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## 4. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

### 4.1 Executive Summary

4.1.1 This Chapter describes the landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) for the Proposed Development. The assessment considers potential effects during construction and during operation.

4.1.2 The assessment finds that there would be no significant landscape and visual effects associated with the Proposed Development.

### 4.2 Introduction

4.2.1 This Chapter presents the findings of the Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) for the Proposed Development. The purpose of the LVIA is to identify and evaluate potential significant effects on landscape character and visual amenity as a result of the Proposed Development.

4.2.2 The assessment has been undertaken by landscape architects at ASH design + assessment Ltd (ASH), who are chartered members of the Landscape Institute (CMLI). The assessment has been prepared with reference to the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (LI and IEMA, 2013)<sup>1</sup>, referred to as GLVIA3.

### 4.3 Scope of Assessment

4.3.1 The LVIA considers all aspects of the Proposed Development during the construction phase and during operation, as described in **Chapter 3: The Proposed Development** of this Environmental Appraisal (EA). It gives consideration to potential effects on the character of the landscape and also the visual amenity of those present within the landscape. Given that the Proposed Development is reliant on the Bhlairidh Wind Farm Extension being built, the wind farm has been considered as part of the existing baseline.

4.3.2 Although closely related to one another, effects on landscape character and visual amenity have been considered separately for reasons of clarity and robustness. The landscape assessment comprises sections 4.6 to 4.8 while the visual assessment comprises sections 4.9 to 4.11.

4.3.3 This Chapter describes the key components, features and characteristics that contribute to the quality and perception of the landscape character and visual amenity within the study area (see paragraph 4.3.9) and assesses the potential effects that the introduction of the Proposed Development may have on them. In the context of the Proposed Development (see **Figure 3.1: Proposed Development**), potential effects relate to:

- Temporary construction traffic on existing routes (e.g. A887) and temporary access routes (e.g. trackways);
- Any upgrades to existing routes and access points;
- The construction and introduction of a 132 kV overhead line (OHL), to be supported by trident H wood poles (between 10 m and 15 m high). For the purposes of the LVIA a worst-case scenario has been assumed (i.e. all poles are 15 m high);
- The construction and introduction of cable sealing end (CSE) wood pole structures and associated hardstanding and tracks at the points where the proposed OHL transfers the connection to underground cable (UGC); and
- Tree felling and vegetation clearance (see **Chapter 9: Forestry**).

4.3.4 Potential effects resulting from the proposed UGC (see **Figure 3.1.2: Proposed Development**) are assessed separately in **Appendix 1.1: Underground Cable Works Impact Assessment** and relate to:

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<sup>1</sup> Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. Routledge

- The construction of underground cables and reinstatement of disturbed areas, comprising:
  - UGC between the consented Bhlaraidh Extension Wind Farm Substation and CSE where the UGC transitions to OHL; and
  - UGC between CSE where the OHL transitions to UGC and Fort Augustus Substation.
- Temporary construction traffic on existing routes (e.g. A887) and temporary access routes (e.g. trackways); and
- Any upgrades to existing routes and access points.

#### *Zone of Theoretical Visibility*

- 4.3.5 A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has been generated to illustrate theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development. ZTVs are useful tools to aid the identification of potential effects but are not indicative of an effect itself since they are generated over bare ground terrain models and do not take into account the potential screening effects of localised features, buildings or vegetation. Nor do they indicate ways in which a development may relate to its broader landscape context.
- 4.3.6 ZTVs are computer generated diagrams which use a terrain model to indicate areas from which the Proposed Development would theoretically be visible. The ZTV for the Proposed Development has been prepared using Ordnance Survey (OS) Terrain 5 digital terrain model (T5 DTM) and ESRI ArcGIS software. T5 DTM is a grid of heightened points with regular 5 metre point spacing. The software uses this information to create a virtual, 3-dimensional, bare ground model which is representative of the earth / sea surface.
- 4.3.7 The ZTV shows theoretical visibility for a person with a viewing height of 2 m as per NatureScot's visualisations guidance for a person standing at ground level (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2017<sup>2</sup>). Therefore, while the ZTV shows theoretical visibility from ground level, it does not show visibility from other heights (e.g. 2<sup>nd</sup> storey, 3<sup>rd</sup> storey buildings) and so site appraisal is critical in assessing and evaluating on-site visibility.
- 4.3.8 A ZTV has been generated (see **Figure 4.1: Study Area with ZTV**) to illustrate theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development, based on the worst-case pole height of 15 m.

#### *Study Area*

- 4.3.9 Following an initial site appraisal and review of the ZTV, it was considered that any potentially significant landscape and visual effects would be likely to occur within 2.5 km of the Proposed Development. As such, a 2.5 km radius study area offset from the Proposed Development has been adopted for the assessment, as shown on **Figure 4.1: Study Area with ZTV**.

#### *Issues Scoped Out of the Assessment*

- 4.3.10 Cumulative effects may arise when other developments of a similar scale and nature combine with the Proposed Development to form an increased perception of a landscape or visual effect. However, as there are no other OHL developments (with an active planning application) or consented within 1 km of the study area, a cumulative assessment has been scoped out. All operational developments are considered as part of the LVIA baseline.

#### *Illustrative Visualisations*

- 4.3.11 Illustrative visualisations contained in **Chapter 3: The Proposed Development** have been produced to illustrate the Proposed Development during operation from two locations, agreed with The Highland Council

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Natural Heritage (2017). *Visual Representation of Wind Farms. Guidance. Version 2.2.* February 2017.

(THC) during consultation. Illustrative wirelines have been prepared from a further two locations. These have been produced to THC<sup>3</sup> (2016) guidance.

4.3.12 Whilst a viewpoint-based assessment has not been undertaken for the LVIA, illustrative visualisations and wirelines have been prepared to provide visual references to be viewed alongside the LVIA. The four visualisation locations (VLs) are included to provide representative impressions of the views which could be obtained whilst also demonstrating how the Proposed Development would sit in the landscape setting. All locations are within the study area and are detailed in **Table 4.1** and shown on **Figure 3.2: Visualisation Location Plan**.

