

## ANNEX 1.1A – UGC LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT TABLES

Baseline text in this Appendix is a copy of the text in **Appendix 4.1: Landscape Assessment Tables** of the Bhlaraidh Extension Wind Farm Grid Connection Works Environmental Appraisal (EA)<sup>1</sup>, repeated here for ease of reference.

As described in **Appendix 1.1: Permitted Development Impact Assessment**, this assessment is limited to the assessment of effects during the construction period, since it is not anticipated that there would be any long term effects during operation, following reinstatement.

### 1.1 LCT 220: Rugged Massif - Inverness

**Table 1: LCT 220: Rugged Massif - Inverness**

Baseline Description	
<b>Description</b>	<p>This LCT comprises a series of rounded summits and connecting ridges which form a range of large-scale mountains located between Glen Moriston and the Great Glen. The terrain is rugged and irregular, and characterised by crags and rocky outcrops. Vegetation cover consists mainly of heather and grassland, with fragments of birch woodland. Settlement is limited to lower elevations, while the interior is harder to access, and there is a sense of wildness and remoteness.</p> <p>The area within the study area is atypical of this LCT, covering lower hills and reduced sense of wildness and remoteness due to the presence of nearby forestry and associated tracks, OHLs nearby and crossing the LCT, and wind turbines at Millennium (outside the study area) which signal human activity in the LCT.</p>
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	<p>NatureScot (2019) have identified the following characteristics for this LCT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Parallel ranges of massive mountains of irregular landform divided by deep glaciated valleys.</i></li> <li>• <i>Mainly broad, sometimes rounded rugged summits connected by long ridges and relatively few individual mountain peaks, particularly in the east.</i></li> <li>• <i>Steep terrain with many mountain-side burns and occasional lochans in corries and depressions.</i></li> <li>• <i>Landcover of rock outcrops, glacial debris, deer-grazed heather and rough grassland create a smooth surface with mottled texture, with alpine habitats on high land to the west.</i></li> <li>• <i>Almost uniform texture and cover from lower to upper levels in the east makes the size of the hills difficult to perceive.</i></li> <li>• <i>Tracts of Caledonian pinewoods and occasional small patches of open birch woodland add colour, texture and seasonal diversity.</i></li> <li>• <i>Largely uninhabited, few signs of human activity or human artefacts in the interior, and sparse archaeological evidence”</i> (this characteristic is less present within the study area, given the presence of OHLs and wind turbines within /near the study area, which contribute to a sense of connectivity)</li> <li>• <i>“Hill ranges combine to create a fairly even undulating skyline and a sense of enclosure when viewed from straths.</i></li> <li>• <i>Views from the hill tops at the edges of the massif offer expansive views of the adjacent straths and surrounding landscape character types.</i></li> <li>• <i>A sense of remoteness and wildness which is particularly strong within the interior”</i> (this characteristic is less present within the study area, given the presence of OHLs and wind turbines within /near the study area, which contribute to a sense of connectivity and development).</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> SSEN Transmission (2022), *Bhlaraidh Extension Wind Farm Grid Connection Works: Environmental Appraisal*.

<b>Landscape Value</b>	<p>The eastern part of this LCT (outside the study area) falls within the south-western edge of the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA. The LCT is also somewhat valued as a setting to the Great Glen and Glen Moriston, and is appreciated within the local context for recreational opportunities and scenic qualities. It is generally valued for its remote and wild qualities, although the character of the LCT within the study area is influenced by forestry, OHLs and wind development, thereby reducing these qualities.</p> <p>Landscape Value is therefore considered to be Medium.</p>
<b>Assessment of Effects</b>	
<b>Possible Landscape Receptors</b>	<b>Potential Effects</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sense of connectivity and development within a confined part of this LCT, due to the presence of OHLs crossing this LCT, and nearby turbines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UGC construction activities within a small part of this LCT may increase the prominence of development within part of this LCT.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	<p>This is a moderately valued landscape, already affected by OHLs through a distinct corridor in the LCT. However, other parts which are not influenced by forest and existing OHLs, such as the high open slopes and summits, in particular those which are important as a setting to Loch Ness, Fort Augustus and the Great Glen and Glen Moriston, are more susceptible to direct change of the type proposed, especially where the skyline would be affected when seen from these areas.</p> <p>Landscape sensitivity therefore ranges between Low (through the distinct corridor of OHLs) to Medium (across the higher open slopes and summits). This balances out to be Low-Medium across the LCT.</p>
<b>Nature and Magnitude of Change</b>	<p>Construction works would lead to activity and movement in a very small part of this LCT, and in an adjacent LCT, including the use of temporary routes and existing routes and tree felling. Some of this activity may be similar to forestry operations which occurs in this area.</p> <p>Magnitude of change would be Locally Negligible-Low (elsewhere Negligible) during construction.</p>
<b>Significance of Effect</b>	<p>Construction works within a very small part of this LCT may very marginally increase the perception of development temporarily within the local area, but this would not result in a discernible change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.</p> <p>The effect would be <b>Negligible</b> (not-significant) during construction.</p>

