects on landscape character will therefore decrease incrementally as decommissioning progresses and as more turbines and associated foundations and hardstanding are removed.

6.7.114. The effects would be similar to those during the construction phase but in reverse.

6.7.115. Overall, it is considered that there would be a medium low magnitude of change upon the part of the Open Rolling Moorland LCT (LCT 291) the Proposed Development is sited in and a temporary additional **moderate minor effect**.

6.7.116. There will be a low magnitude of additional change as a result of decommissioning activities on the smaller part of LCT 291 situated to the north-west of the Findhorn Valley, resulting in no greater than a temporary **minor effect**.

6.7.117. In terms of indirect effects on other landscape character types, there will be a very low magnitude of change upon LCT 122 Mountain Massif, Cairngorms, LCT 123 Smooth Rounded Hills – Cairngorms, LCT 128 Forested Upland Fringe, LCT 286 Narrow Wooded Valley - Moray & Nairn and LCT, result in no greater than a temporary **minor effect**.

6.7.118. The decommissioning effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character are deemed to be not significant. Once decommissioning is complete, there would be no further effects upon landscape character.

Assessment of Visual Effects

6.7.119. Effects on visual amenity arise from changes to views resulting from the introduction of the Proposed Development. It comprises:

- An assessment of visual effects from the representative viewpoints brought forward into detailed assessment; and
- An assessment of visual effects on receptor groups such as settlements, roads and core paths brought forward into detailed assessment.

6.7.120. The assessment has been carried out through a combination of site visits and desk study using the ZTVs, wirelines and photomontages.

Construction Effects

6.7.121. Despite the openness of the landscape in which the Proposed Development is located, the relative visual containment of the surrounding landform means that ground-level activity associated with the turbine construction will be screened from the view from the majority of the study area, with the exception of views from the closest viewpoints and routes to the site, comprising Viewpoints 3, 4 and the B9007. Due to the proximity of these locations to the Proposed Development and in the case of Viewpoint 4 its elevation relative to the site, some ground-level activity such as movement of construction vehicles may be visible resulting in a low magnitude of additional change and no greater than a minor, temporary effect which would be not significant.

6.7.122. From all the remaining assessment viewpoints, the only additional visual effects, over and above those addressed under the heading of Operational Effects, will arise in relation to views of the cranes erecting the turbines.

6.7.123. The cranes will be visible for a relatively short period and would be incidental when considered in the context of the turbines being erected. However, it is assessed that any views of these works will result in a low magnitude of additional change and no greater than a **minor**, temporary effect which would be not significant.

Operational Effects

6.7.124. A detailed viewpoint assessment of the operational effects is presented at **Appendix 6.5** and this considers the long-term visual effects during the operational phase of the Proposed Development for each of the 13 viewpoints brought forward into detailed assessment.

6.7.125. For each of the assessment viewpoints, a short description is given of the baseline view, and a judgement is provided regarding the sensitivity of the key receptors likely to experience the view.

6.7.126. This is followed by a description of the features of the Proposed Development that would be visible from that viewpoint. This includes a description of how many turbine hubs and blades would be visible and, where relevant, whether any ground-level components of the Proposed Development would be visible. For each viewpoint, there is a comment on how vegetation or topography would affect the actual visibility of the turbines.

6.7.127. A judgement is then provided of the magnitude of change that would be experienced at each viewpoint, the level of the effect on the view and a statement provided to clarify whether the additional effect resulting from the Proposed Development is significant or not.

6.7.128. A summary of the sensitivity of the view, the magnitude of change in the view, the level of effect and its significance is given in **Table 6.7** below. Where a viewpoint is representative of more than one type of visual receptor, the assessment carried forward to the table represents the most sensitive receptor group represented by the viewpoint.

6.7.129. With reference to the Viewpoint Assessment at **Appendix 6.5**, when considered against the existing baseline it has been assessed that there would be a significant visual effect at 7 of the 16 representative viewpoints during daylight hours. These are as follows:

- Viewpoint 1 – Carn Glas-choire;
- Viewpoint 3 – B9007 near Lochindorb;
- Viewpoint 4 - Creag Ealraich;
- Viewpoint 6 – Shore Road, Lochindorb;
- Viewpoint 9 – Gorton Hill;
- Viewpoint 13 – Minor road, near Dunearn Fort; and
- Viewpoint 16 – Knock of Braemoray.

6.7.130. It was further assessed that during the hours of darkness there would be a significant visual effect at 5 of the 16 representative viewpoints. These are as follows:

- Viewpoint 1 – Carn Glas-choire;
- Viewpoint 3 – B9007 near Lochindorb;
- Viewpoint 4 - Creag Ealraich;
- Viewpoint 13 – Minor road, near Dunearn Fort; and
- Viewpoint 16 – Knock of Braemorary.

Table 6.7 – Summary of Operational Effects on Assessment Viewpoints

		Daylight Hours			Hours of Darkness		
Viewpoint	**Sensitivity**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Level of Effect**	**Significant**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Level of Effect**	**Significant**
1 – Carn Glas-choire	High	Medium high	**Moderate major**	**Yes**	Medium	**Moderate**	**Yes**
3 – B9007 near Lochindorb	Medium high	Very high	**Major**	**Yes**	High	**Major**	**Yes**
4 – Creag Ealraich	High	High	**Major**	**Yes**	Medium high	**Moderate major**	**Yes**
6 – Shore Road, Lochindorb	High	Medium high	**Moderate major**	**Yes**	Low	Moderate minor	No
7 – Dava Way	High	Low medium	Moderate	No	Low	Moderate minor	No
8 – A939 at Milestone	Medium	Medium	Moderate	No	Low	Moderate minor	No
9 – Gorton Hill	High	Low medium	Moderate	**Yes**	Low	Moderate minor	No
10 – Beinn Mhor	High	Low	Moderate	No	Low	Moderate minor	No
11 – Creagan a Chaise	High	Low	Moderate	No	Very low	Minor	No
12 – Meall a' Bhuachaille Cairn	High	Low to very low	Minor	No	Very low	Minor/no effect	No
13 – Minor road, near Dunearn Fort	Medium high	High	**Major**	**Yes**	Medium high	**Moderate major**	**Yes**
14 – Ardclach Bell Tower	High	Low medium	Moderate	No	Low	Moderate minor	No
16 – Summit of Knock of Braemoray	High	Medium	Moderate major	**Yes**	Medium	Moderate	**Yes**

Bold text indicates a significant effect

Assessment of Effects on Visual Receptor Groups

6.7.131. In this section, the assessment of effects of the Proposed Development on the visual receptor groups brought forward into detailed assessment is presented.

Construction Effects on Visual Receptor Groups

6.7.132. It is recognised that there would be some additional temporary visual effects during the construction of the Proposed Development over and above those assessed under the operational phase.

6.7.133. The vast majority of effects, of note, when considering the construction phase will be experienced within the local environs of the site, with views largely experienced from the landscape contained by the topography to the west, south and south-east of the site.

6.7.134. The construction works will be visible from a number of properties within the local landscape. However, views of the construction phase will be restricted to views of cranes appearing above intervening landform and vegetation with all ground-level components screened from view. These views would only be experienced for a relatively short duration during the construction and they would be experienced within the context of the turbines being constructed.

6.7.135. Overall, it is assessed that there would be a low magnitude of additional effect during construction over and above the operational phase effects assessed below. This would result in a temporary moderate additional effect which would not be significant, and these effects need to be considered in conjunction with the operational effects identified below.

Operational Effects on Visual Receptor Groups

6.7.136. Views of the ground level components of the Proposed Development will be limited to a relatively short radius around the site, largely in an easterly direction. Except where indicated, the discussion below therefore relates primarily to views of the proposed turbines of the Proposed Development.

Residential Properties within 2 and 5 km of the Proposed Development

6.7.137. The below assessment considers the effects of the Proposed Development on individual properties identified in the baseline as being situated within 2 and 5 km of the Proposed Development. As set out in **Appendix 6.1**, the sensitivity of residential receptors is considered to be high.

6.7.138. For each property, a short description is given of its location, the key view from façade nearest to the development and a description of the features of the Proposed Development that would be visible. This includes a description of how many turbine hubs and blades would be visible and, where relevant, whether any ground-level components of the Proposed Development would be visible. The view summary also considers how vegetation or topography would affect the actual visibility of the turbines.

6.7.139. A judgement is then provided of the magnitude of change that would be experienced at each property, the level of the visual effect and whether the effect is considered significant.

Banchor

6.7.140. This single storey cottage is situated approximately 3.2 km to the north north-west of the Proposed Development within the narrow valley of the River Findhorn alongside the minor road between Dulsie in the north-east and Drynachan Lodge in the south-west.

6.7.141. The south-eastern façade overlooks an open, mown grass area with no boundary vegetation. A large block of coniferous woodland close to the north-east of the property truncates views to the east, while views extend south-east and south towards the more elevated northern edge and slopes of the open rolling moorland, which is partially screened by tree cover on the southern valley side.

6.7.142. The Proposed Development introduces 17 turbines on the horizon of the direct view from the property. Visibility of the turbines towards the right-hand edge of the view is limited to blade tips due to the landform of the northern slopes of the open moorland. Parts of the towers, hubs and blades of turbines in the centre and left-hand part of the view will be visible, extending above the horizon and skyline of the view.

6.7.143. During daylight hours the Proposed Development would introduce a medium to large size and scale of change that would occupy a large proportion of the central part of the view, resulting in **a high magnitude of change** and a **major effect** that is **significant**.

6.7.144. During the hours of darkness, with reference to **Figure 6.25** illustrating the lit turbine ZTV within 20 km, up to three of the five lit turbines would be visible from this location, with the nacelle lights of turbines 1, 3 and 14 visible in theory. The nacelle lights of turbines 1 and 3 that are situated on the northern edge of the Proposed Development would be seen as small red dots above the dark sky horizon, while the nacelle light of T14, which is located approximately 6.6 km to the south south-east would appear as a very small faint red dot. This change would occur in a part of the landscape with very few existing light sources, resulting in a medium magnitude of change and a **moderate major effect** that is **significant**.

Drumlochan and Milltown

6.7.145. These two properties are situated approximately 3.6 and 3.8 km to the north north-east respectively. Drumlochan comprises two single storey buildings, a C-shaped building, with the enclosed area facing east and a single-storey property to the north of it. Millside comprises a single-storey dwelling with farm buildings to its west. The principal facades of both buildings are orientated west north-west to east south-east. There does not appear to be a garden area at Drumlochan, while there is a garden adjacent to the east south-east of the Millside off the rear elevation of the property.

6.7.146. There is extensive tree cover in the vicinity of both properties. At Drumlochan trees extend along both sides of the track leading from the south to the property. A block of trees is situated to the south of the property and trees extend along the banks of the watercourse to the east of the property that flows between Drumlochan and Millside.

6.7.147. The Proposed Development introduces 17 turbines that appear as medium scale elements occupying a moderate proportion of the horizon at a perpendicular angle to the properties, with parts of the towers, the hubs and blades of all turbines visible in theory. However, actual visibility is likely to be reduced with views partially screened by the nearby tree cover.

6.7.148. During daylight hours the Proposed Development would introduce a medium size and scale of change that would occupy a moderate proportion of the view experienced at a perpendicular angle to the principal façades of the properties resulting in a medium magnitude of change and a **moderate major effect** that is considered **significant**.

6.7.149. During the hours of darkness, with reference **to Figure 6.25** illustrating the lit turbine ZTV within 20 km, between three and five lit turbines would be visible from these properties. The nacelle lights of turbines 1 and 3 that are situated on the northern edge of the Proposed Development would be seen as small red dots above the dark sky horizon, while the nacelle light of turbines 14, 15 and 17 at the southern edge of the Proposed Development over 6.5 km to the south south-west would appear as a very small faint red dot. However, given their position at the horizon it is considered that they are likely to be screened by the intervening vegetation. This change would occur in a part of the landscape with very few existing light sources, resulting in a low medium magnitude of change and a **moderate effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

Dulsie and Dulsie Cottage

6.7.150. These two properties are located approximately 3.7 and 3.4 km to the north of the Proposed Development respectively.

6.7.151. Dulsie is situated to the north of Dulsie Bridge and comprises a two-storey stone farmhouse positioned near the minor road with extensive farm buildings and storage areas to its west, north and east. The principal façades of the farmhouse are orientated north-west to south-east pointing away from the Proposed Development. The property is flanked to its western edge by a large tree belt, while there is further extensive tree cover to the south of the minor road and along the river corridor that passes to the south.

6.7.152. Dulsie Cottage is situated to the south of Dulsie Bridge and is a single-storey stone cottage situated off the road along a track. Its principal façades are orientated north-west to south-east, resulting in the Proposed Development being sited at an oblique angle to the Proposed Development. To the south there is extensive tree cover extending along the eastern bank of the River Findhorn and over the low hill where Dunearn Fort sits.

6.7.153. This hill largely screens the Proposed Development, with views limited to up to five turbines at Dulsie Cottage, with only two hubs visible in theory and views limited to blade tips of the other three turbines. From Dulsie views would be limited to the hubs and blades of two turbines only.

