6 SEASCAPE, LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 This chapter assesses the likely significant effects on seascape and landscape receptors and visual amenity associated with the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. This chapter (and its associated Figures and Appendices) should be read in conjunction with the introductory chapters of this Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) (**Volume 2, Chapters 1-5**).

6.1.2 The assessment has been carried out by Sara Notfors (Chartered Landscape Architect with Ramboll UK Limited) in conjunction with Robert Bainsfair (CMLI) who has over 27 years' experience in the management and preparation of Seascape, Landscape and Visual Assessments (SLVIAs) with particularly focus on electricity generation, transmission and renewable energy projects.

6.1.3 This chapter is supported by the following figures and technical appendices:

- Volume 3a: Figures
  - **Figure 6.1: ZTV, Study Area and Viewpoint Locations;**
  - **Figure 6.2: Topography and Viewpoint Locations;**
  - **Figure 6.3a: SLCTs, LCTs and Viewpoint Locations;**
  - **Figure 6.3b: SLCTs, LCTs with ZTV and Viewpoint Locations;**
  - **Figure 6.4a: Landscape Designations and Classifications and Viewpoint Locations;**
  - **Figure 6.4b: Landscape Designations and Classifications with ZTV and Viewpoint Locations;**
  - **Figure 6.5: Visual Receptors with ZTV and Viewpoint Locations;**
  - **Figure 6.6a: Cumulative Developments and Viewpoint Locations;**
  - **Figure 6.6.b: Cumulative ZTV: Towers, An Suidhe and Clachan Flats Wind Farms;**
  - **Figure 6.6c: Cumulative ZTV: Towers, Carraig Gheal and Beinn Glass Wind Farms;**
  - **Figure 6.6d: Cumulative ZTV: Towers and Blarghour Wind Farm;**
  - **Figure 6.6e: Cumulative ZTV: Towers, An Carr Dubh and Ladyfield Wind Farms;**
  - **Figure 6.6f: Cumulative ZTV: Towers, LT29 and LT40 OHLs;** and
  - **Figure 6.6g: Cumulative ZTV: Towers and Creag Dhubh Substation.**
- Volume 3b: Visualisations
  - **Figures 6.7a to 6.7d: Viewpoint 1: A819 North of Tulloch;**
  - **Figures 6.8a to 6.8d: Viewpoint 2: A819 south of Cladich;**
  - **Figures 6.9a to 6.9d: Viewpoint 3: Inveraray castle GDL at the Tower;**
  - **Figures 6.10a to 6.10d: Viewpoint 4: A815 at Hazelbank;**
  - **Figures 6.11a to 6.11d: Viewpoint 5: Public Path at Cruachan Reservoir;**
  - **Figures 6.12a to 6.12d: Viewpoint 6: Monadh Driseig;**
  - **Figures 6.13a to 6.13d: Viewpoint 7: Core Path and Loch an Droighinn;**
  - **Figures 6.14a to 6.14d: Viewpoint 8: A819 at Three Bridges;**
  - **Figures 6.15a to 6.15d: Viewpoint 9: Cruach Mhor;**
  - **Figures 6.16a to 6.16d: Viewpoint 10: Hilltop above Lochan Shira Reservoir (WLA);**
  - **Figures 6.17a to 6.17d: Viewpoint 11: Ardanaiseig GDL;**
  - **Figures 6.18a to 6.18d: Viewpoint 12: Stuc Scardan;** and
  - **Figures 6.19a to 6.19d: Viewpoint 13: Stac a Chuirn.**
- Volume 4: Technical Appendices
  - **Technical Appendix 6.1: Seascape and Landscape Character Types: Description and Sensitivity;**
  - **Technical Appendix 6.2: Landscape Designations and Classifications Descriptions;**
  - **Technical Appendix 6.3: Residual Effects on Seascape and Landscape Character Types;**

- **Technical Appendix 6.4: Residual Effects on Landscape Designations and Classifications;**
- **Technical Appendix 6.5: Wild Land Assessment Consultation;**
- **Technical Appendix 6.6: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment;** and
- **Technical Appendix 6.7: Viewpoint Assessment.**

6.1.4 Figures and technical appendices are referenced in the text where relevant.

6.2 Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

Scope of the Assessment

6.2.1 This chapter considers seascape, landscape and visual effects of the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. It is noted that the Proposed Development, as described in **Chapter 2: Description of the Proposed Development (EIAR Volume 2)**, includes horizontal and vertical Limits of Deviations (LODs) to allow for micro-siting of the proposed tower locations and variation of tower heights (see the tower schedule provided in **Technical Appendix 2.1: Detailed Tower Schedule**). In determining residual effects, the assessment incorporates the likely impact of these changes in location and potential increase in tower height.

6.2.2 This chapter considers effects on:

- landscape fabric, caused by changes to physical elements of the landscape;
- seascape and landscape character, caused by changes in the key characteristics features and qualities of the seascape and /or landscape as a result of the Proposed Development; and
- visual amenity, caused by changes in the views and the visual amenity as a result of the Proposed Development.

6.2.3 The chapter also assesses cumulative effects as arising from the addition of the Proposed Development to other similar cumulative developments within 15 km of the Proposed Development. The extent of this cumulative 'Study Area' is intended to capture developments that might have a bearing on in-addition or in-combination effects despite lying outwith the Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact assessments main 10 km Study Area. This is reflective of the approach adopted in NatureScot's guidance on the visual representation of wind farms[1] which advocates inclusion of cumulative developments outwith the principal Study Area of assessments. **Figure 6.6a: Cumulative Development and Viewpoint Locations (Volume 3a)** illustrates the Proposed Development along with other cumulative developments recorded as operational, consented but as yet not constructed), those in-scoping (where a scoping opinion has been requested but no planning application yet submitted).

6.2.4 The chapter assesses cumulative effects as arising from the Proposed Development in conjunction with other similar developments that are operational, under construction, or consented and exceptionally, at the request of Argyll and Bute Council (ABC), the Ladyfield and Car Dubh Wind Farms at the scoping stage. For the purpose of the assessment, operational and consented developments are taken as part of the baseline context. Other developments at the scoping stage are not included in the assessment as they are liable to change prior to being brought forward as an application and therefore represent a high degree of uncertainty. Similar developments 'in planning' (but not yet determined) are also considered.

