Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

SSEN Transmission

Bingally 400 / 132 kV Substation

Environmental Appraisal

Volume 1

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7. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND VISUAL IMPACT

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 With reference to **Volume 1, Chapter 1 Introduction and Background, Section 1.1.10**, this Voluntary EA has been prepared based on the structure and assessment methodology of an EIA. This overall report, however, is a Voluntary EA Report and is not carried out under the EIA Regulations.

7.1.2 This chapter assesses the likelihood of environmental effects on landscape and visual impact resulting from the Proposed Development. This section contains:

- A description of baseline conditions for the Proposed Development;
- A concise appraisal of the direct and indirect risks to the landscape and visual conditions of the area of the Proposed Development; and
- Recommendations for additional mitigation as required.

7.1.3 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been carried out in accordance with good practice guidance (see **Section 7.3.1** below) in relation to LVIA. The scope of this LVIA reflects the nature and scale of the Proposed Development as described in **Volume 2, Chapter 6 Scope and Consultation** and within the following sections.

7.1.4 This chapter is supported by the following figures, reports, photomontages, and drawings:

Volume 2, Appendix A:

- **Figure 7-1**: Landscape Designations;
- **Figure 7-2**: Landscape Character Types;
- **Figure 7-3**: Representative Viewpoints, Recreational Routes and ZTV; and
- **Figure 7-4**: Cumulative Developments.

Volume 3, Appendix C:

- Photomontages.

Volume 3, Appendix G:

- Landscape and Habitat Management Plan report (LHMP);
- Landscape Restoration Plan Substation Area; and
- Landscape Restoration Site Wide Plan.

Study Area

7.1.5 A Study Area of 5 km radius from the substation and 1 km radius from the access track has been identified for the LVIA in order to establish the baseline and anticipated limit of significant landscape and visual effects. The Study Area is shown in **Volume 2, Appendix A, Figure 7-1**. The Study Area has been derived from a review of maps and aerial photographs as well as on-site appraisal and Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) analysis (refer **Volume 2, Appendix A, Figure 7-3**). Occasional reference may be made to features beyond the defined Study Area where required. Landscape and visual effects beyond 5 km have been scoped out as they are unlikely to be significant. Several criteria have been used to determine whether or not the likely landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development beyond 5 km are deemed ‘significant’. These effects have been assessed quantitively based on the following

criteria; international, national, and local standards, sensitivity of the receiving environment, extent, and magnitude of the effect, reversibility, and duration of the effect.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

7.1.6 ZTV mapping has been undertaken to establish the theoretical extent of visibility of the Proposed Development. The ZTV has been used to inform the extent of the Study Area and the identification of landscape and visual receptors. The ZTV is shown in **Volume 2, Appendix A, Figure 7-3**.

7.1.7 The ZTV mapping indicates areas from where it may be possible to view the Proposed Development. It is considered as a tool to assist in assessing the theoretical visibility and not a measure of the visual effect. The approach to ZTV modelling and limitations in its use are outlined below:

- The ZTV is based on a bare ground model – Ordnance Survey (OS) Terrain 5 Digital Terrain Model (DTM) data which does not take account of the screening effects of vegetation, buildings, or other structures.
- The ZTV has been calculated based on the substation geometry and a maximum height of 13 m above the new platform's proposed ground level.
- Some areas of theoretical visibility may comprise buildings, forestry and woodland which are not often visited therefore the likelihood of views being experienced is consequently low.
- The ZTV maps do not take account of the likely orientation of a viewer, such as the direction of travel, and there is no allowance for reduction of visibility with distance, weather, or light.

7.1.8 ZTV analysis was undertaken as part of the LVIA in parallel with the iterative design process to identify and refine the Proposed Development.

Temporal Scope of Appraisal

7.1.9 Landscape and visual effects can differ from one stage of the Proposed Development to the next and change over time as mitigation planting establishes and matures. The assessment therefore considers potential effects of the Proposed Development at each of the following stages:

- **Construction:** including consideration of all temporary structures and works areas relating to construction, such as temporary construction compounds, movement of plant and machinery etc.
- **Operation Year 1:** including consideration of potential effects associated with the Proposed Development following completion of the construction phase and associated reinstatement. This stage is intended to represent the potential worst-case operational effects prior to establishment of mitigation planting.
- **Operation Year 15:** including consideration of potential long-term effects of the Proposed Development 15 years after becoming operational. This stage is intended to help demonstrate how proposed mitigation planting will influence effects once established.

General and Specific Limitations

7.1.10 Field work has been undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects during spring 2024 to inform the iterative design process, assess the existing character of the landscape and visit representative viewpoints. Seasonal differences are taken into consideration within the LVIA,

and the operational year 1 assessment on landscape character and visual amenity reports the worst-case scenario when broadleaf vegetation would not be in leaf. Viewpoint photography was captured within April 2024 and June 2024.

Issues Scoped Out of Assessments

7.1.11 Landscape and visual receptors beyond the Study Area have been excluded. A full Wild Land Area (WLA) Assessment is not proposed under the professional judgement that it is unlikely to result in significant change to the WLA however an appraisal of the potential change to WLA has been considered within **Section 7.6**.

7.2 Consultation Undertaken to Date

7.2.1 Best practice in EA encourages consultation and engagement with stakeholders early in the process, with advice and input from key consultees being sought at the early design stages of a project, to inform decisions about the Proposed Development.

7.2.2 Consultations undertaken to date and feedback received are described in **Volume 1, Chapter 6 Scope and Consultation** and have not been repeated in this chapter.

7.3 Methodology

7.3.1 The LVIA has been carried out in accordance with the following good practice guidance documents:

- The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), Third Edition[1].
- Landscape Institute (2019) Technical Guidance Note 06/19, Visual Representation of Development Proposals[2].
- Landscape Institute (2021) Technical Guidance Note 02/21, Assessing landscape value outside national designations[3].

7.3.2 GLVIA places a strong emphasis on the importance of professional judgement in identifying and defining the significance of landscape and visual effects. The LVIA has been undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects with experience in the assessment of similar projects. Professional judgement has been used in combination with structured methods and criteria to evaluate landscape and visual value and susceptibility, the resulting sensitivity, magnitude, and significance of effect. The definition of 'impact' and 'effect' is as follows:

- 'Impact' is specific and defined as the action being taken, for example, cutting down trees; and
- 'Effect' is defined as the change resulting from that action, for example, the alteration in landscape character or visual quality.

7.3.3 When identifying likely significant effects, all types of effect, such as beneficial and adverse, will be included. As stated in GLVIA3, "… *identifying significant effects stresses the need for an approach that is in proportion to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the*

[1] Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management Assessment (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Third Edition.

2 Landscape Institute (2019) Technical Guidance Note 06/19, Visual Representation of Development Proposals. [Online]. Available from: TGN-06-19-Visual_Representation (windows.net)

3 Landscape Institute (2021) Technical Guidance Note 02/21, Assessing landscape value outside national designations. [Online] Available from: TGN 02-21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations - Landscape Institute

nature of its likely effects. Judgement needs to be exercised at all stages in terms of the scale of the investigation that is appropriate and proportional".

7.3.4 The characteristics of an effect will vary depending on the duration of the activity causing the effect, the sensitivity of the receptor and the resultant change. It is therefore necessary to assess whether the effect is temporary or permanent; beneficial and adverse, and indirect or direct. Effects that are temporary are usually reversible and generally confined to the construction period.

7.3.5 For the purposes of this Voluntary EA the terms used in the assessment of effects are generally defined as follows:

- Temporary - where the effect occurs for a limited period of time and the change at a defined receptor can be reversed.
- Permanent - where the effect represents a long-lasting change at a defined receptor.
- Direct - where the effect is a direct result (or primary effect) of the Proposed Development.
- Indirect - a knock-on (or secondary) effect which occurs within or between environmental components, may include effects on the environment which are not a direct result of the Proposed Development, often occurring away from the proposals or as a result of a complex biological or chemical pathway.
- Cumulative - these effects may arise when more than one development of a similar scale and nature combine to create a potentially greater impact than would result from the proposed development alone.

7.3.6 The result of the assessment is the determination of whether the likely effect of the Proposed Development on the receptor in the Study Area would be significant or not significant, and adverse or beneficial.

Landscape Sensitivity

7.3.7 Landscape receptors are described as components of the landscape that are likely to be affected by Proposed Development. These can include overall character and key characteristics, individual elements or features and specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects. The sensitivity of the landscape receptor has been derived by combining the value of the landscape (undertaken as part of the baseline study) and the susceptibility to change of the receptor, to the specific type of development being assessed.

7.3.8 Landscape value is frequently addressed by reference to international, national, regional, and local designations. Absence of such a designation does not necessarily imply a lack of quality or value. Factors such as accessibility and local scarcity can render areas of nationally unremarkable quality, highly valuable as a local resource.

7.3.9 The evaluation of landscape value has been informed by Technical Guidance Note 02/21 and undertaken considering the following factors and classified as high, medium, or low with, evidence provided as to the basis of the evaluation:

- Natural heritage – Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological, or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape.
- Cultural heritage – Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical, or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape.
- Landscape condition – Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure.
- Associations – Landscape, which is connected to notable people, events, and the arts;

- Distinctiveness – Landscape that has a strong sense of identity.
- Recreational – Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important.
- Perceptual (scenic) – Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense.
- Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity) – Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and / or dark skies.
- Functional – Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape.

7.3.10 Landscape susceptibility relates to the ability of a particular landscape to accommodate the Proposed Development. It is appraised through consideration of the baseline characteristics of the landscape, and in particular, the scale or complexity of a given landscape. The evaluation of landscape sensitivity is defined as high, medium, or low and is supported by a clear explanation (refer to **Table 7-1**).

Table 7-1: Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

	Higher Sensitivity		Lower Sensitivity
Value	A designated landscape (For example National Scenic Area) or a landscape in very good condition, exceptional scenic quality and high recreational opportunities or a high degree of rarity.	⟷	Landscapes containing few if any notable elements / features, of poor condition or containing several detracting features and limited aesthetic qualities. Landscapes which are not formally designated.
Susceptibility	Attributes that make up the character of the landscape which offer very limited opportunities to accommodate change of the type proposed without fundamentally altering key characteristics.	⟷	Attributes that make up the character of the landscape which are tolerant of a large degree of the type of change proposed without fundamentally altering the key characteristics.

Visual Sensitivity

7.3.11 The sensitivity of visual receptors has been defined through an appraisal of the viewing expectation, or value placed on the view as identified in the baseline study, and its susceptibility to change.

7.3.12 The value of the view is an appraisal of the value attached to views and is often informed by the appearance on Ordnance Survey or tourist maps and in guidebooks, literature, and art, or identified in policy. Value can also be indicated by the provision of parking or services and signage and interpretation. The nature and composition of the view and its scenic quality is also an indicator. The value of the view has been classified as high, medium, or low and is supported by evidenced, professional judgements.

7.3.13 The susceptibility of visual receptors to change has been established as a function of the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view, and the extent to which their attention or interest is focussed on the view and the visual amenity they experience. For example, residents in their homes, walkers whose interest may be focused on the landscape or a particular view, or visitors at an attraction where views are an important part of the experience, indicate a higher level of susceptibility. Conversely receptors engaged in outdoor

sport where views are not important or receptors at their place of work are considered less susceptible to change.

7.3.14 As with landscape susceptibility, judgements about the sensitivity of visual receptors have been described as high, medium, or low using consistent and reasoned judgements (refer to **Table 7-2**).

Table 7-2: Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

	Higher Sensitivity		Lower Sensitivity
Value	Views protected by designation, or nationally recognised, or recorded on maps / guidebooks or with cultural associations. Views that have high scenic qualities relating to the content and composition of the view.	⟷	Views which are not documented or protected with minimal or no cultural associations. Views that exhibit low scenic qualities relating to the content and composition of the view.
Susceptibility	Viewers whose attention or interest is focused on their surroundings.	⟷	Viewers whose attention or interest is not focused on their surroundings and where the view is incidental to their enjoyment.

Landscape Magnitude of Effect

7.3.15 Landscape magnitude of effect refers to the extent to which Proposed Development would alter the existing characteristics of the landscape. It is an expression of the size or scale of change to the landscape, the geographical extent of the area influenced, and its duration and reversibility. The variables involved are:

- The extent to which existing landscape elements which would be lost, the proportion of the total extent that this represents and the contribution of that element to the character of the landscape;
- The extent to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered either by removal of existing components of the landscape or by the addition of new components;
- Whether the change alters the key characteristics of the landscape that are integral to its distinctive character;
- The geographic area over which the change will be experienced (for example within the application boundary, the immediate setting around that boundary, at the local landscape character area scale, or on a larger scale influencing broader areas of landscape character);
- The duration of the change (i.e. short term (0-5 years), medium term (5-10 years), or long term (10 years +)), and its reversibility (i.e. whether it is permanent, temporary, or partially reversible); and
- Landscape change can be both direct, through alteration of physical components, or indirect, resulting from changes to perceptual aspects of character and how it is experienced.

7.3.16 An overall assessment of the magnitude of landscape effect resulting from Proposed Development on landscape receptors has been made by combining the above judgements

using evidence and professional judgement. The levels of landscape magnitude of effect are described as being very high, high, medium, low, very low and none as defined in **Table 7-3**.

