3. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

3.1 Introduction

This Chapter presents a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) with the aim of identifying the predicted landscape and visual effects of the Project, comprising the Proposed Development and the Associated Development, as described in **Chapter 2: Project Description**. The LVA is augmented by supporting text and graphics within the following annexes.

- Annex C – Landscape Assessment Methodology
- Annex D – Landscape Character Sensitivity Table
- Annex E – Photomontages and figures

- Figure E.1 – Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Viewpoints;
- Figure E.2 – Landscape Character;
- Figure E.3 – Landscape Designations and Recreational Routes; and
- Figure E.4 – Landscape Mitigation Plan.

Study Area

Taking a proportionate approach, a 5 km radius Study Area has been adopted from the location of the Project Site for the assessment of landscape and visual effects ("the Study Area"). This has been informed by analysis of Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) maps and an early appraisal of potential effects for a development of this scale. It is considered that any notable landscape or visual effects would be confined within this geographical area.

3.2 Guidance and Methodology

3.2.1 Guidance

The methodology presented here is based on the following best practice guidance:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GLVIA3); Institute of Environmental Management and Appraisal and the Landscape Institute, 2013;
- Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland; Prepared on behalf of the Countryside Agency and NatureScot, Land Use Consultants, 2002;
- Landscape Sensitivity Assessment - Guidance for Scotland (Consultation Draft); NatureScot, 2020; and
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals; Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/2019 (2019).

In addition, reference has been made to other published guidance and the appraisal work has drawn on the following relevant baseline information:

- National Landscape Character Assessment (web-based interactive map), NatureScot, 2019;
- Ordnance Survey Land ranger (1:50 000) and Explorer (1:25 000) maps;
- Field surveys; and
- Aerial photography.

3.2.2 Methodology

The LVA aims to identify and evaluate the potential landscape and visual effects arising from the Project. This includes discrete analysis of i) effects resulting specifically from the addition of the Proposed Development; ii) effects arising specifically from the Associated Development; and iii) the combined effects of both of these elements based on the addition of the Project to the baseline landscape.

Wherever possible, identified effects are quantified, albeit the nature of landscape and visual appraisal requires interpretation by professional judgement. In order to provide a level of consistency to the appraisal, the prediction of magnitude and appraisal of the residual landscape and visual effects have been based on pre-defined criteria. The complete appraisal methodology is set out in **Annex C**.

3.3 Planning Policy Context

The following section identifies the planning policy and other planning guidance material specifically relevant to the LVA. This includes consideration of the following:

- Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2015, Argyll and Bute Council, 2015;
- Argyll and Bute Supplementary Guidance 2016, Argyll and Bute Council, 2016;
- Biodiversity Technical Note for Planners and Developers, Argyll and Bute Council, 2017; and
- Woodland and Forestry Strategy, Argyll and Bute Council, 2011.

3.3.1 Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2015

The Local Development Plan (LDP) sets out the Council's vision for the area alongside planning policy to guide development. Relevant landscape-related policies from the LDP are summarised as follows:

- Policy LDP 3 – Supporting the Protection, Conservation and Enhancement of our Environment, which seeks to protect established character and local distinctiveness of the landscape, the special qualities of landscape designations, and landscape features such as woodland. This encompasses consideration of potential cumulative effects.
- Policy LDP 9 – Developing Setting, Layout and Design, which promotes high standards of design, with reference to site location, scale and density, and the sensitivity of the receiving landscape.

The LDP is augmented by further policy within the Supplementary Guidance 2016, which sets out additional information in relation to the interpretation of key policies.

3.3.2 Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan Supplementary Guidance 2016

The following landscape-related supplementary guidance clauses are linked to the Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2015:

- SG LDP ENV 1 – Development Impact on Habitats, Species and our Biodiversity: this outlines relevant legislation, policies and conservation objectives that will be consulted in regards to development proposals.
- SG LDP ENV 6 – Development Impact on Trees/Woodland: this outlines that the Council will protect trees and woodland by making Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), and will resist development likely to have adverse effects on trees, with mitigation plans required.
- SG LDP ENV 8 – Protection and Enhancement of Green Networks: this highlights that the Council will encourage developments that contribute towards the overall health of green infrastructure.
- SG LDP ENV 13 – Development Impact on Areas of Panoramic Quality (APQs), states that the Council will resist development in, or affecting, an APQ where its scale, location or design will have a significant adverse impact, unless these are outweighed by wider benefits.
- SG LDP ENV 14 – Landscape: this outlines that the Council will consider landscape impact when assessing development proposals, and will look for development that has correct scale, location and design in relation to the site context.
- SG LDP ENV 15 – Development Impact on Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes, seeks to protect heritage assets and their setting.

3.3.3 Biodiversity Technical Note for Planners and Developers 2017

The Technical Note states that the Council encourage high quality development that will make a positive contribution towards biodiversity within the local environment. The overall aims include the conservation and

enhancement of existing biodiversity, as well as improving connectivity between key habitats. The Technical Note incorporates lists of suggested plant species, including native tree species, and their suitability for specific soil conditions and habitat types.

3.3.4 Argyll and Bute Woodland and Forestry Strategy 2011

This document outlines the prevalence of woodland and forestry across Argyll and Bute and sets out a vision of how this resource can best contribute to the economy, communities and environment. The strategy aims to ensure native woodland expansion is integrated with other land uses including agriculture, improves connectivity between woodland areas, and contributes towards biodiversity. Across Kintyre, the strategy states that any loss of woodland will require compensatory planting elsewhere.

3.4 Landscape Baseline Environment

3.4.1 Local Landscape Context

Figure E.1 illustrates the geographic location of the Project, which is located in an area of commercial forestry approximately 1.8 km north west of the village of Minard. The local landscape consists of a patchwork of commercial forestry, pastoral farmland and open moorland. The commercial plantation forms part of the wider Kilmichael Forest, which covers extensive areas of the surrounding landscape.

The underlying landform typically rises towards inland areas to the north / west (where it varies from 400 – 450 m AOD), and falls towards the coastline along the Kilbrannan Sound to the south east. However, the local topography undulates considerably, resulting in a number of peaks and rolling ridges within the immediate context of the Proposed Development Site. These include Beinn Ghlas (420 m AOD) to the north east, A'Cruach (254 m AOD), Cnoc Buidhe (270 m AOD) and Creag Chaise (303 m AOD) to the south west, and Fiargall (272 m AOD) to the south. The Proposed Development Site is located at an elevation of 170 – 200 m AOD.

There is an extensive network of small rivers and streams traversing the surrounding landscape, which feed into the various waterbodies that are found within the immediate area. These include Blackmill Loch, Loch Bealach and the closest waterbody to the Project, Loch Feorlin. The closest water course to the Project Site is Abhainn Bheag an Tunns, which feeds into Loch Feorlin.