6.2.5 The scope of the assessment has been informed by consultation responses summarised in **Table 6-1** and the following guidelines /policies:

- Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. (Third Edition); Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. (2013). (Referenced as GLVIA3 hereafter);

[1] NatureScot (2017) Visual Representation of Wind farms- Guidance Version 2.2 available at https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2019-09/Guidance%20-%20Visual%20representation%20of%20wind%20farms%20-%20Feb%202017.pdf [Accessed August 2022]

- A handbook on environmental impact assessment: Guidance for competent authorities, consultees and others involved in the Environmental Impact Assessment process in Scotland, V5. NatureScot. (2018)[2];
- Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity. Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Agency. (2002)[3]; and
- NatureScot: Assessing impacts on Wild Land Areas - technical guidance (2020).[4]

Extent of the Study Area

6.2.6 A Study Area of 10 km from the Proposed Development is used for the SLVIA based on previous experience of similar developments elsewhere in Scotland. Significant effects (including cumulative effects) are expected to fall within this extent (see **Figure 6.1, EIAR Volume 3a**). The Study Area was agreed in consultation with NatureScot (NS) and ABC.

Consultation Undertaken to Date

6.2.7 Consultation undertaken to date in relation to the SLVIA is summarised in **Table 6-1**. Further information can be found in **Technical Appendix 4.3: Consultation Register (EIAR Volume 4).**

Table 6-1: Consultation Responses

Organisation	Type of Consultation	Response	How response has been considered
NS	Pre-Scoping consultation on cumulative list, April 2022	An assessment of cumulative impacts associated with the development proposal should encompass the impacts of the proposal in combination with: • Existing development, either built or under construction; • Approved development, awaiting implementation; and • Proposals awaiting determination within the planning process with design information in the public domain. Proposals and design information may be deemed to be in the public domain once an application has been lodged, and the decision-making authority has formally registered the application. Occasionally it may be appropriate to include proposals in an assessment which are at earlier stages of development (including at scoping), particularly where clusters of development or "hotspots" emerge, or where proposals are adjacent to one another.	Noted
		Broadly content with cumulative list however due to potential significant interactions should Carr Dhubh and Ladyfield wind farms go beyond scoping stage they should be included in cumulative impact assessment	Noted, these have been included in the cumulative assessment in **Section 6.7**.

[2] https://www.nature.scot/doc/handbook-environmental-impact-assessment-guidance-competent-authorities-consultees-and-others [Accessed April 2022]
[3] http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5146500464115712 [Accessed April 2022]
[4] https://www.nature.scot/doc/assessing-impacts-wild-land-areas-technical-guidance [Accessed August 2202]

Organisation	Type of Consultation	Response	How response has been considered
		based on the currently available information. Confirmation should be sought through ECU.	
	Scoping Response, May 2022	We are broadly content with the approach to the assessment of landscape and visual impacts outlined in the Scoping Report. We note the intention to carry out Wild Land Assessments for the Ben Lui Wild Land Area (WLA) and Loch Etive Mountains WLA for this Proposal.	Additional consultation has been undertaken with NatureScot with regards to the WLIA. **Technical Appendix 5.6, EIAR Volume 4**, was provided to NS which included a review of Zone of theoretical Visibility (ZTV), Relative Wildness and photomontages, to support scoping out a WLIA considering guidance provided by NS. It was then subsequently agreed with NS that the WLIA could be scoped out.
		Cumulative landscape and visual impacts are likely to be key issues for consideration in the EIA Report given other developments in the area. The cumulative landscape and visual impact assessment should take account of the current baseline (i.e. development which is existing or under construction). Other development scenarios; e.g. consented but not constructed schemes should be considered under the cumulative scenarios in accordance with our cumulative guidance.	Noted, this is covered in the cumulative assessment in **Section 6.7**.
		Landscape figures to provided in a ring binder to be send hard copy directly to NatureScot case officer.	Noted
ABC	Pre-scoping consultation on cumulative list, April 2022	Carr Dhubh and Ladyfield Wind Farms should be included in the cumulative assessment and wirelines.	Noted, these have been included in cumulative assessment in **Section 6.7**.
	Scoping Response, June 2022	In respect of the predicted ZTV and proposed viewpoints and the proposed 10 km radius study area of the ZTV this is considered to be acceptable.	Noted
		In respect of landscape designation as and matters to be included within the SLVIA are agreed. The proposed viewpoints are also considered to be acceptable.	Noted
		In respect of the cumulative SLVIA evaluation of Creag Dhubh substation and the proposed S37 from Creag Dhubh to Dalmally (Glen Orchy switch). It would also be useful to include views to the south and west from the Duncan Ban Monument within the SLVIA analysis as parts of the cumulative infrastructure are likely to be visible from this popular location.	Viewpoint 10 is considered to provide a similar view to those proposed, albeit closer to the Proposed Development.

Organisation	Type of Consultation	Response	How response has been considered
		A list of other developments to be considered as part of the cumulative landscape evaluation was provided to the Planning Authority under separate submission by SSEN on 1.6.22. This list is agreed as capturing those existing or likely foreseeable developments at this time. It should however be noted that there is a potential for a large pump hydro scheme at Balliemeanoch to be formally submitted during the application process and this may also require to be considered. Alan Brogan at the ECU is aware of this potential development, and will be able to clarify whether a formal submission has been made under S36 at time of the submission of this proposal.	Noted
		That the SLVIA will identify and evaluate the likely residual effects of the Proposed Development on landscape and visual receptors within 10 km of the Proposed Development. This will be undertaken via desk study and through field reconnaissance. The effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character and on views and visual amenity would be assessed and mitigation measures, where appropriate, would be proposed to prevent, reduce, or offset any likely significant adverse effects identified. Cumulative effects from the Proposed Development in combination with other proposed developments would also be considered….is also welcomed	Noted
ECU	Pre-Scoping consultation on cumulative list, April 2022	ECU agree with list and that Carr Dubh and Ladyfield Wind Farms should be included.	Noted, these have been included in cumulative assessment in **Section 6.7**.
		The ECU would also recommend that Creag Dhubh Substation be included as commitment was given to considering this development in a cumulative impact EIA associated with the main S37 transmission line by SSEN in previous submissions to the Planning Authority.	Noted, these have been included in cumulative assessment in **Section 6.7**.
		The ECU also note that no connection towers between Creag Dhubh Substation and the main transmission line(s) appear to be proposed they are proposed for the four other substations where between two and eight towers are involved). Should any short connection line be required to link the substation into any section of the now two part main S37 transmission line between Dalmally and Inveraray then this too should be included in the cumulative impact assessment.	The OHL is terminated to the gantries within Creag Dhubh substation via downleads from the tower.

Effects Scoped Out

6.2.8 The Proposed Development would not have a fixed operational life as it is assumed to be operational for 50 years or more. Effects associated with the construction phase can be considered to be representative of the worst-case decommissioning effects and therefore decommissioning effects have been scoped out.