6.7.154. During daylight hours the Proposed Development would introduce a small size and scale of change that would occupy a small to very small proportion of the view experienced at an oblique angle to the principal façades of the properties resulting in no greater than a low to very low magnitude of change and a **minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.7.155. During the hours of darkness, with reference to **Figure 6.25** illustrating the lit turbine ZTV within 20 km, between one and three and five lit turbines would be visible from these properties. From Dulsie only the nacelle light of T1 would be visible in theory. From Dulsie Cottage the nacelle light of turbines 1 and 4 would be visible in theory. The nacelle lights would be seen as small red dots above the dark sky horizon. However, it is considered that they are likely to be partially screened by the intervening vegetation. This change would occur in a part of the landscape with very few existing light sources, resulting in a low to very low magnitude of change and a **minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

Dunearn Lodge

6.7.156. Dunearn Lodge is situated approximately 2.5 km to the north north-east of the Proposed Development in an open part of the landscape that allows views south south-west across the open rolling moorland towards the site. The property is Lethen Estate's Victorian shooting and fishing lodge, and is a financially involved property.

6.7.157. The principal façades of the property face north-west towards a small watercourse and south-east across a large open area of grassland and the driveway, with a large block of woodland to the east and extending along part of the southern edge of the driveway. There is also a number of external buildings to the south that of the lodge that will provide some filtering of views towards the site.

6.7.158. During daylight hours the Proposed Development would introduce a large size and scale of change that would occupy a moderate proportion of the view experienced at an oblique angle to the property resulting in a **high magnitude of change** and a **major effect** that is considered **significant**.

6.7.159. During the hours of darkness, with reference to **Figure 6.25** illustrating the lit turbine ZTV within 20 km, between three and five of the lit turbines would be visible in theory. However, in practice, four of the lit turbines would be visible (Turbines 1, 3, 15 and 17).

6.7.160. The nacelle lights of turbines 1 and 3 that are situated on the northern edge of the Proposed Development would be seen as small red dots above the dark sky horizon, while the nacelle lights of turbines 15 and 17, which are located approximately 6.1 km to the south south-west would appear as a very small faint red dot. This change would occur in a part of the landscape with very few existing light sources, resulting in a **medium magnitude of change** and a **moderate major effect** that is **significant**.

Knockandhu

6.7.161. Knockandhu is situated approximately 2.6 km to the north-east and is a single-storey cottage with a large mown garden area to its south-east between the property and the minor road to its east. The property is orientated north-west to south-east, with a large coniferous woodland situated immediately to its south that will screen views of the Proposed Development. As such it is considered that during both daytime and the hours of darkness there will be no greater than a very low magnitude of change and **no effects** from the property.

Little Aitnoch

6.7.162. The farm is situated approximately 4.6 km to the north-east of the Proposed Development on a slight rise to the north of the minor road between the B9007 and A939. It comprises a single-storey farmhouse, with large farm outbuildings and barns to its western edge, along with an extensive area of woodland also the south-west and to the north of the minor road. The principal facades of the property are orientated north-west to south-east, with a small garden area to the north of the house, in the opposite direction from the Proposed Development.

6.7.163. Views south-west towards the Proposed Development are partially filtered by a combination of both vegetation to the south-west of the property and along the minor road and part of the northern slopes of Hill of Aitnoch, which also prevents views further south. The existing Tom nan Clach Wind Farm is also visible in the far distance to the south-west.

6.7.164. During daylight hours the Proposed Development would introduce a small size and scale of change that would occupy a small proportion of the view experienced at an oblique angle to the property. This would result in a in a low to very low magnitude of change and a **minor effect** that is considered **not significant**, with actual visibility likely to restricted further by vegetation extending along the minor road.

6.7.165. During the hours of darkness, with reference to **Figure 6.25** illustrating the lit turbine ZTV within 20 km, between one and two of the five lit turbines would be visible in theory. However, in practice, the only lit turbine that would be visible would be T1.

6.7.166. The nacelle light of T1 is situated on the northern edge of the Proposed Development and would be seen as a small red dot back-clothed against the dark background. This change would occur in a part of the landscape with very few existing light sources, resulting in a low magnitude of change and a **minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

Lochindorb Lodge

6.7.167. The property is situated approximately 3.2 km to the east of the Proposed Development on the eastern shoreline of Lochindorb. It is a privately owned hunting lodge, with the main aspect facing south-west towards the loch. It is bordered to its west by woodland adjacent to the loch and by further dense woodland to its northern and eastern sides. A range of other buildings and gamekeeper cottages are also situated to the south-east of the main lodge and face towards the loch and the Proposed Development.

6.7.168. Views from the main lodge are orientated at an oblique angle to the south-west, away from the Proposed Development, with views west largely screened by the adjacent woodland. Views from the associated buildings to the south-east are partially filtered by a narrow band of trees that extends along the loch shoreline, partially filtering views.

6.7.169. During daylight hours the Proposed Development would introduce a low medium size and scale of change that would occupy a moderate proportion of the view experienced at an oblique angle to the main lodge. Views of the turbines would be partially screened by the gradually rising landform to the west of the loch, restricting views of the towers, with the hubs and blades of the turbines. This would result in a in a medium magnitude of change and a **moderate major effect** that is considered **significant**, with actual visibility likely to restricted further by vegetation to the west of the properties adjacent to the loch.

6.7.170. During the hours of darkness, with reference to **Figure 6.25** illustrating the lit turbine ZTV within 20 km, between one and two lit turbines would be visible in theory. However, in practice, the only lit turbines that would be visible would be T1 and T3 and right-hand edge of the array. Turbines 14, 15 and 17 at the left-hand edge of the array will be screened by the ridge of high ground at Carn nan Clach Garbha on the south-eastern edge of the site.

6.7.171. The nacelle lights of T1 and T3 would be seen as small red dots appearing at the horizon line of the dark sky. This change would occur in a part of the landscape with very few existing light sources, resulting in a low magnitude of change and a **minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

Refouble

6.7.172. The property is located approximately 2.9 km to the north-east of the Proposed Development and comprises a single-storey farmhouse, with associated farm outbuildings, a large barn and silage storage to its south-west.

6.7.173. Views from the house are orientated north-west to south-east, away from the Proposed Development, with views at an oblique angle filtered by the adjacent buildings and storage to the south-west of the farmhouse and by woodland to the south-west on the eastern side of the B9007. The existing Tom nan Clach wind turbines are visible above the horizon of westerly views.

6.7.174. During daylight hours the Proposed Development would introduce a medium size and scale of change that would occupy a moderate proportion of the view experienced at an oblique angle to the farmhouse. Views of some of the turbines would be partially screened by the slopes of Hill of Aitnoch and Carn Bad a' Churaich to the south. Parts of the towers, the hubs and blades of the visible turbines would be partly backclothed against the background landform. This would result in a in a medium magnitude of change and a **moderate major effect** that is considered **significant**.

6.7.175. During the hours of darkness, with reference to **Figure 6.25** illustrating the lit turbine ZTV within 20 km, between one and two of the five lit turbines would be visible in theory, with the nacelles of turbines 1 and 3 visible.

6.7.176. The nacelle lights of these two turbines be seen as small red dots above the background landform. This change would occur in a part of the landscape with very few existing light sources, resulting in a low medium magnitude of change and a **minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

The Kennels, Glenferness

6.7.177. These two properties are situated approximately 4.8 km to the north north-east of the Proposed Development and are stone-built properties located near Glenferness House which is situated beyond 5 km from the Proposed Development. The properties are located to the east of the River Findhorn and are set within a clearing with extensive mature woodland blocks to the immediate, north, west and south.

6.7.178. The main façades of the north-westerly of the two properties face north-west to south-east and the property is positioned adjacent to the westerly woodland. The south-easterly property is L-shaped with a garden area to the south-west, located within the area created by the two wings

of the property. This property is situated further from the westerly woodland but closer to the southerly woodland. As a result, views of the Proposed Development will be screened such that during both daytime and the hours of darkness there will be no greater than a very low magnitude of change and **negligible effects** from these properties.

Tirriemore

6.7.179. The property is situated approximately 3.6 km to the east on the slopes on the western side of Lochindorb. It comprises a single C-shaped building, orientated north-west to south-east with the inner quadrangle positioned to the south-east, facing away from the Proposed Development. There is no boundary vegetation or other nearby tree cover. As such there are open views from the rear of the property towards the Proposed Development.

6.7.180. The smooth, gently sloping topography to the west of the property partially screens views of the proposed turbines, with views of eight turbines, with views mainly limited to blade tips, although the hubs of two turbines will be visible.

6.7.181. During daylight hours the Proposed Development would introduce a low size and scale of change that would occupy a small proportion of the view experienced at an oblique angle to the property. Views of some of the turbines would be screened by the slopes of Carn Bad a' Churaich to the west. This would result in a in a low magnitude of change and a **moderate effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.7.182. During the hours of darkness, with reference to **Figure 6.25** illustrating the lit turbine ZTV within 20 km, between one and two of the five lit turbines would be visible in theory, with the nacelles of turbines 14 and 17 visible.

6.7.183. The nacelle lights of these two turbines be seen as small red dots back-clothed against the landform to the west of the site. This change would occur in a part of the landscape with very few existing light sources, resulting in a low to very low magnitude of change and a **minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

Settlements within 5 to 10 km

Properties in and around Dava

6.7.184. This comprises two main clusters of properties situated approximately 7.3 km to the east north-east of the Proposed Development at Dava at the junction between the A939 and the A940. The southerly group includes Dava Farm Cottage, Woodside and Dava School House situated alongside the A939 to the south of Dava School Plantation. The northerly group comprises Station Cottages and Station House situated within woodland further to the north-east adjacent to the former railway line and the Dava Way.

6.7.185. From the southerly group of three properties (Dava Farm Cottage, Woodside and Dava School House) there are open views in a westerly direction towards the Proposed Development, with these properties orientated west to east with the front façades facing towards the site, with open lawn areas in front, adjacent to the A939.

6.7.186. Views from the northerly group of properties (Station Cottages and Station House) towards the Proposed Development are screened by extensive tree cover along the western edge of the properties.

6.7.187. During daylight hours the Proposed Development would introduce a very low size and scale of change that would occupy a medium proportion of the view, that would only be experienced from the southerly group of properties, with only the upper blade tips of up to 12 turbines visible above the intervening landform to the west. This would result in a in a low to very low magnitude of change and a **minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.7.188. During the hours of darkness, with reference to **Figure 6.25** illustrating the lit turbine ZTV within 20 km, there would be no theoretical visibility of any of the lit turbines from the southerly group

of properties as all lit turbine hubs would be below the horizon. From the northerly group, although there is theoretical visibility predicted of between three and five of the lit turbines actual visibility will be prevented by the mature woodland around the properties and along their western edge, resulting in a very low magnitude of change and **no effects** during dark hours.

Ferness

6.7.189. This linear cluster of properties is situated approximately 7.7 km to the north north-east, along the western edge of the B9007, immediately to the south of its junction with the A939. From the junction the road slopes downhill, with extensive tree cover and boundary vegetation enclosing the houses, which are orientated west north-west to east south-east, with the Proposed Development situated at an oblique angle to the south south-west. There are also substantial areas of woodland to the south of this cluster of properties.

6.7.190. As a result, views of the Proposed Development will be screened such that during both daytime and the hours of darkness there will be no greater than a very low magnitude of change and **no effects** from these properties.

Table 6.8 – Summary of Operational Effects on Residential Properties and Settlements

		Daylight Hours			Hours of Darkness		
Location	**Sensitivity**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Level of Effect**	**Significant**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Level of Effect**	**Significant**
Banchor	High	High	**Major**	**Yes**	Medium	**Moderate major**	**Yes**
Drumlochan & Milltown	High	Medium	**Moderate major**	**Yes**	Low medium	Moderate	No
Dulsie & Dulsie Cottage	High	Low to very low	Minor	No	Low to very low	Minor	No
Dunearn Lodge	High	High	**Major**	**Yes**	Medium	**Moderate major**	**Yes**
Knockandhu	High	Very low	No effect	No	Very low	No effect	No
Little Aitnoch	High	Low to very low	Minor	No	Low to very low	Minor	No
Lochindorb Lodge	High	Medium	**Moderate major**	**Yes**	Low	Moderate	No
Refouble	High	Medium	**Moderate major**	**Yes**	Low medium	Moderate	No
The Kennels, Glenferness	High	Very low	Negligible	No	Very low	Negligible	No
Tirriemore	High	Low	Moderate	No	Low to very low	Minor	No
Dava	High	Low to very low	Minor	No	Very low	No effect	No
Ferness	High	Very	No effect	No	Very	No effect	No

Bold text indicates a significant effect

Recreational Walking Routes

6.7.191. As identified in the baseline section, a section of the Dava Way at Dava (also identified as THC Reference Core Paths BS05.01 and Moray DA01 – DA05) has been brought forward into detailed assessment. It extends for approximately 4.5 km, commencing to the south of Knock of Braemoray and continuing south to Fox Hill, Dava with theoretical visibility ending to the north-west of Carn na Glaisneach.

6.7.192. The assessment of Viewpoint 7 (see **Appendix 6.5**) identified users of this route as having a high sensitivity of the change proposed.

6.7.193. From the south of Knock of Braemoray to south of Fox Hill there is limited theoretical visibility of parts of eight of the turbines. However, intermittent tree cover along the route, woodland to the west at Carn Bad a' Churaich, together with parts of the route being in former railway cuttings means that actual visibility of the Proposed Development is likely to be less than predicted.