The surrounding landscape is very sparsely settled, particularly across more elevated areas to the north where there are no built forms or settlements. The closest residential receptors include the isolated farmsteads of Strone and Garvachy, which are located approximately 500 m to the south east of the Project Site. Settlements found within the wider context include Minard, 1.8 km to the southeast, Crarae, 2.2 km to the east, and Tullichgorm, 2.3 km to the south. These settlements are connected by the A83, which serves as the primary road corridor within the Study Area. A mixture of interfaces are found along the northern side of the road, including hedgerows, tree clusters, forestry and dry stone walling, which exert varying influences on inland views. To the south, expansive views across Loch Fyne are experienced along lengthy sections of the A83.

With regards to other notable elements of built form within the Study Area, the operational A'Chruach (and A'Chruach Phase 2) Wind Farm is located approximately 2.3 km to the west / north west of the Project Site. The wind turbines represent recognizable features across more open upland areas throughout the wider landscape context. The existing Crarae Substation is located to the east of the Project Site, with associated overhead power lines extending outwards from this to the north, south and west.

3.4.2 Landscape Character

Figure E.2 illustrates the Landscape Character Types (LCTs) within the Study Area, as defined within the National Landscape Character Assessment[1], which represents the most up-to-date assessment of landscape

[1] National Landscape Character Assessment, NatureScot, 2019

character across the Study Area. The Proposed Development Site and Associated Development are located within the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT. The key characteristics and sensitivities are listed below.

Key Characteristics of the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT

- 'Upland plateau with rounded ridges, craggy outcrops and an irregular slope profile;
- Upland Lochs;
- Winding narrow glens and wider glens with rivers;
- Extensive, large-scale mosaic of open moorland and forestry;
- No field boundaries;
- Very few buildings; occasional isolated dwellings on edges of moor;
- Small enclosed pastures and occasional farms and houses on lower hill slopes at the transition with adjacent character types and within the narrow glens which dissect these uplands; and
- Little access; roads follow shorelines.'

The sensitivity of the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT specific to the Project and its locality is assessed within **Annex D** as being Medium.

Relationship to Adjacent LCTs

The Rocky Coastland LCT is located to the south east of the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT, where it forms the interface with Loch Fyne (1.4 km to the south east of the Proposed Development Site). On the opposite side, the Craggy Upland LCT encompasses more elevated inland areas to the north west (2.6 km to the north west of the Proposed Development Site). The key characteristics of these LCTs are listed below.

Key Characteristics of the Rocky Coastland LCT

- 'Uneven, hummocky landform with rocky outcrops and narrow glens;
- Raised benches, cliffs and distinctive rounded knolls;
- Rocky, indented coastlines with offshore islands and small sandy bays;
- Relatively small-scale landscape with a diverse mix of colours and textures;
- Steep wooded cliffs with hummocky, gorse-covered slopes;
- Stone walls provide partial enclosure;
- Relatively well-settled, with scattered isolated farm buildings and small villages in sheltered sites;
- A wide variety of archaeological sites; and
- Complex transitional landscape.'

Key Characteristics of the Craggy Upland - Argyll LCT

- 'Upland moor with irregular, rather amorphous landform;
- Rounded knolls, rock outcrops and numerous lochs in low-lying hollows and glens;
- Open moorland predominates, but extensive conifer plantations camouflage the landscape pattern in some areas;
- Oak-birch woodland on lower slopes;
- Stone walls enclose an irregular patchwork of pastures within glens on margins of moorland;
- Isolated farmsteads and small villages in sheltered sites within glens;
- Numerous archaeological remains, often concentrated on rounded knolls on lower slopes; and
- Historic intricate, irregular landscape pattern in glens.'

3.4.3 Landscape Designations

Landscape planning designations and policies are considered in the determination of the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors as they provide an indication of value ascribed to the landscape or visual resource.

With reference to **Figure E.3**, the Proposed Development Site and Associated Development are not located within a landscape designation. However, two Areas of Panoramic Quality (APQ) extend along the northern and

southern shores of Loch Fyne to the south east of the Project. West Loch Fyne APQ is located on the northern side of the loch, 1.2 km to the south east of the Proposed Development Site at the closest point. East Loch Fyne APQ is located on the opposite side of the loch, 4.1 km to the south east of the Proposed Development Site. With reference to the LDP, these APQs are designated for "*their physical landforms and for the flora and fauna which they support, but also the environmental assets that they represent*". Both of these areas incorporate patchworks of forestry, scrub, open grassland and agricultural fields, along with numerous tree belts and hedgerows.

In addition, Crarae Garden is located 1.5 km to the east of the Proposed Development Site and is included within the inventory of Garden and Designed Landscapes (GDL). It is recognised for its Himalayan-style woodland garden containing many rare and unusual plants, as well as its forestry planting, displaying the shape and growth habits of a variety of tree species.

3.5 Visual Baseline and Receptors

The following section describes the visual receptors within the Study Area. In each case, distances are listed in ascending order from the Proposed Development Site.

3.5.1 Local Residents

With reference to **Figure E.1**, settlement within the Study Area is limited to the village of Minard, 1.8 km to the southeast of the Proposed Development Site, as well as the hamlets of Crarae, 2.2 km to the east, and Tullichgorm, 2.3 km to the south.

Other residents within the Study Area are limited to dispersed dwellings and farmsteads. Those within 3.0 km of the Proposed Development Site comprise:

- Strone, 500 m to the south east;
- Garvachy, 550 m to the south east;
- Limekiln Cottage, 1.9 km to the south;
- Braig Varr, 2.0 km to the south;
- Barr Cottage, 2.1 km to the south
- Gallanach, 2.1 km to the north east;
- Woodhouse, 2.2 km to the south east;
- Bar-liath and nearby property on the A83, 2.7 km to the south; and
- Birdfield, 3.0 km to the south.

3.5.2 Recreational Receptors

With reference to **Figure E.3**, recreational routes and outdoor destinations / attractions within the Study Area are listed below:

- Core Path network, 780 m to the south of the Proposed Development Site at the closest point;
  - C142 – Minard to Loch Glashan, 780 m to the south;
  - C120 – Brainport Circular (Minard), 1.9 km to the south;
  - C122 – Loch Glashan Circular, 4.1 km to the south west;
- Crarae Garden, 1.5 km to the east;
- Minard Castle, 3.3 km to the south; and
- Lachlan Castle (remains), 4.6 km to the south east.

3.5.3 Road and Rail Receptors

The Potential vehicular receptors within the Study Area are limited to road users on the following roads:

- A83, which extends north east to south west through the Study Area, broadly aligned with the shore of Loch Fyne, 1.9 km to the south east of the Proposed Development Site at the closest point;

- B8000, which is situated on the opposite side of Loch Fyne, 4.8 km to the south east.