**Table 4.1: Visualisation Locations**

Location	Type	Grid Coordinate	Description
<b>VL 1</b> <b>A887, Dundreggan</b>  (see <b>Figure 3.3a-c</b> )	Illustrative Visualisation	231793, 814027  (approx. 0.7 km from the Proposed Development)	Representative of views from the A887 through Dundreggan settlement. Views are similar to views from nearby properties in Dundreggan (see visual assessment of B3), where there are filtered views southwest across the road, towards the Proposed Development.
<b>VL 2</b> <b>Near Dundreggan Dam</b>  (see <b>Figure 3.4a-c</b> )	Illustrative Visualisation	235465, 815718  (approx. 0.3 km from the Proposed Development)	Illustrative of views from a viewing area near Dundreggan Dam. Views are south towards the Proposed Development and are more open than views from nearby properties by the reservoir (see visual assessment of B2), which are more filtered / screened by foreground trees.
<b>VL 3</b> <b>Old Military Road</b>  (see <b>Figure 3.5a-b</b> )	Illustrative Wireline	232648, 810914	Wireline from Old Military road in vicinity of clearer ground at high point. Illustrative of worst-case scenario views, as does not show existing Beauly-Denny corridor or account for forestry screening along much of the route.
<b>VL 4</b> <b>Dalchreichart</b>  (see <b>Figure 3.6a-b</b> )	Illustrative Wireline	229308, 812744	Wireline from a semi open location on the road. Illustrative of worst-case scenario views, as does not show existing Beauly-Denny corridor or account for intervening forestry.

#### 4.4 Consultation

4.4.1 A Screening Request for the Proposed Development was submitted in November 2021. The Screening Opinion for the Proposed Development issued by the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) in March 2022, determined that the Proposed Development did not comprise EIA development.

4.4.2 In their Screening Opinion, ECU confirmed that a full landscape and visual impact assessment would be required as supporting information for the planning application. **Table 4.2** sets out the comments received from consultees in relation to landscape and visual amenity and the actions taken to address them within this assessment.

<sup>3</sup> The Highland Council (2016). *Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Development*.

**Table 4.2: Consultee responses**

Consultee	Summary Response	Comment / Action Taken
<b>The Highland Council (THC)</b>	<p>There is a need to ensure the gateway qualities of the local landscape are protected, which are addressed in the Highland Council Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance: Loch Ness Landscape Sensitivity Study. The visual impacts experienced by recreational users of the outdoors also need to be considered</p>	<p>Reference has therefore been made to the <i>Loch Ness Landscape Sensitivity Study</i> contained in the <i>Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG) (THC, 2016)</i><sup>4</sup> and a brief commentary is provided in the supporting document titled <b>Consideration of The Highland Council's Loch Ness Landscape Sensitivity Study.</b></p>
	<p>It is understood from the pre-application meeting held with SSEN Transmission that the necessary tree felling through the glen will not be highly visible from the road, but this will need to be clearly demonstrated, along with clear demonstration of the likely appearance and effect of the A887 itself as well as any local recreational routes and the long-distance trails within the area.</p>	<p>Tree felling associated with the Proposed Development is assessed in the LVIA, and illustrated in visualisations. Tree felling has been minimised where possible to retain screening, to mitigate adverse landscape and visual effects. Proposals are described in <b>Chapter 9: Forestry.</b></p>
	<p>As the layout and design process evolves, we would welcome SSEN Transmission sharing the location of viewpoints with the Council to allow us to provide further consideration and advice through the EIA Scoping stage. Viewpoints should include receptors from roads, residential properties and nearby hills. Selection will need to take into account any potential loss of woodland. It should also address such aspects as interaction with existing OHLs and location and appearance of any Sealing End Compounds and other structures. All visualisations should be produced in accordance with the Council's Visualisation Standards</p>	<p>Consultation was undertaken with THC to agree four visualisation locations described in <b>Table 4.1</b></p>
<b>John Muir Trust</b>	<p>Incorporating an underground section near Bhlaraidh Wind Farm in addition to undergrounding the line near Fort Augustus would be beneficial as underground cables can help reduce landscape and visual impacts.</p>	<p>The alignment approach to the Bhlaraidh Extension Wind Farm on-site substation has been changed to be UGC as a result of the constraints posed by the wake effect of the turbines.</p>

<sup>4</sup> The Highland Council (2016). *Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance. November 2016.* Available at:

[https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/18793/onshore\\_wind\\_energy\\_supplementary\\_guidance\\_november\\_2016](https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/18793/onshore_wind_energy_supplementary_guidance_november_2016) [Accessed on 06.07.22]

## 4.5 Methodology

### *Assessment Guidance*

- 4.5.1 The assessment has been prepared with reference to the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (LI and IEMA, 2013), referred to as GLVIA3, and Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland (SNH and The Countryside Agency, 2002)<sup>5</sup>.

### *Professional Judgement*

- 4.5.2 GLVIA3 places a strong emphasis on the importance of professional judgement in identifying and defining the significance of landscape and visual effects. As part of this assessment, professional judgement has been used in combination with structured methods and criteria to evaluate landscape value and landscape and visual sensitivity, magnitude and significance of effect. The assessment has been undertaken and verified by chartered members of the Landscape Institute to provide a robust and consistent approach.

- 4.5.3 New development inevitably attracts a spectrum of opinion from the public, ranging from very adverse to very beneficial reactions. However, using the precautionary principle, the LVIA has been carried out based on the assumption that all landscape and visual effects reported are adverse, unless otherwise stated.

### *Key Stages of the Assessment*

- 4.5.4 GLVIA3 suggests that landscape and visual effects are assessed from a clear understanding of the Proposed Development and any mitigation measures which are being adopted.
- 4.5.5 The GLVIA3 methodology for landscape assessment involves an appreciation of the existing landscape and visual resource, the susceptibility of its key components to accept the change proposed, and an understanding of the potential effects which could occur and how these could affect these key components.
- 4.5.6 Familiarity with the site and the extent, nature and expectation of existing views is a key factor in establishing the visual sensitivity in terms of the Proposed Development. The guidelines require evaluation of magnitude of change to views experienced by sensitive receptors, comprising individuals living, working, travelling and carrying out other activities within the landscape, and subsequent evaluation of effect significance.
- 4.5.7 The potential to mitigate adverse effects should also be considered for both landscape and visual assessment.
- 4.5.8 There are five key stages to the assessment:
- establishment of the baseline;
  - appreciation of the Proposed Development;
  - identification of key landscape and visual receptors;
  - identification of potential landscape and visual effects; and
  - assessment of landscape and visual effect significance.
- 4.5.9 Detailed methodology for these five key stages are described separately under the relevant methodology sections for landscape assessment (see Section 4.6) and visual assessment (see Section 4.9).
- 4.5.10 Landscape and visual effects have been assessed at two points in time:
- during construction;
  - during operation (after 10 years of operation)

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<sup>5</sup> Scottish Natural Heritage and The Countryside Agency (2002). *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland*.