Table 7-3: Landscape Magnitude of Effect

Magnitude	Description
Very High	Substantial alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact an extensive area or unique characteristics at a local level. May be longer term, permanent or reversible.
High	Large alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact an extensive area or unique characteristics at a local level. May be longer term, permanent or reversible.
Medium	Partial alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact a wide area or characteristics at a local level. May be medium term, permanent or reversible.
Low	Slight alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact a restricted area and few key characteristics. May be short to medium term, permanent or reversible.
Very Low	No perceptible change to key characteristics or setting.
None	No change to the landscape receptor.

Visual Magnitude of Effect

7.3.17 Visual magnitude of effect relates to the extent to which the Proposed Development would alter the existing view and is an expression of the size or scale of change in the view, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. The variables involved are described below:

- The scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by Proposed Development;
- The degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the form, scale, composition, and focal points of the view;
- The nature of the view of the Proposed Development in relation to the amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views of this will be visible fully, partially or glimpsed;
- The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor, distance of the viewpoint from the Proposed Development and the extent of the area over which the changes would be visible; and
- The duration of the change (i.e. short term (0-5 years), medium term (5-10 years), or long term (10 years +), and its reversibility (i.e. whether it is permanent, temporary, or partially reversible).

7.3.18 An overall assessment of the magnitude of visual change resulting from the Proposed Development on the visual receptor has been made combining the above judgements using evidence and professional judgement. The levels of visual magnitude of effect are described as being very high, high, medium, low, very low and none as defined in **Table 7-4** below.

Table 7-4: Visual Magnitude of Effect

Magnitude	Description
Very High	A substantial change to the composition of the view or change that may be viewed in the foreground or directly. May be longer term, permanent or reversible.

Magnitude	Description
High	A pronounced change to the composition of the view or change that may be viewed in the foreground or directly. May be longer term, permanent or reversible.
Medium	A noticeable change to the composition of the view or change that may be viewed in the middle ground or indirectly. May be medium term, permanent or reversible.
Low	An unobtrusive change in the composition of the view or change that may be viewed in the background or obliquely. May be short to medium term, permanent or reversible.
Very Low	No perceptible change in visual composition.
None	No change to the view.

Cumulative Effects

7.3.19 There are two aspects to Cumulative Effects, defined as follows:

- In-combination effects: The combined effect of the Proposed Development together with other reasonably foreseeable developments (taking into consideration effects at the site preparation and earthworks, construction, and operational phases); and
- Effects Interactions: The combined or synergistic effects caused by the combination of a number of effects on a particular receptor (taking into consideration effects at the site preparation and earthworks, construction, and operational phases), which may collectively cause a more significant effect than individually. A theoretical example is the culmination of disturbance from dust, noise, vibration, artificial light, human presence, and visual intrusion on sensitive fauna (e.g. certain bat species) adjacent to a construction site.

7.3.20 The potential for cumulative effects will be considered in relation to the proposed OHL tie-in and other developments listed within **Volume 1, Chapter 5 EA Approach and Methodology**, **Table 5-2**, within the Study Area relevant to each particular issue. The basis for this is that only these developments have the potential to result in significant cumulative effects in combination with those arising from the Proposed Development.

Significance of Effects

7.3.21 Determination of the significance of the landscape and visual effects has been undertaken by employing professional judgement and experience to combine and analyse the magnitude of effect against the identified sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors.

7.3.22 The landscape assessment has taken into account direct and indirect changes to existing landscape elements, features, key characteristics and evaluates the extent to which these

would be lost or modified, in the context of their importance in determining the existing baseline character.

7.3.23 The visual assessment has considered the 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.

7.3.24 The level of significance of landscape and visual effects is described with reference to the criteria presented in **Diagram 7-1** below.

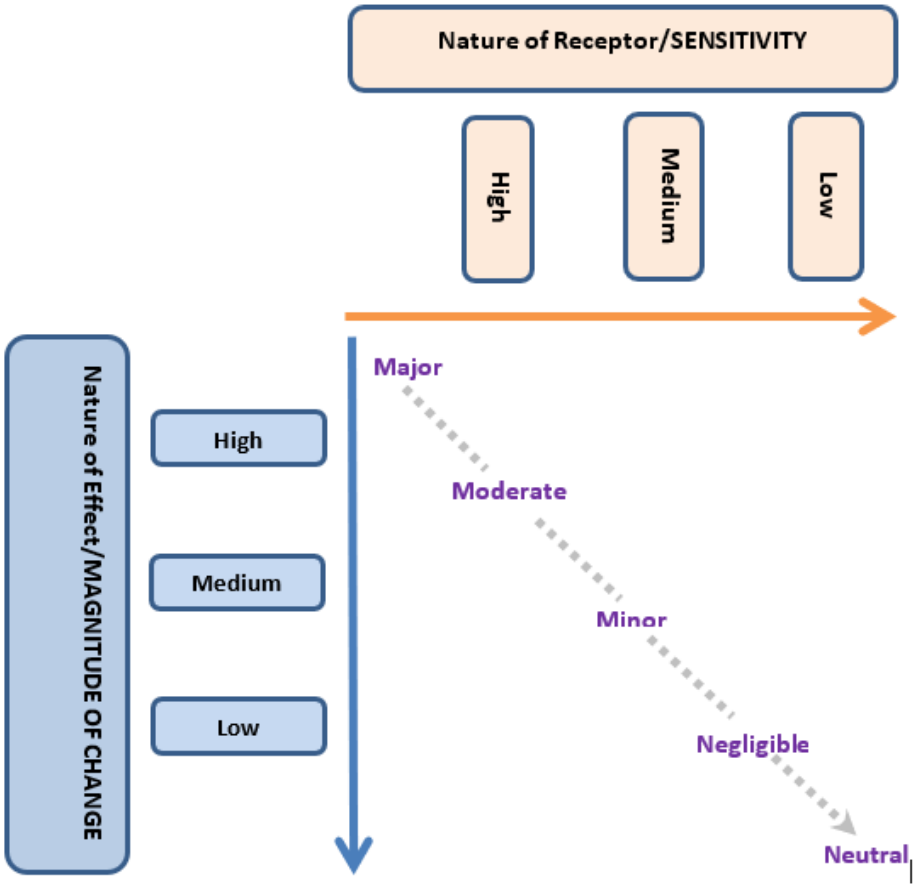

Diagram 7-1: Basis for Consideration of Significance of Effects

7.3.25 Major and moderate effects are considered to be significant. Minor and negligible effects are not considered significant.

7.3.26 A description of individual levels of significance is included in **Table 7-5** below.

Table 7-5: Level of Significance of Effects

Level of Effect	Landscape	Visual
Major Beneficial	Alterations that result in a considerable improvement of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be restored or reintroduced.	Alterations that typically result in a pronounced improvement in the existing view.
Moderate Beneficial	Alterations that result in a partial improvement of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be largely restored or reintroduced.	Alterations that typically result in a noticeable improvement in the existing view.
Minor Beneficial	Alterations that result in a slight improvement of the existing landscape resource. Characteristic features would be partially restored.	Alterations that typically result in a limited improvement in the existing view.
Negligible Beneficial	Alterations that result in a very slight improvement to the existing landscape resource, not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.	Alterations that typically result in a barely perceptible improvement in the existing view.
Neutral	No alteration to any of the components that contribute to the existing landscape resource.	No change to the existing view.
Negligible Adverse	Alterations that result in a very slight deterioration to the existing landscape resource, not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.	Alterations that typically result in a barely perceptible deterioration in the existing view.
Minor Adverse	Alterations that result in a slight deterioration of the existing landscape resource. Characteristic features would be partially lost.	Alterations that typically result in a limited deterioration in the existing view.
Moderate Adverse	Alterations that result in a partial deterioration of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be largely lost.	Alterations that typically result in a noticeable deterioration in the existing view.
Major Adverse	Alterations that result in a considerable deterioration of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be wholly lost.	Alterations that typically result in a pronounced deterioration in the existing view.

7.4 Landscape Baseline Conditions

Site Context

7.4.1 The Site is located at the transition between two landscape types characterised by Farmed Strath[4] to the west, transitioning east to more steeply sloping Rocky Moorland[5] Plateau. The Site sits within an area of felled plantation woodland. The boundary associated with the proposed access track mostly follows the existing OHL corridor at the boundary between woodland and upland moor. Vegetation is mostly comprised of heather and open grassland. Forestry operations, including felling, are commonplace within the overall Study Area. Although the Site is located within a plateau landscape, local landform more broadly within the Site is undulating.

7.4.2 The Proposed Development and immediate context are accessed via a network of access and forestry tracks, some of which are also designated as Core Paths. One Core Path runs

[4] NatureScot (2019), *Farmed Strath – Inverness* [online]. Available from: **LCT 227 - Farmed Strath - Inverness - Final pdf.pdf (nature.scot)**

[5] NatureScot (2019), *Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness [*online]. Available from: **LCT 222 - Rocky Moorland Plateau - Inverness - Final pdf.pdf (nature.scot)**

through the Site along an existing track and adjacent to the main works area. There is a rich network of Core Paths that connect through forestry within the immediate context to the west of the Site.

7.4.3 Much of the broader landscape to the west of the Site is well purposed for recreation (core paths etc) and a popular draw for tourism however, the wooded slopes to the south of the Farmed Strath open up to a more rugged landscape within which the Site is located. The sense of enclosure to the west is reinforced by the expanse of woodland. The site and the landscape to the east is far more open and the sense of isolation prevails in more upland hills and plateaus.

Landscape Designations

7.4.4 The landscape of certain parts of the Study Area has been designated or defined due to scenic qualities or historic landscape qualities as shown on **Volume 2, Appendix A, Figure 7-1**. This includes the Glen Affric National Scenic Area (NSA) and Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch Special Landscape Area (SLA). The ZTV has been used to identify landscape designations and defined areas within the Study Area from which the Proposed Development may be visible from (refer to **Volume 2, Appendix A, Figure 7-3**). Any designations and defined areas that are not within the ZTV are scoped out of the LVIA and are not included within the baseline section as there is no potential for significant effects from the Proposed Development.

Glen Affric National NSA

7.4.5 The Glen Affric NSA occupies a very small part at the western edge of the Study Area (refer to **Volume 2 Appendix A, Figure 7-1**). The Glen Affric NSA is described as one of the most beautiful glens in Scotland, representing the romantic, iconic, image of the Highland landscape. It is comprised of "*dramatic mountains with high corries rising above a narrow glen, ancient Caledonian forest of beautiful trees and deep heather, grading to open moorland in the west. Lochs with rocky shores, small bays and promontories, occasional beaches, and wooded isles. Most of the land within the study area is comprised of dense forestry and combined with wider forestry and woodland would limit intervisibility between this Proposed Development and this landscape designation*[6]*".* The full description of the special qualities can be found online from Scottish Natural Heritage 2010[7], the key qualities are defined as:

- One of the most beautiful glens in Scotland;
- A glen of transition, from dense forest to exposed moorland;
- A journey into wildness;
- The prominence of water;
- A glen for all seasons;
- A historic and popular route through the Highlands;
- Venerable pine forest;
- Beautiful Loch Affric; and
- The baronial Affric Lodge.

[6] NatureScot, (2010) Extract from: Scottish Natural Heritage (2010). The special qualities of the National Scenic Areas. SNH Commissioned Report No.374 https://apps.snh.gov.uk/sitelink-api/v1/sites/9126/documents/37

[7] NatureScot, (2010) Extract from: Scottish Natural Heritage (2010). The special qualities of the National Scenic Areas. SNH Commissioned Report No.374 https://apps.snh.gov.uk/sitelink-api/v1/sites/9126/documents/37

7.4.6 Considering the intact qualities and national level designation, the landscape value is considered to be **High**.

Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA

7.4.7 The Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA occupies a small area at the edge of the Study Area, immediately north of the Glen Affric NSA. Overall, this area includes a vast unbroken tract of remote interior hills and is the largest such area north of the Great Glen, with mountain summits and glens remote from roads and human habitation. Relevant key landscape and visual characteristics include the following[8]:

- *"Extensive tract of moorland and hills which are difficult to access, largely uninhabited and consequently possesses wild land qualities. Deeply dissected mountain massif with mountain ridges on a grand scale with interconnected narrow crests";*
- *"Relatively uniform low land cover on hill slopes and summits, dominated at higher elevations by intact mosaics of montane heaths, grasses, and mosses, the low level of which contribute to the very open and highly exposed character of these areas in contrast to the partly wooded straths"; and*
- *"Small but significant remnants of Caledonian Pinewood, reinforced by natural regeneration schemes, contribute to a greater diversity of land cover within the glens and western strath; this includes semi-natural broadleaved woodland on river banks and steep-sided gullies, occasional, unfenced grassland on the strath floor river flats, and mature, predominantly coniferous plantations".*

7.4.8 Special qualities of the Grand Mountain Ridges, Long Glens, and Wide Strath:

- Grand Mountain Ridges, Long Glens and Wide Strath comprised of a series of grand, broadly parallel, high mountain ridges, separated by long, sinuous, steep sided glens and straths combine to form a landscape of immense scale which tend to be experienced in sequentially along the ridges and / or glens and straths.
- There is a marked contrasts between the bare, dramatic scenery of the ridges and upper glens - exaggerated by the huge scale of lochs Monar and Mullardoch - and the more tranquil and intimate qualities of the strath and glen floors, with their patchworks of grassland, bog, birch and pine wood, river and lochan.
- Distinctive sequential changes in the visual and landscape qualities travelling along the glens reflect a transition from lowland strath to mountain interior.
- There is an intimate sequential travelling experience on the A890 through Strathcarron with ever changing enclosure and exposure and views to adjacent features.
- There are contrasting deep, steep sided glens and wide, wooded straths on the eastern and western periphery.