There are no other roads or railway lines that run within the immediate or wider context of the Project.

3.6 Embedded Mitigation

The location of the Project has been chosen to avoid any notable ridgelines or visually prominent sections of skyline. The Project Site is located within an area of commercial forestry, with limited receptors in the immediate vicinity. The surrounding areas of forestry, in combination with undulations in the local landform would notably restrict views of the Project across wider parts of the Study Area.

Furthermore, the Proposed Development Site and Associated Development are located in close proximity to existing electricity infrastructure, comprising the existing Crarae Substation to the east, and nearby overhead lines (OHLs) to the east and north. As such, the Project would exert its primary influence over a local landscape already partially characterised by existing development,and avoids the spread of infrastructure into wider parts of the surrounding landscape.

In terms of design, the proposals seek to incorporate a comprehensive mitigation strategy to effectively integrate the Project into the surrounding landscape. This involves consideration of the most appropriate methods of lessening its potential influence on landscape and visual amenity. To this end, the Project has been designed to achieve the following landscape objectives:

- Land clearance and occupation would be limited to necessary areas only to minimise the geographic spread of the infrastructure and limit the potential impact on the local landscape fabric.
- The Proposed Development and Associated Development access tracks would utilise existing forestry tracks to minimise effects associated with peripheral parts of the Project;
- The number of new permanent towers comprising the Associated Development has been limited as far as possible (three towers in total) to minimise the effects resulting from this component of the Project;
- Temporary tracks and temporary OHL diversions (for construction purposes) would be reinstated at the end of the construction phase, thereby further limiting the geographic extent of potential residual effects;
- In terms of colour and materials, the AIS building would be painted with a recessive colour (dark-brown, such as RAL 8014: Sepia Brown or similar approved) to assist blending in with the surrounding landscape context comprising plantation forestry; and
- Proposed landscape works would focus on the reinstatement of ground cover within the Site to native bog / mire habitat (see **Figure E.4**). This approach reflects the local ground conditions, ensures a natural context to the proposed built form, and also provides additional habitat type within the locality.

3.7 ZTV and Viewpoint Analysis

The potential landscape and visual effects arising from the Project have been analysed in two ways:

- Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) map analysis, to provide a general overview of the geographical extent of visibility of the Proposed Development and Associated Development within the Study Area; and
- Analysis of the potential effects at key viewpoints.

3.7.1 Zone of Theoretical Visibility Analysis

Theoretical visibility mapping of the Proposed Development and Associated Development is illustrated in **Figure E.1**. The ZTV illustrates the maximum overall visibility of the Proposed Development, with proposed buildings to the top height of 22 m and of the Associated Development with towers of 57.30 m maximum height. The ZTV has been prepared on the basis of ‘bare ground’ and does not take into account the potential screening effects of surrounding vegetation / forestry.

With reference to the ZTV, the geographical extent of potential visibility of the Proposed Development would be very fragmented and predominantly focused within approximately 1.0 km of the Proposed Development Site, increasing to approximately 2.0 km in a north easterly direction, encompassing areas of moorland and forestry. Beyond these areas ZTV coverage would generally be limited to isolated parcels of land associated with localised rises in the landform. Again, these areas primarily comprise upland areas of moorland and forestry. There is wider ZTV coverage across the open water of Loch Fyne to the south east, and across the shore and rising landform on the far side of the water.

The ZTV illustrates that potential views of the Associated Development would be slightly more widespread, in accordance with the increased height of this infrastructure. The additional areas of potential visibility would be primarily focused across fragmented areas of moorland and forestry, as well as parts of Loch Fyne.

3.7.2 Viewpoint Analysis

Viewpoint analysis has been carried out on a selection of key viewpoint locations to assess the likely level of effects arising as a result of the Project. These locations were verified via consultation with the local planning authority (phone call Oct 2021). With reference to the geographical extent of visibility illustrated within the ZTV, a total of three viewpoints have been selected as being representative of the main views from publicly accessible locations within the Study Area (see **Figure E.1** for locations).

Table 3.1 Viewpoint Analysis

Viewpoint	Description
1. View south from forestry track	**Existing View (Figure E.5a)** This viewpoint is located on the forestry track 325 m to the north of the Proposed Development Site, within the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT. It represents views experienced by recreational hillwalkers on an informal path that is not actively promoted as a long distance route or as part of the wider Core Path network. The existing views to the south are characterised by the rolling landform, with rough grassland in the foreground, backed by swathes of forestry beyond that extends across the skyline. Built form within the view comprises an existing section of OHL, incorporating one tower that extends above the horizon, as well as smaller scale timber towers. . **Predicted View (Figures E.5b – E.5c)** The Proposed Development would be experienced on the hillside to the south at close proximity, where it would represent an additional element of built form in the landscape. This new built form would contrast with the more rural characteristics of the receiving landscape, albeit would be experienced within the same sector of view already influenced by existing towers, accounting for a relatively narrow angle of view below the skyline (back-clothed by plantation forestry). The recessive colour of the buildings would reduce their influence on the view. Two of the towers that comprise the Associated Development would also be visible at close proximity and would extend above the horizon. These would be experienced in the same sector of view as the existing tower (to be removed), and the net result would be an increase in the height and number of towers in this field of view. **Effects on Visual Amenity** The sensitivity of hillwalkers is assessed as being High. i) The Proposed Development would be experienced at close proximity, incorporating all built form and the surrounding compound. The magnitude of change at completion would be Medium based on the close proximity of the view balanced by the presence of existing infrastructure to the south. The resultant level of effect would be Major/Moderate. Views would remain predominantly unchanged over time. On balance, the magnitude of change at Year 12 would remain Medium from this vantage point and the corresponding level of effect would be Major/Moderate. ii) The Associated Development would extend above the horizon, albeit the visual influence of the towers would be offset by the removal of an existing tower and further limited by their open, latticework structure, and the narrow angle of view. The magnitude of change at completion would be Medium and the resultant level of effect