6.7.194. During daylight hours the Proposed Development would introduce a low to very low size and scale of change that would occupy a small to very small proportion of the view, that would only be experienced in westerly views, perpendicular to the route. The hubs of two turbines would be visible in theory, with views of the blades of the remaining turbines. This would result in a in a low to very low magnitude of change and a **minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.7.195. During the hours of darkness, the nacelles of turbines 14 and 17 would be visible in theory, seen as small red dots back-clothed against the landform to the west of the site. This change would occur in a part of the landscape with very few existing light sources, resulting in a low to very low magnitude of change and a **minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.7.196. From south of Fox Hill to Dava a greater number of turbines would be visible to the west of the route. The turbines would sit beyond the landform of Carn Bad a' Churaich to the north-east of the site and the ridge at the south-east corner of the site at Carn nan Clach Garbha. In theory, up to 11 turbines would be visible over this section of the route. However, the partially wooded slopes of Carn Bad a' Churaich would provide some further screening of parts of the development.

6.7.197. During daylight hours the Proposed Development would introduce a low size and scale of change that would occupy a small to moderate proportion of the view, that would only be experienced in westerly views, perpendicular to the route. The hubs of eight turbines would be visible in theory, with views of the blades of the remaining turbines. This would result in a in a low medium magnitude of change and a **moderate effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.7.198. During the hours of darkness, the nacelles of turbines 14, 15 and 17 would be visible in theory, seen as small red dots back-clothed against the landform to the west of the site. This change would occur in a part of the landscape with very few existing light sources, resulting in a low magnitude of change and a **moderate minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.7.199. At Dava the route passes through Dava Plantation, obscuring views of the Proposed Development. Over this section, during daylight and dark hours receptors would experience no effects as views west would be screened by the woodland.

6.7.200. To the south of Dava Plantation westerly views towards the Proposed Development are once again available and continue for approximately 450 m, before views are restricted for a further 450 m north north-east of Drumguish by localised topography.

6.7.201. Viewpoint 7 Dava Way (see **Figure 6.43**) is representative of the worst-case visibility from this section of the route. The assessment of this viewpoint identified a low medium magnitude of

change and a **moderate effect** that is considered **not significant** during daylight hours and a low magnitude of change and a **moderate minor** level of effect that would be considered **not significant** during the hours of darkness. These effects would be experienced over an approximate 450 m section of the route.

6.7.202. South of this point there is predicted visibility for the remainder of this section of the route, with progressively fewer turbines being visible, until the end of the section to the north-west of Carn na Glaisneach. During daylight hours the Proposed Development would introduce no greater than a low to very low size and scale of change that would occupy a small to very small proportion of the view, that would only be experienced in westerly views, perpendicular to the route, with effects reducing as progressively fewer turbines are visible. This would result in no greater than a low to very low magnitude of change and a **minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant**. During the hours of darkness, none of the lit turbines would be visible, resulting in **no effects**.

6.7.203. A summary of the operational effects on recreational walking routes is provided in **Table 6.9** below.

Roads

6.7.204. As set out in **Appendix 6.1** the visual sensitivity of trunk road and major roads is typically low. However, given the nature of the landscape and the likelihood that a greater number of tourists likely to be passing through the landscape, who are more likely to appreciate its scenic qualities, users of this road are considered to have a medium sensitivity to the change proposed.

A939

6.7.205. The A939 extends through the eastern part of the study area from Nairn in the north, to Grantown-on-Spey and continues south-east towards Tomintoul and out of study area to Ballater. At its closet point it passes approximately 5 km to the north-east of the Proposed Development near Aitnoch.

6.7.206. With reference to the blade tip ZTV to 20 km at **Figure 6.3**, theoretical visibility from the northern part of the route commences to the north-west of Littlemill where there is predicted visibility from an approximate 500 m section of the road with views extending in a south south-east direction across fields, trees and towards the distant hills that provide the backdrop to the view.

6.7.207. From this section of the road all 17 turbines would be visible in theory at distances in excess of 12 km. However, in practice views are likely to partially screened by tree cover around field margins in the middleground view and by the more distant forestry.

6.7.208. During daylight hours the Proposed Development would introduce a very low size and scale of change that would occupy a small proportion of the view, that would only be experienced intermittently at an oblique angle to the route. This would result in no greater than a low to very low magnitude of change and **minor/no effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.7.209. During the hours of darkness, none of the nacelle lights would be visible resulting in a very low magnitude of change and **no effect**.

6.7.210. As the road continues to south-east of Littlemill, there is no predicted visibility for several kilometres until the road reaches Belivat, where intermittent theoretical visibility is predicted. However, actual visibility is prevented for approximately 4 km as the road continues to Ferness with mature woodland adjacent to the southerly edge of the road screening views of the Proposed Development. As such over this section of the route there will be **no effect** during daylight or dark hours.

6.7.211. At Ferness the road exits Ferness Forest and south south-westerly views towards the Proposed Development are available, with views across the row of properties near the junction with the

B9007 to the west of the route, the tops of trees in the foreground to middleground, forestry plantation and towards the distant hills to the west of the site. Views are available from the route for approximately 565 m south of Ferness as the road climbs in elevation before it enters further woodland that screens views towards the Proposed Development.

6.7.212. Over this part of the route 17 turbines would be visible in theory at distances in excess of 11 km. However, in practice views are likely to partially screened by forestry plantation that blankets the hills in the view.

6.7.213. During daylight hours the Proposed Development would introduce a low size and scale of change that would occupy a small proportion of the view, that would only be experienced intermittently at an oblique angle to the route with views filtered by intermittent roadside vegetation. This would result in no greater than a low medium magnitude of change and **moderate minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.7.214. During the hours of darkness, the nacelle lights of all lit turbines would be visible in theory, appearing as very faint, small red dots at over 11 km from the road at this point. However, actual visibility of the nacelle lights of turbines 14 and 17 is unlikely due to their position at the horizon, with views of the lights likely to be screened by intervening vegetation. The nacelle lights of turbines 1, 3 and 15 are likely to be visible, backclothed against the distant dark hills. This change would occur in a part of the landscape with some existing light sources such as the properties at Ferness and transient light sources of vehicles passing along the main route. As such during the hours of darkness the Proposed Development would result in no greater than a low to very low magnitude of change and a **minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.7.215. To the south the road enters a wooded area for a distance of approximately 900 m resulting in there being no views and hence no effects during daylight hours or hours of darkness.

6.7.216. From Viewpoint 8 southwards for a distance of approximately 2.8 km, views extend across the open moorland towards the Proposed Development which is situated approximately 5.7 km to the south-west. The assessment of Viewpoint 8 (see **Appendix 6.5**) identified a medium magnitude of change and a **moderate effect** that is considered **not significant** during daylight hours and a low magnitude of change and a **moderate minor effect** that is considered **not significant** during the hours of darkness. These effects would gradually reduce over a distance of approximately 1 km at the southern end of this section as views of the Proposed Development are progressively screened by landform at Hill of Aitnoch.

6.7.217. From near the junction between the A939 and the minor road west to Burnside, there is no visibility for approximately 3 km. Further along the road theoretical visibility commences approximately 1.2 km west of Bridge of Dava, with views south-west partially filtered by roadside vegetation. Where views are available, they extend across open moorland to the gently undulating low hills that provide the backdrop to the view. Approaching Bridge of Dava theoretical visibility increases with up to 12 turbines visible. Six hubs would be visible backclothed against the landform to the west of the site with views of the remaining turbines limited to blade tips that are partly backclothed against the landform.

6.7.218. During daylight hours the Proposed Development would introduce a low size and scale of change that would occupy a small proportion of the view, that would only be experienced intermittently at an oblique angle to the route with views filtered by intermittent roadside vegetation. This would result in no greater than a low medium magnitude of change and **moderate minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.7.219. During the hours of darkness, the nacelle lights of turbines 14, 15 and 17 would to be visible in theory, backclothed against the distant dark hills. This change would occur in a part of the landscape with some existing transient light sources of vehicles passing along the road. As such during the hours of darkness the Proposed Development would result in no greater than

a low to very low magnitude of change and a **minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant**. These effects would continue for approximately 3.2 km through Dava and past the junction between the A939 and the A940, until the Proposed Development is no longer visible and is once again screened by the intervening landform to the west.

6.7.220. Beyond this point there is no further predicted visibility from the route for over 14 km as the route continues in a broadly southerly direction, entering the Cairngorms National Park and passing through Grantown-on-Spey. A further section of theoretical visibility commences to the south-east of Strath Spey as the road climbs in elevation and passes between the hills of Beinn an Fhudair and Coire Odhar. There is theoretical visibility predicted over 3.5 km with theoretical visibility of up to 12 turbines. This section of the route is represented by Viewpoint 15. Views would be limited to the upper parts of blade tips seen only just above the horizon of the distant hills above Grantown-on-Spey at distances between15 and 17.5 km.

6.7.221. During daylight hours the wind farm would introduce a very low size and scale of change that would occupy a small proportion of the view, that would only be experienced at considerable distance from the route. This would result in no greater than a low to very low magnitude of change and **minor/no effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.7.222. During the hours of darkness, none of the nacelle lights would be visible resulting in a very low magnitude of change and **no effect**.

A940

6.7.223. A940 leads off the A939 at Dava, approximately 7 km to the east of the Proposed Development and continues in a northerly direction towards Forres. With reference to the blade tip ZTV to 20 km at **Figure 6.3**, theoretical visibility along the route is intermittent.

6.7.224. From the northern end of the route there is predicted visibility between 18.5 km and 20.5 km to the north north-east of the Proposed Development, north of Altyre Wood. From this section of the route, views towards the Proposed Development are characterised by moorland and extensive forestry plantation. At such distances the Proposed Development would result in no greater than a very low magnitude of change and a **minor/no effect** during daylight and dark hours that would be considered not significant. However, views are likely to be screened by intervening vegetation to the west of the road.

6.7.225. Further south there is intermittent predicted visibility for approximately 1.6 km north of Logie. However, actual visibility is prevented by extensive tree cover along the western side of the road that screens views of the Proposed Development, resulting in **no effects** during daylight and dark hours over this part of the road.

6.7.226. A further section of predicted visibility is situated between Carnach in the north and Beachans in the south at approximately 12.5 km to 13.6 km to the north-east of the Proposed Development. Actual visibility towards the Proposed Development is intermittently prevented by tree cover along the western side of the road. Where views are available, they are only available for short distances and will be glimpsed at an oblique angle to the road, resulting in no greater than a very low magnitude of change and a **minor/no effect** during daylight and dark hours that would be considered not significant.

6.7.227. The final section of predicted visibility from the A940 extends between Tomdow in the north and the junction between the A940 and the A939 in the south, over a distance of approximately 6.4 km. Views are screened by extensive coniferous woodland for approximately 1.4 km south of Tomdow, resulting in **no effects** during daylight and dark hours over this part of the road.

6.7.228. Actual visibility commences approximately 450 m south of Culfearn, with views south-west towards the Proposed Development filtered by conifers next to the road before views open up fully as the road continues towards Braemoray Lodge. At this point up to eight turbines would be visible in theory. Two hubs would be visible, with blade tip views of the remaining turbines.

The turbines would appear within the fold of the distant hills at approximately 8.9 km to south-west of the road. This would result in a low magnitude of change and a **minor effect** that would be **not significant** during daylight hours. There would be **no effects** during the hours of darkness as none of the lit turbine hubs would be visible.

6.7.229. As the road continues south there is predicted visibility of fewer turbines to the west of Knock of Braemoray, with up to 4 turbines visible in theory. However, woodland to the west of the road screens views of the Proposed Development for approximately 1.2 km from near Braemoray Lodge to the turn off to Kerrow, west of Knock of Braemorary, resulting in **no effects** during daylight and dark hours over this part of the road.

6.7.230. South of Kerrow, theoretical visibility is predicted across the remaining section of the route to Dava and the junction of the road and the A939. From Kerrow up to 4 turbines are visible in theory, with increasing numbers becoming visible towards Dava where there is predicted visibility of up to 12 turbines. Views over this part of the road are across moorland and large-scale forestry plantation towards the distinctive low hills to the west of the site. Where available, glimpsed views will be experienced at an oblique angle to the road, with views filtered and intermittently screened by roadside vegetation.

6.7.231. During daylight hours the Proposed Development would introduce a low size and scale of change that would occupy a medium proportion of the view, that would only be experienced intermittently. This would result in no greater than a low medium magnitude of change and **moderate minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.7.232. During the hours of darkness, the nacelle lights of turbines 14, 15 and 17 would to be visible in theory, backclothed against the distant dark hills. This change would occur in a part of the landscape with some existing transient light sources of vehicles passing along the road. As such during the hours of darkness the Proposed Development would result in no greater than a low to very low magnitude of change and a **minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

B9007

6.7.233. As set out in the assessment of Viewpoint 3 (see **Appendix 6.5**), the sensitivity of road users travelling along the B9007 is judged to be medium high.

6.7.234. The B9007 links the A940 at Logie, approximately 14.7 km to the north-east of the Proposed Development, with Duthill on the A938 approximately 9.4 km to the south of the Proposed Development. With reference to the blade tip ZTV to 20 km at **Figure 6.3**, theoretical visibility along the route is intermittent.

6.7.235. From Logie, there is no predicted visibility for approximately 4 km of the route. Theoretical visibility commences north of Aidrie and continues for approximately 2.1 km to Aidrie Mill. Over this section up 17 turbines are visible in theory. However, the majority of views from this section of the road are screened by forestry plantation, with only very limited stretches where views are available. However, it is acknowledged that some views may become available as felling occurs. Where views are available, they will be experienced at distances over 9.4 km and will be glimpsed at an oblique angle to the road, resulting in no greater than a very low magnitude of change and a **minor/no effect** during daylight and dark hours that would be considered **not significant.**

6.7.236. Further south, the next part of the route where there is predicted visibility of the Proposed Development commences at Ferness and continues for approximately 10.9 km past the site to the point at which the ridge of high ground at Carn nan Clach Garbha screens views of the proposed turbines.