7.4.9 Special qualities of the Wildness and Remoteness:

- There is a very strong sense of wildness and remoteness within most parts of this landscape, typically evoked by the long journey from the main access points into this area form the east along winding single-track roads to the head of the glens. A sense of wildness is also influenced by the sparse network of rough, isolated paths and tracks, and the spectacular summit views over vast expanses of moorland and hills. The main detractors from these qualities are reservoir draw down scars and tracks compromise the sense of wildness within the interior.

[8] The Highland Council (2011) Extract from: Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas. https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/2937/assessment_of_highland_special_landscape_areas

- The mountain interior and upper reaches of the glens are out of sight of public roads, remote from any habitation, and are among the most remote areas of mainland Britain. The only part of this area significantly less remote is within Strathcarron where there are road and rail links.
- Extensive areas of hill slopes and summits are dominated by native vegetation that contributes to the wildness qualities, including mosaics of montane heaths, grasses, and mosses contrast with the afforested side slopes and partly wooded flood plain at Strathcarron. There are also important remnants of native Caledonian pinewood.
- The mountain terrain is physically challenging to access and ideally suited to adventurous ridge walkers. The area is very popular with hill walkers, with a high number of Munro mountains in close proximity. Also, given the large extent of the area and the limited accessibility, many wild camp within the area.

7.4.10 Some parts of this area are enclosed in forestry whilst more upland areas offer outstanding scenic quality and sense of remoteness; on balance landscape value is judged to be **High**.

Wild Land Areas

7.4.11 Wild Land Areas (WLA) are identified as nationally important in Scottish Planning Policy but are not a statutory designation. The Central Highlands WLA occupies a very small part of the study area across upland moor as shown on **Figure 7-1**. The key attributes and qualities of this WLA are as follows[9]:

- "*An extensive and awe-inspiring range of large scale, high and rugged mountains;*
- *An extensive, remote mountain interior with strong qualities of sanctuary and solitude;*
- *Deep glens that have steep, arresting side slopes as well as rivers and waterfalls, with some containing lochs and some revealing human land use; and*
- *Small and extensive areas of native woodland that contribute to the sense of naturalness and highlight some arresting landscape features".*

7.4.12 The Central Highlands WLA is of high landscape value on account of the key attributes and qualities. However, it was agreed with THC during consultation that a full WLA assessment will not be undertaken. An appraisal of the potential change has been prepared.

Landscape Character Types

7.4.13 The landscape appraisal for the Proposed Development is based on the Landscape Character Types (LCT) defined and described by NatureScot[10]. The LCTs found within the Study Area and immediate context include the following:

- LCT 222: Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness[5];
- LCT 227: Farmed Strath – Inverness[4];
- LCT 220: Rugged Massif – Inverness[11]; and
- LCT 226: Wooded Glen – Inverness[12].

[9] Nature Scot (2017) Extract from: Description of Wild Land Area, Central Highlands https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2021-06/Wild%20land%20Description%20Central-Highlands-July-2016-24.pdf

[10] NatureScot (2023), *Scottish Landscape Character Types Map and Descriptions* [Online]. Available from: **Scottish Landscape Character Types Map and Descriptions | NatureScot**

[11] NatureScot (2019), *Rugged Massif – Inverness* [Online]. Available from: **LCT 220 - Rugged Massif - Inverness - Final pdf.pdf (nature.scot)**

[12] NatureScot (2019), *Wooded Glen – Inverness* [Online]. Available from: **LCT 226 - Wooded Glen - Inverness - Final pdf.pdf (nature.scot)**

7.4.14 A summary of each LCTs description, key characteristics and landscape value judgements are provided below. LCTs are shown on **Volume 2, Appendix A, Figure 7-2**.

LCT 222: Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness

7.4.15 The Rocky Moorland Plateau - Inverness LCT[5] consists of two areas of high rocky plateau which covers much of the central part of the district, gradually merging to the Rugged Massif - Inverness[11] in the west and bordering the Great Glen to the east. This LCT occupies the eastern and southeastern half of the Study Area.

7.4.16 Key characteristics as outlined by NatureScot include[5]:

- Open, gently rolling moorland plateaux with distinct edges descending to adjoining straths and glens or rising to merge with Rugged Massif;
- Plateau with a patchy texture of small rocky outcrop hills, bogs and lochans in no clear hierarchy or discernible pattern;
- Hilltops and upper slopes dominated by rocky heather moorland, except in the northeast where extensive, contrasting conifer forests dominate;
- Regenerating trees and scrub in glens with rivers s and sheltered lower hillsides;
- Strong contrast in landcover and settlement between the plateau and adjoining straths and glens;
- Sparsely inhabited and little evidence of active land use;
- A few historic sites indicating past settlement and land use;
- Orientation is difficult due to the lack of hierarchy, pattern, and foci in the landform and landcover;
- Within the plateau distance and scale are generally difficult to perceive due to the lack of elements of known size;
- Distinct edges isolate the plateau from adjacent areas and give the sense of a vast, remote, upland moor;
- At the plateau edges, expansive views over inhabited straths and glens create surprise;
- Eastern areas have a semi-exposed character with occasional views of distant hills framed by the distinct edges of conifer forests; and
- Perception of remoteness on the open plateau, from the rugged patchy texture and absence of obvious human artefacts.

7.4.17 This LCT is not subject to any landscape designations. The expanse of plantation forestry is a less valued element however, the network of upland lochs and uninhabited vast hills contribute to the tranquillity and relative sense of remoteness. On balance, landscape value is judged as **Medium**.

LCT 227: Farmed Strath – Inverness

7.4.18 The Farmed Strath - Inverness LCT[4] occupies the lower-level strath and central part of the Study Area. The strath is characterised by open farmed valley floors and a central meandering river contained within steep, mainly forested and wooded slopes.

7.4.19 Key characteristics as outlined by NatureScot include[4]:

- Linear to sinuous channels cut through uplands, with a central meandering river located in a flat or gently undulating strath floor, edged by the steep, rocky, side slopes;
- Pronounced and dynamic river meanders of Strathglass, emphasised by riparian trees, oxbow lakes, and curved wetland features;

- Small scale broadleaf woodlands and small blocks of conifer forest within Strathnairn / Stratherrick strath floor which do not override openness of the strath;
- A few small settlements located on the strath floor or sides and infrequent small farms, crofts, estate buildings or groups of houses;
- Roads which generally relate well to landform, with a limited number of river crossing points;
- Many archaeological sites in Strathnairn dating from a range of periods;
- Contrast between the open, inhabited, and agricultural landscape of the straths, the side slopes cloaked in alternating broadleaf woodlands, conifer forests and heather moorland, and the setting of adjacent rugged, remote uplands;
- Diversity of colour and texture added by river meanders, wetlands, damp pastures and thin bands of woodland; and
- An overall sense of linear enclosure, which directs distant views along the strath and allows uninterrupted views of the flanking hill slopes.

7.4.20 This LCT is not subject to any landscape designations. The combination of intact belts of woodland and natural scenic qualities contained by the more upland LCTs to the west and east contribute to the sense of place and enclosure. Landscape value is judged to be **Medium**.

LCT 220: Rugged Massif – Inverness

7.4.21 The Rugged Massif – Inverness LCT[11] consists of rugged, exposed mountains which cover much of the northwestern part of Inverness district, on the north side of the Great Glen, and extending beyond the district boundary northwards into Ross-Shire. This type tends to be divided into distinct hill ranges by the long east to west glens of the Wooded Glen LCT[12].

7.4.22 Key characteristics as outlined by NatureScot include[11]:

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

7.4.23 Much of the area within the LCT is comprised of Caledonian forest. Very small parts at the edge of the Study Area also sit within the Glen Affric NSA and the Central Highlands WLA.

There is strong network of Core Paths and recreational routes, and more upland areas offer a strong sense of remoteness. Taking all of this into account landscape value is **High**.

LCT 226: Wooded Glen – Inverness

7.4.24 The Wooded Glen - Inverness LCT[12] consists of wooded and farmed glens to the west of Loch Ness, namely Glen Moriston, Glen Affric, Glen Cannich, Glen Strathfarrar and Glen Urquhart. The glens are broad at their lower end where they pass through Rocky Moorland Plateau - Inverness[5]. In their upper reaches they are relatively narrow, less intensively managed and located within Rugged Massif - Inverness[11].

7.4.25 Key characteristics as outlined by NatureScot include[12]:

- Long glens set within uplands and mountains, divided into upper and lower glens by a cross-cutting narrow farmed strath;
- 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;
- Rivers, water bodies (lochs and sometimes reservoirs), river flats and areas of wetland in valley floors;
- Balance between open and enclosed space formed by the diverse mix of landscape patterns, land uses, conifer forests, woodlands, and fields;
- Distinctive mix of rugged hillsides, extensive Caledonian pine forest and lochs in the upper glens;
- 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;
- Contrast between the settled and farmed floor of lower glens and their open heather moorland and forests of the upper slopes;
- 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;
- Central, major through-road in lower glens, with minor roads along the glen sides which are integrated with the landform and settlement pattern;
- Single track road along the base of the upper glens, terminating at the upper edge of the glen;
- Large number and range of archaeological remains in the lower glens;
- Strong sense of history in upper glens created by the Caledonian pinewood stands;
- Intimate, semi-enclosed landscape within the glen floor with limited visibility, due to the screening effect of trees and landform;
- Distant views along the glens from open hill ground creating a feeling of openness and exposure; and
- Increasing sense of naturalness and remoteness traversing the upper glens into mountainous interior.

7.4.26 Part of this LCT also lies within the Glen Affric NSA. The quality of woodland and rich network of Core Paths, recreational trails, and places of interest within the landscape contribute to the sense of place and more enclosed scenic quality focussed around the Loch Beinn a' Mheadhoin. Taking all of this into account, landscape value is judged to be **High**.

7.5 Visual Baseline Conditions

7.5.1 Visual receptors within the scope of this assessment are described below / grouped into the following categories:

- Residential, comprising those in residential dwellings;
- Recreational and places of interest, includes walkers and users of promoted cycling routes; and
- Road users, including users of the local transport network.

7.5.2 Residential settlements within the Study Area include Tomich and Cannich. There are a small number of clustered and scattered properties within the Study Area where residents experience a range of views in the direction of the Proposed Development however, existing woodland and forestry tends to enclose residential areas and reduces the potential for intervisibility. Residential properties located on more exposed upland areas and those in closer proximity to the Site are more sensitive to change.

7.5.3 Recreational routes include a rich network of Core Paths and long-distance trails alongside more informal paths throughout the landscape. The routes within the Study Area include the following:

- Core Paths: IN05.01, IN05.02, IN05.03, IN05.04, IN05.05, IN05.08, IN05.09, IN05.10, IN05.11, IN05.12; and
- Affric Kintail Way - Drumnadrochit to Cannich: The first stage of the Affric-Kintail Way climbs up from Drumnadrochit through Craigmonie Woods before following forestry tracks, farm tracks and forestry sections before reaching Cannich. Stage 2 of the route stretches approximately 19 km from the village of Cannich to the River Affric.

7.5.4 Many of the recreational routes are largely enclosed within forestry and along the loch shore and rivers within Glen Affric. The more upland and expansive locations are beyond the Study Area boundary. Recreational routes are shown in **Figure 7-3**.

7.5.5 The local transport network includes the A831 and a series of local roads through the strath leading west from Cannich to Fasnakyle Power Station, south to Tomich, southwest to Dog Falls and towards car parks within Glen Affric. These local roads provide important access to places of interest for walkers and recreational pursuits within the wider landscape beyond the Study Area.

Representative Viewpoints

7.5.6 A total of nine representative viewpoints have been selected in consultation with NatureScot and THC to represent the visual receptors within the Study Area which are most likely to be significantly affected by the construction and / or operation of the Proposed Development. Representative viewpoint locations are shown on **Figure 7-3** and listed in **Table 7-6** below.

Table 7-6: List of representative viewpoints

ID	Viewpoint	Receptor Group	Easting	Northing
1	Core Path IN05.08, Beinn na Sparra circuit, North	Recreational	228564	825662
2	Core Path IN 05.11 Dog Falls to Comar	Recreational	229940	829410
3	Allt Na Doire Mhoire, Doire Mhor Mountain	Recreational	222680	827199
4	Core Path IN05.08, Beinn na Sparra circuit, South	Recreational	228109	825212
5	Core Path IN05.03, Eve's Road, South	Recreational	229789	823418
6	Core Path IN05.03, towards Lough na Beinne Baine	Recreational	229117	821506
7a / b*	Core Path IN05.02, Corrimony to Tomich by River Enrick	Recreational	232074	826321
8	Affric Kintail Way	Recreational	235152	831694
9	Core Path IN05.03, Eve's Road, North	Recreational	230688	824607
*Note: Viewpoint 7a and 7b (or 7a / b) are taken from the same point but face a different direction in order to encompass a wider extent of the proposed access track. 7a is facing southwest and 7b is facing northwest.				