Viewpoint	Description
	would be Major/Moderate. The magnitude of change at Year 12 would remain Medium, and the corresponding level of effect would be Major/Moderate. iii) The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would be High/Medium based on the close proximity and open nature of the view. The resultant level of effect would be Major/Moderate. The combined magnitude of change at Year 12 would remain High/Medium and the level of effect would be Major/Moderate. **Landscape Effect** The Plateau Moor and Forest LCT is assessed as being of Medium sensitivity to the Project. i) At this proximity, the Proposed Development would represent a recognizable new element within the local landscape. The magnitude of change at completion would be Medium and the effect on landscape character would be Moderate. At Year 12, the effects would remain unchanged. ii) The Associated Development would exert its influence on a local landscape already influenced by towers. The resultant effect on landscape character would be further offset by the removal of an existing tower. The magnitude of change would be Low and the effect on landscape character would be Moderate/Minor. At Year 12, the effects would remain unchanged. iii) The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would be Medium. The resultant level of effect would be Moderate. At Year 12, the effects would remain unchanged.
2. View west from forestry track	**Existing View (Figure E.6a)** This viewpoint is located on the unsurfaced track 385 m to the east of the Proposed Development Site, within the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT. It represents views experienced by recreational hillwalkers on an informal path that is not actively promoted as a long distance route or as part of the wider Core Path network. The existing views to the west are characterised by the rolling landform with parcels of rough grassland and craggy moorland broken up by extensive areas of forestry. The landscape is rural in character, albeit there are clear views of the existing section of OHL, wind turbines and existing access tracks. **Predicted View (Figures E.6b – E.6c)** The Proposed Development would be experienced at relatively close proximity and would represent an additional element of built form in the landscape. The proposed buildings would be experienced within an area of forestry, within the same sector of view as the existing wind turbines and OHL. The compound and lower parts of the buildings would be subject to screening by intervening tree cover. There would be clearer views of the upper parts of the buildings, which would be visible on the skyline, accounting for a narrow angle of view. Two of the towers that comprise the Associated Development would be visible at relatively close proximity, with the upper parts experienced against the skyline. The proposed towers would be experienced in the same field of view as exiting towers (one of which would be removed). The net result would be a slight increase in the number and height of towers in the view. **Effects on Visual Amenity** The sensitivity of hillwalkers is assessed as being High. i) The Proposed Development would be experienced at close proximity, accounting for a narrow angle of view. The magnitude of change at completion would be Medium and the resultant level of effect would be Major/Moderate. The effects at Year 12 would remain unchanged. ii) The Associated Development would extend above the horizon, albeit the visual influence of the towers would be offset by the removal of an existing tower and further limited by their open, latticework structure, and the narrow angle of view. The magnitude of change at completion would be Low and the resultant level of effect would be Moderate. At Year 12, the effects would remain unchanged.

Viewpoint	Description
	iii) The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would be Medium based on the close proximity to the viewpoint, balanced by partial screening of proposed buildings and their relationship to existing infrastructure. The resultant level of effect would be Major/Moderate. The effects at Year 12 would remain unchanged. **Landscape Effect** The Plateau Moor and Forest LCT is assessed as being of Medium sensitivity to the Project. i) At this proximity, the Proposed Development would represent a recognizable new element within the local landscape, albeit part-screened by intervening tree cover and in a local context influenced by existing human activity. The magnitude of change at completion would be Medium and the effect on landscape character would be Moderate. The effects at Year 12 would remain unchanged. ii) The Associated Development would exert its influence on a local landscape already influence by towers. The resultant effect on landscape character would be further offset by the removal of an existing tower. The magnitude of change on landscape character would be Negligible and the effect on landscape character would be Minor. At Year 12, the effects would remain unchanged. iii) The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would be Medium. The resultant level of effect would be Moderate. The effects at Year 12 would remain unchanged.
3. View north west from B8000 parking area, Lachlan Bay	**Existing View (Figure E.7a)** This viewpoint is located at the parking area off the B8000 at Lachlan Bay, 5km to the south east of the Proposed Development Site (on the opposite side of Loch Fyne), within the Rocky Coastland LCT. It represents views experienced by road users. The existing views to the north west are characterised by the open water of Loch Fyne, with the landform on the far side rising to form the distant horizon. The landscape comprises a mosaic of woodland and forestry, which gives way to open moorland on the upper-most ridges and summits. Built form comprises scattered houses and settlement along the opposite banks of Loch Fyne, as well as existing towers and a wind turbine along the upper slopes and skyline. **Predicted View (Figures E.7b – E.7c)** Potential views of the Proposed Development would be subject to screening by the intervening landform, and further restricted by intervening woodland (including coniferous species). As such, views of the Proposed Development would be limited to the upper-most parts of the Substation building at most, which would be experienced at distance, below the horizon. The three towers that comprise the Associated Development would be visible on the distant skyline. The proposed towers would be experienced in the same field of view as exiting towers. The net result would be a slight increase in the number / spread of towers in long distance views. **Effects on Visual Amenity** The sensitivity of road users at this location is assessed as being Medium. i) The Proposed Development would be predominantly screened from view. Its influence would be further restricted by the distance of view. The magnitude of change would be Negligible and the resultant level of effect experienced by road users would be Negligible. At Year 12 the effects would remain unchanged. ii) The visual influence of the Associated Development would be limited by the distance of view and would be further offset by the removal of an existing tower. The magnitude of change on views would be Negligible and the effect on landscape character would be Negligible. At Year 12, the effects would remain unchanged. iii) The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would be Negligible based on the distance of view, intervening screening and presence of

Viewpoint	Description
	existing infrastructure within the same field of view. The resultant level of effect would be Negligible. At Year 12, the effects would remain unchanged. **Landscape Effect** The Rocky Coastland LCT is assessed as being of High sensitivity to the Project. i) The Proposed Development would represent a very discreet element within the distant landscape, predominantly screened beyond intervening landform and tree cover. As such, it would exert minimal influence on the existing characteristics of the receiving landscape. The magnitude of change on landscape character would be Negligible and the effect on landscape character would be Negligible. At Year 12 the effects would remain unchanged. ii) The Associated Development would exert its influence on a distant landscape already influence by towers. The resultant effect on landscape character would be further offset by the removal of an existing tower. The magnitude of change on landscape character would be Negligible and the effect on landscape character would be Negligible. At Year 12, the effects would remain unchanged. iii) The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would be Negligible. The resultant level of effect would be Negligible. At Year 12, the effects would remain unchanged.

3.8 Appraisal - Construction Effects

Whilst it is the operational stage of the Project that would give rise to prolonged landscape and visual effects, construction works detailed in **Chapter 2: Project Description** would give rise to medium-term temporary landscape and visual effects. The detailed construction programme is not known at this stage, although it is anticipated that construction of the Proposed Development and Associated Development would take approximately 24 months.

These effects would be temporary and would mainly arise through the gradual introduction of proposed buildings/infrastructure. The effects arising from other operations, including the vehicle movement, construction of the fencing and excavation works would be localised, and whilst potentially visible, would not appear prominently in views from the surrounding areas. As such, the construction phase effects would be limited in extent and duration.

3.8.1 Construction Landscape Effects

The Proposed Development Site is located in an area of commercial forestry, with the Associated Development located in the adjoining landscape to the north. During the construction stage, the coniferous forestry within the Proposed Development Site would be removed, along with any groundcover and understorey planting to facilitate construction activities. There would also be localised areas of excavation required for the parking and access, foundations of the buildings and cable routes, resulting in a change to the current landscape fabric. There would also be clearance activities associated with the construction of temporary and permanent access tracks for the Associated Development and temporary OHL bypass, as well as a short term, temporary increase in vehicle movements to and from the Project Site.