6.2.9 In order to achieve consistency with recent assessments for the Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection and Inveraray - Crossaig 275 kV Circuit projects in Argyll the boundaries of the LCTs set out in Carol Anderson and Associates (2017), Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (Capacity Study) have been utilised. These broadly align with those of NatureScot's Landscape Character Type boundaries, however the Upland Glens – Argyll LCT covers a narrower area than the corresponding Capacity Study Mountain Glen LCT. The Mountain Glen LCT includes viewpoint 3 and there is more theoretical visibility shown. All of these factors have contributed to the Capacity Study Mountain Glen LCT being included in the SLVIA whereas the Upland Glens – Argyll LCT being scoped out (in agreement with NS).

6.2.10 Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park (LLNTP), lies 10.3 km southeast of the Proposed Development and falls outwith the 10 km Study Area for the SLVIA and is therefore not considered further.

6.2.11 Following consultation with NatureScot it was agreed that a WLIA would not be necessary, with details on the material provided and justification to be included in the SLVIA (see **Technical Appendix 6.5: Wild Land Assessment Consultation, EIAR Volume 4**).

6.2.12 The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) shows there is no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development within Ardkinglas and Strone Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL00022) has been scoped out (in agreement with NS).

Method of Baseline Data Collation

Desk Study

6.2.13 Initially, a desk study was undertaken to identify the existing landscape and visual context and key receptors within the Study Area. This was informed, in part, by the findings of a preliminary ZTV which indicated the extent of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.

6.2.14 The desk study was undertaken with reference to the following guidance and information:

- Carol Anderson and Associates (2017), Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (Capacity Study)[5];
- Landscape Character Assessment. NatureScot. (2019)[6];
- NatureScot Guidance note Coastal Character Assessment (Version 1a – July 2018)[7];
- Scott, K.E., Anderson, C., Dunsford, H., Benson, J.F. and MacFarlane, R. (2005) - An assessment of the sensitivity and capacity of the Scottish seascape in relation to offshore wind farms. Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No.103 (ROAME No. F03AA06)[8].
- Landscape Character Assessment. The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage. (2002)[9];

[5] https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/landscape-wind-energy-capacity-study [Accessed March 2022]
[6] https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e3b4fbb9fc504cc4abd04e1ebc891d4e&extent=-2030551.0017%2C6851563.2052%2C1100309.6769%2C8923312.4198%2C102100 [Accessed April 2022]
[7] https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2018-07/Guidance%20Note%20-%20Coastal%20Character%20Assessment.pdf [Accessed June 2022]
[8] https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2017-07/Publication%202005%20-%20SNH%20Commissioned%20Report%20103%20-%20An%20assessment%20of%20the%20sensitivity%20and%20capacity%20of%20the%20Scottish%20seascape%20in%20relation%20to%20windfarms.pdf [Accessed June 2022]
[9] https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2018-02/Publication%202002%20-%20Landscape%20Character%20Assessment%20guidance%20for%20England%20and%20Scotland.pdf [Accessed April 2022]

- NatureScot Guidance note Coastal Character Assessment (Version 1a – July 2018)[10];
- Scott, K.E., Anderson, C., Dunsford, H., Benson, J.F. and MacFarlane, R. (2005) - An assessment of the sensitivity and capacity of the Scottish seascape in relation to offshore wind farms. Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No.103 (ROAME No. F03AA06)[11];
- Historic Environment Scotland Designations Map Search12;
- Wild Land Areas map and descriptions. NatureScot (2014)[13];
- Assessing impacts on Wild Land Areas – technical guidance. NatureScot (2020)[14];
- Ordnance Survey Meridian 2 data;
- Ordnance Survey Address Data;
- Ordnance Survey Maps (1:25,000, 1:50,000, 1:250,000); and
- Aerial photography.

6.2.15 **Figures 6.1** to **Figure 6.4 (EIAR Volume 3a**) illustrate the topography, location and extents of landscape designations and classifications and character types within the Study Area with ZTV overlaid on **Figure 6.1**, **Figure 6.3b** and **Figure 6.4b** (**EIAR Volume 3a**).

6.2.16 Additionally, computer generated photomontages have been used to predict operational views of the Proposed Development from viewpoint locations in determining residual effects (see **Figures 6.7** to **Figure 6.19, EIAR Volume 3b**). Wirelines illustrating potential cumulative developments theoretically visible from each viewpoint location have also been created (see **Figures 6.7** to **Figure 6.19, EIAR Volume 3b**). Note that in the case of wirelines this represents a worst-case scenario as 50 m DTM data has been used that does not capture local variations in topography and is a bare-earth representation therefore excluding any screening or filtering provided by vegetation. Where topography and vegetation may screen or filter views of the Proposed Development these are noted in the text and can be cross-referenced with baseline photography.

Field Survey

6.2.17 The findings of the desk study were verified and refined during a series of field visits undertaken by a team of Landscape Architects in March and May 2022.

Limitations and Assumptions

6.2.18 The assessment is based upon available data and geographical information which have inherent limitations. These have been taken into account in the undertaking of the assessment.

6.2.19 The assessment takes account of proposed felling within and adjoining the Operational Corridor and Limit of Deviation (LOD) for the Proposed Development, as described **Chapter 2: Description of Proposed Development (EIAR Volume 2)**. Where the loss of existing forest cover falls outside of the scope of the Proposed Development (i.e. as a part of wider forest management) and would have a bearing upon the level of residual effects this is commented upon, but a comprehensive review of forest management plans has not been undertaken. Note that wirelines produced to illustrate the location of cumulative developments that would be visible at each viewpoint are bare-earth representations and will be used where appropriate to understand the impact of clear-felling in views of the Proposed Development. This approach was agreed with NS.

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10 https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2018-07/Guidance%20Note%20-%20Coastal%20Character%20Assessment.pdf [Accessed June 2022]

11 https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2017-07/Publication%202005%20-%20SNH%20Commissioned%20Report%20103%20-%20An%20assessment%20of%20the%20sensitivity%20and%20capacity%20of%20the%20Scottish%20seascape%20in%20relation%20to%20windfarms.pdf [Accessed June 2022]

12 https://hesportal.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Viewer/index.html?appid=18d2608ac1284066ba3927312710d16d [Accessed May 2022]

13 https://www.nature.scot/doc/wild-land-areas-map-and-descriptions-2014 [Accessed May 2022]

14 https://www.nature.scot/doc/assessing-impacts-wild-land-areas-technical-guidance [Accessed May 2022]

Method of Assessment

6.2.20 The seascape, landscape and visual impact assessment is intended to identify, predict and evaluate potential significant effects arising from the Proposed Development. Wherever possible, identified effects are quantified, but the nature of landscape and visual assessment requires interpretation by professional judgement. In order to provide a level of consistency to the assessment, landscape sensitivity to change, the prediction of magnitude of impact and assessment of significance of the residual effects has been based on pre-defined criteria, the level of effects being determined by a comparison of the sensitivity of receptors and the magnitude of impact arising from the Development.