Viewpoint 1 Core Path IN05.08, Beinn na Sparra circuit, North

7.5.7 This viewpoint is representative of recreational receptors of the Core Path as the route descends from a section of forestry into the strath floor. This is a slightly elevated, wide angle and long-distance view across the strath. Views southeast extend across open grassland sloping down to the lower path that follows the river. A band of deciduous woodland frames the view, filtering views of the river. The background comprises of rising landforms with a combination of plantation forest and native woodland. A small number of OHL towers are visible in the foreground of the upland hills including the Beauly-Denny OHL towers; this is a prominent feature within the existing skyline view. This is a pleasant view at the gateway between forestry and strath from one of the few more open and elevated locations within this part of the landscape, where the combination of landscape features contributes to the overall amenity of the view. Taking this into account, visual value is judged to be **Medium**.

Viewpoint 2 Core Path IN 05.11 Dog Falls to Comar

7.5.8 This viewpoint is representative of recreational receptors of the Core Path between the village of Cannich to the River Affric. This is a popular route for walkers heading from Cannich to Dog Falls. The view is located on an upland path predominantly enclosed within forestry with very limited clearings which open up to wider views. The view is predominantly comprised of a linear belt of woodland across the horizontal extents with some glimpses of the moor upland plateau across the backcloth and skyline of the view. It is a pleasant view from one of the

more elevated locations with mixed woodland forestry and located within the Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA. Taking this into account, visual value is judged to be **Medium**.

Viewpoint 3 Approach to Doire Mhor

7.5.9 This viewpoint is representative of recreational receptors including hill walkers within the Central Highlands WLA and at the southern boundary of the Glen Affric NSA. Elevated and expansive views south extend across this upland landscape. The view comprises of parallel ranges of lower hills and massive mountains. The midground band of hills are rocky and interspersed with more sparsely mature trees. To the south of Loch Beinn a' Mheadhoin, the lower slopes feature large expanses of Caledonian pinewoods with blocks of commercial plantation further south. More elevated upland plateau and hills extend across the background of the view. Two windfarms appear on the horizon and are noticeable manmade features. The existing OHL towers are visible but less noticeable given the mountains backcloth. As hillwalkers gain further elevation, the nature of the view becomes panoramic with no specific focus. However, views north are representative of the scenic qualities of the Glen Affric NSA. This view is located within the Central WLA and illustrates strong scenic qualities where a sense of isolation prevails. As such, visual value is judged to be **High**.

Viewpoint 4 Core Path IN05.08, Beinn na Sparra circuit, South

7.5.10 This viewpoint is representative of recreational receptors of the Core Path through the strath floor. Low level and wide angled views extend southeast across the rough grassland of the farmed strath running parallel to the Core Path. A linear band of deciduous woodland forms the southern boundary of the open pasture across most of the middle ground, where there are glimpsed views of a residential property. The background view comprises of the low rising wooded hills. Woodland across the backcloth transitions from deciduous broadleaves on lower slopes to plantation forest on higher ground. A small part of the background comprises of more undulating upland moor where the existing OHL towers break the skyline. This is not a recognised or designated view, but it is pleasant where the visual composition is typical of the farmed strath and is of some importance and limited quality. Taking this into account, the visual value is **Medium**.

Viewpoint 5 Core Path IN05.03, Eve's Road, South

7.5.11 This viewpoint is representative of recreational receptors using Core Path IN05.03 at the transition between mixed woodland and plantation forestry, and open moorland. Medium range views north and northwest are channelled along the path, where open moor occupies the foreground and extend to background. The existing OHL towers dominate the view and visual character extending from mid-to-background views. Landform is gently rising from the base of the OHL towers to a band of plantation forestry. There are long range views of more upland mountain peaks to the north and plateau moorland to the east. This is not a designated or recognised view, where the scale of the OHL towers contrast with the more natural elements in the view and limits the scenic quality within part of the view. On balance, the visual value is **Low**.

Viewpoint 6 Core Path IN05.03, towards Lough na Beinne Baine

7.5.12 This viewpoint is representative of recreational users of Core Path IN05.03 south of Viewpoint 5. This is an elevated, expansive, and long-range view orientated north and northeast. Foreground and mid-ground views of open moor occupies most of the horizontal extent. The existing OHL towers follow the existing track and appear in contrast with the vast natural landscape features. The background is comprised of blocks of plantation forests set within the

glen and on lower slopes that transition to the Rugged Massif and peaks. Although this view is not located within a designation, the Rugged Massif across the backdrop sits within the Glen Affric NSA and the Strathconon, Monor and Mullardoch SLA. The combination of the vast open moor and upland backcloth contribute to a high degree of scenic quality, whilst the OHL towers appear in contrast to the otherwise natural setting. On balance, the visual value is judged to be **Medium**.

Viewpoint 7a / b Core Path IN05.03, Corrimony to Tomich by River Enrick

7.5.13 This viewpoint is representative of recreational receptors of the Core Path network, typically accessed from Tomich and connects some residential dwellings and scattered tourist accommodation overlooking the nearby Loch na Beinne Moire. The viewpoint has been split into a / b in order to show a wider extent of the proposed access track associated with the Proposed Development. Viewpoint '7a' is facing southwest and represents a mid-level, open and expansive view southwest across the open plateau moor and Loch a' Ghreidlein. Viewpoint '7b' is a similarly open and expansive view facing northwest, towards the settlement of Tomich.

7.5.14 The existing OHL towers extend across part of the view (i.e. Viewpoints 7 a and b), along the edge of the plateau, at the transition to the lower wooded glens and back into the more southwestern extent of the Rugged Massif. Although this view is not located within a designation, the Rugged Massif sits within the Glen Affric NSA and the Strathconon, Monor and Mullardoch SLA. The combination of elements within the view contribute to strong scenic qualities albeit tempered by the OHL corridor. On balance, the visual value is **High**.

Viewpoint 8 Affric Kintail Way

7.5.15 This viewpoint is representative of recreational users of the Affric Kintail Way and transport users of the A831. Views are channelled along the road corridor by roadside vegetation comprised of grass verges, scrub, and trees. Views southwards include the junction between an existing forestry track against the backcloth of steeply rising landform and band of deciduous trees and moorland. This is not a designated view and not illustrative of any particular scenic quality and as such, visual value is **Low**.

Viewpoint 9 Core Path IN05.03, Eve's Road, North

7.5.16 This viewpoint is representative of recreational receptors using the Core Path network at the transition between open moor and enclosed plantation forests. This lower-level view south is foreshortened by undulating moorland across the horizontal extent of the view interspersed with clusters of younger deciduous and evergreen trees. The existing OHL towers broadly follow the existing tracks and is a contrasting feature in the view. This is not a designated view and not illustrative of any notable scenic quality and as such, visual value is **Low**.

7.6 Assessment of Effects, Mitigation and Residual Effects: Landscape

Potential Effects

7.6.1 During construction of the Proposed Development, there are several elements and activities that have the potential to temporarily impact landscape character and visual amenity within the Study Area. These impacts relate to the removal of existing landscape features such as heathland, and the visibility of new temporary features such as construction machinery, including any effects on perceptual qualities of landscape and visual amenity. The potential

for temporary impacts on the landscape and visual resource are likely to occur from the following construction activities:

- Site clearance, particularly the clearance of trees, scrub, and other vegetation along the temporary access and at the temporary construction compounds;
- Ground works to achieve a level area for the Substation (Proposed Development) including a cut-fill exercise to minimise import or export of materials, tree felling and stump removal;
- Temporary construction compounds, materials storage, temporary offices, lighting, access tracks and vehicle parking and associated activity;
- Installation of transformers and associated equipment;
- The movement of construction traffic, plant and machinery and use of temporary haul roads and access tracks along within the temporary construction compounds and substation site;
- Localised lighting in discrete working locations to facilitate safe working, during the months with shorter daylight hours; and
- Remedial works to reinstate the immediate vicinity, and ground disturbed to pre-existing conditions.

7.6.2 There would be the potential for these activities to occur in combination adding to the impact experienced at individual receptors.

7.6.3 Elements which could give rise to potential landscape and visual impacts during operation of the Proposed Development include:

- The presence of new or additional structures and infrastructure, including access tracks, within the landscape and views;
- Changes to landform, including land reprofiling and establishment of a level platform for the substation, using site won and / or imported materials;
- A change in or reduction of vegetation, particularly woodland which takes longer to re-establish, in areas temporarily occupied for construction; and
- The presence of new vegetation reinstatement areas, particularly around the substation localised locations along the access track route, noting that these would mature and integrate within adjacent vegetation over time.

Mitigation

7.6.4 Primary mitigation measures were taken throughout the iterative design phase of the Proposed Development to influence the design to minimise potential environmental effects. Considerations were based on key sensitivities, constraints, and opportunities as part of the embedded design and assessment process. Landscape and visual considerations have been important in informing the identification and evaluation of the layout option for the substation and landscape elements within the Site, in collaboration with forestry and ecology studies. A holistic approach to landscape and visual, forestry, and ecology mitigation is also considered in **Volume 1, Chapter 6 Scope and Consultation**. Landscape measures comprise of:

- Siting of the substation infrastructure within the context of surrounding existing OHL electrical infrastructure therefore limiting wider landscape fragmentation;
- Native broadleaf woodland planting within the site boundary to screen and aid landscape integration; and
- Peatland restoration within the site and creating transitions between the hard surfaces and woodland proposals.

7.6.5 Secondary mitigation measures are those that are not built into the final development proposals but seek to further reduce potential effects that could not be entirely designed out. Where required and where appropriate, potential mitigation measures have been developed to ensure that the Proposed Development is integrated into the surrounding landscape and views. A Landscape and Habitat Management Plan (**Volume 3, Appendix G**) has been prepared to deliver this objective. This is comprised of the following:

- Re-profiling of earthworks;
- Proposed woodland planting;
- Heath and heather seeding;
- Peatland seeding; and
- Wet meadow mix seeding/ regeneration within the vicinity of the SuDS.

7.6.6 The Landscape and Habitat Management Plan is included in **Volume 3, Appendix G** and comprises the following elements:

- Landscape and Habitat Management Plan report (LHMP);
- Landscape Restoration Plan Substation Area; and
- Landscape Restoration Site Wide Plan.

Landscape Assessment

7.6.7 This section presents the findings of the landscape assessment for the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development. The extent to which the Proposed Development would affect the landscape resource is dependent on the capacity of the existing landscape to absorb the changes proposed. The key components of the Proposed Development are detailed in **Volume 1, Chapter 3 Description of the Proposed Development**.

Landscape Designations

Table 7-7: Glen Affric National NSA

Receptor:	Glen Affric National NSA
Landscape Sensitivity: Landscape value is high. The intervening landform and location of the Site, within this designation, reduces susceptibility to absorb the Proposed Development. Factors that increase susceptibility include the strong levels of relative wildness and the limited presence of manmade infrastructure. On balance, landscape susceptibility is medium. Taking this into account, landscape sensitivity is assessed as **High.**	
Magnitude of Effect – Construction: During construction, activities would not be located within this designation and any perceptual changes would be limited due to a lack of intervisibility due to topography and distance. Established woodland provides cover along the eastern fringe of the NSA which also increases screening.. Construction would result in additional movement and activity and the loss of moorland and of scrub vegetation and therefore would not be dissimilar to the activities carried out within the recently cleared plantation forest.. Construction activities would be short-term and temporary. The key characteristics and special qualities of the NSA. Taking all of this into account the magnitude of effect would be **Low.**	
Significance of Effect – Construction: The high sensitivity to change combined with the low magnitude of change would result in **Minor Adverse** effect at construction.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 1: At year 1 operation, the landscape effects would be derived from the introduction and potential visibility of additional infrastructure outside of the NSA. Given the topography is much lower in the eastern part of this the NSA and rises to the west, there would be limited intervisibility towards the Proposed Development. The ZTV indicates intervisibility within the NSA is localised to a small area of the upland hills. The main qualities of the NSA would remain intact, preserving the sense of tranquillity. Taking all of this into account, the magnitude of effect is assessed as **Very Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 1: The high sensitivity combined with very low magnitude of effect would result in a **Minor Adverse** effect at year 1 of operation.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 15: At year 15 of operation, landscape restoration measures would help to soften the Site into the landscape and further reduce the impression of change beyond the immediate setting of this NSA. Direct effects on landscape elements would remain similar to those assessed at year 1. The proposed landscape restoration measures would have established and increased the overall presence of native woodland, alongside broader heathland restoration measures within the Site. This combined with the reduction in plantation forest would strengthen the quality of landscape elements between the wooded slopes of the strath and the upland moor, whilst retaining the accessibility of Core Paths. Taking all this into account, the overall magnitude of effect would be **Very Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 15: The high sensitivity combined with very low magnitude of effect would result in a **Minor Adverse** effect at year 15 of operation.	

Table 7-8: Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA

Receptor:	Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA
Landscape Sensitivity: Landscape value is high. The network of well used recreational routes as well as intricate routes focussing on the watercourse increases the already high susceptibility to change. Together with the medium value and the medium susceptibility for this SLA, the sensitivity is assessed as **High.**	
Magnitude of Effect – Construction: During construction, activities would not be located within this designation and a combination of landform and established woodland would restrict intervisibility within most of this the SLA. There would be no discernible change to the key characteristics or special qualities. Considering this the magnitude of effect would be none. Taking all of this into account, the magnitude of effect would be **No Change**.	
Significance of Effect – Construction: The high sensitivity to change combined with no magnitude of change would result in **Neutral** effect at construction.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 1: At year 1 of operation, existing woodland would remain and restrict intervisibility and therefore the Proposed Development would result in no change to the significance of effect. Effects at operation would be long-term and permanent. Overall, the scale and extent of change would be contained within a small part of the overall SLA. Taking all of this into account, the magnitude of effect is assessed as **No Change**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 1: The medium sensitivity to change combined with no magnitude of change would result in **Neutral** effect at year 1 of operation.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 15: At year 15 of operation, landscape restoration measures would help to soften the Site into the landscape and further reduce the impression of change beyond the immediate setting of this SLA. Direct effects on landscape elements would remain similar to those assessed at year 1. The proposed landscape restoration measures would have established and increased the overall presence of native woodland, alongside broader heathland restoration measures within the Site. Taking all this into account, the overall magnitude of effect would be **No Change**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 15: The medium sensitivity to change combined with no magnitude of change would result in **Neutral** effect at year 15 of operation.	