In terms of landscape fabric; the existing ground cover is considered to be of Low sensitivity to the Project. This is based on the scale and extent of the surrounding forestry / moorland, within which the Project would comprise a very small area, and the ability of such landscapes to regenerate in a relatively short period of time.

The magnitude of change on existing landscape fabric based on the Proposed Development would be Medium, resulting in a Moderate/Minor effect. The magnitude of change on landscape fabric based on the Associated Development would be Low/Negligible based on its smaller footprint and close geographical proximity to existing

electrical infrastructure and access tracks, resulting in a Minor effect. The combined magnitude of change based on the addition of the Project would be Medium, resulting in a Moderate/Minor effect.

In terms of landscape character; the construction stage effects would be limited to a very localised part of the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT, which is considered to be of Medium sensitivity to the Project with reference to **Annex D**. The magnitude of change associated with the localised areas of felling, disturbance of the existing ground cover and additional presence of vehicles and temporary access tracks within the Project Site would be tempered by the extensive spread of surrounding forestry that predominates throughout the local landscape, as well as the close geographical location of the Project in relation to existing electricity infrastructure. Within such landscapes, occasional vehicle movements and localised tree felling is considered to be a standard occurrence.

On balance, the magnitude of change on landscape character during the construction stage would be Low based on the Proposed Development, resulting in a Moderate/Minor effect. The magnitude of change on landscape character based on the Associated Development would be Low/Negligible, resulting in a Minor effect. The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would be Low, resulting in a Moderate/Minor effect.

3.8.2 Construction Effects on Visual Amenity

The visual effects of the activities during the construction phase would be temporary and limited to localised areas in the vicinity of the Project due to the containing effect of the underlying landform and surrounding tree cover, in combination with the low-lying nature of activities associated with site clearance / excavation. As such, views would be predominantly limited to hill walkers on non-promoted sections of forestry tracks in the surrounding area. Taking a precautionary approach, these receptors are considered to be of High sensitivity.

In more open views from these tracks, the construction activities would be experienced within a local context comprising existing electricity infrastructure and forestry operations. Construction activities would typically be experienced below the skyline, backed by moorland and commercial plantation.

The influence of construction activities on existing views would be tempered by the introduction of new areas of planting within the Proposed Development Site, and the gradual reinstatement of ground cover along the route of the Associated Development as works progress. The effects would be further reduced through good site management and the temporary nature of the construction activities.

On balance, the visual magnitude of change during the construction phase would be Low based on the Proposed Development, resulting in a Moderate effect at most on hillwalkers. The magnitude of change based on the Associated Development would be Low/Negligible, resulting in a Moderate/Minor effect. The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would be Low. The resultant effect on views would be Moderate.

3.9 Appraisal - Operational Landscape Effects

This Section examines the effects arising as a result of the Project with reference to landscape fabric, landscape character and landscape designations.

3.9.1 Effects on Landscape Fabric

The landscape features within the Proposed Development Site and surrounding context comprise coniferous forestry and open moorland, which is assessed as being of Low sensitivity to the Project. There are no other features of note or value.

The Proposed Development would result in the permanent loss of a small area of forestry and rough grassland and its replacement with the proposed AIS building, site services and control equipment, electrical switchgear and associated infrastructure. The Associated Development would also result in localised loss of ground cover along the permanent access tracks and the introduction of the proposed towers. In both cases, the proposed infrastructure would account for a relatively small parcel of land within an expansive area of surrounding forestry.

Upon completion of the works, any areas of disturbed ground would be reinstated to native bog / mire at the first available season, and would establish rapidly thereafter (see **Figure 3.4: Landscape Mitigation)**.

On balance, the magnitude of change based on the Proposed Development would be Medium, giving rise to a Moderate/Minor effect on landscape fabric. The magnitude of change based on the Associated Development would be Low/Negligible based on the small footprint of the towers and close geographical proximity to existing electrical infrastructure and access tracks, resulting in a Minor effect. The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would be Medium, resulting in a Moderate/Minor effect.Whilst the replacement of existing forestry with hard-standing and built form is regarded as adverse, the introduction of additional new areas of native bog / mire in accordance with the surrounding locality and ground conditions represents neutral change.

3.9.2 Effects on Landscape Character

The effect of the Project on landscape character largely depends on the key characteristics of the receiving environment; the degree to which the development may be considered to be consistent with or at odds with it; and how the proposal would be perceived within its setting.

Plateau Moor and Forest LCT

The Project would be located within the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT, which is described previously in this Chapter (see Section 3.4: Landscape Baseline Environment). With reference to sensitivity analysis within **Annex D**, the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT is assessed as being of Medium sensitivity to the Project. The effects on this LCT would be direct (affecting the Proposed Development Site and route of the Associated Development) and indirect (affecting the visual and perceptual characteristics of the wider landscape).

In terms of direct effects, there would be some loss of natural features to facilitate introduction of the proposed buildings, permanent access tracks and associated infrastructure; specifically, localised areas of existing forestry, as well as parcels of rough grassland. However, this accounts for a very small portion of the existing forestry spread across the surrounding landscape. The proposed access route would make use of existing forestry tracks, thereby reducing the requirement for new permanent track. The short section of new permanent access track required would be assimilated with the existing pattern of development and would not result in any notable loss of landscape elements.

In terms of indirect effects, ZTV coverage for the Proposed Development is fragmented across the LCT and typically focused across areas within 1.0 km of the Proposed Development Site (increasing to 2.0 km to the north east). Theoretical views of the Associated Development would be slightly more widespread based on the higher height of the towers, albeit remains focused across very similar geographic areas. These areas generally comprise forestry that would limit the extent of intervisibility across the LCT, or upland moorland where there is limited public access. At greater distances ZTV coverage is more fragmented and predominantly limited to more elevated parcels of land. This incorporates the summits / slopes of Beinn Ghlas to the north east, Sithean Beag to the north west and Creag Chaise to the south west. This reflects the characteristic '*rounded ridges, craggy outcrops and… irregular slope profile'* of the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT. Within more open views from these elevated vantage points, the Project would represent a new element of built form. It would be experienced in the context of existing electricity infrastructure in the form of overhead power lines in the locality, as well as wind turbines in the wider landscape. The Associated Development would be located in close geographic proximity to the existing OHL and its influence on landscape character would be further offset by the removal of an existing tower. The Proposed Development would be of smaller scale than the existing infrastructure and represent a relatively minor addition to the characteristic *'large-scale mosaic of open moorland and forestry'*. As such, the introduction of the Project would exert limited influence on local landscape character.