### *Site Survey*

- 4.5.11 A site visit was undertaken in June 2022 to verify the landscape and visual receptors identified through desk study, identify any further potential receptors which may be of relevance, and collate information on baseline landscape and visual amenity. Site recording involved the completion of standardised recording forms and annotation of Ordnance Survey plans, supported by a photographic record of views from key receptor locations. True View Visuals augmented reality software was also used to verify visibility on site. Photography for visualisations was also conducted in June 2022.

### *Limitations of the Assessment and Assumptions*

- 4.5.12 The prominence of the Proposed Development in the landscape would vary according to the prevailing weather conditions. The assessment has been carried out, as is best practice, by assuming the 'worst case' scenario i.e. on a clear, bright day in winter, when neither foreground deciduous foliage nor haze can interfere with the clarity of the view obtained.
- 4.5.13 The assessment of visual effects has been undertaken from the nearest publicly accessible locations, for example the nearest public road, footpath or open space to each receptor or receptor group, as appropriate. Assumptions have been made about the types and importance of views obtained from these locations. Where access has not been possible, conclusions have been estimated with regards to the level of effect, using professional judgement with the aid of desk-based resources and assessment from the nearest accessible location. Receptors in derelict, demolished or unused buildings or those considered to be unoccupied / unused at the time of the survey have not been assessed. Therefore, not all buildings included on the Ordnance Survey base maps are necessarily assessed as building-based receptor locations in the visual assessment. The assessment also generalises the effect rating across receptors in each grouping.
- 4.5.14 Limitations relating to ZTVs are discussed in Section 4.3.5 to 4.3.8.
- 4.5.15 The assessment acknowledges that there will be tree felling associated with the Proposed Development to establish an operational corridor and avoid wind blow, and some areas of compensatory replanting (see **Chapter 9: Forestry**). However, the assessment assumes that all other trees and shrubs will remain in place, at the same height, in the same condition throughout the assessment since it is not within the scope of this assessment to establish the future status of all planting in the study area. Likewise, the assessment does not factor any other new planting or development into the assessment, since the details of future proposals are not known at this stage. This includes potential new planting outside the operational corridor, which is likely to be the responsibility of landowners, Forestry and Land Scotland or other parties.

## **4.6 Landscape Assessment: Detailed Methodology**

- 4.6.1 Effects to landscape character may arise through the introduction of new components which are out of keeping with established landscape patterns and features. The scale and form of new development can prove to be influential in the context of existing landform, scenic quality, settlement pattern and planting structure. Development may also result in the alteration or fragmentation of important and distinctive landscape components.
- 4.6.2 The Landscape Assessment assesses the potential impacts on landscape character of the Proposed Development. The character of the landscape relates to the natural processes and human activities that have been at work for a long time to shape the land to its present form. Factors contributing to landscape character include topography, vegetation cover, sense of space or enclosure and past and present land use. Landscape character and resources are considered to have an importance in their own right and are valued for their intrinsic qualities. The aim of the assessment is to determine the effect of the Proposed Development on the landscape character of the area and the elements which contribute to its values and sensitivity.



4.6.3 This detailed methodology section describes the five key stages of the landscape assessment (as listed in paragraph 4.5.8).

*Establishment of the Landscape Baseline*

4.6.4 Establishment of the baseline conditions has been undertaken through a combination of desk study and site appraisal. The following specific tasks have been undertaken:

- a review of the ‘Highland wide Local Development Plan’ (THC, 2012)<sup>6</sup>, ‘Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan’ (THC, 2015)<sup>7</sup> and the ‘West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan’ (THC, 2019)<sup>8</sup> for local landscape designations and a search for other national and regional level designated and protected landscapes;
- a review of the Landscape Character Types (LCTs) identified by NatureScot (2019)<sup>9</sup>; and
- site appraisal (June 2022) to verify landscape receptors identified through desk study, identify further potential receptors and collate information on the landscape baseline.

Relative Landscape Value

4.6.5 The relative value of the landscape is an important consideration in informing later judgement of the significance of effects. Value concerns the perceived importance of the landscape, when considered as a whole and within the context of the study area. Landscape value is established through consideration of the following factors:

- presence of landscape designations, other inventory or registered landscapes;
- landscape features or identified planning constraints;
- the scenic quality of the landscape;
- perceptual aspects, such as wildness or tranquillity;
- conservation interests such as cultural heritage features or associations, or if the landscape supports notable habitats or species;
- recreational value; and
- rarity, either in the national or local context, or if it is considered to be a particularly important example of a specific landscape type.

4.6.6 It should be noted that absence of a designation does not necessarily mean that a landscape or component is not highly valued as factors such as accessibility and local scarcity can render areas of nationally unremarkable quality, highly valuable as a local resource. Criteria for the allocation of perceived landscape value are outlined in **Table 4.3**.

**Table 4.3: Relative Landscape Value Criteria**

Landscape Value	Criteria
<b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The landscape is closely associated with features of international or national importance which are rare within the wider context;</li> <li>• The landscape is of high scenic quality and forms a key part of an important</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> The Highland Council (2012). *Highland-wide Local Development Plan. April 2012*. Available at: [https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local\\_and\\_statutory\\_development\\_plans/199/highland-wide\\_local\\_development\\_plan](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/199/highland-wide_local_development_plan) [Accessed on 06.07.22]

<sup>7</sup> The Highland Council (2015). *Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan. July 2015*. Available at: [https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/15008/adopted\\_inner\\_moray\\_firth\\_local\\_development\\_plan](https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/15008/adopted_inner_moray_firth_local_development_plan) [Accessed on 06.07.22]

<sup>8</sup> The Highland Council (2019). *West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan. September 2019*. Available at: [https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/21199/westplan\\_adopted\\_september\\_2019](https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/21199/westplan_adopted_september_2019) [Accessed on 06.07.22]