6.7.237. Throughout this section there is theoretical visibility of up to 17 turbines. However, extensive areas of woodland extend along each side of the road for approximately 4.9 km south of

Ferness to Drumlochan, screening views towards the Proposed Development, resulting in **no effects** during daylight and dark hours over this part of the road.

6.7.238. South of Drumlochan to south of Dunearn Lodge, over a distance of approximately 1.3 km views become more open and extend across fields, woodland belts and conifer plantations that blanket the low hills to the south-west of the road, with the Proposed Development turbines appearing above the trees that extend along the near horizon to the south of the route.

6.7.239. During daylight hours the Proposed Development would introduce a medium size and scale of change that would occupy a moderate proportion of the view, seen directly ahead when travelling south along the route, with views filtered by intermittently by roadside vegetation. This would result in a medium magnitude of change and a **moderate effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.7.240. During the hours of darkness, the nacelle lights of the nearest lit turbines, turbines 1 and 3 would be visible as small red dots above the horizon. This change would occur in a part of the landscape with some occasional existing transient light sources as vehicles pass along the road, result in no greater than a low magnitude of change and a **moderate minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.7.241. As the road continues southwards, the Proposed Development becomes increasingly more prominent within the view due to the openness of the landscape and the proximity of the proposed turbines to the road. The magnitude of change would increase as would the level of effect.

6.7.242. South of Dunearn Lodge to approximately 500 m further along the route and approximately 2 km to the north north-east of the nearest turbine (T3), the magnitude of change would increase but would remain medium with effects increasing to **moderate** and **significant** during daylight hours. During the hours of darkness, the nacelle lights of the nearest lit turbines, would become more noticeable and would appear at a slightly higher elevation within the dark sky, resulting in a low medium magnitude of change and a **moderate effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.7.243. As the road continues south-west and south to approximately 1 km from the nearest turbine at the north-eastern corner of the site the proposed turbines would become more prominent within views to the west of the route resulting in the magnitude of change increasing to high with effects becoming **moderate major** and **significant** during daylight hours. During the hours of darkness, the nacelle lights of the nearest lit turbines, would become more elevated within the dark sky appearing above the background landform, resulting in a medium magnitude of change and a **moderate effect** that is considered to be **significant**.

6.7.244. From the north-eastern corner of the site, the nearest turbine, T1 is within approximately 1 km and is highly prominent in south-westerly views from the road. The assessment of Viewpoint 3 (see **Appendix 6.5**) identified a very high magnitude of change and a **major effect** that is considered **significant** during daylight hours and a high magnitude of change and a **moderate major effect** that is considered **significant** during the hours of darkness. These effects would continue for approximately 1 km along the road.

6.7.245. Approximately 1 km further along the road from T1, where there is greater separation between the road and the proposed turbines, the magnitude of change would reduce to high, with effects becoming **moderate major** and **significant** during daylight hours and a medium magnitude of change and a **moderate effect** that is considered to be **significant** during the hours of darkness. These effects would continue for approximately 2.2 km as the road passes the eastern edge, where westerly views would be perpendicular to the route of the site, until the ridgeline at Carn nan Clach Garbha at the south-eastern corner of the site screens views of the proposed turbines.

6.7.246. Road users travelling north or south along the route would experience significant effects for varying durations. Road users travelling north along the road would experience significant effects over a distance of approximately 2.9 km as the road passes Carn nan Clach Garbha and the south-eastern corner of the site, continuing to a point just past T3, where the Proposed Development would pass to the rear of road users and would no longer appear in front of travellers.

6.7.247. In contrast, road users travelling south along the B9007 would experience significant effects over a distance of approximately 4.3 km, from approximately 500 m south of Dunearn Lodge until views of the proposed turbines are screened by Carn nan Clach Garbha at the south-eastern corner of the site.

Shore Road, Lochindorb

6.7.248. As set out in the assessment of Viewpoint 6 (see **Appendix 6.5**), the sensitivity of road users travelling along Shore Road is judged to be high.

6.7.249. Shore Road is a minor road that leads from the A939 to the east of the site, past Lochindorb, to its junction with the B9007 approximately 285 m to the south of the south-eastern corner of the site. Views from the road are characterised by the undulating, small-scale moorland landscape between the A939 and the loch, the ruins of Lochindorb Castle and the loch itself set against the smooth, gently sloping rounded low hills beyond.

6.7.250. With reference to the blade tip ZTV to 20 km at **Figure 6.3**, there is theoretical visibility across the whole route.

6.7.251. From its junction with the A939, there is predicted visibility of up to 4 turbines for approximately 1.2 km. However, views would be limited to blade tips only with intervening landform largely screening the proposed turbines from view. This would result in a very low magnitude of change and **minor/no effect** that would be **not significant** during daylight hours. There would be **no effects** during the hours of darkness as none of the lit turbine hubs would be visible.

6.7.252. As the road turns south-west towards the loch, more turbines come into view over the course of approximately 300 m to the junction with the track that leads south from Shore Road. At this point up to 17 turbines are visible in theory, with the Proposed Development approximately 5.8 km to the west, appearing in the dip between the smooth, gently sloping landform to the west.

6.7.253. At this point along the road, during daylight hours the Proposed Development would introduce a low size and scale of change that would occupy a small proportion of the view. This would result in a **medium magnitude of change** and a **moderate effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.7.254. During the hours of darkness, the nacelle lights of only T1 would be visible as a small red dot seen against the background dark landform. This change would occur in a part of the landscape with few other existing light sources but would result in no greater than a low to very low magnitude of change and a **minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.7.255. These effects would gradually increase over approximately 1 km as the road continues towards the loch, with some localised screening provided by landform as the road descends towards the layby at the north-eastern end of the loch.

6.7.256. The assessment of Viewpoint 6 (see **Appendix 6.5**) identified a medium high magnitude of change and a **moderate major significant effect** during daylight hours and a low magnitude of change and a **moderate minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant** during the hours of darkness. These effects would continue for approximately 1.6 km as the road passes along the eastern shoreline of loch to Lochindorb Lodge, where woodland surrounding the

lodge screens westerly views towards the Proposed Development, resulting in **no effect** during daylight or dark hours over an 800 m section of the road.

6.7.257. To the south-west of Lochindorb Lodge, the proposed turbines are screened to a greater degree by the ridgeline at Carn nan Clach Garbha at the south-eastern corner of the site that forms the horizon of westerly views from this section of the road.

6.7.258. At this point along the road, during daylight hours the wind farm would introduce a low medium size and scale of change that would occupy a large proportion of the view. This would result in a medium magnitude of change and a **moderate effect** that is considered to be **significant**.

6.7.259. During the hours of darkness, the nacelle lights T1 and T3 would be visible as a very small, faint red dots seen against the background dark landform at the right-hand edge of the array. This change would occur in a part of the landscape with few other existing light sources but would result in no greater than a low magnitude of change and a **moderate minor effect** that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.7.260. These effects would continue over a distance of approximately 2.7 km as the road continues towards its junction with the B9007. Effects would reduce quickly and continue to be **not significant** as the road approaches the junction and views of the proposed turbines are screened due to the proximity of the landform at Carn nan Clach Garbha at the south-eastern corner of the site.

6.7.261. These effects would be primarily experienced by people travelling south-west along Shore Road, in the direction of the Proposed Development. In contrast, the Proposed Development would mainly appear to the rear as people travel in a north-easterly direction along the road. Notwithstanding this, users travelling north-east could experience oblique views towards the Proposed Development but the main views along the route would be in the opposite direction from the Proposed Development.

A summary of the operational effects on road users is provided in **Table 6.10** below.

Table 6.9 – Summary of Operational Effects on Recreational Walking Routes

		Daylight Hours			Hours of Darkness		
Location	**Sensitivity**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Level of Effect**	**Significant**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Level of Effect**	**Significant**
Dava Way *Knock of Braemoray to south of Fox Hill)*	High	Low to very low	Minor	No	Low to very low	Minor	No
Dava Way *Fox Hill to Dava*	High	Low medium	Moderate	No	Low	Moderate minor	No
Dava Way *Dava Plantation*	High	Very Low	No effect	No	Very Low	No effect	No
Dava Way *South of Dava Plantation for approximately 450 m*	High	Low medium	Moderate	No	Low	Moderate minor	No
Dava Way *Drumguish to Carn na Glaisneach*	High	Low to very low	Minor	No	Very low	No effect	No

Table 6.10 – Summary of Operational Effects on Roads

		Daylight Hours			Hours of Darkness		
Location	**Sensitivity**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Level of Effect**	**Significant**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Level of Effect**	**Significant**
A939 – Littlemill *(500 m section)*	Medium	Low to very low	Minor/no effect	No	Very low	No effect	No
A939 – Belivat to Ferness *(4 km section)*	Medium	Very low	No effect	No	Very low	No effect	No
A939 – Ferness *(550 m section)*	Medium	Low medium	Moderate minor	No	Low to very low	Minor	No
A939 – 550 m south of Ferness to Viewpoint 8 *(900 m section)*	Medium	Very low	No effect	No	Very low	No effect	No
A939 – Viewpoint 8 *(2.8 km section)*	Medium	Medium	Moderate	No	Low	Moderate minor	No
A939 Bridge of Dava	Medium	Low medium	Moderate minor	No	Low to very low	Minor	No
A939 South of Lynemore *(3.5 km section)*	Medium	Very low	Minor/no effect	No	Very low	No effect	No
A940 Altyre Wood *(2 km section)*	Medium	Very low	Minor/no effect	No	Very low	No effect	No
A940 Logie *(1.6 km section)*	Medium	Very low	Minor/no effect	No	Very low	No effect	No
A940 Carnach to Beachans *(1.1 km section)*	Medium	Very low	Minor/no effect	No	Very low	No effect	No

		Daylight Hours			Hours of Darkness		
Location	**Sensitivity**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Level of Effect**	**Significant**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Level of Effect**	**Significant**
A940 Tomdow to 450 m north of Culfearn *(1.4 km section)*	Medium	Very low	No effect	No	Very low	No effect	No
A940 450 m north of Culfearn to near Braemoray Lodge *(400 m section)*	Medium	Low	Minor	No	Very low	No effect	No
A940 Near Braemoray Lodge *(1.2 km section)*	Medium	Very low	No effect	No	Very low	No effect	No
A940 Kerrow to Dava *(4 km section)*	Medium	Low medium	Moderate minor	No	Low to very low	Minor	No
B9007Aidrie to Aidrie Mill *(2.1 km section)*	Medium high	Very low	Minor/no effect	No	Very low	No effect	No
B9007 Ferness to Drumlochan *(4.9 km section)*	Medium high	Very low	No effect	No	Very low	No effect	No
B9007 South of Drumlochan to south of Dunearn Lodge *(1.3 km section)*	Medium high	Medium	Moderate	No	Low	Moderate minor	No
B9007 South of Dunearn Lodge to approximately 2 km from nearest turbine *(500 m section)*	Medium high	Medium	**Moderate**	**Yes**	Low medium	Moderate	No
B9007 approximately 2 km from nearest turbine to north-east corner	Medium high	High	**Moderate major**	**Yes**	Medium	**Moderate**	**Yes**

		Daylight Hours			Hours of Darkness		
Location	**Sensitivity**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Level of Effect**	**Significant**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Level of Effect**	**Significant**
of the site *(1 km section)*							
B9007 North-east corner of the site south for 1 km *(1 km section)*	Medium	Very high	**Major**	**Yes**	High	**Moderate major**	**Yes**
B9007 1 km from north-east corner of the site to Carn nan Clach Garbha *(2.2 km section)*	Medium high	High	**Moderate major**	**Yes**	High	**Moderate major**	**Yes**
Shore Road from A939 junction *(1.2 km section)*	High	Very low	Minor/no effect	No	Very low	No effect	No
Shore Road to layby at north-eastern end of loch *(1.3 km section)*	High	Low	Medium	No	Low to very low	Minor	No
Shore Road layby at north-eastern end of loch to Lochindorb Lodge *(1.6 km section)*	High	Medium high	**Moderate major**	**Yes**	Low	Moderate minor	No
Shore Road Lochindorb Lodge *(800 m section)*	High	Very low	No effect	No	Very low	No effect	No
Shore Road south-west of Lochindorb Lodge *(2.7 km section)*	High	Low	**Moderate**	**Yes**	Low	Moderate minor	No

Effects on the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors Special Landscape Area

6.7.262. In order to consider the effects upon the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA it is appropriate to consider the various assessments for the relevant identified landscape character types which occur within the SLA.

6.7.263. The Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA extends to approximately 245,000 hectares and comprises the following landscape character types:

- LCT 221 – Rolling Uplands – Inverness;
- LCT 286 – Narrow Wooded Valley – Moray & Nairn; and
- LCT 291 – Open Rolling Upland.

6.7.264. The Highland Council Assessment of Special Landscape Areas describes it as:

"This landscape comprises high rolling moorland, which has a consistency of character derived from gentle gradients, limited relief, and management of much of the area as grouse moor. Although this moorland is not as extensive as other moorlands further north, it is valuable for being located mid-way between a number of settlements and for being easily accessible via several roads which pass through the area. High tableland of this extent, which can be traversed by and appreciated from public roads, is relatively rare in Highland region. Key characteristics are the homogeneity of this area, its sense of spaciousness, wide views, and sparse human presence.

Elements of human intervention are evident within this landscape, most obviously in the form of tracks, fences, muirburn patterns and fencing. However, it retains a strong sense of tranquillity as well as some wildness qualities, which are emphasised by an almost complete absence of built structures."