The absence of ZTV coverage across other areas illustrates that the Project would be completely screened from view across extensive parts of the LCT. The spread of visibility would be further tempered by the extent of forestry surrounding the Project. As such, there would be minimal effects on the characteristic *'occasional farms*

and houses on lower hill slopes' or the *'isolated dwellings on edges of the moor'.* The Project would exert no discernible influence on the *'small enclosed pastures'* or the roads that *'follow shorelines'*. As such, the majority of the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT would be completely unaffected.

In summary, based on the addition of the Proposed Development, the main effects would be focused within approximately 100 m in a southerly direction due to the containing influence of the landform and surrounding forestry. These effects would extend outwards to 300-400 m to the north / north east, where the extent of forestry is more limited and the landscape is more open in character. At a localised level the magnitude of change would typically be Medium and the level of effect would be Moderate. The effects would diminish at greater distances in accordance with the increasing distance of view and / or screening influence of intervening landform and forestry. Accordingly, across wider parts of the LCT the magnitude of change based on the Proposed Development would typically be Negligible or less, and the resultant effect would be Minor/Negligible. Extensive parts of the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT would be completely unaffected.

The main effects resulting from the Associated Development would also be focused within the surrounding locality, within approximately 400 – 500 m of the towers. The Associated Development would represent a slight increase in the number of towers within the local landscape, rather than the addition of elements that are completely new to it. The effects would be reduced by the removal of an existing tower. As such, the magnitude of change would be Low and the effect would be Moderate/Minor. Across wider parts of the LCT the magnitude of change based on the Associated Development would be Negligible, and the resultant effect would be Minor/Negligible.

The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would be Medium across the local landscape (out to approximately 400 – 500 m), resulting in a Moderate effect. Across wider parts of the LCT the combined magnitude of change based on the Project would be Negligible, and the resultant effect would be Minor/Negligible.

Rocky Coastland LCT

There are two discreet areas of Rocky Coastland within the Study Area. The closest area is located 1.4 km to the south east of the Proposed Development Site (along the western shore of Loch Fyne), with the second area located on the opposite side (eastern shore) of Loch Fyne, 4.2 km to the east. The LCT is considered to be of High sensitivity to the Project with reference to its small scale and the association with the West Loch Fyne APQ and East Loch Fyne APQ.

ZTV coverage is extremely limited across the closest area and is primarily restricted to isolated areas of higher ground at Cnoc Cul na Ceardaich and Lady's Seat to the south of the Project. These areas comprise forestry and woodland that restricts outward views. Potential views of the Proposed Development and Associated Development from these areas would be further limited by the presence of intervening forestry in the landscape to the north.

ZTV coverage is more continuous across the geographically separate area of Rocky Coastland LCT located on the eastern side of Loch Fyne. However, this area is spatially separated from the Project by the open water of Loch Fyne, as well as intervening areas of forestry on the opposite side of the loch. In the most open views, the Proposed Development and Associated Development would represent very distant elements in the background landscape.

In summary, there would be minimal influence on the '*hummocky landform', 'raised beaches', 'indented coastline'* or '*wooded cliffs'* and no loss of '*archaeological sites'* that characterise the Rocky Coastland LCT. Based on the addition of the Proposed Development, the magnitude of change would be Negligible and the effect on landscape character would be Minor/Negligible. The magnitude of change based on the Associated Development would also be Negligible, resulting in a Minor/Negligible effect. The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would be Negligible, resulting in a Minor/Negligible effect.

Craggy Upland LCT

The Craggy Upland LCT is located 2.6 km to the north west of the Proposed Development Site and is considered to be of High sensitivity to the Project with reference to its openness and upland characteristics which confer a strong relationship with the skyline in views from neighbouring LCTs.

ZTV coverage is extremely limited across the LCT and primarily restricted to the south easterly-facing slopes of A'Cruach and Sidh Mor and southern slopes of Beinn Laoigh. From these slopes the Proposed Development and Associated Development would represent new elements of built form in the lower-lying forested landscape to the south east. They would be experienced at a distance in excess of 3.4 km within a context comprising forestry and existing electricity infrastructure comprising overhead power lines. Accordingly, the Project would represent a very minor element within the wider view and exert very limited influence upon the characteristic '*open moorland', 'irregular patchwork of pastures',* or *the 'historic intricate, irregular landscape pattern'*. There would be no loss of characteristic '*archaeological remains'.*

The magnitude of change would be Negligible based on the addition of the Proposed Development or the Associated Development, resulting in a Minor/Negligible level of effect in each case. Given the limited visibility and spatial separation, the combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would also be Negligible and the combined effect on landscape character would be Negligible. The vast majority of the Craggy Upland LCT would be completely unaffected.

3.9.3 Effects on Landscape Designations

West Loch Fyne APQ

The West Loch Fyne APQ is located 1.2 km to the south east of the Proposed Development Site at the closest point, where it follows the lower lying coastal edge of the landscape. ZTV coverage across the APQ is extremely limited and restricted to isolated parcels of land at Braig Varr, Cnoc Cul na Ceardaich and Lady's Seat to the south, as well as Bar Mor and the south westerly facing slopes of Beinn Ghlas further to the east. The influence of the Project in views from these areas would be limited by the presence of intervening forestry and / or the increasing spatial separation from the proposed buildings and infrastructure. As such, the Project would exert minimal influence on the special qualities of the APQ.

The magnitude of change would be Negligible based on the addition of the Proposed Development or the Associated Development, resulting in a Minor/Negligible level of effect in each case. Given the limited visibility and spatial separation, the combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would also be Negligible and the combined effect on the West Loch Fyne APQ would be Minor/Negligible.

East Loch Fyne APQ

The East Loch Fyne APQ is located 4.1 km to the south east of the Proposed Development Site. ZTV coverage is relatively continuous across parts of the APQ within the Study Area. However, due to geographical separation of the Project from the APQ, it would represent a very distant element in the background landscape on the far side of Loch Fyne. As such, it would exert minimal influence on the special qualities of the APQ.

The Proposed Development and the Associated Development would each exert a Negligible magnitude of change, resulting in a Negligible level of effect in each case. The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would also be Negligible, leading to a Negligible effect on the East Loch Fyne APQ.

Crarae GDL

Crarae GDL is located 1.5 km to the east of the Proposed Development Site. It is located outside the ZTV, hence there would be no views of the Proposed Development or Associated Development and no effect.

3.10 Appraisal - Operational Visual Effects

This Section examines the visual effects based on changes to the existing view as experienced by people within the surrounding landscape (as described within Section 3.5: Visual Baseline and Receptors). This process draws on the results of the ZTV and viewpoint analysis.

3.10.1 Visual effects experienced by Local Residents

The Appraisal below considers the effects experienced by local residents in settlements, as well as those in isolated residential dwellings / steadings in closest proximity to the Project. In all cases, sensitivity is deemed to be High.

Settlements

The village of Minard and the hamlets of Crarae and Tullichgorm are located completely outside the ZTV. There would be no views of the Project from these settlements and no effect. There are no other settlements within the Study Area.