<sup>9</sup> Scottish Natural Heritage (2019). *Scottish Landscape Character Types Maps and Descriptions*. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-character-assessment/scottish-landscape-character-types-map-and-descriptions> [Accessed on: 06.07.22]

Landscape Value	Criteria
	designated landscape or planning constraint; and/or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The landscape is an example of a scarce resource within the local context and is of considerable local importance for its, scenic quality, recreational opportunities or cultural heritage associations.</li> </ul>
<b>Medium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The landscape is associated with features of national or regional importance which are relatively common within the wider context;</li> <li>The landscape forms part of a designated landscape or is associated with other features of importance but is not rare or distinctive within the local context; and/or</li> <li>The landscape is one of a number within the local context appreciated for its scenic quality, recreational opportunities or cultural heritage associations.</li> </ul>
<b>Low</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The landscape characteristics are common within the local and regional context and the landscape is not associated with any particular features or attributes considered to be important; and/or</li> <li>The landscape is of poor scenic quality and is not appreciated for any recreational or cultural associations.</li> </ul>

#### *Appreciation of the Proposed Development*

4.6.7 Appreciation of the Proposed Development involves the accumulation of a thorough knowledge of the proposal, its nature, scale and location within the baseline landscape context. It involves an understanding of the proposed activities and changes which would take place during the short-term construction of the Proposed Development and its long-term operation, and of any peripheral or ancillary features proposed.

#### *Identification of Key Landscape Receptors*

4.6.8 The identification of landscape receptors is the first step in the analysis of the potential for significant landscape effects to take place. Landscape receptors comprise key characteristics or individual features which contribute to the value of the landscape and have the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development. Landscape receptors are identified through analysis of baseline characteristics when considered in relation to the effects which might result from a development of the type proposed.

#### Landscape Sensitivity

4.6.9 Landscape sensitivity considers the nature of the landscape and its ability to accommodate development of the type proposed without compromising its key characteristics and components. There are two aspects which are considered when establishing the landscape sensitivity:

- value: the baseline value of the landscape and the contributory value of individual landscape receptors to the landscape as a whole; and
- susceptibility to change: the ability of landscape receptors to accommodate development of the type proposed without changing the intrinsic qualities of the landscape as a whole.

4.6.10 Landscape sensitivity has been evaluated with reference to these factors and using a three-point scale as listed in **Table 4.4**.

**Table 4.4: Landscape Sensitivity Criteria**

Landscape Sensitivity	Criteria
<b>High</b>	A highly valued landscape of particularly distinctive character susceptible to relatively small changes of the type proposed.
<b>Medium</b>	A reasonably valued landscape with a composition and characteristics tolerant of some degree of change of the type proposed.
<b>Low</b>	A relatively unimportant landscape which is potentially tolerant of a large degree of change of the type proposed.

#### *Identification of Potential Landscape Effects*

- 4.6.11 The second step in the assessment process involves the identification of potential effects which may occur as a result of the interaction of the effects of the Proposed Development with the identified landscape receptors. The assessment takes into account direct effects upon existing landscape elements, features and key characteristics and also indirect effects which may occur secondarily as a result of changes affecting another landscape component or area. The ZTV is used as a tool to gauge the extent of potential indirect change, supported by targeted field surveys.

#### Magnitude of Change

- 4.6.12 Magnitude of change concerns the degree to which the Proposed Development would alter the existing characteristics of the landscape. The assessment of magnitude involves consideration of the nature and scale of the change which would occur in relation to each identified potential effect and also the duration and potential reversibility of the effect. These changes are then combined to evaluate a magnitude rating for the area as a whole. Magnitude of change is categorised on a four-point scale as listed in **Table 4.5**.

**Table 4.5: Magnitude of Landscape Change Criteria**

Magnitude of Landscape Change	Criteria
<b>High</b>	Notable change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area ranging to a very intensive change over a more limited area.
<b>Medium</b>	Perceptible change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area ranging to notable change in a localised area
<b>Low</b>	Virtually imperceptible change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area or perceptible change in a localised area
<b>Negligible</b>	No discernible change in any landscape characteristics or components

- 4.6.13 As recommended in GLVIA3, the criteria used to assess magnitude of change are recognised to be reference points along a continuum. Consideration is given to the potential for magnitude to vary over time, during construction and operation.

#### *Assessment of Landscape Effect Significance*

- 4.6.14 Evaluation of the predicted significance of effect has been carried out through analysis of the anticipated magnitude of change in relation to the identified landscape sensitivity and using a degree of professional judgement. The assessment takes into account identified effects upon existing landscape receptors and assesses the extent to which these would be lost or modified, in the context of their importance in determining the existing baseline character.

- 4.6.15 Effect significance has been evaluated using a four-point scale using the criteria noted in Table 4.6: Landscape Effect Criteria **Table 4.6** to describe effects. Effects are assessed to be adverse, unless otherwise stated as beneficial.

**Table 4.6: Landscape Effect Criteria**

Landscape Effect	Criteria
<b>Major</b> (Significant)	The Proposed Development would be at considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape and would be an influential feature, resulting in considerable alteration to scenic quality and large scale change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.
<b>Moderate</b> (Significant)	The Proposed Development would be inconsistent with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape and may be locally influential and / or result in a noticeable alteration to scenic quality and a degree of change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.
<b>Minor</b>	The Proposed Development would not quite fit with the scale, landform or local pattern of the landscape and may be locally influential but would result in an inappreciable alteration to scenic quality or change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.
<b>Negligible</b>	The Proposed Development would sit well within the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape and / or would not result in any discernible alteration to the scenic quality or change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.

- 4.6.16 The above criteria and levels of effect represent points on a continuum. Where necessary, interim ratings (such as Minor-Moderate) have been used to indicate the anticipated level of effect. For the purposes of the assessment, effects with a rating of Moderate and above are considered to be significant. In some circumstances, localised effects may be described, where effects would be localised to part of the landscape resource. Consideration is given to the potential for effects to vary over time, during construction and operation.