6.7.265. It goes on to identify its Special Qualities as:

- A Sense of Solitude, Views over Heather Moorland, and Big Skies
  - Expansive views and broad panoramas across open, rolling moorland and vast skies instil a boundless sense of scale and space, enhanced by the consistency of moorland cover and landform character;
  - A narrow, deep section of the Findhorn river valley at Streens offers enclosed and intimate relief in contrast to the elevated and exposed moorland. Elsewhere, valleys frame views to Lochindorb;
  - Land management practices create distinctive abstract muirburn patterns, accentuated by ever-changing weather and light patterns;
  - The limited extent of tree cover and human habitation creates a simple yet powerful moorland image of tranquillity, simplicity and isolation which is emphasized by Lochindorb and its ruined castle;
  - Where buildings exist, these are of a distinctive estate character. Also building remains from preclearance farmsteads, with enclosures, head dykes and associated field systems and improved landform one of the few built and 'managed' elements within the landscape. These engender a strong atmosphere which can arouse contemplative emotions of past human endeavour and hardship; and
  - The long, fairly straight routes through this landscape allow an easy appreciation of the openness and simplicity of the landscape. These are typically lined with permanent snow poles which serve to reinforce the impression that this is a landscape exposed to adverse weather.

6.7.266. It is noteworthy that the existing Moy Wind Farm overlaps with the western boundary of the SLA, and that the existing Tom nan Clach Wind Farm is situated entirely within the western edge of the SLA, establishing wind energy development as a human influence on the SLA.

6.7.267. Based on the findings of the likely effects on landscape character set out above, the Proposed Development would have a direct, localised and **significant** effect on a very small part of the moorland landscape fabric in the vicinity of the where the wind farm is sited.

6.7.268. Indirect and significant effects would extend across a relatively confined part of the Open Rolling Upland LCT (LCT 291), out to approximately 3 km to the west, south to the boundary of the CNP and approximately 6 km to the east (approximately 4 km once the consented Cairn Duhie Wind Farm is constructed). The Proposed Development would also have an indirect **significant** effect on LCT 286 – Narrow Wooded Valley – Moray & Nairn to approximately 5 km to the north of the Proposed Development.

6.7.269. However, the Proposed Development would not have any appreciable effect on the character of the far western part of the SLA which overlaps with LCT221 Rolling Uplands – Inverness. The character of this part of the SLA is more strongly influenced by its proximity to the existing Tom nan Clach and Moy wind farms.

6.7.270. In terms of the visual qualities of the SLA, **significant** visual effects would occur across part of the SLA. However, these are limited to the central part of the SLA and would extend to approximately 3 km to the west, to the southern boundary of the SLA where it meets the CNP and approximately 5 km to the east and north.

6.7.271. Beyond approximately 5 km to the east, theoretical visibility from within the SLA is more intermittent. Where views are available the Proposed Development would not strongly influence the perception of the SLA's visual qualities.

6.7.272. Overall, it is acknowledged that there would be both significant effects on landscape character and visual amenity within parts of the SLA, as a result of the Proposed Development. However, with regard to the special qualities of the SLA identified by Highland Council (set out at **paragraph 6.6.20**), it is **not considered that the addition of the Proposed Development would be such as to prevent an understanding or appreciation of the underlying landscape of the SLA or its special qualities**.

Visual Effects during Decommissioning

6.7.273. It is recognised that there would be some additional temporary effects during decommissioning of the turbines over and above those assessed under the heading of 'Operational Effects' above. The additional effects resulting from decommissioning activities would be localised and relatively incidental when viewed in the context of the turbines being removed.

6.7.274. The effects on visual amenity would therefore decrease incrementally as decommissioning progresses and as more turbines and associated foundations and hardstanding are removed. Users of the B9007 which passes to the east of the site, and within close proximity to the proposed turbines, will experience the greatest effects during decommissioning. Receptors using these routes would have largely unobstructed views of the decommissioning activities associated with the wind turbine elements of the Proposed Development.

6.7.275. The effects would be similar to those during the construction phase but in reverse.

6.7.276. Overall, it is considered that there would be a low magnitude of additional change (over that during the operation phase) for the reasons outlined above. This would result in no greater than a minor temporary effect on the visual amenity. The decommissioning effects would be temporary in nature and are unlikely to all occur at the same time during this phase.

6.7.277. The decommissioning effects of the Proposed Development on visual amenity are not deemed to be significant.

6.8. Mitigation

Mitigation Measures and Design Evolution

6.8.1. As discussed in best practice guidance for EIA, mitigation measures may include:

- avoidance of effects;
- reduction in magnitude of effects; and
- compensation for effects (which may include enhancements to offset any adverse effects).

6.8.2. The primary mitigation adopted in relation to the Proposed Development is embedded within the design of the Proposed Development and relates to the consideration that was given to avoiding and minimising landscape and visual effects during the evolution of the Proposed Development layout. This is sometimes referred to as 'mitigation by design'. A detailed discussion of the design evolution and the iterative process underpinning it is provided in **Chapter 2** of this EIA Report. Design evolution is summarised below, in so far as landscape and visual matters have influenced the Proposed Development.

6.8.3. Based on general good practice design principles (as set out in SNH/NatureScot guidelines) and an analysis of site-specific opportunities and constraints, the wind farm layout has evolved to take into consideration a number of landscape and visual constraints whilst maintaining an optimal development. In particular, a focus of the design iteration process was to seek to reduce the extent and nature of landscape and visual effects on the Cairngorms National Park. This process resulted in an increased offset between turbines and the CNP boundary and a large reduction in the visibility of the Proposed Development from the CNP, as demonstrated through the ZTVs. The design process also led to the reduction in the number of lit turbines down to only 5 compared with the original proposal of all turbines being lit.

6.8.4. A design rationale has been adopted to avoid inconsistent turbine spacing, outliers or excessive overlapping turbines to minimise visual confusion and ensure a balanced / compact array from key views in the local landscape. The proposed turbines have been positioned within a bowl within the wider landscape, avoiding areas of higher ground ensuring that the Proposed Development is perceived as being set down in the landscape as far as possible.

6.8.5. Appropriate offsets from all properties and settlements, have been maintained to ensure that no property would experience an overbearing visual impact such that it became an unattractive place to live.

6.8.6. The above principles have been applied as a number of iterations to the design were made. Taking all other engineering and environmental constraints into account, the final layout of the turbines on site was specifically designed to achieve a balanced array of turbines when viewed from the surrounding landscape.

6.8.7. In considering the layout of other structures and ancillary features of the Proposed Development, the design has sought to utilise some of the existing Tom nan Clach Wind Farm access tracks.

6.8.8. The turbines themselves will be painted an off-white colour with a low reflectivity semi-matt finish (or similar as agreed with the THC). Such a finish is widely regarded to be the least intrusive in the landscape when seen against the sky in a host of weather conditions typically experienced within the UK.

6.8.9. Mitigation of visible turbine lighting has been designed into the scheme by adopting a cardinal lighting scheme where only the outermost turbines are lit (Turbines 1, 3, 14, 15 and 17). Further mitigation has been incorporated to reduce the intensity of lighting in certain atmospheric conditions by reducing the intensity and attenuating the amount of vertical downwards lighting in order to reduce the visual impact experienced by receptors below the lights.

6.8.10. Visibility sensors will be installed on relevant turbines to measure the prevailing atmospheric conditions and visibility range. Should atmospheric conditions mean that visibility from the turbines within the site is greater than 5 km from the Proposed Development, CAA policy permits lights to operate in a lower intensity mode, being a minimum of 10% of their capable illumination. Therefore, the 2000 candela steady state lights would operate at 200 candela. However, if visibility is restricted to 5 km or less, the lights would operate at 2,000 candela.

6.8.11. Additionally, the inherent directional intensity of 2,000 candela lights can be used to reduce vertical downwards lighting impacts at elevations less than -1° degree vertical angle from the horizontal plane from the aviation light. By ensuring the lights installed comply with the ICAO recommendations, it is possible to attenuate the vertical downwards light to a level that reduces the visual impact from receptors at ground levels below the lights. Implementing the ICAO recommendations, at -1 degrees the aviation lights should only be 1,125 cd and at -10 degrees should only be 75cd, when visibility is greater 5 km.

6.8.12. These measures are proposed as embedded mitigation. They are likely to reduce the magnitude of landscape and visual effects particularly for distant receptors, however this feature will not remove visibility of aviation lighting completely for any nearby receptors.

6.8.13. In the long term, when the Proposed Development is decommissioned, the turbines would be removed from site, and the hard-standings would be restored in accordance with a restoration plan to be approved by the local planning authority.

6.9. Residual Effects

6.9.1. Best practice for EIA in general terms requires that the significance of potential effects be assessed, mitigation proposals identified and the residual effect (with mitigation in place) then re-assessed to demonstrate the effectiveness of the mitigation proposed.

6.9.2. In the case of LVIA for wind farms this presents two interrelated problems:

- Potential effects cannot be meaningfully assessed in the absence of an assumed layout; and
- Landscape and visual mitigation principally focuses on refinement of the site layout ('mitigation by design').

6.9.3. The primary mitigation adopted in relation to the Proposed Development is embedded within the design of the Proposed Development and relates to the consideration that was given to avoiding and minimising landscape and visual effects during the evolution of the Proposed Development layout. The approach taken in this LVIA has therefore been to assess the final layout which is the result of an iterative design process. Therefore, the residual landscape and visual effects are largely the same as those assessed in the main part of the LVIA.

6.10. Cumulative Effects

6.10.1. For the cumulative assessment, consideration was initially given to a 60 km radius from the Site, as recommended by NatureScot best practice guidance. Following this, all other wind energy developments that are operational, under construction, consented or subject to a valid full planning or Section 36 application within 45 km of the Proposed Development were identified and reviewed as part of the cumulative baseline. It is acknowledged that this list is constantly evolving and therefore, the 12 of October 2021 was used as an effective 'cut off' date after which no further research was undertaken on the evolving status of wind energy development in the study area, and the CLVIA reflects the status of each wind farm at the time of this date.

6.10.2. In order that the assessment remains focused on those other schemes which have the greatest potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects, it was deemed appropriate to scope out

any turbines under 50 m, or any turbines between 50 m and 80 m which lie over 10 km from the site. Schemes that are at scoping or at the pre-planning stage have not been considered due to the uncertainty that these schemes will come forward and the lack of adequate information about project details. This is in accordance with the approach advocated in GLVIA3.

6.10.3. The cumulative sites within 45 km are shown in **Table 6.11** and illustrated in **Figure 6.27**. Following a request by Highland Council and the local community, the location of any scoping stage schemes within 45km are also illustrated on this Figure.

6.10.4. At the time of preparing this LVIA, there were 22 other wind farms or wind turbine schemes within 45 km of the site which were either operational, under construction or in the planning system. As a breakdown of these by status: 10 were operational, 7 were consented or under construction and 5 were subject to a valid planning application (including those at appeal or had been refused and may be appealed at a later date).

Table 6.11: Other Wind Farms within 45 km of the Site

Site	Blade tip height of turbines	Number of turbines	Distance and Direction from the Site
Operational			
Tom nan Clach	125m	13	3km west
Moy	126.5m	20	7km west
Farr	101m	40	17km south-west
Dunmaglass	120m	33	31km south-west
Corriegarth	120m	20	37km south-west
Hill of Glaschyle	100m	12	13km north-east
Berry Burn	104m	29	15km north-east
Paul's Hill	100m	28	17km north-east
Rothes I	99.5m	28	26km north-east
Rothes II	15 x 125m 3 x 110m	18	27km north-east
Consented/Under Construction			
Cairn Duhie	110m	20	6km north-east
Glen Kyllachy	110m	20	17km south-west
Aberarder	130m	12	28km south-west
Paul's Hill II	1 x 134m 5 x 149.9m	6	20km north-east
Meikle Hill	126.5m	6	25km north-east
Kellas	110m	4	27km north-east
Hunt Hill	67m	3	32km north-east
In Planning			
Clash Gour	130m - 180m	48	13km north-east
Berry Burn Extension	149.9m	9	17km north-east
Rothes III	17 x 225m 8 x 200m 3 x 149.9m	28	27km north-east
Corriegarth II	149.9m	16	37km south-west
Cairn Duhie (revised scheme)	149.9m	16	6km north-east

6.10.5. As the Cairn Duhie Wind Farm is consented, but also subject to a valid application for an amended scheme, clarification was sought from Highland Council regarding how the scheme should be addressed within the cumulative assessment. In an email dated 29 October 2021 Highland Council advised that the proposed, rather than the consented scheme, should be shown in all visualisations and CZTVs. This approach has therefore been adopted in the LVIA. In addition, a further CZTV based on the consented scheme has also been provided for reference.

6.10.6. For the avoidance of doubt and to reiterate the methodology adopted in **Appendix 6.1**, the baseline against which the solus effects of the Proposed Development has been assessed includes all operational wind farms. An assessment of the Proposed Development with consideration of other operational wind farms has already therefore been presented in the main section of this LVIA.

6.10.7. The primary purpose of the cumulative impact assessment is therefore to consider the additional effects that might arise as a result of the Proposed Development if the other consented and in planning (awaiting determination) schemes were also operational. In addition, this cumulative assessment also includes a further consideration of the overall totality of the effect, when the Proposed Development is considered alongside the other operational or proposed schemes across the study area.