## 1.2 LCT 222: Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness

**Table 2: LCT 222: Rocky Moorland Plateau - Inverness**

<b>Baseline Description</b>	
<b>Description</b>	<p>This LCT comprises an open, gently rolling and undulating moorland plateau with distinct edges featuring small rocky hills and lochans, bog and occasional patches of scrubby woodland which give a complex pattern with no clear visual focus.</p> <p>Within the study area, this LCT is dominated by the existing Bhlaraidh Wind Farm turbines which would be increased by the presence of the consented Bhlaraidh Extension Wind Farm.</p>

<b>Key Characteristics</b>	<p>NatureScot (2019) have identified the following characteristics for this LCT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Open, gently rolling moorland plateaux with distinct edges descending to adjoining straths and glens or rising to merge with Rugged Massif;</i></li> <li>• <i>Plateau with a patchy texture of small rocky outcrop hills, bogs and lochans in no clear hierarchy or discernible pattern;</i></li> <li>• <i>Hilltops and upper slopes dominated by rocky heather moorland, except in the north east where extensive, contrasting conifer forests dominate;</i></li> <li>• <i>Regenerating trees and scrub in glens with rivers and sheltered lower hillsides;</i></li> <li>• <i>Strong contrast in landcover and settlement between the plateau and adjoining straths and glens;</i></li> <li>• <i>Sparsely inhabited and little evidence of active landuse”</i> (this characteristic is less present within the study area, given the presence of wind turbines and dam infrastructure);</li> <li>• <i>“A few historic sites indicating past settlement and land use;</i></li> <li>• <i>Orientation is difficult due to the lack of hierarchy, pattern and foci in the landform and landcover;”</i> (this characteristic is less present within the study area, given the presence of wind turbines);</li> <li>• <i>“Within the plateau distance and scale are generally difficult to perceive due to the lack of elements of known size”</i> (this characteristic is less present within the study area, given the presence of wind turbines);</li> <li>• <i>“Distinct edges isolate the plateau from adjacent areas and give the sense of a vast, remote, upland moor;</i></li> <li>• <i>At the plateau edges, expansive views over inhabited straths and glens create surprise;</i></li> <li>• <i>Eastern areas have a semi-exposed character with occasional views of distant hills framed by the distinct edges of conifer forests; and</i></li> <li>• <i>Perception of remoteness on the open plateau, from the rugged patchy texture and absence of obvious human artefacts”</i> (this characteristic is less present within the study area, given the presence of wind turbines).</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Value</b>	<p>This LCT does not fall within any landscape designations. While its upland sense of place and remoteness may give it certain value in the wider area, existing wind farm development within the study area reduces these qualities.</p> <p>Landscape Value is therefore considered to be Medium.</p>
<b>Assessment of Effects</b>	
<b>Possible Landscape Receptors</b>	<b>Potential Effects</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sparse habitation and little evidence of active landuse, contrasting with concentration of built features and active landuse (at Bhlaraidh Wind Farm and Extension).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UGC construction activities within part of this LCT may extend the perceived influence of an active and inhabited landscape.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	<p>This is a moderately valued landscape with some sense of remoteness. The open upland qualities are susceptible to some degree of change of the type proposed. However, the presence of existing wind turbines and those that would be present as part of Bhlaraidh Extension Wind Farm reduce this susceptibility locally.</p> <p>Landscape sensitivity is therefore Low-Medium.</p>
<b>Nature and Magnitude of Change</b>	<p>Construction works would lead to activity and movement in part of this LCT, including the use of temporary and existing routes. This would be occurring in (and near to) an area where there are operational Bhlaraidh Wind Farm turbines and where the consented Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Extension turbines would be present (or being installed). Activity may be similar to other wind farm operations and construction activity which would be occurring in this area.</p> <p>Magnitude of change would be Locally Negligible-Low (elsewhere Negligible) during construction.</p>