#### 4.7 Landscape Assessment: Baseline Conditions

##### *Overview*

- 4.7.1 The landscape within the study area is characterised by a wooded, settled Glen Moriston with forested glen slopes that rise up to rocky moorland plateaus and rugged massifs. To the south-east of this glen, is the broad, steep-sided Great Glen with settlements of Fort Augustus, Auchterawe and Invermoriston. To the north, lies the operational Bhlairaidh Wind Farm, which would sit next to the consented Bhlairaidh Extension Wind Farm. The River Moriston meanders through Glen Moriston itself, and passes the Reservoir and Dundreggan Dam. Settlement within the glen is limited and focussed primarily along the A887.

##### *Designated and Protected Landscapes*

- 4.7.2 Landscapes can be ascribed an international, national, regional or local designation or protection that recognises the importance of the landscape for its scenic interest or attractiveness. These include National Scenic Areas (NSAs), Special Landscape Areas (SLAs), Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDLs) and Wild Land Areas (WLAs).

As show on **Figure 4.2: Landscape Character, Designations and Protected Areas with ZTV**, there are no designated or protected landscapes within the study area. The closest areas are Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA (2.5 km from the Proposed Development) and WLA 24: Central Highlands (5.3 km from the Proposed Development). Further consideration of these areas has been scoped out of the LVIA, since it is considered very unlikely that there would be potential for significant effects on these areas or their special qualities, particularly given distance and landform between them.

### *Landscape Character*

4.7.3 NatureScot has undertaken detailed review and classification of the various landscape areas and types of Scotland (SNH, 2019<sup>9</sup>). Four individual Landscape Character Types (LCTs) are identified within the study area (see **Figure 4.2: Landscape Character, Designations and Protected Areas with ZTV**):

- LCT 220 – Rugged Massif – Inverness;
- LCT 222 – Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness;
- LCT 225 – Broad Steep-Sided Glen; and
- LCT 226 – Wooded Glen – Inverness.

4.7.4 Further consideration of LCT 225 (Broad Steep-Sided Glen) has been scoped out of the LVIA for the Proposed Development, since it is considered very unlikely that there would be potential for significant effects on this area. However, underground components would extend into LCT 225 (Broad Steep-Sided Glen). As such, these effects are addressed within **Appendix 1.1**.

4.7.5 The LVIA therefore focuses on the three LCTs within which the Proposed Development is situated. Descriptions of these LCTs, including their key characteristics are included in **Appendix 4.1: Landscape Assessment Tables**. A brief description of these LCTs is included below:

#### LCT 220 – Rugged Massif – Inverness

4.7.6 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. Within the study area, the sense of wildness and remoteness is limited by the presence of grid infrastructure, tracks, wind turbines and commercial forestry in the area.

#### LCT 222 – Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness

4.7.7 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. Within the study area, this LCT is dominated by the operational Bhlaraidh Wind Farm and would be influenced by the presence of Bhlaraidh Extension Wind Farm.

#### LCT 226 – Wooded Glen – Inverness.

4.7.8 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 occurs on the lower valley floors which provide important communication corridors for road connections and existing OHLs.

## **4.8 Landscape Assessment: Potential Effects**

4.8.1 The potential effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character are as follows:

- direct and indirect *temporary* effects from construction of the Proposed Development; and
- direct and indirect *permanent* effects associated with operation of Proposed Development.

4.8.2 The following sections summarise the findings of the landscape assessment, based on an appreciation of the Proposed Development. Refer to **Figure 4.2: Landscape Character, Designations and Protected Areas with ZTV** and **Appendix 4.1: Landscape Assessment Tables** for details of the landscape baseline and assessment.

### Effects Likely to be Significant

- 4.8.3 No significant landscape effects would be experienced to landscape character as a result of the Proposed Development, during construction or operation, due to the largely wooded context and presence of existing OHLs in the landscape.

### Effects Likely to be Not Significant

- 4.8.4 During construction, it is anticipated that **Minor** (not significant) effects would occur for LCT 220 (Rugged Massif – Inverness) and LCT 226 (Wooded Glen – Inverness), since construction activities within both LCTs would temporarily form focal features and distraction within the local area, although this would be somewhat contained by woodland. In more open areas (such as within the Beaully-Denny OHL corridor; and along the glen floor near Dundreggan), construction may be more perceptible from the wider landscape. Construction works, including tree felling, may appear similar to existing forestry operations in some areas, but would nonetheless be a perceptible intensification of this activity. For LCT 222 (Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness), construction would occur within a small peripheral part of the LCT, adjacent to Bhlaraidh Wind Farm and consented Extension. Temporary construction effects on this LCT are therefore anticipated to be more limited and **locally Negligible-Minor** (not significant) and **elsewhere Negligible** (not significant).
- 4.8.5 During operation, it is anticipated that **Negligible-Minor** (not significant) effects would occur for LCT 220 (Rugged Massif – Inverness) and **locally Negligible-Minor** (not significant) effects would occur for LCT 222 (Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness). For these LCTs, the addition of the Proposed Development may be associated with a perceptible increase in OHL development, but only marginally, given its clustering alongside other OHLs. For LCT 226 (Wooded Glen – Inverness), long terms effects would be **Negligible** (not significant) since the Proposed Development would not alter the character of the landscape, as it would be barely perceptible alongside an existing OHL.

### Summary of Landscape Effects

- 4.8.6 **Table 4.7** provides a summary of these findings. An 'L' indicates a localised effect.

**Table 4.7: Summary of Landscape Assessment**

	Potential Effect During Construction						Potential Effect During Operation (after 10 years)							
	Not Significant			Significant			Not Significant			Significant				
	Negligible	Negligible – Minor	Minor	Minor – Moderate	Moderate	Moderate – Major	Major	Negligible	Negligible – Minor	Minor	Minor – Moderate	Moderate	Moderate – Major	Major
<b>LCT 220</b> – Rugged Massif - Inverness			•						•					
<b>LCT 222</b> – Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness	•	L						•	L					
<b>LCT 226</b> – Wooded Glen – Inverness			•					•						

- 4.8.7 This assessment concludes that landscape effects on the LCTs would not be significant due to the wooded character of the landscape and the presence of existing OHLs, and other built features such as wind turbines and dam infrastructure that affect the sensitivity of the landscape to change. Effects are anticipated to be higher during construction, due to construction activities, tree felling and the increased perception of activity within the landscape, but these would reduce in the long term during operation.