6.10.8. The baseline in the cumulative impact assessment is therefore extended to consider other schemes that are not yet present in the landscape but are at various stages in the planning process. Two scenarios are considered which reflect the different degrees of certainty that these schemes will be constructed:

- Scenario 1 assumes that other consented (but as yet unbuilt) wind farms are operational;
- Scenario 2 extends this further to assume that all schemes in planning are also operational. In reality, it is possible that all other schemes that are in planning may not be approved and constructed but this scenario assumes all planning schemes are operational as this presents the 'worst case'.

Cumulative ZTVs and Wireframes

6.10.9. Cumulative ZTVs (CZTVs) have been produced to illustrate the theoretical visibility of various other wind farms and combinations of wind farms with the Proposed Development.

6.10.10. It should be reiterated that ZTVs imply a much greater geographical extent of influence on the landscape and views of it than would actually be the case. It therefore follows that the cumulative ZTVs also exaggerate the actual impacts of the turbines on landscape character and visual amenity as they do not take account of vegetation or buildings in the landscape, which may restrict the nature and extent of views.

6.10.11. Cumulative ZTVs have been produced for the following combinations of existing, consented and other wind farm sites in planning:

Operational Schemes

- Lethen with Tom Nan Clach, Moy and Farr (**Figure 6.28**);
- Lethen with Dunmaglass and Corriegarth (**Figure 6.29** and
- Lethen with Hill of Glaschyle, Berry Burn, Pauls Hill and Rothes I and II (**Figure 6.30**).

Consented Schemes

- Lethen with Glen Kyllachy and Aberarder (**Figure 6.30**);
- Lethen with Cairn Duhie (**Figure 6.31**); and
- Lethen with Paul's Hill II, Meikle Hill, Kellas and Hunt Hill (**Figure 6.32**).

In Planning Schemes

- Lethen with Glen Kyllachy and Aberarder (**Figure 6.33**);

- Lethen with Cairn Duhie (revised scheme) (**Figure 6.34**);
- Lethen with Clash Gour, Berry Burn Extension and Rothes III (**Figure 6.35**); and
- Lethen with Corriegarth II (**Figure 6.36**).

6.10.12. **Table 6.12** provides a summary of cumulative visibility at each of the 16 assessment viewpoints.

Table 6.12 Summary of Combined Cumulative Visual Effects by Viewpoint Location

Visibility of Wind Farms at Each Viewpoint Location (Key: X = In Combination, O = In Succession)														
		Tom Nan Clach, Moy or Farr	Dunmaglass or Corriegarth	Hill of Glaschyle, Berry Burn, Pauls Hill or Rothes I and II	Glen Kyllachy or Aberarder	Cairn Duhie	Paul' s Hill II, Meikle Hill, Kellas or Hunt Hill	Glen Kyllachy or Aberarder	Cairn Duhie (revised)	Clash Gour, Berry Burn Extension, or Rothes III	Corriegarth II
Viewpoint location											
1	Carn Glas-choire	O		X	O	x	X	X	X		
2	Minor road north of Drynachan										
3	B9007 near Lochindorb	X									
4	Creag Ealraich	X		O		x		X			
5	Meall a'Bhreacraibh			X	O						
6	Shore Road, Lochindorb	X									
7	Dava Way	X		O						O	
8	A939 at Milestone	X									
9	Gorton Hill	X	O	O	O						
10	Bheinn Mhor	X	O	O	O						
11	Creagan a Chaise	X	X	X	X	x	O	X	X	X	
12	Meall a'Bhuachaille Cairn	X		X	O	x	X	X	X		
13	Minor Road, near Dunearn Fort	X									
14	Ardclach Bell Tower	X									
15	Lymore on the A939				X			X			
16	Summit of the Knock of Braemoray	x		O	O	x		x			

Cumulative Effects on Landscape Character

6.10.13. It is acknowledged that wherever more than one wind farm is visible at any given location in the landscape, there will be a greater overall or cumulative effect on landscape character than if just one wind farm was visible in the landscape. Likewise, it is acknowledged that the more wind turbines that are constructed in any given landscape, the greater magnitude of overall (or combined) change to the landscape character that prevailed prior to the introduction of the first turbines.

6.10.14. However, it is also noted that in any given landscape where turbines are already present, the additional effect on landscape character of introducing further turbines may not be as significant as the initial introduction of turbines. Furthermore, in general, the greater the number of turbines in the baseline landscape the less significant the addition of further turbines may be in landscape character terms as the landscape will be more heavily characterised by turbines in the baseline situation.

6.10.15. It has been assessed in the assessment of the solus effects of the Proposed Development set out earlier in this chapter that there would be some limited significant effects on landscape character as a result of the Proposed Development. The purpose of this section of the cumulative assessment is therefore to identify whether there would be any change to the assessments of significance previously set out in relation to the Proposed Development, once the other wind turbines which are not already operational are considered to form part of the baseline landscape.

6.10.16. Generally speaking, such additional cumulative effects will arise where a tract of landscape would now lie between a cumulative wind farm in one direction and the Proposed Development in a different direction, such that the visibility of turbines as a result of the addition of the Proposed Development would become notable in multiple, usually directly opposite, directions.

6.10.17. The assessment is considered in two parts, firstly in relation to the scenario where the additional consented developments are also considered to be operational and then secondly the scenario where the consented and in-planning schemes are also considered to be operational.

Cumulative Scenario 1 – Other consented schemes are also considered to be operational

6.10.18. In the first cumulative scenario considered (where other consented wind farms are also considered to be operational), it is recognised that there would be additional wind farms in two different directions from the site. Firstly, there would be schemes to the south-west at Glen Kyllachy and Aberarder. Secondly, there would be schemes to the north-east at Cairn Duhie, Paul's Hill II, Meikle Hill, Kellas and Hunt Hill.

6.10.19. Considering the two schemes to the south-west of the site, in each case these schemes would be located adjacent to existing wind farms, with Glen Kyllachy located next to the Farr wind farm and Aberarder located next to the Dunmaglass wind farm. The addition of these schemes therefore would serve to further consolidate the existing influence of wind energy which is already brought about in these parts of the landscape. Noting also that the Glen Kyllachy scheme is located 17 km from the site and Aberarder 28 km from the site, in this context it is considered that if these schemes were also part of the baseline landscape in which the Proposed Development were to be constructed, there would be no change to the previous assessment of the effects on landscape character which the Proposed Development would bring about.

6.10.20. Considering the schemes to the north-east of the site, the consented Cairn Duhie scheme is not discussed at this point with an assessment instead provided in relation to the application stage revised Cairn Duhie scheme, which Highland Council advised represented more of a 'worst-case'. The other consented schemes are again in each case located adjacent to existing

schemes. Paul's Hill II lies next to the existing Paul's Hill wind farm. Meikle Hill and Kellas lie next to Rothes I and II. Hunt Hill is slightly separated from Rothes I and II but lies in the same broad tract of the landscape. The addition of these schemes therefore would serve to further consolidate the existing influence of wind energy which is already brought about in these parts of the landscape. Noting also that each of these schemes are located between 20 km and 32 km of the site it is therefore considered that if these schemes were also part of the baseline landscape in which the Proposed Development were to be constructed, there would be no change to the previous assessment of the effects on landscape character which the Proposed Development would bring about.

Cumulative Scenario 2 – Other consented and in-planning schemes are considered to also be operational

6.10.21. In the second cumulative scenario considered (where other schemes in planning are also considered to be consented and operational) the five additional schemes to be considered would comprise three broad groupings. Firstly, the revised Cairn Duhie scheme which lies 6 km to the north-east. Secondly, the Clash Gour, Berry Burn Extension and Rothes III schemes, which lie between 13 km and 27 km to the north-east. Thirdly, the Corriegarth II scheme which lies 3 7km to the south-west.

6.10.22. Considering the Cairn Duhie scheme first, this scheme is located within the same Landscape Character Type (291 – Open Rolling Upland) as the Lethen scheme, lying towards the northern boundary of the LCT and the adjacent LCT286 – Narrow Wooded Valley. The main assessment identifies there would be a significant effect on the character of LCT291 up to a distance of 6 km from the Proposed Development site. However, if the revised Cairn Duhie scheme were already present in the landscape, the extent of this significant effect would reduce in a north-easterly direction down to approximately 4km, as beyond that point the existing influence of the revised Cairn Duhie scheme would be such as to render the additional effect of the Proposed Development non-significant. For all other assessments of landscape character effects there would be no change to the significant effects already identified in the main assessment. The combined effects of both schemes together are discussed separately subsequently.

6.10.23. With regard to the Clash Gour, Berry Burn Extension and Rothes III schemes, in each case these schemes would be located adjacent to existing wind farms, with Clash Gour and Berry Burn Extension next to the existing Berry Burn wind farm and Rothes III next to Rothes I and II. The schemes would therefore serve to further consolidate the existing influence of wind energy which is already brought about in these parts of the landscape. It is noted that part of the Clash Gour scheme and the Berry Burn Extension both lie with the same Landscape Character Type (291 – Open Rolling Upland) as the Proposed Development. However, in each case they all lie at least 13 km from the Proposed Development site. It is therefore considered that if these schemes were also part of the baseline landscape in which the Proposed Development were to be constructed, there would be no change to the previous assessment of the effects on landscape character which the Proposed Development would bring about. Again, the combined effects of all the schemes together are subsequently discussed separately.

6.10.24. The Corriegarth II scheme is located at a distance of 37 km to the south-west of the site, immediately adjacent to the existing Corriegarth scheme. In this context, if this scheme were also part of the baseline landscape in which the Proposed Development were to be constructed, there would be no change to the previous assessment of the effects on landscape character which the Proposed Development would bring about.

Totality of the Combined Effect of all schemes

6.10.25. Consideration has also been given the overall totality of the effect, when the Proposed Development is considered alongside the other operational, consented and proposed

schemes. Of most relevance to this is a consideration of the overall impact on the two LCTs where a significant effect was identified in the main assessment, and which cover the majority of the 5 km area around the Proposed Development: LCT 291 – Open Rolling Upland and Flows and LCT286 – Narrow Wooded Valley.

6.10.26. The Proposed Development is located in LCT 291 – Open Rolling Upland. The existing Tom nan Clach wind farm is already operational in the western part of the LCT, with the Paul's Hill I and Berry Burn schemes already located in the north-eastern part of the LCT. It is acknowledged that each of the operational schemes already individually bring about a localised significant effect on the part of LCT291 in which they are located. In turn, it is noted that the revised Cairn Duhie Wind Farm and part of the Clash Gour scheme and the Berry Burn Extension are also proposed within LCT291 and would themselves also give rise to a localised significant effect on those parts the LCT in which they are located.

6.10.27. It is acknowledged that there may also be the potential for further additional combined effects to occur in those parts of the LCT291 which lie between two or more of the sites, but where the schemes individually would not bring about a significant effect. In this case however, it is already identified in the main assessment that the significant effects of the Proposed Development in its own right would extend up to the location of the Tom nan Clach and Cairn Duihe schemes. As such, there would not be any additional significant cumulative effect in additional parts of the landscape located between the schemes that would not already arise as a result of the Proposed Development in its own right.

6.10.28. It is recognised that the combined overall effect on the character of LCT291 were the Proposed Development plus each of the additionally proposed schemes to be consented alongside the existing Tom nan Clach scheme would be notable, such that collectively the character area would become one in which the presence of wind farms was a recognised characteristic. It would not however be the case that wind energy would become the single dominant characteristic of LCT291 in such a fashion that would prevent an understanding and appreciation of its wider underlying landscape.

6.10.29. LCT286 – Narrow Wooded Valley is located to the north of the Proposed Development and does not have any existing or proposed wind farms located within it. A significant effect was identified for part of the LCT as result of the Proposed Development and as a result of its proximity to LCT286 it is understood that such localised significant effects with the LCT would also apply to the revised Cairn Duhie Wind Farm which lies immediately adjacent to the LCT. There may also be the potential for views of the existing schemes at Hill of Glaschyle and Berry Burn, as well as the proposed Clash Gour and Berry Burn Extension. When the combined effect of both Lethen, Cairn Duhie and the other schemes is considered it is noted that a significant effect would extend to cover much of the southern part of the LCT. However, it is not considered that views of wind energy beyond the boundary of the LCT would become the single dominant characteristic of LCT286 in such a fashion that would prevent an understanding and appreciation of its wider underlying characteristics.

Cumulative Effects on Views and Visual Amenity

6.10.30. As with cumulative landscape character effects, it is acknowledged that wherever more than one wind farm is visible in any given view, there will be a greater overall or cumulative effect on the view or visual amenity than if just one wind farm was visible in the landscape and that the more wind turbines that are constructed, the greater the magnitude of overall (or combined) change to the view or visual amenity that prevailed prior to the introduction of the first turbines.

6.10.31. However, it is also noted that in any given view where turbines are already present, the additional effect on visual amenity of introducing further turbines may not be as significant as the initial introduction of turbines. Furthermore, in general the greater the number of turbines in the baseline view, the less significant the addition of further turbines may be. It is also

recognised however that a slight additional effect on top of an existing effect which at present is not quite significant could in theory tip the balance such that the overall effect is deemed to be significant. Again, generally speaking, such additional cumulative effects will arise where a visual receptor would now lie between a cumulative wind farm in one direction and the Proposed Development in a different direction, such that the visibility of turbines as a result of the addition of the Proposed Development would become notable in multiple, usually directly opposite, directions.

Cumulative 'in combination' visual effects

6.10.32. An 'In combination' cumulative visual effect is the term used to refer to the situation where a viewer is able to see one or more further wind farms, in addition to the Proposed Development, whilst standing in the one location. These effects are either 'simultaneous', where the viewer can see the additional turbines in the same angle of view, or 'successive', where the view can see the additional turbines in a different angle of view by turning their head.