<b>Significance of Effect</b>	Construction works within part of this LCT would be perceptible in the localised area, but in the context of Bhlaraidh Wind Farm and consented Extension, is unlikely to extend the perceived influence of an active and inhabited landscape and would not result in a discernible change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.  The effect would be <b>Negligible</b> (not-significant) during construction.
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### 1.3 LCT 225: Broad Steep-Sided Glen

**Table 3: LCT 225: Broad Steep-Sided Glen**

Baseline Description	
<b>Description</b>	Comprising the area of the Great Glen around Loch Ness, this LCT is characterised by a clearly defined, V-shaped glen with steep, partly forested side slopes, encompassing the long, linear loch and the farmed and settled alluvial plains at its head, around Fort Augustus, and at the foot of Glen Moriston. This LCT comprises a popular transport corridor and tourist route, containing the A82 trunk road, Caledonian Canal and Great Glen Way walking and cycling routes.
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	NatureScot (2019) have identified the following characteristics for this LCT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“A clearly defined, broad, linear, steep sided, v-shaped glen and deep loch cutting through mountains and hills, with limited areas of flatter ground;</i></li> <li>• <i>Large-scale conifer forests with small areas of open moorland covering most of the glen sides, particularly the lower slopes;</i></li> <li>• <i>Small patches of broad leaved woodlands, mostly in side glens and close to the shore;</i></li> <li>• <i>Agricultural land on less steep slopes, glen intersections and alluvial plains;</i></li> <li>• <i>A few settlements, with a well-defined core, located at glen intersections and on gentler slopes, separated by long stretches of relatively uninhabited land;</i></li> <li>• <i>Contrast between the busy trunk road and larger settlements on the west side and the quiet minor road on east side which has fewer settlements separated by large undeveloped areas;</i></li> <li>• <i>Strong evidence of past settlement in the number and diversity of archaeological and historic sites from prehistoric times to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century;</i></li> <li>• <i>Contrast between the visual and seasonal diversity of broadleaf woodland and bright, open pockets of farmland and the forested and moorland surroundings;</i></li> <li>• <i>Contrast between the smaller scale landscapes of settled, lower slopes and the large scale moorland and forested backdrop;</i></li> <li>• <i>A simple linear and enclosed visual composition of bands of land, water and sky, with long skylines of even height, and the glen and loch as unifying features; and</i></li> <li>• <i>Visual focus directed along the linear route of the glen or across the water to the opposite shore and up to the skyline.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Value</b>	Outside the study area, this LCT falls within the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA, which forms a key contribution to the designation. The dramatic topography, popularity for recreation and tourism and associations with Loch Ness and its famous monster also give it a notable value. The main area within the study area, around Fort Augustus Substation, is associated with forestry, substation and electrical infrastructure and therefore further man-made interventions in the landscape may be perceived to reduce landscape value to an extent.  Landscape Value is considered to be Medium.
Assessment of Effects	
<b>Possible Landscape Receptors</b>	<b>Potential Effects</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentration of substation infrastructure, OHLs and associated activity by Fort Augustus Substation and within the Beauly-Denny OHL corridor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UGC construction activities within part of this LCT may increase sense of activity and development within the local area and pull focus up the hillslopes.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Landscape Sensitivity</b></p>	<p>This is a valued landscape, but its variable character and developed nature (particularly within the study area) give it some potential to accommodate a degree of development of the type proposed. Nevertheless, some parts such as the steep slopes to either side of Loch Ness are more susceptible to change due to their high intervisibility with the majority of the glen and steep side slopes.</p> <p>Landscape sensitivity is therefore Medium (but High outside the study area, on steep side-slopes around Loch Ness)</p>
<p><b>Nature and Magnitude of Change</b></p>	<p>Construction works would lead to activity and movement in an open part of this LCT, within the Beaully-Denny OHL corridor, including the use of temporary and existing routes. This would be occurring in an area where there are already OHLs and near to Fort Augustus Substation. Therefore, some activity may be similar to substation operations which would be occurring to the south of the UGC construction.</p> <p>Magnitude of change would be Locally Low (elsewhere Negligible) during construction.</p>
<p><b>Significance of Effect</b></p>	<p>Construction works within part of this LCT would be perceptible in the localised area, as an intensification of activity. This would however be experienced in the context of existing OHLs and Fort Augustus Substation, and partially screened by trees, and would not result in a discernible change to the intrinsic landscape character of the wider area.</p> <p>The effect would be <b>locally Negligible-Minor, elsewhere Negligible</b> (not-significant) during construction.</p>