## 4.9 Visual Assessment: Detailed Methodology

4.9.1 The visual assessment describes and evaluates the potential change in existing views obtained from residential properties, places of work, routes, popular destinations and strategic vantage points during the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development, and the extent to which these would affect residents, visitors and users of the landscape.

4.9.2 Visual amenity relates to the way in which people visually experience the surrounding landscape. Adverse visual effects may occur through the intrusion into established views of new features, out of keeping with the existing structure, scale and composition of the view. However, visual effects may also be beneficial where an attractive focus is created in a previously unremarkable view or the influence of previously detracting features is reduced. The significance of effects will vary, depending on the nature and degree of change experienced and the perceived value and composition of the existing view.

4.9.3 This detailed methodology section describes the five key stages of the visual assessment (as listed in paragraph 4.5.8).

### *Establishment of the Visual Baseline*

4.9.4 Establishment of the baseline conditions has been undertaken through combination of desk study and site appraisal. The following specific tasks have been undertaken:

- generation and review of ZTV diagram to identify visual receptors and focus the review of the visual baseline;
- a review of OS maps, Googlemaps, Bing maps, 'Highland wide Local Development Plan' (THC, 2012)<sup>6</sup>, 'Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan' (THC, 2015)<sup>7</sup> and the 'West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan' (THC, 2019)<sup>8</sup>, and other online resources to identify visual receptor locations, including key road and recreational routes; and
- site appraisal (June 2022) to verify sensitive visual receptors identified through desk study, identify further potential receptors, and collate information on the visual baseline, including the nature and context of individual visual receptors and the key elements and qualities of the existing view.

### *Appreciation of the Proposed Development*

4.9.5 Appreciation of the Proposed Development involves the accumulation of a thorough knowledge of the proposal, its nature, scale and location within the baseline visual context. It involves an understanding of the proposed activities and changes which would take place during the construction of the Proposed Development and its longer-term operation, and of any peripheral or ancillary features proposed.

### *Identification of Key Visual Receptors*

4.9.6 For there to be a visual effect there is the need for a viewer. Individuals experiencing views from locations such as buildings and recognised routeways used by the public have been included in the assessment. Those experiencing views are referred to as visual receptors.

4.9.7 Potential visual receptors have been identified through analysis of the ZTV in combination with targeted field survey.

### *Identification of Potential Visual Effects*

4.9.8 Preparation of the visual baseline is followed by the systematic identification of likely effects on the potential visual receptors. This is a two-fold process, giving consideration to how effects may arise from aspects of the Proposed Development, and how these changes may be accommodated in the existing baseline view.

4.9.9 Locations of visual receptors identified for inclusion in the assessment were visited and key information on the nature, composition and characteristics of the existing visual experienced recorded. Consideration is given to the likely perceived value of a particular view to the viewer, taking into account the nature of the receptor and the potential activity they may be involved in, and factors such as elevation, extent and key features or attractions which may feature in the view.

#### Visual Sensitivity

4.9.10 The evaluation of visual sensitivity considers both the perceived *value* of the existing view to the receptor and the *susceptibility* of the visual receptor to change. Consideration is therefore given to the following:

- the susceptibility of the receptor to change, which is a combination of the nature of the receptor and the potential activity they may be involved in;
- the perceived value of a particular view to the viewer, which takes into account visual context, including key features and attractors/ detractors which may feature in the existing view and affect the value of that view to the receptor; and
- the aspect and direction of change in respect of the most valued views from the receptor location including the relative elevation compared to the changed element of the view.

4.9.11 Visual sensitivity has been evaluated with reference to these factors above and using a three-point scale as listed in **Table 4.8**.

**Table 4.8: Visual Sensitivity Criteria**

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
<b>High</b>	Views from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dwellings and publicly accessible buildings where the changed aspect is an important element in the view and there are no detracting features present; and</li> <li>• recreational routes and locations where the changed aspect is an important element in the view and there are no detracting features present.</li> </ul>
<b>Medium</b>	Views from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dwellings and publicly accessible buildings where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present;</li> <li>• recreational routes and locations where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present;</li> <li>• roads and transport routes where the changed aspect is an important element in the view and there are no detracting features present; and</li> <li>• workplaces where the changed aspect is an important element of the view and there are no detracting features present.</li> </ul>
<b>Low</b>	Views from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dwellings and publicly accessible buildings where the changed aspect is an unimportant element in the view and / or numerous detracting features are present;</li> <li>• recreational routes and locations where the changed aspect is an unimportant element in the view and / or where numerous detracting features are present;</li> <li>• roads and transport routes where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present; and</li> <li>• workplaces where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present.</li> </ul>



The next stage in the assessment process, having identified potential visual receptors and their sensitivity to the Proposed Development, is to ascertain the magnitude of change which would result from the Proposed Development.

#### Magnitude of Change

- 4.9.12 Magnitude of change concerns the extent to which the Proposed Development would alter the existing views. Consideration is given to the scale or extent of the changes; the extent to which the composition or focus of the view may be altered; and duration and reversibility of these changes. Magnitude of change is categorised on a four-point scale as listed in **Table 4.9**.

**Table 4.9: Magnitude of Visual Change Criteria**

Magnitude of Visual Change	Criteria
<b>High</b>	The Proposed Development would result in a very noticeable change in the existing view.
<b>Medium</b>	The Proposed Development would cause a noticeable change in the existing view.
<b>Low</b>	The Proposed Development would cause a perceptible change in the existing view.
<b>Negligible</b>	The Proposed Development would cause a largely imperceptible change in the existing view.

- 4.9.13 As recommended in GLVIA3, the criteria used to assess magnitude of change are recognised to be reference points along a continuum. Consideration is also given to the potential for effects to vary over time, during construction and operation.

#### *Assessment of Visual Effect Significance*

- 4.9.14 The level of visual effect identified concerns the importance of changes resulting from the Proposed Development. Evaluation of the visual effect is established using professional judgement based on consideration of the magnitude of change in relation to visual sensitivity, taking into account proposed mitigation measures. The assessment takes into account likely changes to the visual composition, including the extent to which new features would distract or screen existing elements in the view or disrupt the scale, structure or focus of the existing view.
- 4.9.15 Effect significance has been evaluated using a four-point scale and using the criteria noted in **Table 4.10** to describe effects. Effects are assessed to be adverse, unless otherwise stated as beneficial.