6.10.33. As has been set out within the main part of the assessment, many of the views available towards the Proposed Development will already include the existing Tom nan Clach turbines either simultaneously, or successively. In turn, for a number of viewpoints the existing turbines at Berry Burn or Paul's Hill I may be seen successively at more of a distance. Views of all other existing schemes in the 45km study area are largely restricted to long distance glimpses from the highest points in the landscape, which allow for the full 360 panorama to be clearly viewed.

Cumulative Scenario 1 – Other consented schemes are also considered to be operational

6.10.34. In the first cumulative scenario considered, (where other consented wind farms are also considered to be operational), it is recognised that there would be additional wind farms in two different directions from the site. Firstly, there would be schemes to the south-west at Glen Kyllachy and Aberarder. Secondly, there would be schemes to the north-east at Cairn Duhie, Paul's Hill II, Meikle Hill, Kellas and Hunt Hill.

6.10.35. As discussed in relation to cumulative character effects, in each case these schemes would be located adjacent to existing wind farms (noting that the consented Cairn Duhie scheme is not discussed at this point with an assessment instead provided in relation to the application stage revised Cairn Duhie scheme, which Highland Council advised represented more of a 'worst-case'). The addition of these schemes therefore would serve to further consolidate the existing views of wind energy which is already brought about in these parts of the landscape, with the schemes being seen alongside other existing turbines in any views in which they would be visible. With regard to the cumulative ZTVs prepared for the schemes, it is clear that any areas where both the Proposed Development and these schemes would be seen together would be limited in nature, with views largely restricted to long distance glimpses from the highest elevated points in the landscape. It is therefore considered that if these schemes were also part of the baseline landscape in which the Proposed Development were to be constructed, there would be no change to the previous assessment of the effects on visual amenity which the Proposed Development would bring about.

Cumulative Scenario 2 – Other consented and in-planning schemes are also considered to be operational

6.10.36. The second cumulative scenario (where other schemes in planning are also considered to be consented and operational) has also been considered. As noted previously, five additional schemes have been considered which would comprise three broad groupings. Firstly, the revised Cairn Duhie scheme which lies 6 km to the north-east. Secondly, the Clash Gour, Berry Burn Extension and Rothes III schemes, which lie between 13km and 27km to the north-east. Thirdly, the Corriegarth II scheme which lies 37km to the south-west.

6.10.37. Considering the Cairn Duhie scheme first, this scheme would be seen simultaneously in only a very small number of views alongside the Proposed Development, for example LVIA Viewpoint 1 from Carn Glas-choire. In this case the scheme would appear beyond the Proposed Development in the same angle of the view and would form a relatively minor element of the view which would not change the assessment of effects of the viewpoint set out in the main assessment. The two schemes may also be seen successively, from locations along the A939, A940 and the B9007, which are discussed separately subsequently in relation to sequential effects. There are also a small number of residential properties which lie between the Proposed Development and the Cairn Duhie scheme which may have the potential for views of the Proposed Development in one direction and Cairn Duhie in the opposite direction however this would be limited to a very small number of dwellings.

6.10.38. With regard to the Clash Gour, Berry Burn Extension and Rothes III schemes, in each case these schemes would be located adjacent to existing wind farms and would generally only be seen in long distance glimpses from the highest elevated points in the landscape. Noting again that in each case they all lie at least 13 km from the Proposed Development site it is therefore considered that if these schemes were also part of the baseline landscape in which the Proposed Development were to be constructed, there would be no change to the previous assessment of the effects on visual amenity which the Proposed Development would bring about.

6.10.39. The Corriegarth II scheme is located at a distance of 37 km to the south-west of the site, immediately adjacent to the existing Corriegarth scheme. In this context, if this scheme were also part of the baseline landscape in which the Proposed Development were to be constructed, there would be no change to the previous assessment of the effects on visual amenity which the Proposed Development would bring about.

Cumulative 'sequential' effects

6.10.40. A 'sequential' cumulative visual effect is the term used to refer to the situation where a viewer is able to see one or more further wind farms in addition to the Proposed Development, whilst travelling along a linear route. This could be either on foot, whilst walking on a footpath, or by bicycle or car along the public highway. The main assessment focussed on the following routes which it was identified had the potential to experience significant effects as a result of the Lethen scheme and these are also used as the basis for the cumulative assessment:

- A939
- A940
- B9007
- Shore Road Lochindorb
- Dava Way

6.10.41. In the first cumulative scenario considered (where other consented wind farms are also considered to be operational), this would include the addition of the wind farms at Glen Kyllachy and Aberarder to the south-west and at Cairn Duhie, Paul's Hill II, Meikle Hill, Kellas and Hunt Hill to the north-east (although it is again noted that the revised Cairn Duhie application is considered rather than the consented scheme).

6.10.42. Due to their notable distance from each of the assessed routes it is considered that there would be no potential for the Glen Kyllachy or Aberarder schemes to bring about any significant effects or materially change the findings of the main assessment in relation to each of the routes. For Paul's Hill II, Meikle Hill, Kellas and Hunt Hill, these may be visible to some degree from parts of the A939, A940 and the Dava Way, however given the other existing turbines already present immediately adjacent to these schemes it is not considered that they would bring about any additional significant sequential cumulative effects.

6.10.43. There would therefore be no additional significant sequential cumulative effects on any of the routes when the other consented wind farms are also considered.

6.10.44. The second cumulative scenario (where other schemes in planning are also considered to be consented and operational) has also been considered. Considering the Cairn Duhie scheme first, this scheme would be located immediately adjacent to the A939, on the opposite side of the route than the Proposed Development. There would therefore be a significant cumulative effect on a short section of the A939, if the Cairn Duhie scheme were to be constructed, above that which was reported in the main assessment of the route. Similarly, the Cairn Duhie scheme would be located only a short distance from both the A940 and the B9007, giving rise to potential for a significant cumulative effect on a short section of these routes, if the Cairn Duhie scheme were also to be constructed. Such an effect may also arise in relation to the Shore Road Lochindorb, for users travelling northwards in the direction of the Cairn Duhie scheme.

6.10.45. With regard to the Clash Gour, Berry Burn Extension and Rothes III schemes, these would be visible in part from sections of the A939, A940 and the Dava Way. Again, where visible they would most likely be seen adjacent to the existing wind farm at Berry Burn, however it is acknowledged that part of the Clash Gour scheme in particular would extend closer to the routes than the existing scheme and may be visible from a greater part of the routes than the existing development. There would therefore be an additional sequential cumulative effect on the A939, A940 and the Dava Way if this scheme were to be considered, however it is not considered that this effect would be significant.

6.10.46. The Corriegarth II scheme is located at a distance of 37 km to the south-west of the site and would have no potential to bring about any significant cumulative effects on these routes.

Totality of the Combined Effect of all schemes

6.10.47. Consideration has also been given the overall totality of the cumulative visual effect, when the Proposed Development is considered alongside the other operational, consented and proposed schemes. The main visual receptors where this would be applicable are the A939, A940, B9007, the Shore Road Lochindorb and the Dava Way.

6.10.48. It has already been identified in the main assessment that there would be a significant visual effect on part of the B9007 and the Shore Road Lochindorb as a result of the Proposed Development. When the combined effects of the other operational, consented and proposed schemes are considered there would also be localised significant effects on parts of the A939, A940 and the Dava Way, however, these effects would be brought about by the other schemes in isolation, irrespective of the addition of the Proposed Development. It is not considered that the addition of the Proposed Development would be such as to result in the overall cumulative impact of turbines being dominant or oppressive in views from this area.

Summary of Cumulative Effects

6.10.49. It is acknowledged that wherever more than one wind farm is visible at any given location in the landscape, there will be a greater overall or cumulative effect on landscape character than if just one wind farm was visible in the landscape. Likewise, it is acknowledged that the more wind turbines that are constructed in any given landscape, the greater will be the magnitude of overall (or combined) change to the landscape character that prevailed prior to the introduction of the first turbines.

6.10.50. When each of the other consented wind farms (excluding Cairn Duhie which has been assessed as an in-planning scheme) are added into the assessment such that they are considered to already form part of the baseline it is considered that there would be no change to the previous assessment of the effects on landscape character which the Proposed Development would bring about.

6.10.51. In the second cumulative scenario considered (where other schemes in planning are also considered to be consented and operational) the only change to the previous assessment of the effects on landscape character which the Proposed Development would bring about relates to the revised Cairn Duhie scheme which lies 6km to the north-east. This scheme is located within the same Landscape Character Type (291 – Open Rolling Upland) as the Proposed Development. The main assessment identifies there would be a significant effect on the character of LCT291 up to a distance of 6 km from the Proposed Development site. However, if the revised Cairn Duhie scheme were already present in the landscape, the extent of this significant effect would reduce in a north-easterly direction down to approximately 4 km, as beyond that point the existing influence of the revised Cairn Duhie scheme would be such as to render the additional effect of the Proposed Development non-significant.

6.10.52. In terms of the totality of effect on landscape character, it is recognised that the combined overall effect on the character of LCT291 were the Proposed Development plus each of the additionally proposed schemes to be consented alongside the existing Tom nan Clach scheme would be notable, such that collectively the character area would become one which could be described as 'Open Rolling Upland with wind farms'. It would not however be the case that wind energy would become the single dominant characteristic of LCT291 in such a fashion that would prevent an understanding and appreciation of its wider underlying characteristics.

6.10.53. Similarly, when the combined effect of both Lethen, Cairn Duhie and the other schemes is considered it is noted that a significant effect would extend to cover much of the southern part of LCT286 – Narrow Wooded Valley. However, it is not considered that views of wind energy beyond the boundary of the LCT would become the single dominant characteristic of LCT286 in such a fashion that would prevent an understanding and appreciation of its wider underlying characteristics.

6.10.54. As with cumulative landscape character effects, it is acknowledged that wherever more than one wind farm is visible in any given view, there will be a greater overall or cumulative effect on the view or visual amenity than if just one wind farm was visible in the landscape and that the more wind turbines that are constructed, the greater the magnitude of overall (or combined) change to the view or visual amenity that prevailed prior to the introduction of the first turbines.

6.10.55. When each of the other consented wind farms are added into the assessment such that they are considered to already form part of the baseline it is considered that there would be no change to the previous assessment of the effects on visual amenity which the Proposed Development would bring about.

6.10.56. In the second cumulative scenario considered (where other schemes in planning are also considered to be consented and operational) there may be the potential for views of the Proposed Development in one direction and Cairn Duhie in the opposite direction however this would be limited to a very small number of dwellings. The two schemes may also be seen successively, from locations along the A939, A940, the B9007 and the Shore Road Lochindorb, where significant 'sequential' cumulative visual effects are also identified for a short section of the routes if the Cairn Duhie scheme were also to be constructed, above that which was reported in the main assessment of the route. There would be no significant sequential cumulative visual effects as a result of any of the other in planning schemes.

6.10.57. In terms of the totality of effect on visual amenity, it is not considered that the addition of the Proposed Development would be such as to result in the overall cumulative impact of turbines being dominant or oppressive in views from this area.

6.11. Summary

6.11.1. This chapter presents the findings of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and identifies the likely significant effects arising from the Proposed Development on landscape

character and visual amenity. It has been informed by field visits carried out on three separate occasions at different times of the year and by consultation undertaken with statutory consultees including The Highland Council, Moray Council, NatureScot and the Cairngorms National Park Authority.

6.11.2. The existing landscape and visual baseline has been documented and is presented at **Section 6.6** and the assessment has been supported by figures (presented in **Volume 2**) and visualisations produced to both THC Visualisation Standards and NatureScot Visualisation Standards that show representative views from locations consulted on at Scoping that illustrate views existing and proposed views during daylight hours and views during dark sky hours from a select number of viewpoint locations (presented in **Volume 4**).

6.11.3. The Proposed Development is located in the Highlands of Scotland. The nearest main settlement is Grantown-on-Spey, located approximately 10 km to the south-east. The nearest roads are the B9007 that passes along the eastern boundary of the site and the A939, approximately 5 km to the east at its closest point and the A940, approximately 7 km to the east.

6.11.4. There are no international or national landscape designations covering the site or located within the 45 km study area. However, the Cairngorms National Park (CNP) is situated approximately 2.8 km to the south. The site is located within the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors Special Landscape Area extends approximately 13.9 km to the west, south to the boundary with the CNP and east for approximately 17.9 km. The existing Tom nan Clach and Moy wind farms are also situated within the western part of the SLA.

6.11.5. The site is located on a sloping plateau, enclosed by higher ground to the west, south and east that mainly comprises heather moorland and rough grassland with a general absence of built structures apart from the existing Tom nan Clach Wind Farm that sits on the high ground to the west. Both the Proposed Development and the existing Tom nan Clach Wind Farm and sit within the Open Rolling Upland National Landscape Character Type (LCT 291).

6.11.6. The design of the Proposed Development is the result of a considered iterative process which has sought to minimise landscape and visual effects whilst achieving the technical and commercial requirements to ensure project viability.

6.11.7. Appropriate offsets from all properties and settlements have been maintained to ensure that no property would experience an overbearing visual impact. Mitigation has been designed into the proposed aviation lighting to reduce the intensity of the 2000 candela steady state lights in certain atmospheric conditions by reducing their intensity and attenuating the amount of vertical downwards lighting in order to reduce the visual impact experienced by receptors below the lights.