Table 7-9: Central Highlands WLA

Receptor:	Central Highlands WLA
Landscape Sensitivity: Landscape value is high. The remote qualities at the edges of this the WLA are somewhat susceptible to change, however, the other key attributes and qualities are tolerant of the changes proposed. On balance, susceptibility is medium. Overall landscape sensitivity is considered **High**, due to a strong sense of remoteness, largely uninhabited nature, high scenic quality, and sense of tranquillity.	
Magnitude of Effect – Construction: During construction, activities would not be located within this the WLA and any effects to the perceptual qualities would be limited to the western fringes. The ZTV indicates intervisibility within the WLA is localised to a small part of upland moor. The scale and intensity of construction activity including the movement of plant, earthworks and construction of electrical infrastructure would affect the sense of remoteness at the edge of the WLA. However, construction activities would be located adjacent to a disturbed part of the landscape where there have been recent forestry operations. The more remote interior qualities and sense of tranquillity would remain intact, and any impression of change would be localised to the outermost fringe of the WLA. Construction effects would be short-term and reversible. Taking all of this into account, the magnitude of effect would be **Low**.	

Receptor:	Central Highlands WLA
Significance of Effect – Construction: The high sensitivity to change combined with the low magnitude of change would result in **Minor Adverse** effect at construction.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 1: At year 1 of the operation, the Proposed Development would be located approximately 4 km northeast of the WLA at its closest point. There would be no direct change to the special key attributes or special qualities. The addition of the Proposed Development and associated electrical infrastructure on the setting of the WLA would very slightly contribute to the intensification of electrical infrastructure on the outer fringes of the WLA, but this would be concentrated within parts of the landscape where the existing OHL is already a largescale manmade feature and where previous forestry operations including felling are not uncommon. Any long-term effects on the sense of remoteness would be localised and inconsequential. Taking all of this into account, the magnitude of effect is assessed as **Very Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 1: The high sensitivity to change combined with the very low magnitude of change would result in a **Negligible** Adverse effect at year 1 of operation.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 15: At year 15 of operation, landscape restoration measures would help to soften the Site into the landscape and further reduce the impression of change beyond the immediate setting of this WLA. Direct effects on landscape elements would remain similar to those assessed at year 1. The proposed landscape restoration measures would have established and increased the overall presence of native woodland, alongside broader heathland restoration measures within the Site. Taking all this into account, the overall magnitude of effect would be **Very Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 15: The high sensitivity to change combined with the Very Low magnitude of change would remain **Negligible** effect at year 15 of operation.	

Landscape Character Types

Table 7-10: LCT 220: Rugged Massif – Inverness

Receptor:	LCT 220: Rugged Massif – Inverness
Landscape Sensitivity: Landscape value is high. Factors that reduce susceptibility include the distance to the Site and the intervening woodland. The more remote and wild aspects, scenic quality and expansive views from upland areas and peaks are somewhat vulnerable to the Proposed Development. Taking the high sensitivity and medium susceptibility into account, overall landscape sensitivity is **High**.	
Magnitude of Effect – Construction: During construction, activities would be located in the neighbouring LCT and effects on the Rugged Massif LCT would be indirect. Intervisibility of construction would be further limited by the expanse of woodlands at the eastern extents of this LCT and the landscapes to the east. The vegetation clearance, temporary compounds, the movement of plant, earthworks and construction of electrical infrastructure would have a very limited bearing on the overall sense of remoteness and wildness experienced from the upland peaks that occupy the southwest of the Study Area. The scale and intensity of construction would also result in short-term change to a small part of the setting and scenic quality to the northeast of this LCT. However, most of the key characteristics would remain intact. Effects at construction would be short-term. The overall magnitude of effect is judged to be **Very Low.**	
Significance of Effect - Construction: The high sensitivity combined with the very low magnitude would result in a **Minor Adverse** effect during construction.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 1: At year 1 of operation, the Proposed Development would be located in the neighbouring LCT to the northeast and as such effects would be indirect. Woodland at the edge of this LCT would continue to limit intervisibility	

Receptor:	LCT 220: Rugged Massif – Inverness
within this LCT to the more upland areas and peaks. The introduction of the proposed Bingally substation, proposed access track and operational traffic would increase the overall influence of electrical infrastructure across a small part of the setting to the northeast, in parallel with the existing OHL. Any change to the overall sense of remoteness and wildness would be limited. Effects at operation would be long-term. Most of the key characteristics would remain intact. Taking this into account the magnitude of effect would be **Very Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 1: The medium sensitivity combined with the very low magnitude would result in a **Negligible Adverse** effect at operation.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 15: At year 15 of operation, the scale and extent of change would reduce slightly. The establishment of landscape restoration measures including woodlands would help to integrate the Proposed Development in the neighbouring LCT. There would be limited perceptible change to the overall impression or character and perceptual associations within this LCT. Taking this into account, the magnitude of effect would be **Very Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 15: The high sensitivity combined with the very low magnitude would result in a **Negligible Adverse** effect at year 15 of operation.	

Table 7-11: LCT 222: Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness

Receptor:	LCT 222: Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness
Landscape Sensitivity: Landscape value is medium. Factors that increase susceptibility include the intricate network of lochans and the absence of manmade elements set within a plateau landscape. The existing OHL and network of tracks in relation to the Site reduce susceptibility. Taking into account the characteristics and context, the landscape susceptibility is medium. Together with the medium value and the medium susceptibility for this LCT, the sensitivity is assessed as **Medium.**	
Magnitude of Effect – Construction: During construction, there would be localised direct effects on the landscape elements, characteristics, and perceptual qualities of this LCT in the vicinity of the substation. Construction activities including earthworks, movement of plant and materials, temporary compounds SuDS, and landscaping would be concentrated within a small part of the landscape. The main access track and associated temporary compound near the A831 (Temporary Compound 5) would extend north beyond this LCT into neighbouring Farmed Strath LCT and indirectly increase the impression of operations and vehicle movements. Construction would result in the loss of moorland and of scrub vegetation and therefore would not be dissimilar to the activities carried out during the recent clearance of plantation forest. The scale and intensity of activity would reduce the relative sense of remoteness within part of the moorland plateau where construction activity is not commonplace in a sparsely inhabited landscape. Construction activities would be short-term and temporary. Most of the key characteristics would remain unchanged and the scale of change limited within a much larger section of this LCT. Taking all of this into account, the magnitude of effect would be **Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Construction: The medium sensitivity to change combined with the low magnitude of change would result in **Minor Adverse** effect at construction.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 1: At year 1 of the operational phase, the Proposed Development would result in a direct change in the landscape elements and characteristics of this LCT. The introduction of the proposed Bingally substation and access track would result in localised changes adjacent to the existing OHL and at the boundary between the farmed strath and the wooded slopes that transition to the moorland plateau. This would locally reduce the degree of contrast between the plateau and the more developed edges of the adjoining straths and glens. The proposed Bingally Substation would be sited adjacent to the existing OHL. The substation platform, electrical infrastructure and access track would result in long-term land use change, with the loss of moorland and expansion of electrical infrastructure corridor within the wider landscape setting. Effects at operation	

Receptor:	LCT 222: Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness
would be long-term and permanent. Overall, the scale and extent of change would be contained within a small part of the overall LCT. Taking all of this into account, the magnitude of effect is assessed as **Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 1: The medium sensitivity to change combined with the low magnitude of change would result in **Minor Adverse** effect at year 1 of operation.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 15: At year 15 of operation, landscape restoration measures would help to soften the Site into the landscape and reduce the impression of change beyond the immediate setting of this LCT. Direct effects on landscape elements because of the Proposed Development remain similar to those assessed at year 1. The proposed landscape restoration measures would have established and increased the overall presence of native woodland, alongside broader heathland restoration measures within the Site. This combined with the reduction in plantation forest would strengthen the quality of landscape elements between the wooded slopes of the strath and the upland moor, whilst retaining the accessibility of Core Paths. Despite the influence of mitigation measures the overall magnitude of effect would remain **Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 15: The medium sensitivity to change combined with the low magnitude of change would result in **Minor Adverse** effect at year 15 of operation.	

Table 7-12: LCT 226: Wooded Glen – Inverness

Receptor:	LCT 226: Wooded Glen – Inverness
Landscape Sensitivity: Landscape value is high. The network of recreational routes and contrasting landform are factors that increase susceptibility. However, the physical separation afforded by the farmed strath and its wooded slopes afford a high degree of tolerance to accommodate the Proposed Development. Landscape susceptibility is judged to be low. The combination of high value and low susceptibility results in overall landscape sensitivity assessed as **Medium**.	
Magnitude of Effect – Construction: During construction, there would be no direct effects and changes to the setting and perceptual associations would be barely perceptible. Existing woodland between the area affected by construction and this LCT would highly restrict intervisibility within this LCT. There would be no change to the sense of naturalness and remoteness from the most exposed and upland landscapes within the Study Area. Taking this into account, the magnitude of effect is **Very Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Construction: The medium sensitivity combined with the very low magnitude would result in a **Negligible Adverse** effect during construction.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 1: As is the case with construction, intervening woodland would highly restrict invisibility within the parts of this LCT within the Study Area. There would be no change to the physical landscape elements, perceptual qualities of setting. Therefore, the magnitude of effect is classed as **No Change**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 1: Considering there is no change to the key characteristics, there would be a **Neutral** effect at year 1 of operation.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 15: Effects would be the same as those assessed at year 1. The magnitude of effect is therefore classed as **No Change**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 15: Considering there is no change to the key characteristics there would be a **Neutral** effect at year 15 of operation.	

Table 7-13: LCT 227: Farmed Strath – Inverness

Receptor:	LCT 227: Farmed Strath – Inverness
Landscape Sensitivity: Landscape value is medium. Factors that increase susceptibility include the steep landform and transition from woodland to more exposed upland moor within which part of the Site is located. The scale and density of woodland on the lower slopes of the strath reduces susceptibility to the Proposed Development. On balance, landscape susceptibility is medium. Together with the medium value and the medium susceptibility for this LCT, the sensitivity is assessed as **Medium**.	
Magnitude of Effect – Construction: During construction, there would be direct effects on the landscape elements of this LCT as a result of the construction and use of the proposed access track and presence of the temporary compound (Temporary Compound 5) on previously cleared land south of Kerrow Wood. Vegetation clearance, earthworks, creation of embankments and movement of materials, followed by the use of the temporary compound and access track to transport plant, personnel and materials to the proposed Bingally substation construction site would be concentrated along part of the eastern edge of this LCT, at the transition from the wooded edges of the strath to the more rolling moorland plateaux to the east. The vertical track alignment is such that it would be at odds with the gently rolling landform within this part of the landscape, unlike smaller forestry tracks. The movement of plant and materials would be more intense than other forestry operations within the landscape. The temporary compound in this LCT would be largely screened from the A831 and wider LCT by landform and woodland and exert only a local influence on the wider character. The overall impression of construction would temporarily reduce the relative pockets of isolation on the slopes of the strath. However, the majority of the characteristics of the strath floor, such as improved pasture and small-scale woodlands, would remain intact. Indirect effects on the perceptual qualities of this landscape are limited by the band of woodland along the eastern slopes, west of the proposed track. Therefore, the scale and extent of change within this LCT is localised to the access track corridor and its immediate extents. Construction activities within this LCT would be short-term and reversible. Taking this into account the magnitude of effect would be **Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Construction: The medium sensitivity to change combined with the low magnitude of change would result in **Minor Adverse** effect at construction.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 1: At year one of operation, the Proposed Development would result in both direct effects on landscape elements and effects on the perceptual quality and setting of this LCT. The introduction of the track would continue to be at odds with the local landform and wider than existing forestry tracks. The intensity of movement would have reduced to levels similar within the existing landscape. The track would also result in the loss of vegetation, in particular heather moorland and occasional trees; however landscape restoration measures would have been recently implemented. The introduction of the proposed Bingally Substation within the neighbouring landscape would result in some limited increase to the impression of electrical infrastructure within the landscape, however existing wooded slopes would limit intervisibility and the impression of change within most of the strath floor. Operational effects would be long-term and permanent. Taking this into account the magnitude of effect would be **Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 1: The medium sensitivity to change combined with the low magnitude of change would result in **Minor Adverse** effect at year 1 of operation.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 15: At year 15 of operation, the loss of vegetation in particular heather moorland and occasional trees would be substantially mitigated by the planting of new woodlands and expansive heathland restoration measures (see **Volume 3, Appendix G Landscape and Habitat Management Plan**). Once established, the landscape restoration measures would help assimilate the track into the landscape and reduce the impression of change on the setting due to the introduction of the proposed Bingally substation. The scale of woodland proposed would strengthen the integrity of existing woods that defines the sloping eastern edge of the strath. Overall, there would be limited perceptible change to the impression of character and the magnitude of effect would reduce to **Very Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 15:	

Receptor:	LCT 227: Farmed Strath – Inverness
The medium sensitivity to change combined with the very low magnitude of change would result in **Negligible Adverse** effect at year 15 of operation.	