**Table 4.10: Visual Effect Criteria**

Visual Effect	Criteria
<b>Major</b> (Significant)	The Proposed Development would form a prominent and very detracting feature, resulting in a very noticeable deterioration to an existing highly valued and well composed-view.
<b>Moderate</b> (Significant)	The Proposed Development would introduce some detracting features to an existing highly valued and well composed view, or would be prominent within a pleasing or less well composed view, resulting in a noticeable deterioration of the existing view.
<b>Minor</b>	The Proposed Development would form a perceptible but not detracting feature within a pleasing or valued view or would be a more prominent feature within a poorly composed view of limited value, resulting in a small deterioration to the existing view.

Visual Effect	Criteria
<b>Negligible</b>	The Proposed Development would form a barely perceptible feature within the existing view and would not result in any discernible deterioration or improvement to the view.

4.9.16 Consideration is given to the potential for effects to vary over time, during construction and operation.

4.9.17 The above criteria and levels of effect represent points on a continuum. Where necessary, interim ratings (such as Minor-Moderate) have been used to indicate the anticipated level of effect. For the purposes of this assessment, effects of Moderate and above are considered to be significant.

4.9.18 In some circumstances, localised effects may be described, where effects would be localised to part of the visual receptor grouping / route (often a small part).

#### 4.10 Visual Assessment: Baseline Conditions

##### *Overview*

4.10.1 The visual context of the study area varies between the low-level, channelled views experienced within Glen Moriston and the Inchnacardoch Forest as it descends into the Great Glen at Auchterawe (the majority of which are enclosed by trees and landform); to the more open and elevated views from glen slopes, experienced in the context of OHLs and wind turbines.

##### *Visual Receptors*

4.10.2 Visual receptors within the study area comprise residents or visitors present in and around buildings and settlement areas, those using routes (including transport and recreational routes). Recreational routes include Core Paths (CPs) (The Highland Council, 2011)<sup>10</sup> and Scottish Hill Tracks (SHTs) (Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society, 2011)<sup>11</sup>.

4.10.3 Visual receptors within the ZTV and with the potential for significant visual effects have been included in the assessment (see **Figure 4.3: Visual Receptors with ZTV**) and grouped for discussion as follows:

- **Building-based receptors:** four building-based receptor locations (B1 – B4) have been identified within the study area and ZTV from which receptors may have views of the Proposed Development. These comprise receptor locations along the valley floor of Glen Moriston at:
  - Bhlaraidh (B1), which includes Moriston Lodges and Glenmoriston Shooting Ground;
  - Dundreggan Dam (B2) which includes the dam and properties nearby by the reservoir;
  - Dundreggan (B3), which includes several properties along the A887, a café, gift shop and under-construction buildings; and
  - Dalchreichart, Torgyle Bridge and nearby on the A887 (B4).
- **Route-based receptors:** six routes / route groupings (R1 – R6) have been identified within the study area and ZTV from which receptors may have views of the Proposed Development. These include:
  - part of the A887 (R1);
  - the minor road through Dalchreichart (R2);
  - the minor road to Inverwick (R3);
  - CP IN05.03 and SHT 261a (R4);

<sup>10</sup> The Highland Council (2011). Core Paths Interactive Map. Available at:

<https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2fd3fc9c72d545f7bcf1b43bf5c8445f> [Accessed on 06.07.22]

<sup>11</sup> Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (2011). *Scottish Hill Tracks 5<sup>th</sup> edition*.

- CP IN16.16 and SHTs 260a and 260b (R5); and
- the route to Bhlaraidh Reservoir (R6).

4.10.4 A number of receptor locations are not included in the Chapter as receptors in these locations are not considered likely to experience significant visual effects from the OHL, primarily due to screening from landform and trees, as well as the influence of distance and context, and/or low sensitivity of receptors in these areas. These locations are in Auchterawe and nearby (including properties in Auchterawe (B5)), Core Paths IN 16.03, IN16.02 and IN16.14 (R7) and the minor road (R8)) and various infrastructure related buildings at Bhlaraidh Reservoir, Wind Farm, and near a quarry on the A887. Where relevant (for B5, R5, R7 and R8), effects of the Proposed Development on these receptors are addressed in **Appendix 1.1: Underground Cable Works Impact Assessment**.

4.10.5 No outdoor viewing locations have been identified for individual inclusion within the assessment, but are instead to be considered by the reader as part of the visual experience of nearby receptors. For example, views from various roadside parking areas are part of the visual experience of the routes concerned.

#### 4.11 Visual Assessment: Potential Effects

4.11.1 Effects to visual amenity may arise through the introduction of new components within the existing views of a visual receptor, the scale and form of which may be perceived to be prominent or intrusive.

4.11.2 The following sections summarise the findings of the visual assessment, based on an appreciation of the Proposed Development. Please refer to **Figure 4.3: Visual Receptors with ZTV** and **Appendix 4.2: Visual Assessment Tables** for details of the visual baseline and assessment and **Figures 3.3a-c: VL1 – A887, Dundreggan** and **3.4a-c: VL2 – Near Dundreggan Dam** for illustrative visualisations and **Figures 3.5a-b: VL3 – Old Military Road** and **3.6a-b: VL4 – A887, Dalchreichart** for illustrative wirelines. The location of the visualisations are shown on **Figure 3.2: Visualisation Locations Plan**.

##### *Building-based Receptors*

4.11.3 No significant visual effects would be experienced by building-based receptors as a result of the Proposed Development, during construction or operation, due to screening from landform and trees, sensitivity of receptors, visual context, and its limited perceptibility introduced adjacent to existing OHLs.

4.11.4 During construction, visual effects would be **Minor** (not significant) for receptors in B1 (Bhlaraidh), B2 (Dundreggan Dam) and B3 (Dundreggan), whereby construction of the Proposed Development would be perceptible nearby, although partially screened or filtered by trees and seen in the context of other existing OHLs nearby.

4.11.5 During operation, long term visual effects would remain **Minor** (not significant) for receptors in B3 (Dundreggan) since the Proposed Development would remain perceptible in more open main views (see **Figure 3.3a-c: VL1 – A887, Dundreggan**). However, for receptors in B1 (Bhlaraidh) and B2 (Dundreggan Dam), effects would reduce during the operational period to **Negligible** (not significant) since the Proposed Development would be barely perceptible considering the visual context of nearby existing OHLs and tree and landform screening.