#### 1.4 LCT 226: Wooded Glen – Inverness

**Table 4: LCT 226: Wooded Glen – Inverness**

Baseline Description	
<b>Description</b>	Covering the area of Glen Moriston within the study area, this LCT is comprised of long east – west orientated glens with steep upper slopes and a narrow floor with meandering river and an intimate and semi-enclosed character. Glen-sides are usually wooded while settlement and rough pasture land occurs on the lower valley floors which provide important communication corridors for road connections and existing OHLs.
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	<p>NatureScot (2019) have identified the following characteristics for this LCT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Long glens set within uplands and mountains, divided into upper and lower glens by a cross-cutting narrow farmed strath;</i></li> <li>• <i>Lower glens broader, with steep upper slopes, undulating lower slopes and a narrow floor mostly occupied by river terraces; upper glens are narrower and more rugged, influenced by the surrounding mountains;</i></li> <li>• <i>Rivers, water bodies (lochs and sometimes reservoirs), river flats and areas of wetland in valley floors;</i></li> <li>• <i>Balance between open and enclosed space formed by the diverse mix of landscape patterns, land uses, conifer forests, woodlands and fields.</i></li> <li>• <i>Distinctive mix of rugged hillsides, extensive Caledonian pine forest and lochs in the upper glens.</i></li> <li>• <i>Actively farmed and relatively settled lower glen floors, with small clusters of houses near roads, and farms and crofts in open areas at the base of slopes.</i></li> <li>• <i>Contrast between the settled and farmed floor of lower glens and their open heather moorland and forests of the upper slopes.</i></li> <li>• <i>Sparse settlement in upper glens, limited to a few farms and crofts, isolated lodges and clusters of estate buildings usually sheltered by trees or woodland.</i></li> <li>• <i>Central, major through-road in lower glens, with minor roads along the glen sides which are integrated with the landform and settlement pattern.</i></li> <li>• <i>Single track road along the base of the upper glens, terminating at the upper edge of the glen.</i></li> <li>• <i>Large number and range of archaeological remains in the lower glens.</i></li> <li>• <i>Strong sense of history in upper glens created by the Caledonian pinewood stands.</i></li> <li>• <i>Intimate, semi-enclosed landscape within the glen floor with limited visibility, due to the screening effect of trees and landform.</i></li> <li>• <i>Distant views along the glens from open hill ground creating a feeling of openness and exposure.</i></li> <li>• <i>Increasing sense of naturalness and remoteness traversing the upper glens into mountainous interior.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Value</b>	<p>This LCT does not fall within any area designated for landscape value. However, its small scale and intimate character with rural settlement is likely to be valued locally. There are a number of areas of Caledonian Pine woodland which add additional landscape value.</p> <p>Landscape Value is considered to be Medium-High.</p>
Assessment of Effects	
<b>Possible Landscape Receptors</b>	<b>Potential Effects</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central, major through-road in lower glen, with minor roads along the glen sides which are integrated with the landform and settlement pattern.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary access, upgrades to one existing track and construction activities, may alter the perceived pattern of settlement and landform.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forested glen slopes with wooded glen floor, with some felled corridors through which OHLs run.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New UGC construction activities may add or widen felled corridors on glen floors and increase prominence of development.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Landscape Sensitivity</b></p>	<p>This is a relatively valued landscape. However, its variable, wooded character which already provides a route for a number of OHLs and roads reduces its susceptibility to change of the type proposed. However, there may also be a sensitivity to further development, should it exceed the areas capacity for this type of development.</p> <p>Landscape sensitivity is therefore Medium.</p>
<p><b>Nature and Magnitude of Change</b></p>	<p>Construction works associated with the short section of UGC may lead to a slight increase to activity and movement through a small part of this LCT including the construction and use of temporary and existing routes, upgrades to one existing track and tree felling. These activities may be somewhat similar to existing forestry operations in the LCT</p> <p>Magnitude of change would be very locally Low (elsewhere Negligible) during construction.</p>
<p><b>Significance of Effect</b></p>	<p>Construction works within this LCT would temporarily form a focal features within a very small part of this LCT, although this would be somewhat contained by woodland and seen in the context of the existing OHL. Construction of the UGC would not result in a discernible change to the intrinsic landscape character of the wider area.</p> <p>The effect would be <b>Negligible</b> (not-significant) during construction.</p>