6.2.21 In order to assist in evaluating the potential landscape and visual effects arising from the Development, ZTVs were generated to identify the potential extent of visibility of the Development over the Study Area (**Figure 6,1, EIAR Volume 3a**). An assessment of the predicted visibility of the Proposed Development from each of the landscape character types, designated and sensitive non-designated landscapes in the Study Area has been carried out by analysing the ZTVs and verifying the findings during field reconnaissance. The visibility assessment has concentrated on the publicly accessible areas including outdoor recreational areas, cycle routes, roads, and the public footpath network.

6.2.22 Mitigation measures which have been incorporated into the final design and layout of the Proposed Development are described, together with a summary of the design optimisation process carried out in parallel with the SLVIA. Further details of the constraints which were identified, and the design process are described in **Chapter 3: Alternatives (EIAR Volume 2)**.

6.2.23 Representative viewpoints were chosen in consultation with ABC, NS and non-statutory consultees in respect of this application. These viewpoints are considered to be representative of the main sensitive receptors in the Study Area. The viewpoints have also been checked against the cumulative ZTVs for existing/consented and developments within the Study Area in order to ensure that they provide representative coverage of potential cumulative visibility and related effects.

6.2.24 Analysis of the potential effects on seascape, landscape and visual amenity arising from the Proposed Development at each of these viewpoints has been carried out. This analysis has involved the production of computer-generated wirelines and/or photomontages to predict the operational views of the Proposed Development from each of the agreed viewpoints. The existing and predicted views from each of these viewpoints have been analysed to identify the magnitude of impact and the residual effects on landscape character and visual amenity at each viewpoint location.

Nature of Effects and Nature of Receptors

6.2.25 As identified in the GLVIA3 the effects are identified by establishing and describing the changes to the landscape and visual baseline resulting from the different components of the Proposed Development and the resulting effects on individual seascape, landscape or visual receptors.

6.2.26 The assessment of effects is derived from a comparison of the sensitivity of receptors and the magnitude of impact anticipated as a result of the construction and operation of the Proposed Development, as indicated in **Table 6-2**. For the purpose of this assessment **Major** and **Major/Moderate** effects are considered significant in landscape and visual terms. It should be noted, however, that significance in landscape and visual terms does not necessarily equate to significance in planning terms, or unacceptable effects in planning terms, especially where significant landscape or visual effects are highly localised.

Table 6-2: Residual Effects

	Magnitude of Impact				
Sensitivity	**Substantial**	**Moderate**	**Slight**	**Negligible**	**None**
High	**Major**	**Major/Moderate**	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	None
Medium	**Major/Moderate**	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor	None
Low	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Minor	None

6.2.27 In line with the recommendations in the GLVIA*3* the matrix is not used as a prescriptive tool or arithmetically, and the methodology and analysis of potential effects at any particular location must allow for the exercise of professional judgement. Descriptions of residual effects, especially those considered significant, are described in narrative text.

6.2.28 Landscape and visual effects can be adverse (i.e., having a detrimental effect on the physical elements, character and visual amenity of the area) or beneficial (i.e., having a positive effect on the landscape and visual amenity of the area through strengthening or augmentation of baseline conditions and/or improvement of the existing landscape or views). For the purposes of this assessment residual effects are assumed to be adverse, unless stated otherwise.

6.2.29 Cumulative assessments in the SLVIA address both in-addition (i.e., impacts and effects attributable specifically to the Proposed Development when considered in conjunction with other energy developments) as well as in-combination impacts and effects (the total effect of the Proposed Development and other energy developments, taken together).

6.2.30 The cumulative assessment also takes into account a number of different development scenarios:

- the Proposed Development with other operational and consented developments;
- the Proposed Development in conjunction with operational, consented developments;
- the Proposed Development with operational, consented, in planning developments; and
- the Proposed Development in conjunction with operational, consented, in planning, and in scoping developments.

Sensitivity of Receptor

Criteria for Assessing Landscape Sensitivity

6.2.31 The sensitivity of the landscape to change is defined as High, Medium or Low based on professional interpretation of a combination of its susceptibility to change associated with the type of development proposed, and the value attributed to the landscape.

6.2.32 The following parameters were therefore applied in determining the sensitivity of the seascapes and landscapes within the Study Area:

- the demonstrable value placed on the seascape or landscapes, such as designations or classifications;
- seascape and landscape quality;
- existing land-use;
- the pattern and scale of the landscape;
- visual enclosure/openness of views and distribution of visual receptors;
- the scope for mitigation, which would be in character with the existing landscape; and
- the degree to which the particular element or characteristic contribution to the landscape character and can be replaced or substituted.

6.2.33 In determining value, the SLVIA uses, as its primary indicator, formal landscape designations. Where other clearly defined indicators were identified, these have also been referred to. The elements of the landscape that are not defined by these but augment these criteria are determined by professional judgment, for example landscape and scenic quality, recreational value and representativeness. The approach aligns with that set out in the GLVIA3.

Criteria for Assessing Visual Sensitivity

6.2.34 Visual receptor sensitivity is also defined as High, Medium or Low based on an interpretation of a combination of parameters, and also relates to the susceptibility and value ascribed to visual receptors or receptor locations. The following criteria were utilised in determining viewpoint sensitivity:

- the land use or main activity at the viewpoint/receptor location and expectation of receptors;
- the role or contribution of the viewpoint to the perception and experience of the wider seascape/ landscape or visual receptor;
- the frequency and duration of use of receptor location; and
- the seascape/landscape character and quality.

6.2.35 In relation to land use at the viewpoint, visual sensitivity is summarised as follows:

- High - Tourists and users of outdoor recreational facilities including formal vantage points, strategic recreational footpaths, cycle routes, kayak trails or rights of way, whose attention would be focused on the seascape and landscape; important seascape/landscape features with physical, cultural or historic attributes; views from residential buildings; beauty spots or picnic areas. Tourists utilising key routes to access the region;
- Medium – Users of local footpaths, local road users/people travelling through the landscape and along the coast on roads, trains or other transport routes of local importance; and
- Low - People engaged in outdoor sports or recreation (other than those where appreciation of the seascape/landscape is an expectation), commercial buildings, and other locations where people's attention may be focused on their work or activity. People in commercial buildings, and other locations where people's attention may be focused on their work or activity.