6.11.8. As with almost any onshore wind farm development it is recognised that the Proposed Development would give rise to some additional localised significant effects on landscape character and visual amenity. These worst-case effects are noted in **Table 6.13** at the end of this summary.

6.11.9. The Proposed Development would result in direct and significant effects on the part of the landscape character type within which the Proposed Development is located, LCT 291 Open Rolling Upland and indirect effects out to approximately 3 km to the west, to the southern edge of the LCT and 6 km to the east. There would also be indirect and significant effects on LCT 286 Narrow Wooded Valley – Moray and Nairn up to approximately 5 km to the north of the Proposed Development.

6.11.10. In relation to visual effects, it is accepted that the Proposed Development would be visible from various nearby properties, settlements as well as the surrounding road network and the nearby Dava Way.

6.11.11. It has been assessed that there would be a significant visual effect at 7 of the 16 representative viewpoints during daylight hours. These are: Viewpoint 1 – Carn Glas-choire; Viewpoint 3 – B9007 near Lochindorb; Viewpoint 4 - Creag Ealraich; Viewpoint 6 – Shore Road, Lochindorb; Viewpoint 9 – Gorton Hill; Viewpoint 13 – Minor road, near Dunearn Fort; and Viewpoint 16 – Knock of Braemoray. Of these viewpoints, it has been assessed that five of them would experience a significant effect during dark hours, namely: Viewpoint 1 – Carn Glas-choire; Viewpoint 3 – B9007 near Lochindorb; Viewpoint 4 - Creag Ealraich; Viewpoint 13 – Minor road, near Dunearn Fort; and Viewpoint 16 – Knock of Braemoray.

6.11.12. Fourteen residential properties have been identified within 2 to 5 km of the Proposed Development. Of these Banchor, Drumlochan, Milltown, Dunearn Lodge, Lochindorb Lodge, and Refouble would experience significant effects during daylight hours and only and it has been assessed that only one of these, Banchor would experience significant effects during the hours of darkness. However, none would experience an overbearing effect.

6.11.13. The assessment of routes found that there would be no significant effects on recreational routes or the A940 or A939. However, road users travelling north along the B9007 would experience significant effects over a distance of approximately 2.9 km, while road users travelling south would experience significant effects over a distance of approximately 4.3 km, in the vicinity of the site.

6.11.14. In relation to cumulative landscape and visual effects, when each of the other consented wind farms (excluding Cairn Duhie which has been assessed as an in-planning scheme) are added into the assessment such that they are considered to already form part of the baseline it is considered that there would be no change to the previous assessment of the effects on landscape character which the Proposed Development would bring about.

6.11.15. In the second cumulative scenario considered (where other schemes in planning are also considered to be consented and operational) the only change to the previous assessment of the effects on landscape character which the Proposed Development would bring about relates to the revised Cairn Duhie scheme which lies 6 km to the north-east. This scheme is located within the same Landscape Character Type (LCT 291 – Open Rolling Upland) as the Proposed Development. The main assessment identifies there would be a significant effect on the character of LCT 291 up to a distance of 6km from the Proposed Development site. However, if the revised Cairn Duhie scheme were already present in the landscape, the extent of this significant effect would reduce in a north-easterly direction down to approximately 4km, as beyond that point the existing influence of the revised Cairn Duhie scheme would be such as to render the additional effect of the Proposed Development non-significant.

6.11.16. In terms of the totality of effect on landscape character, it is recognised that the combined overall effect on the character of LCT291 were Lethen, plus each of the additionally proposed schemes to be consented alongside the existing Tom nan Clach scheme would be notable, such that collectively the character area would become one which could be described as 'Open Rolling Upland with wind farms'. It would not however be the case that wind energy would become the single dominant characteristic of LCT291 in such a fashion that would prevent an understanding and appreciation of its wider underlying characteristics.

6.11.17. Similarly, when the combined effect of both Lethen, Cairn Duhie and the other schemes is considered it is noted that a significant effect would extend to cover much of the southern part of LCT286 – Narrow Wooded Valley. However, it is not considered that views of wind energy beyond the boundary of the LCT would become the single dominant characteristic of LCT286 in such a fashion that would prevent an understanding and appreciation of its wider underlying characteristics.

6.11.18. In relation to cumulative visual effects, when each of the other consented wind farms are added into the assessment such that they are considered to already form part of the baseline it is

considered that there would be no change to the previous assessment of the effects on visual amenity which the Proposed Development would bring about.

6.11.19. In the second cumulative scenario considered (where other schemes in planning are also considered to be consented and operational) there may be the potential for views of the Proposed Development in one direction and Cairn Duhie in the opposite direction, however this would be limited to a very small number of dwellings. The two schemes may also be seen successively, from locations along the A939, A940, the B9007 and the Shore Road Lochindorb, where significant 'sequential' cumulative visual effects are also identified for a short section of the routes if the Cairn Duhie scheme were also to be constructed, above that which was reported in the main assessment of the route. There would be no significant sequential cumulative visual effects as a result of any of the other in planning schemes.

6.11.20. In terms of the totality of effect on visual amenity, it is not considered that the addition of the Proposed Development would be such as to result in the overall cumulative impact of turbines being dominant or oppressive in views from this area.

6.11.21. It is noted that localised significant effects on landscape character and visual amenity are inevitable as a result of commercial wind energy development anywhere in the UK. Whilst the LVIA identified some significant landscape and visual effects it is considered that the landscape has the capacity to accommodate the effects identified, particularly when the consented but as yet unbuilt wind farms are taken into account in the baseline.

6.11.22. Wind turbines give rise to a wide spectrum of opinions, ranging from strongly adverse to strongly positive, with a wide range of opinions lying somewhere between these two positions. Some people view wind turbines as incongruous or industrial structures whilst others view them as aesthetically pleasing, elegant structures and a positive response to climate change. In the case of the Proposed Development the turbines and associated ancillary development may be viewed by some as a symbol of continued progress by society towards a low carbon future.

6.11.23. However, in considering the effects of the Proposed Development, a precautionary approach has been adopted and it is therefore assumed that the effects identified will be adverse in nature even though it is recognised that for some people the impacts could be perceived to be beneficial.

6.11.24. The recent consented wind farm Cairn Duhie is particularly relevant. In the context of this scheme, the Proposed Development will sit in an area already occupied by large-scale wind turbines and in this regard, would constitute an obvious continuation to the established pattern and distribution of existing wind turbines in this area as opposed to introducing any new features to an untouched landscape.

6.11.25. There are no definitive quantifiable thresholds of acceptability in landscape and visual impact assessment. The identified effects on landscape character and visual amenity therefore need to be balanced against the other benefits of the Proposed Development.

Table 6.13 – Summary of Effects

Description of Effect	Significance of Potential Effect		Mitigation Measure	Significance of Residual Effect	
	Significance	Beneficial/Adverse		Significance	Beneficial/Adverse
During Construction / Decommissioning					
Effects on Existing Landscape Features	Worst-case moderate minor Not significant	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	Worst-case moderate minor Not significant	Adverse
Landscape Character Types	Worst-case moderate minor Not significant	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	Worst-case moderate minor Not significant	Adverse
Visual Receptors within the Study Area	Worst-case minor Not significant	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	Worst-case moderate minor Not significant	Adverse
During Operation					
Landscape Character Types within which the proposed turbines are located *During daylight hours*	Worst-case major *Within 3 km to the west, to the southern boundary of the LCT and 6 km east* **Significant**	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	Worst-case major within 3 km to the west, to the southern boundary of the LCT and 6 km east **Significant**	Adverse

Description of Effect	Significance of Potential Effect		Mitigation Measure	Significance of Residual Effect	
	Significance	Beneficial/Adverse		Significance	Beneficial/Adverse
Landscape Character Types within which the proposed turbines are located *During hours of darkness*	Worst-case moderate major *Within 3 km to the west, to the southern boundary of the LCT and 6 km east* **Significant**	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	Worst-case major within 3 km to the west, to the southern boundary of the LCT and 6 km east **Significant**	Adverse
Other Landscape Character Types *During daylight hours*	Worst-case moderate major *Within approximately 5 km* **Significant**	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	Worst-case moderate major *Within approximately 5 km* **Significant**	Adverse
Other Landscape Character Types *During hours of darkness*	Worst-case moderate *Within approximately 5 km* **Significant**	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	Worst-case moderate *Within approximately 5 km* **Significant**	Adverse
Visual assessment viewpoints *During daylight hours*	**Significant** effects on 7 of the 16 representative viewpoints	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	**Significant** effects on 7 of the 16 representative viewpoints	Adverse
Visual assessment viewpoints	**Significant** effects on 5 of the	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual	**Significant** effects on 5 of the	Adverse

Description of Effect	Significance of Potential Effect		Mitigation Measure	Significance of Residual Effect	
	Significance	Beneficial/Adverse		Significance	Beneficial/Adverse
During hours of darkness	16 representative viewpoints		matters was inherent in the design process	16 representative viewpoints	
Residential Properties within 2 and 5 km of the Proposed Development *During daylight hours*	**Significant** effects at 5 of the assessed properties	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	**Significant** effects at 5 of the assessed properties	Adverse
Residential Properties within 2 and 5 km of the Proposed Development *During hours of darkness*	**Significant** effects at 2 of the assessed properties	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	**Significant** effects at 2 of the assessed properties	Adverse
Settlements within 5 and 10 km of the Proposed Development *During daylight hours*	Worst-case minor Not significant	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	Worst-case minor Not significant	Adverse
Settlements within 5 and 10 km of the Proposed Development *During daylight hours*	Worst-case minor Not significant	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	Worst-case minor Not significant	Adverse
Settlements within 5 and 10 km of the Proposed Development *During hours of darkness*	No effects Not significant	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	No effects Not significant	Adverse
Recreational Walking Routes *During daylight hours*	Worst-case moderate Not significant	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	Worst-case moderate Not significant	Adverse

Description of Effect	Significance of Potential Effect		Mitigation Measure	Significance of Residual Effect	
	Significance	Beneficial/Adverse		Significance	Beneficial/Adverse
Recreational Walking Routes *During hours of darkness*	Worst-case moderate minor Not significant	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	Worst-case moderate minor Not significant	Adverse
Roads *During daylight hours*	Worst-case major **Significant** *Within approximately 1 km of the north-east corner of the site*	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	Worst-case major **Significant**	Adverse
Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors Special Landscape Area	**Significant** *In the central part of the SLA to approximately 3 km to the west, to the southern boundary of the SLA where it meets the CNP and approximately 5 km to the east and north.*	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	**Significant** *In the central part of the SLA to approximately 3 km to the west, to the southern boundary of the SLA where it meets the CNP and approximately 5 km to the east and north.*	Adverse
Cumulative Effects – Scenario 1 - Other consented schemes are also considered to be operational					
Landscape Character	No change to the judgements of the effects on landscape	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	Judgements would remain unchanged	Adverse

Description of Effect	Significance of Potential Effect		Mitigation Measure	Significance of Residual Effect	
	Significance	Beneficial/Adverse		Significance	Beneficial/Adverse
	character which the Proposed Development would bring about.				
In-combination Visual Effects	No change to the judgements of the effects on visual amenity which the Proposed Development would bring about.	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	Judgements would remain unchanged	Adverse
Sequential Cumulative Visual Effects	No change to the judgements of the effects on visual amenity which the Proposed Development would bring about.	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	Judgements would remain unchanged	Adverse
Cumulative Effects – Scenario 2 - Other consented and in-planning schemes are considered to also be operational					
Landscape Character	The addition of the Cairn Duhie scheme would reduce the extent of significant effects in a north-easterly direction from 6 km to 4 km. The addition of Clash Gour, Berry	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	Judgements would remain unchanged	Adverse

Description of Effect	Significance of Potential Effect		Mitigation Measure	Significance of Residual Effect	
	Significance	Beneficial/Adverse		Significance	Beneficial/Adverse
	Burn Extension, Rothes III and Corrigarth II schemes would result in no change to the significant landscape character effects identified for the Proposed Development				
Combined Landscape Character Effects of all other operational, consented and proposed schemes	LCT291 – Open Rolling Lowland No additional significant cumulative effects	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	Judgements would remain unchanged	Adverse
In-combination Visual Effects	The addition of the Cairn Duhie has the potential to result in significant cumulative effects to a very small number of dwellings. The addition of Clash Gour, Berry Burn Extension, Rothes III and Corrigarth II schemes would	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	Judgements would remain unchanged	Adverse

Description of Effect	Significance of Potential Effect		Mitigation Measure	Significance of Residual Effect	
	Significance	Beneficial/Adverse		Significance	Beneficial/Adverse
	result in no change to the previous assessment of the effects on visual amenity which the Proposed Development would bring about.				
Sequential Cumulative Visual Effects	The addition of the Cairn Duhie has the potential to result in significant cumulative effects to short stretches of the A939, A940 and B9007 The addition of Clash Gour, Berry Burn Extension and Rothes III schemes would result in an additional sequential cumulative effect on the A939, A940 and the Dava Way. However, it is not considered that	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	Judgements would remain unchanged	Adverse

Description of Effect	Significance of Potential Effect		Mitigation Measure	Significance of Residual Effect	
	Significance	Beneficial/Adverse		Significance	Beneficial/Adverse
	this effect would be significant.				
Combined cumulative visual effects of all other operational, consented and proposed schemes	It is not considered that the addition of the Proposed Development would be such as to result in the overall cumulative impact of turbines being dominant or oppressive in views from this area.	Adverse	No additional mitigation – consideration of landscape and visual matters was inherent in the design process	Judgements would remain unchanged	Adverse

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