Visual Assessment

7.6.8 This section presents the findings of the visual assessment for the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development. This section should be read in conjunction with, and is supported by, photomontages which are included in **Volume 3, Appendix C: Photomontages**.

Table 7-14: Viewpoint 1 Core Path IN05.08, Beinn na Sparra circuit, North

Receptor:	Viewpoint 1 Core Path IN05.08, Beinn na Sparra circuit, North
Visual Sensitivity: Visual value is medium. Views are integral to the experience of recreational users of the Core Path in this part of the landscape. This location is relatively more susceptible to change. As walkers emerge from the more wooded area to the north, the views become more expansive to the south and across the backcloth of the strath floor and wooded slopes. Taking this into account, susceptibility to change is high. Combining the medium value with the high susceptibility to change, overall visual sensitivity is **Medium**.	
Magnitude of Effect – Construction: During construction, activities would be partially screened by intervening topography and woodland on the horizon. Some taller plant machinery would be visible across a noticeable part of the skyline in views directly east. The movement of taller plant machinery would become an additional focus of views within the direction of travel as walkers emerge from enclosed woodland. Effects at construction would be short-term and temporary. Taking this into account the magnitude of effects is assessed as **Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Construction: The medium sensitivity combined with the low magnitude of effect would result in **Minor Adverse** effect at construction.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 1: At operation, the majority of the Proposed Development would be screened by intervening topography and woodland. The tallest elements of the electrical infrastructure would be visible across a small horizontal part of the view and on the skyline. The addition of electrical infrastructure on the skyline would be long-term and permanent. The material appearance of open electrical equipment would not be entirely dissimilar to other OHL infrastructure within the view, albeit more noticeable. Overall, the magnitude of effect is assessed as **Very Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 1: The medium sensitivity combined with the low magnitude of effect would result in **Negligible Adverse** effect at year 1 of operation.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 15: Effects at year 15 would be similar to those assessed at year 1. Once woodland planting has established within the Site, the Proposed Development will be barely discernible. The magnitude of effect is assessed as **Very Low.**	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 15: The medium sensitivity combined with the low magnitude of effect would result in **Negligible Adverse** effect at year 15 of operation.	

Table 7-15: Viewpoint 2 Affric Kintail Way and Core Path IN05.04

Receptor:	Viewpoint 2 Affric Kintail Way and Core Path IN05.04
Visual Sensitivity:	

Receptor:	Viewpoint 2 Affric Kintail Way and Core Path IN05.04
Visual sensitivity is medium. This is an elevated route mostly enclosed within woodland and views of the landscape are important but not integral. Considering this, visual susceptibility is medium. The medium value combined with medium susceptibility results in visual sensitivity assessed as **Medium**.	
Magnitude of Effect – Construction: During construction, intervening woodland and landform would screen and heavily filter most lower-level earthworks and plant movements. Taller elements of plant cover have the potential to be glimpsed in winter months across a very small part of the background and against the backcloth of upland mountains avoiding any changes on the consistent skyline. Construction activities would be oblique to the focus of views along the recreational route, which is mostly enclosed by woodland, and longer-range views south and east are very limited. Effects associated with construction activities would be short-term and reversible. Taking all of this into account the magnitude of effect is assessed as **Very Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Construction: The medium sensitivity combined with the very low magnitude of effect would result in **Negligible Adverse** effect at construction.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 1: At year 1 of operation, the Proposed Development be mostly screened by intervening landform and woodland. Although upper parts of electrical equipment are theoretically visible, there would be very limited change to the overall visual composition. The Proposed Development would be oblique to the focus which is channelled along the direction of travel. Operational effects would be long-term and permanent. Overall, fleeting views of electrical infrastructure would result a barely perceptible change and the magnitude of effect is assessed as **Very Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 1: The medium sensitivity combined with the very low magnitude of effect would result in **Negligible Adverse** effect at year one of operation.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 15: Effects at year 15 would be similar to those assessed at year 1. Existing woodland and the filtered / limited views towards the Proposed Development result in a barely perceptible change. The magnitude of effect is assessed as **Very Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 15: The medium sensitivity combined with the very low magnitude of effect would result in **Negligible Adverse** effect at year 15 of operation.	

Table 7-16: Viewpoint 3 Allt Na Doire Mhoire, Doire Mhor Mountain

Receptor:	Viewpoint 3 Allt Na Doire Mhoire, Doire Mhor Mountain
Visual Sensitivity: Visual value is high. This viewpoint is representative of hill walkers where expansive and long-range views are an integral part of the experience. Despite the appearance of some electrical infrastructure towards the Proposed Development, the more elevated and steep mountains across the background are less tolerant of the Proposed Development. Factors that reduce susceptibility include the wide-angle to panoramic nature of the view. On balance, visual susceptibility is medium. The high value combined with the medium susceptibility will result in visual sensitivity assessed as **High**.	
Magnitude of Effect – Construction: During construction, the full expanse of activities would be visible across a small part of the background view. Construction activities would be set within a broader context of plantation forestry on the distant plateau between two windfarms on the distant skyline. Construction activities including vegetation clearance, earthworks, construction of electrical infrastructure and buildings, movement of plant and materials within the corridor of the Proposed Development, will be noticeable as one element of many in this wide panoramic view. Effects at construction would be short-term but some vegetation losses would be irreversible. Overall, the scale and intensity of construction would affect the visual setting and balance of features contained to a	

Receptor:	Viewpoint 3 Allt Na Doire Mhoire, Doire Mhor Mountain
small part of the view and distract from the overall pleasantness of views within a highly scenic part of the landscape. Taking this into account, the magnitude of effect is assessed as **Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Construction: The high sensitivity combined with the low magnitude of effect would result in **Minor Adverse** effect at construction.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 1: At year 1 of operation, the Proposed Development would be visible across part of the background plateau, within the immediate context of plantation forestry. The introduction of the main Proposed Development would extend across a small to noticeable horizontal extent of the view and would appear in contrast with the wider naturalistic setting. The Proposed Development and occasional vehicle traffic would increase the presence of electrical infrastructure within the same context as the two windfarms on the skyline and the existing OHL. The more upland mountain background provides a backdrop that limits the prominence of electrical infrastructure. In the initial year of operation, reprofiled embankments associated with the track and platform would appear as a scar within the landscape before any landscaping treatment has established. Effects would be long-term, with some elements of change permanent. Taking this into account, the magnitude of effect is assessed as **Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 1: The high sensitivity combined with the low magnitude of effect would result in **Minor Adverse** effect at operation.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 15: At year 15 of operation, landscape and habitat restoration measures would become established and contribute to reduce the visual prominence and significance of the Proposed Development. Over time, proposed woodland and seeding would help aid visual integration of the proposed Bingally Substation into the wider visual setting. Effects at year 15 would be long-term and permanent. Overall, the Proposed Development would be partially integrated within the view and read as an increase the overall presence of electrical infrastructure across what is a small part of the background view and is unlikely to distract from the panoramic qualities of the view. Taking all of this into account, the magnitude of effect is assessed as **Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 15: The high sensitivity combined with the low magnitude of effect would result in **Minor Adverse** effect at operation. On balance the magnitude would reduce such that it is considered effects would not be significant unlike the contrasting nature of change during construction.	

Table 7-17: Viewpoint 4 Core Path IN05.08, Beinn na Sparra circuit, South

Receptor:	Viewpoint 4 Core Path IN05.08, Beinn na Sparra circuit, South
Visual Sensitivity: Visual value is medium. This viewpoint is representative of recreational users including walkers and cyclists of the Core Path network within the strath floor. Views south across the valley floor are an important part of the experience but are not central to it. The sequential nature of views and how they vary from more enclosed sections along wooded valleys contrast with more open expanses through which this view is located. Considering this, visual susceptibility is medium. The medium value combined with medium susceptibility results in visual sensitivity assessed as **Medium**.	
Magnitude of Effect – Construction: During construction, the majority of activity within the Site would be screened by intervening landform and established woodland. The movement of plant equipment associated with the construction of taller electrical equipment would be visible across a small but noticeable part of the skyline. Construction activity would contrast with the balance of mostly naturalistic elements within the view. Effects would be short-term and reversible. The overall sale and intensity of construction within the view would be oblique to the focus of sequential views along this section of the core path. Taking this into account, the magnitude of effect is assessed as **Very Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Construction:	

Receptor:	Viewpoint 4 Core Path IN05.08, Beinn na Sparra circuit, South
The medium sensitivity combined with the very low magnitude of effect would result in a **Neutral** effect at construction.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 1: At year 1 of operation, the majority of the Proposed Development would be screened by intervening woodland and topography. The tallest elements of the proposed Bingally substation would appear across a small but noticeable horizontal extent of the wooded skyline. The introduction of electrical infrastructure would result in a slight but obtrusive change to the overall composition of the view and oblique to the focus along this recreational route. Effects would be considered long-term and permanent. Taking all of this into account, the magnitude of effect is assessed as **Very Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 1: The medium sensitivity combined with the very low magnitude of effect would result in **Neutral** effect at year 1 of operation.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 15: Effects at year 15 of operation would be the same as those assessed at year 1 and the magnitude of effect is assessed as **Very Low**. As proposed mitigation planting matures it will be visible along the more sloping land to the left of view, similar to the existing pattern of forestry.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 15: The medium sensitivity combined with the very low magnitude of effect would result in **Neutral** effect at year 15 of operation.	

Table 7-18: Viewpoint 5 Core Path IN05.03, Eve's Road, South

Receptor:	Viewpoint 5 Core Path IN05.03, Eve's Road, South
Visual Sensitivity: Visual value is low. Views experienced by recreational receptors at the transition between the strath and upland moor are however an important part of the experience and contribute to the sense of tranquillity within the view therefore visual susceptibility is high. Taking the low value assessed alongside the medium susceptibility results in sensitivity assessed as **Medium**.	
Magnitude of Effect – Construction: Construction activities would be prominent across a noticeable horizontal and vertical extent of mid-range views, immediately beyond the existing OHL towers. Vegetation clearance, earthworks, movement of plant and material, construction of electrical structures and buildings would become the dominant feature in the view. Although views along this route are sequential the scale and intensity of construction at this distance and orientation would result in a substantial change to the composition and focus of the view. However, the sequential and therefore fleeting nature would somewhat limit the duration of focus on activities. Construction activities would be short-term and reversible. Taking all of this into account, the magnitude of visual effect is assessed as **Medium**.	
Significance of Effect – Construction: The medium sensitivity combined with the medium magnitude of effect would result in **Moderate Adverse** effect during construction.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 1: At year 1 of operation, the Proposed Development would result in a noticeable change across a small part of the background view and contained within the same context as the existing OHL towers. The height and scale of the Proposed Development would substantially add to the presence of electrical infrastructure within the view and become the main feature in closer range views along this path when travelling south to north. Elements of the proposed Bingally substation within the view include two 400 / 132 kV Super Grid Transformers, four additional 400 kV future bays tied into the 400 kV double busbar, expanse of hard standing, fencing, reprofiled landform, landscaping, and the occasional movement of operational vehicles to and from the site. The intensification of infrastructure is localised at this point with OHL towers dominating. The proposed Bingally substation would read as a small change to the overall composition. Effects at	

Receptor:	Viewpoint 5 Core Path IN05.03, Eve's Road, South
operation are considered to be long-term and permanent. Taking all of this into account the magnitude of effect is **Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 1: The medium sensitivity combined with the medium magnitude of effect would result in **Minor Adverse** effect at year one of operation.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 15: At year 15 of operation, landscape restoration measures would have established and reduced the overall visual prominence of the man-made electrical infrastructure within the view. The upper parts of the electrical equipment and buildings would appear beyond the intervening woodland. Vehicle movements accessing the site from the access track would also be visible albeit infrequent. Further woodland planting would overtime introduce a wooded backcloth across part of the background. Overall, the scale and mass of the Proposed Development would remain a noticeable change across the mid-range view. The magnitude of visual effect would be **Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 15: The medium sensitivity combined with the medium magnitude of effect would result in **Minor Adverse** effect during construction at year 15 of operation.	