Magnitude of Impact

6.2.36 Detailed consideration of the magnitude of impact is a standard component of the SLVIA. It is incorporated to succinctly describe the scale of individual impacts. The magnitude of impact is predicted quantitatively where possible, taking into account the duration and reversibility of effects, and is considered spatially and temporally as described within **Table 6-3**. Effects can be adverse, neutral or beneficial. Unless otherwise stated all impacts are considered to be adverse within this SLVIA.

6.2.37 The magnitude of impact arising from the Proposed Development is described as Substantial, Moderate, Slight, Negligible, or None based on the interpretation of a combination of largely quantifiable parameters, as follows:

- the distance of receptors from the Proposed Development;
- the frequency and duration of predicted changes and whether they are reversible;
- the size and scale of the change anticipated;
- the geographical extent of the Study Area and landscape character units, designation or route that would be affected;
- the angle of view in relation to main receptor activity or outlook;
- the degree of contrast with the baseline context;
- whether the Proposed Development is backclothed or skylined; and

- the extent and nature of other built development visible, including vertical elements.

6.2.38 The SLVIA thresholds adopted for the definition of the magnitude of impact are set out in **Table 6-3**.

Table 6-3: Description of Magnitude of Impact

Magnitude of Impact	Description
Substantial	Equates to a total loss or considerable (large scale and/or extensive) alteration/interruption of key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape character and/or composition of views resulting in a Substantial change to baseline conditions.
Moderate	Representing a notable (easily apparent) or partial loss or alteration to one or more key features or characteristics of the baseline, resulting in localised change within a broader unaltered context.
Slight	A discernible loss or alteration (evident but not prominent, large scale or extensive) to one or more key elements, features or characteristics of baseline conditions. Despite this change, the landscape/view would be similar to that of the baseline.
Negligible	Equating to a very limited or even imperceptible loss or alteration to one or more key elements/characteristics of the baseline. Change may be barely discernible.
None/ No impact	No aspect of the Proposed Development would be discernible and no alteration to baseline conditions would be apparent.

Cumulative Effects

6.2.39 The criteria utilised in ascribing cumulative magnitude of impact throughout this assessment are set out in **Table 6-4**.

Table 6-4: Description of Cumulative Magnitude of Impact

Magnitude Cumulative of Impact	Description
Substantial	The Proposed Development would represent a considerable increase in the influence of grid infrastructure and/or energy developments on the character of the landscape and/or the composition of views
Moderate	The Proposed Development would represent a notable increase in the influence of energy development on the character of landscape and/or the composition of views. Moderate cumulative change equates to a localised change within an otherwise unaltered context.
Slight	The Proposed Development would represent a minor addition to the influence of energy development on the character of the landscape and/or the composition of views. The change would be discernible, but the original baseline conditions would be largely unaltered.
Negligible	The Proposed Development would represent a barely discernible addition to influence of energy development on the character of the landscape and/or the composition of views. The baseline condition of the landscape or view would, for all intents and purposes, be unaffected.
None/ No Impact	No other cumulative development would be apparent.

6.3 Baseline Conditions

Current Baseline

Landscape Receptors

Landscape Fabric

6.3.1 The topography and hydrological features of the Study Area are illustrated in **Figure 6.2, EIAR Volume 3a**. The figure indicates that the topography between Loch Awe to the north and Loch Fyne to the south is a mountainous landscape incised by lochs, rivers and burns creating a highly varied landform.

6.3.2 The Proposed Development would be situated in areas of commercial forestry, areas of open moorland and rough pasture.

Seascape and Landscape Character

6.3.3 There are two landscape character assessments of relevance to the SLVIA which are:

- Carol Anderson and Associates (2017), Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (Capacity Study)[15]; and
- NatureScot (2019) Landscape Character Type map and associated descriptions[16].

6.3.4 The constituent landscape character types (LCTs) within the Study Area are described in **Technical Appendix 6.2: Landscape Character Types: Description and Sensitivity (EIAR Volume 4)**. These are based on the boundaries (see **Figure 6.3, EIAR Volume 3a**) and descriptions provided in the Capacity Study as per precedence based on the Inveraray - Crossaig 275 kV Circuit and the Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection that have been prepared by Ramboll previously in consultation with ABC, NS and the ECU.

6.3.5 There are eight LCTs within the Study Area that are subject to potential views of the Proposed Development. These comprise:

- Steep Ridges and Mountains (1);
- High Tops (2);
- Mountain Glens (4);
- Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic (6a);
- Craggy Upland (7);
- Craggy Upland with Settled Glens (7a);
- North Loch Awe Craggy Upland (7c); and
- Rocky Mosaic (20).

6.3.6 It should be noted that, whilst the Capacity Study contains useful descriptions of the baseline landscape of Argyll and Bute, the analysis of sensitivity it contains relates specifically to wind energy developments. The sensitivity rating given to each landscape character type in the SLVIA is based on an analysis of the value of the landscape and the susceptibility of the landscape to grid infrastructure of the type being proposed.

6.3.7 In addition to the LCTs there is a single seascape character type (SCT) present in the Study Area that would be subject to potential views of the Proposed Development, that of Loch Fyne/Kilbrannan Sound (25)[17].

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[15] https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/landscape-wind-energy-capacity-study [Accessed March 2022]

[16] https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e3b4fbb9fc504cc4abd04e1ebc891d4e&extent=-2030551.0017%2C6851563.2052%2C1100309.6769%2C8923312.4198%2C102100 [Accessed March 2022]

[17] Based on the findings of Scott, K.E., Anderson, C., Dunsford, H., Benson, J.F. and MacFarlane, R. (2005) - An assessment of the sensitivity and capacity of the Scottish seascape in relation to offshore wind farms. Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No.103 (ROAME No. F03AA06) ;

6.3.8 Theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development within the foregoing LCTs and SCT is shown in **Figure 6.3b, EIAR Volume 3a.**

Landscape Designations

6.3.9 The location and extent of landscape designations are shown on **Figure 6.4a, EIAR Volume 3a** with their key characteristics and sensitivity rating set out in **Table 6-5** and **Technical Appendix 6.3 Landscape Designations and Classifications Descriptions (EIAR Volume 4)**. For the purposes of the SLVIA these designations have been assumed to have a High sensitivity (i.e. a High value and High susceptibility to the type of development proposed). Theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development within these landscape designations is shown in **Figure 6.4b, EIAR Volume 3a.**