4.11.6 For receptors in B4 (Dalchreichart, Torgyle Bridge and A887 nearby), effects would be **Negligible** (not significant) during construction and operation, as the Proposed Development would be barely perceptible considering the visual context of nearby existing OHLs and tree and landform screening.

*Route-based Receptors*

- 4.11.7 No significant visual effects would be experienced by route-based receptors as a result of the Proposed Development, during construction or operation, due to screening from landform and trees, sensitivity of receptors, visual context, and its limited perceptibility introduced adjacent to existing OHLs.
- 4.11.8 During construction, effects would be **Minor-Moderate** (not significant) for receptors on R3 (Minor Road to Inverwick), R5 (CP IN16.16, SHTs 26a and b) and R6 (Route to Bhlaraidh Reservoir), as construction activities would be prominent nearby for receptors on notable stretches of the routes, which would be used as construction access routes, but seen alongside existing OHLs and / or wind turbines. For receptors on R1 (A887) and R4 (CP IN05.03 and SHT 261a), visual effects would be **Minor** (not significant) during construction. For receptors on R1, this would occur since construction of the Proposed Development would be perceptible nearby (particularly where the proposed OHL would cross the route, or run nearby it), although it would be partially screened or filtered by trees and seen in the context of other existing OHLs nearby. For receptors on R4, construction of the Proposed Development would be more distant in views, but would be perceptible in some open, elevated views, next to existing OHLs.
- 4.11.9 During operation, long term visual effects would remain **Minor** (not significant) for receptors on R4 (CP IN15.03 and SHT 261a), since the Proposed Development would remain perceptible in some open, elevated views, running up the hillside alongside other existing OHLs. For receptors on R5 (CP IN16.16, SHTs 260a and b), visual effects would also be **Minor** (not significant) during operation, reducing after construction has completed. The Proposed Development would be prominent nearby for receptors on notable stretches of the routes, but would be seen alongside existing OHLs. For receptors on R1 (A887), R3 (Minor Road to Inverwick) and R6 (Route to Bhlaraidh Reservoir), effects in the operational period would reduce after completion of construction to **Negligible-Minor** (not significant) as the Proposed Development would be less perceptible considering the visual context of nearby existing OHLs and tree screening (for example, see **Figure 3.3a-c: VL1 – A887, Dundreggan**).
- 4.11.10 For receptors on R2 (Minor Road through Dalchreichart), effects would be **Negligible** (not significant) during both construction and operation, as the Proposed Development would be barely perceptible considering the visual context of nearby existing OHLs and tree screening.

*Summary of Visual Effects*

- 4.11.11 **Table 4.11** provides a summary of these findings. An 'L' indicates a localised effect.

**Table 4.11: Summary of Visual Assessment**

	Potential Effect During Construction						Potential Effect During Operation (after 10 years)							
	Not Significant			Significant			Not Significant			Significant				
	Negligible	Negligible – Minor	Minor	Minor – Moderate	Moderate	Moderate – Major	Major	Negligible	Negligible – Minor	Minor	Minor – Moderate	Moderate	Moderate – Major	Major
<b>Building-Based Receptors</b>														
<b>B1</b> – Bhlaraidh			•					•						
<b>B2</b> – Dundreggan Dam			•					•						
<b>B3</b> – Dundreggan			•						•					
<b>B4</b> – Dalchreichart, Torgyle Bridge and nearby on the A887	•							•						
<b>Route-Based Receptors</b>														
<b>R1</b> – A887			•						•					
<b>R2</b> – Minor Road through Dalchreichart	•							•						
<b>R3</b> – Minor Road to Inverwick				•					•					
<b>R4</b> – CP IN05.03 and SHT 261a			•							•				
<b>R5</b> – CP IN16.16, SHTs 260a & b				•						•				
<b>R6</b> – Route to Bhlaraidh Reservoir				•					•					

4.11.12 This assessment concludes that visual effects resulting from the Proposed Development would not be significant during both construction and operation, due to screening from landform and trees, sensitivity of receptors, visual context, and its limited perceptibility when introduced adjacent to existing OHLs.

4.11.13 During construction, visual effects would range between Negligible and Minor-Moderate; and during operation, visual effects would range between Negligible and Minor. For several visual receptors nearest the Proposed Development (B1, B2, R1, R3, R5, R6), effects would reduce during operation. The highest levels of effect are anticipated to occur during construction for receptors on routes immediately adjacent to the Proposed Development, which would be used for construction access (R3, R5, R6), but these would reduce during operation and would not be significant.

#### 4.12 Mitigation

4.12.1 Principle mitigation measures have been embedded in the design process and relate to the identification of a preferred route, alignment and technology to reduce, as far as possible, adverse landscape and visual effects.

4.12.2 Landscape and visual mitigation measures relating to the construction and successful reinstatement of disturbed ground associated with the Proposed Development will be managed through good practice as set out in the CEMP. This relates to the successful landscape reinstatement of areas disturbed during the construction of the Proposed Development including compounds, working areas, and temporary access routes, which is important in minimising the degree of landscape and visual effect. For example, the formation of smooth gradients to tie into adjacent undisturbed areas and the use of best practice techniques for the handling and reinstatement of soil will assist in the successful reinstatement of disturbed areas and minimise landscape and visual effects resulting from the features of the Proposed Development.

4.12.3 Furthermore, minimisation of tree felling near receptor locations as far as practicable is proposed to mitigate potential for adverse effects.

#### **4.13 Summary**

##### *Landscape Assessment*

4.13.1 The landscape assessment has assessed effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character and designated and protected landscapes within the study area and concluded that there would be no significant landscape effects associated with the Proposed Development. This is due to screening effects of trees and landform in the surrounding area, the presence of existing OHLs and other built structures and overall landscape character context.

##### *Visual Assessment*

4.13.2 The visual assessment has considered visual effects for receptors in buildings and on routes within the study area and has found that there would be no significant visual effects associated with Proposed Development. This is due to screening effects of trees and landform in the visual context, the presence of existing OHLs and other built structures which influence perceptibility and sensitivity to change, and the nature and sensitivity of receptors to change of the type of development proposed.