Table 7-19: Viewpoint 6 Core Path IN05.03, towards Lough na Beinne Baine

Receptor:	Viewpoint 6 Core Path IN05.03, towards Lough na Beinne Baine
Visual Sensitivity: Visual value is medium. Views of the landscape are an important part of the experience for recreational users of the Core Path network. However, the scale of the existing OHL towers lowers the susceptibility to the Proposed Development. On balance visual susceptibility is medium. Taking all of this into account overall visual susceptibility is **Medium**.	
Magnitude of Effect – Construction: During construction, activities within the Site would be noticeable across a small part of mid-range view, immediately east of the existing OHL. The movement of construction machinery, vegetation clearance, earthwork and the construction of electrical infrastructure would appear in marked contrast with the visual composition experienced from more elevated areas on the core path network. The overall scale and intensity of construction activity would be apparent in an otherwise panoramic view. Considering this and the short term and temporary nature of change, the magnitude of impact would be **Low.**	
Significance of Effect – Construction: The medium sensitivity of the receptor combined with the medium magnitude of effect would result in a **Minor Adverse** effect during construction.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 1: At operation year 1, the Proposed Development would be visible across a small part of mid-range views adjacent to the existing OHL towers. The introduction of the proposed Bingally substation would noticeably increase the presence of electrical infrastructure within the view. The height and scale of the proposed structures and buildings on a levelled platform would appear at slight odds with the overall visual composition within the same part of the view which includes the existing OHL towers. However, the geographical extent of change in the view is limited considering the panoramic nature of the view. Effects at operation year 1 are considered to be long-term. Taking all of this into account, the magnitude of effect is **Low.**	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 1: The medium sensitivity of the receptor combined with the medium magnitude of effect would result in a **Minor Adverse** effect at operation year 1.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 15: At year 15 of operation, mitigation measures comprised of woodland planting within the southern part of the Site would screen lower levels of the substation platform and perimeter fence. The upper parts of the proposed Bingally substation would appear in mid-range views and the scale of change similar to that at year	

Receptor:	Viewpoint 6 Core Path IN05.03, towards Lough na Beinne Baine
1. On balance, mitigation measures would help reduce the visual prominence of electrical infrastructure. Once woodland has established, the magnitude of effect would reduce to **Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 15: The medium sensitivity of the receptor combined with the low magnitude of effect would result in a **Minor Adverse** effect at operation year 15. The dense band of forestry planting would be extended with the introduction of proposed Scots pine and wet woodland planting.	

7.6.9 Viewpoints 7a and 7b are supported by two photomontages, refer to **Volume 3, Appendix C Photomontages** (at viewpoint 7a and 7b), to take account of views south and west.

Table 7-20: Viewpoint 7a/b Core Path IN05.03, Corrimony to Tomich by River Enrick

Receptor:	Viewpoint 7a/b Core Path IN05.03, Corrimony to Tomich by River Enrick
Visual Sensitivity: Visual value is high. Views of the landscape contribute positively to the experience of recreational receptors on more elevated sections of the core path network. However, the presence of the existing OHL somewhat reduces the scenic quality. On balance visual susceptibility is medium. The combination of the high value and medium susceptibility results in **High** sensitivity.	
Magnitude of Effect – Construction: During construction, vegetation clearance, earthworks to create the access track and movement of vehicles and plant would result in a pronounced change in the view. Construction and operation of the access track would occupy a wide horizontal extent of the view within the same context as the OHL which would run in parallel. The visibility of construction works at the proposed Bingally substation site would be limited to upper sections of construction machinery and structures. Lower sections of construction machinery and structures would be screened by intervening landform. The overall scale and intensity of construction activity would be apparent across a small part of in a wide-angle view against the backcloth of the existing OHL and upland mountains. Considering this and the short term and temporary nature of change, the magnitude of impact would be **Medium**.	
Significance of Effect – Construction: The high sensitivity of the receptor combined with the medium magnitude of effect would result in a **Major Adverse** effect during construction.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 1: At year operation year 1, views of the access track in combination with the proposed substation site would occupy a wide horizontal extent of the view. The vertical level of the track and the associated embankments would appear at odds with the natural landform but within the same context of the view as the existing OHL. The lower levels of the substation platform would be screened by intervening landform. The taller parts of the proposed Bingally substation would appear across a small part of the background against the backdrop of the OHL. The height and scale of the proposed Bingally substation would appear as an unobtrusive change in the composition of the view. This, combined with the track and the long-term duration of effects results in the magnitude of effected assessed as **Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 1: The high sensitivity of the receptor combined with the low magnitude of effect would result in a **Moderate Adverse** effect at operation year 1.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 15: Effects at year 15 of operation will be significantly decreased with the establishment of proposed mitigation. The majority of the access track along this viewpoint would remain operational but be screened by established wet woodland planting. Given this, the overall magnitude effect would be **Very Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 15: The low sensitivity combined with the very low magnitude of effect would result in a **Neutral** effect at year 15 of operation.	

Table 7-21: Viewpoint 8 Affric Kintail Way

Receptor:	Viewpoint 8 Core Path IN05.03, Corrimony to Tomich by River Enrick
Visual Sensitivity: Visual value is low. Sequential views along this part of the Affric Kintail Way are of limited importance to the overall view. However, views of the landscape more broadly along this recreational route are of some importance. On balance, visual susceptibility is low. The low value combined with the low susceptibility results in visual sensitivity assessed as **Low.**	
Magnitude of Effect – Construction: During construction, views of construction activity at the proposed Bingally Substation Site would be noticeable in fleeting and sequential views. The creation of a functional junction to the access track would include vegetation clearance along with earthworks followed by the movement of plant and materials; these activities would occupy the mid-range views. Effects would be short-term, but the removal of vegetation would be permanent. The overall scale and intensity of movement would be oblique from the focus of fleeting views. Taking all of this into account the magnitude of effect is **Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Construction: The low sensitivity combined with the low magnitude of effect would result in a **Negligible** effect at construction.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 1: At operation, the scale and intensity of vehicle movement would have reduced from peak construction. The access track would remain operational, but the levels of vehicle access would substantially reduce. The extent of change across the view would be greater than the existing situation and completed earthworks and landscaping would slightly open the view. The presence of the upgraded track and movement of vehicles would be oblique to the focus of the view. Taking this into account, the magnitude of effect is **Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 1: The low sensitivity combined with the low magnitude of effect would result in a **Negligible** effect at year 1 operation.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 15: Effects at year 15 of operation would be similar to those assessed at operation. The proposed access track would remain operational and be the most prominent feature within view. The proposed Bingally substation would not be within view from this viewpoint. The overall magnitude of effect would remain **Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 15: The low sensitivity combined with the low magnitude of effect would result in a **Negligible** effect at year 15 of operation.	

Table 7-22: Viewpoint 9 Core Path IN05.03, Eve's Road, North

Receptor:	Viewpoint 9 Core Path IN05.03, Eve's Road, North
Visual Sensitivity: Visual value is low. The presence of existing electrical infrastructure is prominent along the skyline with heathland and scrub prominent to the left of view. More long-distance views open up to the east however the majority of view is contained within the rugged heathland and existing vegetation. The low value combined with the medium susceptibility results in visual sensitivity assessed as **Medium.**	
Magnitude of Effect – Construction: During construction, views of construction machinery will be prominent within the centre of view given the realignment of the access track and associated earthworks. This activity will be contained to a small portion of the overall landscape however there will be an increase in plant material and construction activity in the area. This will detract from the tranquillity along this route given it was previously a natural surface. The location of the proposed Bingally substation will help to minimise the distance needed to transport materials. Taking this into account the magnitude of effect is **Medium**.	
Significance of Effect – Construction:	

Receptor:	Viewpoint 9 Core Path IN05.03, Eve's Road, North
The medium sensitivity combined with the medium magnitude of effect would result in a **Moderate Adverse** effect at construction.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 1: At operation, the scale and intensity of vehicle movement would have reduced from peak construction. The access track would remain operational, but the levels of vehicle access would substantially reduce. A portion of the proposed Bingally substation will be visible along the skyline however the infrastructure will not be dissimilar to the existing OHL lines within view across the skyline. Taking this into account, the magnitude of effect is **Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 1: The medium sensitivity of the receptor combined with the low magnitude of effect would result in a **Minor Adverse** effect at operation year 1.	
Magnitude of Effect – Operation Year 15: At operation, the magnitude of effect at year 15 would be similar to that of year 1. There would be little change to the extent of visibility as landscape enhancements proposed along the periphery of the proposed Bingally substation will not screen completely screen it. The access track will be operational with reduced usage. Overall, the magnitude of effect would be **Low**.	
Significance of Effect – Operation Year 15: The medium sensitivity combined with the low magnitude of effect would result in a **Minor Adverse** effect at operation year 15.	

7.7 Cumulative Assessment

7.7.1 This section presents an assessment of potential cumulative effects resulting from the Proposed Development in addition to a number of other similar proposed or consented developments. In line with good practice guidance, the cumulative assessment is undertaken on a targeted basis focused on the most significant cumulative effects and those which are likely to influence decision making. Cumulative schemes included within the scope of this assessment are set out in the table below and shown in **Volume 2, Appendix A, Figure 7-4**.

7.7.2 The developments outlined below have the potential for cumulative effects given the likelihood that they are already constructed or will be constructed and operated concurrently with the Proposed Development.

Table 7-23 Developments for Consideration in the Cumulative Appraisal

Ref. (on Figure 5-1)	Development	Planning Reference and Description	Potential for cumulative impacts with the Proposed Development
1	Bingally OHL (referred to as 'proposed Bingally OHL')	**ECU00005145**: The installation of two new towers (including a temporary diversion requiring two temporary towers) to facilitate the tie-in of the existing Beauly-Denny overhead line into the proposed Bingally 400 kV substation.	Cumulative impacts associated with the construction and operation phase of the development due to their proximity to each other / interface. This development would occur simultaneously and within the Site.
2	Bingally to Fasnakyle UGC / OHL connection	Not on Planning Portal: The installation of an UGC / OHL to connect the Proposed Development to the existing Fasnakyle Substation.	Cumulative impacts associated with the construction and operation phase of the development due to their proximity to each other

Ref. (on Figure 5-1)	Development	Planning Reference and Description	Potential for cumulative impacts with the Proposed Development
			/ interface. This development would occur within the Site.
3	Tomchrasky Wind Farm OHL connection	Not on Planning Portal: The installation of an OHL connection from Tomchrasky Wind Farm to the Proposed Development.	Cumulative impacts associated with the construction and operation phase of the development due to their proximity to each other / interface. This development would occur simultaneously and within the Site.
4	Fiodhag Wind Farm	**19/05046/SCOP ECU00001969:** Construction of wind farm comprising of 46 turbines (height to blade tip 149.9 m). Status: Scoping Application Decision Issued (January 2020).	Cumulative impacts associated with the construction and operation phases of both developments due to their relative proximity.
5	Fasnakyle Energy Storage	**22/04640/SCRE 23/04100/FUL**: Battery energy storage facility comprising access track, compound of battery and electrical equipment, stores, meter building, water tank, ancillary structures, fencing, security cameras, landscaping bunds, new trees. Status: 'Screening Application EIA not Required' (November 2022). 23/04100/FUL submitted in August 2023 Under Consideration.	Cumulative impacts associated with the construction and operation phases of both developments due to their relative proximity.
6	Kerrow Farm BESS	**23/01025/SCRE**: Battery energy storage system, multiple containerised storage units, associated infrastructure, control building, switch room, lights, and associated works. Status: 'Screening Application EIA not required' (March 2023).	Cumulative impacts associated with the construction and operation phases of both developments due to their relative proximity.
7	Chrathaich Wind Farm	**21/02152/SCOP**: 18 June 2021 - Scoping Application Decision Issued Erection and operation of a wind farm for a period of 30 years, comprising of 14 wind turbines with a maximum blade tip height of 149.9m, access tracks, borrow pits, substation, control building, and ancillary infrastructure. **ECU00004704** **23/03311/S36** 7 October 2024 - Awaiting Decision, S36 Raise No Objection	Cumulative impacts associated with the construction and operation phases of both developments due to their relative proximity.
8	Erection of OHL	ECU Reference: **ECU00004569** (original application: **ECU00004792**) Erection of small two span spur and free-standing pole for communications mast on the 33 kVA OHL by Benevean Dam, Tomich. Status: 'Consented, EIA not required'	Cumulative impacts associated with the construction and operation phases of both developments due to their relative proximity.
9	Cnoc Farasd Wind Farm	ECU Reference: **ECU00005214**: Status: 'Scoping Report submitted'. A wind farm	Cumulative impacts associated with the construction and operation

Ref. (on Figure 5-1)	Development	Planning Reference and Description	Potential for cumulative impacts with the Proposed Development
		consisting of 9 turbines up to 220m tip height, battery storage and associated infrastructure.	phases of both developments due to their relative proximity.

7.7.3 The following two cumulative scenarios have been considered as part of this assessment:

- **Cumulative Scenario 1**: The cumulative baseline for this scenario includes schemes which have been consented and / or are under construction in addition to existing operational schemes; and
- **Cumulative Scenario 2:** The cumulative baseline for this scenario includes schemes at application stage in addition to existing operational schemes and those which have been consented and / or are under construction.

7.7.4 The assessment of cumulative magnitude of impact and level of effect involves consideration of the additional change resulting from the Proposed Development at operation to each cumulative baseline scenario.

Cumulative Landscape Assessment

7.7.5 Potential significant cumulative effects would occur where the addition of the Proposed Development to the cumulative baseline would increase the prominence of energy infrastructure, to the extent that it would become either an influential characteristic or character-defining feature of a landscape.

7.7.6 A 5 km study area has been considered for the cumulative nature of change resulting from the Proposed Development identified in the LVIA, it is considered that there will be limited potential for significant cumulative landscape effects on the majority of the landscape receptors found within the study area. The cumulative landscape assessment therefore focuses on the LCT 222 – Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness[5], LCT 226 – Wooded Glen - Inverness and LCT 227 – Farmed Strath – Inverness[4].

LCT 222 – Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness

7.7.7 Landscape sensitivity would remain medium as stated in the non-cumulative assessment.

7.7.8 In Scenario 1, the Fiodhag Wind Farm (19/05046/SCOP) would be located less than 200 m east of the Proposed Development. As both developments will be located in the northwest edge of this LCT the Proposed Development would not alter the more valued characteristics of the LCT. There will be an increase in the perception of electrical infrastructure confined to a small area of the overall LCT. The potential for in-combination views would however be likely. Taking this into account the cumulative magnitude of impact would be low. When combined with the medium sensitivity this would result in a **Minor Adverse** cumulative effect for Scenario 1.