6.3.10 Designated and classified landscapes of relevance to the SLVIA are set out in **Table 6-5**.

Table 6-5: Landscape Designations

Designation / Landscape Classification	Approximate distance & direction from the Proposed Development	Key Characteristics	Sensitivity rating
Argyll and Bute Area of Panoramic Quality (APQ)[18]			
North Argyll APQ	Proposed Development lies within this designated area	Scenic landscape whose intricate pattern of land-use, small-scale shore fringes variable landform are juxtaposed against dramatic rugged mountains seen across water.	High
Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDLs)[19]			
Ardanaiseig House (GDL00018)	4.9 km north	Set within extensive policy woodlands on Low-lying headland the 18th century Ardanaiseig House estate includes gardens, parkland and architectural features.	High
Inveraray Castle (GDL00223).	70 m east	Culturally significant designed estate landscape with surrounding grounds, extensive woodlands and planned town on northeastern shore of Loch Fyne including Dun Na Cuiche watchtower on recognisable promontory.	High

Visual Amenity

Settlements

6.3.11 Settlements are concentrated along loch shores and the Argyll coastline. The steep and inaccessible topography of the wider landscape has dictated their location. Those with theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development include:

- Inveraray: 18th century designed town which, at its closest, is located on the north eastern shore of Loch Fyne, approximately 3.3 km to the south, south east of the Proposed Development; and
- Lochawe: village on the northern coast of Loch Awe along the A85, which, at its closest, is approximately 8.9 km to the northeast of the Proposed Development.

[18] There is no citation for the APQ. Instead, its special qualities have been derived from the Capacity Study.

[19] Inventory sites included in Historic Scotland's online records at https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/gardens-and-designed-landscapes/what-is-the-inventory-of-gardens-and-designed-landscapes/ [Accessed July 2022]

Individual Residential Properties

6.3.12 Outwith these settlements are scattered individual properties and small clusters of dwellings. A detailed search was undertaken to identify residential dwellings within 1 km of the Proposed Development and an assessment of the effects on the visual amenity of these properties has been undertaken (**Technical Appendix 6.6: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA), EIAR Volume 4)**. The finalised list of dwellings included in the RVAA was consulted with ABC and NatureScot (NS).

Transport Routes

6.3.13 Transportation routes across the Study Area are generally aligned to glens, valleys and loch shores (see **Figure 6.5, EIAR Volume 3a**). The ZTV indicates visibility from the following routes:

- A819: links the A85 near Dalmally following the eastern shoreline of Loch Awe to Claddich were it turns south climbing to the top of Glen Aray winding down to the west of the river before joining the A83 at Inveraray. The Proposed Development runs parallel to it within Glen Aray, the closest tower is 38 m to the west. Views to the hillsides on either side are filtered by roadside vegetation and embankments but occasionally glimpsed; long-distance views along the road corridor towards Loch Fyne and the Ben Cruachan massive are seen when the route aligns in those directions. It is used by both local, tourist and heavy goods vehicle traffic.
- A83: enters the Study Area from Glen Kinglas, skirting along the northern coast of Loch Fyne and passing through Inveraray before turning inland through the Auchindrain pass. At its closest, this route is situated 3 km southeast of the Proposed Development. This is a key tourist route providing a sequence of loch side views and linking key settlements in Argyll.
- The A815: connects the A83 (Glen Kinglas) to the A886 at Clachan on the eastern side of Loch Fyne. At its closest, this route is situated around 5.7 km southeast of the Proposed Development.
- The A85: runs along the northern shore Loch Awe within the Study Area running parallel to the West Highland Railway Line. At its closest it is 6.7 km north of the Proposed Development. It is a key tourist route providing views out over Loch Awe.
- The B845: begins at the A85 outside of Taynuilt and terminates at North Port near Kilchrenan. At its closest point it is 4.6 km northwest of the Proposed Development; and
- The Crianlarich to Oban spur of the West Highland Railway Line, which, at its nearest, is 6.5 km to the north of the Proposed Development and runs parallel to the A85 in North Loch Awe.

Recreation Receptors

6.3.14 National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 78 forms part of the Caledonia Way long-distance cycle route that connects Campbelltown and Inverness. It crosses through the northern portion of the Study Area, approximately 5.7 km to the northwest of the Proposed Development at its closest point, north of Loch Awe.

6.3.15 Within the western part of the Study Area there is a network of Argyll and Bute Adopted Core Paths (see **Figure 6.5, EIAR Volume 3a)**. Those paths which have theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development include:

- C200(b) - Coille Bhraghad-Queens Drive-Inveraray;
- C201 - Dun Na Cuaiche, Inveraray;
- C450 – Duncan Ban McIntyre monument, Dalmally; and
- 171(b) – Kilmore – Loch Nant – Kilchrenan.

6.3.16 Loch Awe and Loch Fyne are popular areas for water sports enthusiasts and at their closest, are situated approximately 3.5 km to the west and east of the Proposed Development, respectively.

6.3.17 Valued views in the Study Area which are considered include:

- views across open water from many vantage points along the shores of Loch Awe and Loch Fyne such as Inveraray Castle;
- the Cruachan Visitor Centre and the loch-side roads;
- from the elevated monuments on hill tops such as Dun na Cuaiche; and
- elevated views from the mountain summits in the north and east of the Study Area including Beinn Ghlas (550 mAOD) and the western ridge of Bein Bhuidhe including Stac a Chuirn (870 mAOD).

6.3.18 The SLVIA also considers impacts on hill walkers including the experience of the journey along the key walking routes and the approach to (and view from) key summits. This is included as part of the viewpoint assessment (see **Table 6-6** and **Technical Appendix 6.7: Viewpoint Assessment, EIAR Volume 4**).

Viewpoints

6.3.19 To inform and verify the findings of the SLVIA, a series of representative viewpoints were utilised. These were selected in consultation with NatureScot and ABC. These are intended to represent a range of landscape and visual receptors located within in the Study Area and at different distances, directions and elevations relative to the Proposed Development. These are listed in the **Table 6-6** and their locations shown in all Figures.

Table 6-6: Viewpoint Locations

VP	VP Name	Approximate Coordinates (x,y) Distance from Proposed Development [20]	Representative of View From
01	A819 north of Tullich	209153, 716726 0.2 km east	• A819 Road, used by tourists and commuters • Rocky Mosaic (20)
02	A819 south of Cladich	209678, 718721 0.7 km east	• A-road, used by tourists and commuters • North Argyll Area of Panoramic Quality (APQ) • North Loch Awe Craggy Upland (7c)
03	Inveraray castle GDL at the Tower	209988, 710156 2.5 km south east	• Garden and Designed Landscape • Area of Panoramic Quality • Mountain Glens (4)
04	A815 at Hazelbank	209416, 704211 7 km south	• Long distance view from south of Loch Fyne • Local road users • North Argyll APQ • Rocky Mosaic LCT (20) and Loch Fyne/Kilbrannan Sound STC (25)
05	Public Path at Cruachan Reservoir	208128, 728111 8.3 km north	• Area of Panoramic Quality • Local attraction (tourists) • High Tops (2)
06	Monadh Driseig	211322, 728181 8.8 km north	• Hill walkers • North Argyll APQ • On southern boundary of Loch Etive Mountains Wild Land Area (WLA)

[20] Distance is approximate and is measured from the closest part of the Proposed Development to the VP; direction is from the Proposed Development to the VP.