Isolated Residential Dwellings / Steadings

Strone is located 500 m to the south east of the Proposed Development. Potential views of the Proposed Development and Associated Development would be subject to screening by intervening forestry in combination with an intervening rise in the landform (reflected by the restricted ZTV coverage). As such, views would be restricted to the upper parts of the Substation building and towers at most, which would be experienced within the context of commercial forestry, in the same field of view as existing towers. The magnitude of change would be Negligible based on the addition of the Proposed Development or the Associated Development, resulting in a Minor/Negligible level of effect in each case. The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would also be Negligible and the combined level of effect experienced by residents would be Minor.

Garvachy is located 550 m to the south east of the Proposed Development. The dwelling is located outside the ZTV, hence there would be no views of the Project and no effect.

Limekiln Cottage is located 1.9 km to the south of the Proposed Development. The dwelling is located outside the ZTV, hence there would be no views of the Project and no effect.

Braig Varr is located 2.0 km to the south of the Proposed Development. The property is on the edge of the ZTV signifying the screening influence of the intervening topography, which would screen all but the upper-most parts of the Associated Development (there would be no views of the Proposed Development). Potential views of the Associated Development would be further restricted by tree cover surrounding the property in combination with forestry in the intervening landscape that would fully screen these elements from view. In summary, residents at Braig Varr would experience no views of the Proposed Development or the Associated Development. The Project would result in no effect.

Barr Cottage is located 2.1 km to the south of the Proposed Development. The dwelling is located outside the ZTV, hence there would be no views of the Project and no effect.

Gallanach is located 2.1 km to the north east of the Proposed Development. The dwelling is located outside the ZTV, hence there would be no views of the Project and no effect.

Woodhouse is located 2.2 km to the south east of the Proposed Development. The dwelling is located outside the ZTV, hence there would be no views of the Project and no effect.

Bar-liath and the nearby property on the A83 are located 2.7 km to the south of the Proposed Development. Both of these dwellings are located outside the ZTV, hence there would be no views of the Project and no effect.

Birdfield is located 3.0 km to the south of the Proposed Development. The dwelling is located outside the ZTV, hence there would be no views of the Project and no effect.

3.10.2 Visual effects experienced by Recreational Receptors

Recreational receptors are considered to be of High sensitivity in all cases. The Appraisal is described below, listed in order of increasing distance from the Project.

Core Path network

Core Path C142 – Minard to Loch Glashan, is located 780 m to the south of the Proposed Development at the closest point. ZTV coverage across the route is limited to a 250 m section at Barran Eoin (to the south east of the Project). This section of the route extends through established forestry that prevents outward views towards the Project. As such, there would be no views and no effect.

Core Paths C120 – Brainport Circular (Minard), and C122 – Loch Glashan Circular, are both located almost entirely outwith the ZTV. Potential views of the Project from fragmented sections of the route with ZTV coverage would be fully screened by intervening woodland and tree cover. Walkers on these routes would experience no views of the Project and no effect.

Crarae Garden

Crarae Garden is located 1.5 km to the east of the Proposed Development. It is located outside the ZTV, hence there would be no views of the Project and no effect.

Minard Castle

Minard Castle is located 3.3 km to the south of the Proposed Development. The castle is on the edge of the ZTV reflecting the screening influence of the intervening topography, which would screen all but the upper-most parts of the Associated Development (there would be no views of the Proposed Development from the castle). Potential views of the Associated Development would be further restricted by mature tree cover within the castle grounds and woodland / forestry in the intervening landscape, which would fully screen the towers from view. There would be no views of the Project and no effect.

Lachlan Castle (remains)

Lachlan Castle is located 4.6 km to the south east of the Proposed Development, on the opposite side of Loch Fyne. With reference to Viewpoint 3, there are open views out across the open water of Loch Fyne towards the Project from this area. However, due to the distance of view, the Proposed Development and Associated Development would represent very distant elements in the background landscape on the far side of the loch, part screened by intervening forestry. As such, they would be barely discernible. The Proposed Development and the Associated Development would each exert a Negligible magnitude of change, resulting in a Negligible level of effect in each case. The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would also be Negligible, and the effect on the view experienced by visitors would be Negligible.

3.10.3 Visual effects experienced by Road Receptors

The sensitivity of road users is considered to be Medium in all cases unless otherwise stated.

A83

Within the Study Area the A83 extends north east – south west along the lower-lying landscape that broadly follows the western shore of Loch Fyne. ZTV coverage is completely absent across the route, hence road users would experience no views of the Project and no effect.

B8000

The B8000 is located 4.8 km to the south east of the Proposed Development at the closest point, on the eastern side of Loch Fyne. ZTV coverage is continuous across the route within the Study Area, albeit views to the north west are foreshortened by established roadside tree cover along more southern sections of the route. The most open views would be restricted to a 500 m section in the vicinity of Barnacarry and a 100 m section passing Inver Cottage. In the most open views from these sections, the Proposed Development and Associated Development

would represent very minor elements in the distant landscape on the opposite side of Loch Fyne, and would be subject to screening by intervening forestry (see Viewpoint 3). As such, and with reference to the transient nature of views, the Project would be barely discernible.

The magnitude of change based on the Proposed Development or Associated Development would be Negligible in each case and the level of effect experienced by road users would be Negligible. The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would also be Negligible and the combined level of effect would be Negligible.

3.11 Appraisal - Cumulative Effects

This Section examines the potential cumulative effects of the Project in combination with other existing, consented and proposed power developments within the Study Area. In this instance, the assessment includes consideration of the following sites:

- Existing Crarae Substation to the east of the Project;
- Existing overhead power lines to the north and east of the Project; and
- Operational A'Chruach Wind Farm, comprising 21 turbines (124 – 129 m to tip) located 2.3 km to the west / north west of the Project.

It is recognised that in addition to the above, there will be ongoing forestry activity within the surrounding locality in accordance with the Long Term Forestry Plan. Other activities in the surrounding area comprise the construction / upgrade of access tracks, and extraction of stone from an existing borrow pit south east of Loch Bealach Ghearran. However, these activities are excluded from further consideration in the cumulative assessment on the basis of their geographic separation from the Project, differing nature of development, and/or limited size. Similarly, proposals at pre-app or scoping stage are also excluded based on the uncertainty of these developments progressing to formal planning submissions and the potential changes to the proposals in the intervening time.

Landscape and visual receptors described within the main LVA as undergoing / experiencing a Low/Negligible magnitude of change (or less) are excluded from consideration in the cumulative assessment on the basis that the Project would exert such a limited effect in its own right that it would not meaningfully contribute to potential cumulative effects, and as such would not tip the balance from a minor cumulative effect to a notable cumulative effect. To this end, cumulative effects are considered in relation to those on landscape character only, specifically the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT. Cumulative effects on all other landscape and visual receptors are excluded from further consideration on the basis of the very limited influence of the Project as described above within the main assessment.