7.7.9 In Scenario 2, the proposed Bingally OHL tie-ins scheme (ECU00005145) would be located immediately adjacent to the Proposed Development, the Chrathaich Wind Farm (ECU00004704) will be located approx. 3.5 km east, the Fiodhag Wind Farm (19/05046/SCOP) less than 200 m east and the Tomchrasky Wind Farm OHL connection in the south to southwest region of this LCT resulting in a moderate increase in the presence of vertical electrical infrastructure within this LCT. The nature and location of these cumulative

schemes would result in a similar condition for cumulative Scenario 1. The Proposed Development would further add to the presence of electrical infrastructure in this LCT. The extent of potential change would be somewhat reduced due to the existing OHL towers and presence of Wind Turbines contributing to the existing presence of electrical infrastructure within the immediate context of this LCT. Overall, there would be an increase in the perception of electrical infrastructure within this area of the LCT. If operational at a similar time, there would be a significant increase in the overall concentration of wind and electrical infrastructure within this LCT. The potential for in-combination views is highly likely given the proximity and inter-connectivity of all the schemes mentioned. Taking all of this into account the cumulative magnitude of the impact would be low as the Proposed Development would not significantly add to the total cumulative baseline and the perception of infrastructure will be a localised change within the Rocky Moorland Plateau LCT. When combined with a medium sensitivity this would result in a **Minor Adverse** level of cumulative effect for Scenario 2.

7.7.10 The Landscape and habitat proposals, in particular wet woodland and Scots pine woodland planting, will establish over time and help integrate the Proposed Development into the landscape setting, helping to somewhat reduce potential cumulative change in both Scenarios 1 and 2 in the longer term.

LCT 226 – Wooded Glen – Inverness

7.7.11 Landscape sensitivity would remain high as stated in the non-cumulative assessment.

7.7.12 In Scenario 1, the OHL development (ECU00004569) would be contained within the lower glens, undulating lower slopes and surrounding conifer forests and woodland. As this LCT is divided into various sections, the OHL development (ECU00004569) would be located within the southwest portion of the LCT within view (see **Figure 7.4, Volume 2, Appendix A**). There would be no combined cumulative effects with the Proposed Development, due to intervening landform, topography and as it would be located within the Rocky Moorland Plateau LCT. The cumulative magnitude of impact would be considered none. When combined with the high sensitivity this would result in a **Neutral** cumulative effect.

7.7.13 In Scenario 2, the Cnoc Farasd Wind Farm (ECU00005214) would be located within the northeast section of this LCT close to the A831 road. Along this route there is an increased presence of road infrastructure, farmsteads, and scattered housing. In-combination views with the Proposed Development are not anticipated due to the distance, topography, and location of the Proposed Development within the neighbouring Rocky Moorland Plateau LCT. Depending on timing, there may be an increased presence of construction activity concentrated within the northeast section of the Rocky Moorland Plateau LCT (along the A381) as the Cnoc Farasd Wind Farm (ECU00005214) will use the A831 road, during construction, which will also be used for the Access Track associated with the Proposed Development. The cumulative magnitude of impact would be considered very low. When combined with the high sensitivity this would result in a **Minor Adverse** cumulative effect.

LCT 227 – Farmed Strath – Inverness

7.7.14 Landscape sensitivity would remain medium as stated in the non-cumulative assessment.

7.7.15 In Scenario 1, the Fasnakyle Energy Storage (22/04640/SCRE, 23/04100/FUL) and Kerrow Farm BESS (23/01025/SCRE) would be contained due to the varying topography from upland to lowland areas; therefore, the addition of the Proposed Development would not alter the more valued characteristics of the LCT. The Bingally to Fasnakyle connection would also be

situated within this LCT but for the majority would be below ground level therefore cumulative impacts would be restricted to construction activities. There will be an increase in the perception of wind and electrical infrastructure confined to a small area of the overall LCT. Taking this into account the cumulative magnitude of impact would be low. When combined with the medium sensitivity this would also result in a **Minor Adverse** cumulative effect.

7.7.16 In Scenario 2, no cumulative change is anticipated. The cumulative schemes listed in **Table 7-24** would not be visible due to the topography and landform. Therefore, there would be no cumulative change.

Cumulative Visual Assessment

7.7.17 Potential cumulative effects would occur where the addition of the Proposed Development to the cumulative baseline would increase the prominence of energy infrastructure to the extent, they would potentially become an influential characteristic in views across the landscape when operational.

7.7.18 As identified in the non-cumulative assessment above, it is anticipated that visibility of the Proposed Development from the majority of identified representative viewpoints and visual receptors will be limited. As a result, there cumulative effects will focus on Viewpoint 3, 5 and 7 as these are most affected. The following section provides an assessment of potential cumulative visual impacts on the representative viewpoints and receptor locations.

Viewpoint 3: Allt Na Doire Mhoire, Doire Mhor Mountain

7.7.19 In Scenario 1, the Fiodhag Wind Farm (19/05046/SCOP) and OHL at Black Parks (15/04148/OHL) would be visible along with the Proposed Development, adding to the influence of electrical infrastructure in views from this elevated peak.

7.7.20 The Proposed Development and OHL (ECU00004569) would be discernible at this distance, with the Fiodhag Wind Farm (19/05046/SCOP) being most prominent due to its elevation against the skyline. The combination of elements will still make up a small proportion of the overall view from this viewpoint and would not be the defining characteristic. On balance, the magnitude of cumulative impact would be low given the distance and absence of core paths. When combined with high sensitivity this would result in a **Minor Adverse** level of cumulative effect in relation to Scenario 1.

7.7.21 In Scenario 2, the proposed Bingally OHL tie-ins scheme (ECU00005145) would be installed alongside the Proposed Development therefore there would be an increase in energy infrastructure specific to this view once operational. The Tomchrasky Wind Farm OHL connection would also be situated within view from this point albeit to the right of view. The Proposed Development will increase the vertical electrical infrastructure across the extent of this view and would have a slightly greater influence on the baseline view. The distance between this viewpoint and the Proposed Developments would make it slightly imperceptible however there will be a higher concentration of OHL and substation infrastructure within view. On balance, the cumulative magnitude of impact would be low and when combined with the high sensitivity would result in a **Minor Adverse** level of effect in relation to Scenario 2.

Overall, visual effects at this viewpoint would be localised and cumulative visual effects are not considered significant.

7.7.22 Proposed mitigation measures include the planting of Scots pine and wet woodland along the periphery of the Proposed Development; this will help to somewhat mitigate cumulative visual effects of the Proposed Development in the long-term.

Viewpoint 5: Core Path IN05.03, Eve's Road, South

7.7.23 In Scenario 1, none of the existing schemes would be visible along with the Proposed Development, therefore there would be no change.

7.7.24 In Scenario 2, the Fiodhag Wind Farm (19/05046/SCOP), proposed Bingally OHL tie-ins scheme (ECU00005145) and Tomchrasky Wind Farm OHL connection would be visible alongside the Proposed Development. Given the vertical nature of the Wind Farm and OHL scheme, the Proposed Development would not be the most prominent structure within view however the overall presence of electrical infrastructure would be increased along the skyline. The combination of elements will be disproportionate to the overall make up of view from this viewpoint and would be a defining characteristic. On balance, the magnitude of cumulative impact would be medium given the distance and presence of core path IN05.03. When combined with medium sensitivity this would result in a **Moderate Adverse** level of cumulative effect in relation to Scenario 2. Overall, although this is a Moderate Adverse effect and therefore significant at this viewpoint, visual effects would be localised.

7.7.25 Proposed mitigation measures include Scots pine woodland and wet woodland planting along the southwestern boundary of the Proposed Development in order to help mitigate views from this viewpoint. It is observed that the growth height at year 15 is between 5 - 8 m; this will increase the overall presence of vegetation however the height will only partially help decrease visual impacts.

Viewpoint 7a / b: Core Path IN05.03, Corrimony to Tomich by River Enrick

7.7.26 In Scenario 1, no cumulative change is anticipated. The cumulative schemes listed in **Table 7-23** would not be visible due to the topography and landform. Therefore, there would be no cumulative change.

7.7.27 In Scenario 2, the Fiodhag Wind Farm (19/05046/SCOP) and Bingally OHL tie-ins scheme (ECU00005145) would be noticeable features across a small part of the view. Both schemes would exist at a height above that of the Proposed Development and be more prominent as vertical structures. The addition of the Proposed Development in this cumulative scenario would add to the sale and mass of electrical infrastructure within the view however, given the network of OHL towers within the existing view, the overall cumulative impact would be low. When combined with high sensitivity this would result in a **Moderate Adverse** level of cumulative effect in relation to Scenario 2. Overall, although this is a Moderate Adverse effect and therefore significant at this viewpoint, visual effects would be localised.

7.8 Recommendations and Mitigation

7.8.1 All landscape and visual mitigation proposals are covered in detail in **Volume 3, Appendix G Landscape and Habitat Management Plan**, which includes the following:

- Landscape and Habitat Management Plan report (LHMP);
- Landscape Restoration Plan Substation Area; and
- Landscape Restoration Site Wide Plan.

7.8.2 Visual mitigation is limited to ensuring established native woodland cover remains southwest and east of the Proposed Development and proposed Scots pine and wet woodland helps to mitigate new electrical infrastructure from views along the northern boundary, experienced by recreational users along the core paths (refer to Viewpoint 5).

7.9 Summary of Effects

Table 7-24: Summary of Effects

Receptor	Sensitivity	Construction Magnitude of impact	Level of Significance of Effect	Operation Magnitude of impact (Year 1)	Level of Significance of Effect (Year 1)	Operation Magnitude of impact (Year 15	Level of Significance of Effect (Year 15)
Glen Affric National NSA	High	Low	Minor Adverse	Very Low	Minor Adverse	Very Low	Minor Adverse
Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA	High	No change	Neutral	No change	Neutral	No change	Neutral
Central Highlands WLA	High	Low	Minor Adverse	Very Low	Negligible	Very Low	Negligible
LCT 220 Rugged Massif – Inverness	High	Very Low	Minor Adverse	Very Low	Negligible Adverse	Very Low	Negligible Adverse
LCT 222 – Rocky Moorland Plateau - Inverness	Medium	Low	Minor Adverse	Low	Minor Adverse	Low	Minor Adverse
LCT 226 – Wooded Glen – Inverness	Medium	Very Low	Negligible Adverse	No Change	Neutral	No Change	Neutral
LCT 227 - Farmed Strath - Inverness	Medium	Low	Minor Adverse	Low	Minor Adverse	Very Low	Negligible Adverse
Viewpoint 1 - Core Path IN05.08, Beinn na Sparra circuit North	Medium	Low	Minor Adverse	Very Low	Negligible Adverse	Very Low	Negligible Adverse
Viewpoint 2 - Core Path IN 05.11 Dog Falls to Comar	Medium	Very Low	Negligible Adverse	Very Low	Negligible Adverse	Very Low	Negligible Adverse
Viewpoint 3 - Allt Na Doire Mhoire,	High	Low	Minor Adverse	Low	Minor Adverse	Low	Minor Adverse

Receptor	Sensitivity	Construction Magnitude of impact	Level of Significance of Effect	Operation Magnitude of impact (Year 1)	Level of Significance of Effect (Year 1)	Operation Magnitude of impact (Year 15	Level of Significance of Effect (Year 15)
Doire Mhor Mountain							
Viewpoint 4 - Core Path IN05.08, Beinn na Sparra circuit, South	Medium	Very Low	Neutral	Very Low	Neutral	Very Low	Neutral
Viewpoint 5 - Core Path IN05.03, Eve's Road, South	Medium	Medium	Moderate Adverse	Low	Minor Adverse	Low	Minor Adverse
Viewpoint 6 - Core Path IN05.03, towards Lough na Beinne Baine	Medium	Low	Minor Adverse	Low	Minor Adverse	Low	Minor Adverse
Viewpoint 7 - Core Path IN05.03, Corrimony to Tomich by River Enrick	High	Medium	Major Adverse	Low	Moderate Adverse	Very Low	Neutral
Viewpoint 8 - Affric Kintail Way	Low	Low	Negligible	Low	Negligible	Low	Negligible
Viewpoint 9 - Core Path IN05.03, Eve's Road, North	Medium	Medium	Moderate Adverse	Low	Minor Adverse	Low	Minor Adverse

Table 7-25: Summary of Cumulative Effects

Receptor	Sensitivity	Operation Magnitude of impact (Scenario 1)	Level of Significance of Effect (Scenario 1)	Operation Magnitude of impact (Scenario 2)	Level of Significance of Effect (Scenario 2)
LCT 222 – Rocky Moorland Plateau - Inverness	Medium	Low	Minor Adverse	Low	Minor Adverse
LCT 226 – Wooded Glen – Inverness	High	None	Neutral	Very Low	Minor Adverse
LCT 227 - Farmed Strath - Inverness	Medium	Low	Minor Adverse	No change	No change
Viewpoint 3 - Allt Na Doire Mhoire, Doire Mhor Mountain	High	Low	Minor Adverse	Low	Minor Adverse
Viewpoint 5 - Core Path IN05.03, Eve's Road, South	Medium	No change	No change	Medium	Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 7a/b - Core Path IN05.03, Corrimony to Tomich by River Enrick	High	No change	No change	Low	Moderate Adverse