VP	VP Name	Approximate Coordinates (x,y) Distance from Proposed Development [20]	Representative of View From
			• High Tops (2)
07	Core Path at Loch an Droighinn	202568, 723799 3.9 km north west	• Core Path users • Craggy Upland (7)
08	A819 at Three Bridges	208841, 712462 0.7 km east	• A819 Road, used by tourists and commuters • Northern boundary of Inveraray Castle GDL • Rocky Mosaic (20)
09	Cruach Mhor	205699, 714747 3 km west	• Hill walkers • Craggy Upland (7)
10	Hilltop above Lochan Shira Reservoir	215744, 720918 6.4 km north east	• Hill Walkers • Ben Lui WLA • North Argyll APQ • High Tops (2) and North Loch Awe Craggy Upland (7c)
11	Ardanaiseig House GDL	208953, 724523 5.0 km north	• Hotel guests • Rocky Mosaic (20)
12	Stuc Scardan summit	211094, 714773 2.3 km east	• Hill walkers • Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic (6a)
13	Stac a Chuirn	219153, 718094 9.4 km east	• Hill walkers • North Argyll APQ • Ben Lui WLA • High Tops (2)

Future Baseline

6.3.20 In the absence of the Proposed Development, wind farm developments such as the consented Blarghour wind farm, as well as other grid infrastructure, would further expand the influence of such developments. Additionally, rotational felling of commercial forestry and the inclusion of existing and proposed tracks and forest infrastructure will continue to be a characteristic element of the landscape.

Sensitive Receptors

Landscape Receptors

6.3.21 The following LCTs and SCT, or parts therein, are considered to have a High sensitivity to the type of development proposed:

- High Tops (2);
- Edges of Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic (6a);
- Edges of Craggy Upland (7);
- Edges of Craggy Upland with Settled Glens (7a);
- Edges of North Loch Awe Craggy Upland (7c);
- Rocky Mosaic (20); and
- Loch Fyne/Kilbrannan Sound (25).

6.3.22 Landscape designations and classifications within the Study Area are considered to have a High sensitivity to the type of development proposed include:

- North Argyll APQ;
- Ardenaisaig House; and
- Inveraray Castle.

Visual Receptors:

6.3.23 Sensitive visual receptors include:

- Settlements, including Lochawe and Inveraray, as well as scattered residential dwellings within 1 km of the Proposed Development.
- Recreational receptors (including cyclists, walkers, hill walkers, water sports enthusiasts).
- Road users include tourists on the following routes
  - The A819;
  - The A83;
  - The A815;
  - The A85; and
  - The B845.

6.4 Assessment of Potential Effects

Potential Effects

Potential Construction Effects

Landscape Fabric

6.4.1 The landscape fabric within the Site (the Proposed Development including the LOD's, approximately 600 ha) is of Medium value owing to human interventions in terms of vegetation cover (pasture and coniferous forestry), with a Medium susceptibility to the type of development proposed. Consequently, its sensitivity would be Medium.

6.4.2 During construction the Proposed Development would have a direct impact on vegetation cover within the construction envelope, primarily associated with felling of woodland to form the Operational Corridor. With the exception of the felled woodland in the Operation Corridor, which would not be replanted, these impacts would, however, be localised and represent a Moderate impact, and a Moderate effect, which would not be significant. Effects within felled corridors would, however, be **Major/Moderate** (significant) due to the substantial change to characteristic vegetation.

Landscape Character

6.4.3 During construction potential effects on seascape and landscape character would primarily relate to the loss of vegetation within the Site excavation of tower compounds and the erection of towers. These aspects have the potential to adversely affect SCTs and LCTs through the introduction of movement associated with construction plant and people, stockpiling and the construction of access tracks, as well as the large scale engineered elements such as towers to hillsides and skylines which form key elements to a number of sensitive seascapes and landscapes. Such construction impacts would, however, be temporary. and associated with felling, leading to long-term or permanent impacts and represent potentially significant, albeit localised, effects.

6.4.4 **Table 6-7** summarises the potential construction impacts on seascape and landscape receptors within the Study Area. See **Technical Appendix 6.1** and **Technical Appendix 6.3, EIAR Volume 4** for full breakdown of sensitivity ratings and magnitude of impact.

Table 6-7: Summary of Potential Effects on SCT and LCTs during Construction

Seascape or Landscape Character Type	Sensitivity to the type of development proposed	Magnitude of Impact-Construction	Effect
Steep Ridgeland and Mountains (1)	Medium	Slight magnitude of impact.	Moderate/Minor (not significant).
High Tops (2)	High	Slight magnitude of impact.	Moderate (not significant).
Mountain Glens (4)	Medium	Localised areas of Moderate magnitude of impact; overall a Slight magnitude of impact.	Moderate to Moderate/ minor (not significant).
Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic (6a)	Overall Medium; High within Glen Aray	Substantial magnitude of impact within Glen Aray; Negligible within remainder of LCT.	**Major** (significant) to Minor effects would be localised and concentrated in the more sensitive Glen Aray part of the LCT.
Craggy Upland (7)	Medium	Localised area of Moderate magnitude of impact; overall magnitude of impact would be Slight.	Moderate to Moderate/Minor (not significant).
Craggy Upland with Settled Glens (7a)	Medium	Negligible magnitude of impact.	Minor (not significant).
North Loch Awe Craggy Upland (7c)	Medium	Localised Substantial magnitude of impact; overall Slight magnitude of impact.	Localised **Major/ Moderate** (significant) to Moderate/minor (non-significant)
Rocky Mosaic (20)	High	Within the River Aray unit there would be Substantial magnitude of impact; overall a Slight magnitude of impact.	Localised **Major** (significant) effect in River Aray Unit, reducing to Moderate (non-significant) elsewhere
Loch Fyne/Kilbrannan Sound (25)	High	Slight magnitude of impact.	Moderate (non-significant)

Landscape Designations

6.4.5 The key designations liable to potential impacts from the construction of the Proposed Development include the North Argyll APQ and Inveraray Castle GDL; Ardanaiseig GDL.

6.4.6 The construction of the Proposed Development would introduce movement associated with construction plant, stockpiling and the construction of access tracks, as well as the large scale engineered elements (erection of the towers themselves) to hillsides and skylines which form key elements to these designations and classifications. Construction activities would largely be temporary in nature, with the exception of the felling of forestry which would result in long-term or permanent changes to the landscape.