3.11.1 Cumulative Landscape Effects on the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT

In addition to the Project; the existing Crarae Substation, sections of overhead power lines, and the operational A'Chruach Wind Farm are located within the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT, thus exert direct effects upon local landscape character in their own right.

With reference to the preceding assessment of effects on landscape character, the primary effects of the Project on the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT would be focused within approximately 400 - 500 m, where the magnitude of change would be Medium and the level of effect would be Moderate. There would be some coalescence of these effects with the characterising influence currently exerted by the existing infrastructure in the surrounding locality, comprising substation and OHLs to the north / north east of the Project. The influence of the existing Crarae Substation is restricted to localised parts of the LCT due to its limited footprint and scale. The influence of the overhead power lines (and associated access tracks), which extend over larger areas, are more widespread. The Project would augment the presence of these existing elements of infrastructure within the landscape, albeit due to its close spatial proximity to the existing OHL, it would not contribute towards more widespread effects across geographically separate parts of the LCT.

The operational A'Chruach and A'Chruach Phase 2 Wind Farm is of a far larger scale, and as such exerts a more widespread influence across the LCT. This incorporates the more open areas of moorland and uplands that are prevalent inland from the coast, where the associated wind turbines represent recognizable features on the skyline. This coincides with the presence of other existing infrastructure within the LCT, in particular the OHLs as described above. However, the influence of the wind farm is limited in other areas by the spread of commercial forestry that extends across notable parts of the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT. This forestry screens views of the wind turbines across wider areas, particularly to the south and west of the Wind Farm, limiting its overall effect on landscape character. Potential coalescence with the Project would also be limited due to the spatial separation of the Wind Farm from the Project and the presence of forestry across the intervening landscape.

In summary, the Project would contribute to cumulative effects in combination with the existing A'Chruach Wind Farm, Crarae Substation and associated overhead power lines located within the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT. The cumulative magnitude of change across the LCT as a whole would be Medium/Low, and the cumulative level of effect would be Moderate/Minor. These cumulative effects are primarily attributed to the operational A'Chruach Wind Farm and existing overhead power lines with reference to their scale and / or geographic spread. Conversely, the influence of the Project would be far more limited and localised in extent and would not notably contribute to cumulative effects on the wider LCT.

3.12 Summary of Effects

In summary, the Project (comprising Proposed Development and Associated Development) would be located in an area of commercial forestry 1.8 km north west of the village of Minard, on the western side of Loch Fyne. The Project would result in the permanent loss of a localised area of forestry, which represents an extremely small parcel of land within an expansive area of surrounding forestry, in close proximity to existing electricity infrastructure. There would also be temporary disturbance to existing areas of upland moorland during the construction phase. Electricity infrastructure in the surrounding landscape context comprises the existing Crarae Substation, high voltage overhead power lines and tracks, as well as the operational A'Chruach Wind Farm in the wider area.

In terms of landscape effects; the location of the Project in close proximity to existing overhead power lines within an area of commercial plantation means that landscape effects would be limited. The main effects of the Proposed Development would be primarily focused within 100m to the south, extending out to 300-400 m to the north / north east, where the landscape is more open in character. The main effects of the Associated Development would be focussed within approximately 400 – 500 m of the towers, and would be offset by the removal of an existing tower. This area accounts for a small part of the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT. The effects on the LCT as a whole would be very limited. There would be no notable effects on surrounding landscape character areas or designations.

Visual effects would also be extremely restricted based on the geographic location of the Project, which exhibits a high degree of visual enclosure due to the surrounding forestry and the undulating nature of the local topography, and is spatially separate from any major settlements, recreational attractions or transport routes. As such, the Proposed Development and Associated Development would be fully screened from the vast majority of receptors, and represent very minor elements within more open vantage points. On balance, there would be no notable effects on the views experienced by residents, recreational receptors or road users.

In terms of cumulative effects; the Project would augment the presence of existing power-related infrastructure in the locality, in particular the operational A'Chruach Wind Farm, as well as the existing Crarae Substation and associated overhead power lines. However, with regards to its limited footprint and visually enclosed location; the Project would not notably contribute to, or increase, the overall level of cumulative effect across the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT. The Project would not notably contribute to cumulative effects on any other LCT, landscape designation or views experienced by residents, recreational receptors or road users.

In conclusion, it is assessed that the Project could be accommodated with very limited and localised effects on landscape character and visual amenity.

Table 3.2 Appraisal of Landscape and Visual Impact

Receptor	Project Interaction	Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude (Project)	Effect (Project)
Landscape Fabric	Direct effects within Proposed Development Site	Low	Medium	Moderate/minor
Plateau Moor and Forest LCT	Direct Effects within Proposed Development Site, and indirect across wider LCT based on views.	Medium	Medium within 400 - 500 m Negligible across wider LCT	Moderate within 400 - 500 m Minor/Negligible across wider LCT
Other LCTs	Indirect effects based on views	High to Medium	Negligible	Minor/Negligible to Negligible
Landscape Designations	Indirect effects based on views	High	Negligible	Minor/Negligible or less
Settlements: Minard, Crarae, Tullichgorm	Views experienced by Residents	High	No Views	No Effect
Isolated Dwelling: Strone	Views experienced by Residents	High	Negligible	Minor
Other Isolated Dwellings	Views experienced by Residents	High	No Views	No Effect
Core Paths	Views experienced by Recreational Walkers	High	No Views	No Effect
Crarae Garden	Views experienced by Recreational Visitors	High	No Views	No Effect
Minard Castle	Views experienced by Recreational Visitors	High	No Views	No Effect
Lachlan Castle	Views experienced by Recreational Visitors	High	Negligible	Negligible
Road users on A83	Transient views experienced from A road	Medium	No Views	No effect
Road Users on B8000	Transient views experienced from B road	Medium	Negligible	Negligible

3.13 References

Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GLVIA3); Institute of Environmental Management and Appraisal and the Landscape Institute, 2013.

Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland; Prepared on behalf of the Countryside Agency and NatureScot, Land Use Consultants, 2002.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment - Guidance for Scotland (Consultation Draft); NatureScot, 2020.

Visual Representation of Development Proposals; Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/2019 (2019).

National Landscape Character Assessment (web-based interactive map), NatureScot, 2019.

Scottish Planning Policy, Scottish Government, 2014.

Local Development Plan, Argyll and Bute Council, 2015.

Local Development Plan Supplementary Guidance, Argyll and Bute Council, 2016.

Biodiversity Technical Note for Planners and Developers, Argyll and Bute Council, 2017.Woodland and Forestry Strategy, Argyll and Bute Council, 2011.