6.4.7 All designations and classifications assessed have a High sensitivity to the type of development proposed, see **Technical Appendix 6.2, EIAR Volume 4** for further details.

6.4.8 During construction there would be direct impacts on the North Argyll APQ. Within this localised area the magnitude of impact would be Substantial during construction. Within the wider area the magnitude of impact would be Slight during construction, equating to a Moderate effect which would not be significant.

6.4.9 Inveraray Castle GDL would have a Moderate magnitude of impact during construction equating to **Major/Moderate** (significant) effect. Ardanaiseig GDL would have a Slight magnitude of impact, and Moderate effects (non-significant).

Visual Amenity- Settlements

6.4.10 During construction of the Proposed Development there is the potential for adverse effects on the amenity of residents of settlements and scattered dwellings within the immediate area, limited to properties within Glen Aray. Note that scattered properties within Glen Aray are assessed separately within **Technical Appendix 6.6: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment, EIAR Volume 4**. There are two settlements that would be subject to potential impacts from the construction of the Proposed Developments, Inveraray and Lochawe.

Inveraray

6.4.11 The ZTV in **Figure 6.1, EIAR Volume 3a**, shows theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development within Inveraray. However, based on the findings of field reconnaissance, intervening local topography and vegetation would screen the majority of views towards the Site. Therefore there would be Negligible impacts and Moderate/Minor effects on this settlement, which would not be significant.

Lochawe

6.4.12 The northernmost parts of the Site around Creag Dhubh would be theoretically visible in views from Lochawe village. Where vegetation does not obscure views towards the Site, movement associated with construction would be visible. These impacts would be short-term, temporary. The magnitude of impact would be Negligible, equating to a Moderate/Minor effect, which would not be significant.

Visual Amenity- Transport Routes

6.4.13 Visibility of the Proposed Development is limited to the following transport routes:

- The A819;
- The A83;
- The A815: infrequent glimpsed views across Loch Fyne;
- The A85: highly constrained glimpsed views; and
- The B845: views available from vantage points.

A819

6.4.14 Whilst extensive visibility is indicated in the ZTV in **Figure 6.5: Visual Receptors with ZTV and Viewpoint Locations**, actual visibility is likely to be constrained along much of this route by a combination of vegetation and topography. However, during construction, site plant, operatives, stockpiles, construction compounds, and the construction of towers are likely be visible close by the road at the northern end of Glen Aray. Notwithstanding this, the limited proportion of the route affected, the brief/transitional experience of road users, and the short duration of the construction impacts the magnitude of impact is anticipated to be Slight, equating to a Moderate/Minor (non-significant) effect on the amenity of this route. Viewpoint 1: A819 North of Tullich, Viewpoint 2: A819 south of Cladich, and Viewpoint 8: A819 at Three Bridges are indicative of views from a section of this route (**Figures 6.7a** to **6.7d**, **6.8a** to **6.8d** and **6.14a to 6d**, **EIAR Volume 3a**).

A83

6.4.15 The construction of the Proposed Development would theoretically be visible from limited proportion of this key regional route, by Inveraray. However, such visibility would, in fact, likely to be obscured by a combination of intervening topography, vegetation and built structures. Consequently, there is unlikely to be a discernible impact or residual effects on the amenity of this route as a result of the construction activities (no residual effect).

A815

6.4.16 Extensive theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is indicated between Strachur and St. Catherine's. However, such visibility is likely to be restricted by intervening vegetation between Creggans and St. Catherine's. Moreover, where visible, construction operations would be seen distantly and only concern the erection of proposed towers. Given the likely restricted visibility, transitional experience of road users and the short duration of construction works, the magnitude of impact is anticipated to be Negligible, and the residual effect on the amenity of this route would be Moderate/Minor in respect of tourists and Minor in respect of local road users/commuters. Neither effect would be significant. Viewpoint 4: A815 at Hazelbank is indicative of views from sections of this route (see **Figures 6.10a** to **6.10d: Viewpoint 4, EIAR Volume 3a**).

A85

6.4.17 Extensive theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is indicated between the Pass of Brandon Power Station and Drishaig. However, such visibility would be transitory and would be filtered through lochside vegetation. Where visible, the Proposed Development would be seen at distances of over 6.5 km, the erection of the proposed towers would just be evident on the distant horizon formed by the uplands and commercial forestry south of Cladich.

6.4.18 Given the anticipated restricted visibility of the Proposed Development, the transitional experience of road users and the short duration of construction works, the magnitude of impact anticipated would be Negligible, and the residual effect on the amenity of this route would be Moderate/Minor in respect of tourists and Minor in respect of local road users/commuters. Neither effect is considered significant.

B845

6.4.19 Views of the Proposed Development's construction would be confined to around 0.5 km of this route, by Barachander. From where the erection of the Proposed Development's towers are expected to be visible around 6 km to the southeast, forming a minor and temporary element on the horizon.

6.4.20 Given the limited visibility of the Proposed Development, from this route the transitional experience of road users and the short duration of construction works, the magnitude of impact anticipated would be Negligible, and the residual effect on the amenity of this route would be Moderate/Minor in respect of tourists and cyclists on the NCR, and Minor in respect of local road users/commuters. Consequently, construction operations are not expected to result in significant effects on the amenity of this route.

Visual Amenity- Recreational Receptors

NCN Route 78

6.4.21 During construction, operations would be backclothed on the Creag Dhubh hillside in the middle-distance. The short-term, temporary changes would form a small, discernible part of views. There is likely to be a Slight magnitude of impact on NCN Route 78 during construction, equating to a localised Moderate (non-significant) effect.

Core Paths

6.4.22 Core paths are used for recreational purposes and as such the receptors will have a High sensitivity. The magnitude of potential impact on the visual amenity of walkers on core path receptors is anticipated to be as follows:

- C200(b) - Coille Bhraghad-Queens Drive-Inveraray: theoretical visibility is limited to a section of recently felled coniferous forestry which would allow views of backclothed towers until forestry grows and obscures views. During construction movement, stockpiles and access tracks would be visible. Changes would be short-term, temporary. The magnitude of impact would be Moderate, equating to a temporary **Major/Moderate** (significant) effect.
- C201 - Dun Na Cuaiche, Inveraray: in views from the path across Glen Aray the Proposed Development would be seen backclothed in the mid-distance. During construction movement, wind-direction dependent noise, lighting, stockpiles and access tracks would be visible. Changes would be short-term, temporary. The magnitude of impact would be Moderate equating to a temporary **Major/Moderate** (significant) effect on the amenity of this route.
- C450 – Ducan Ban McIntyre monument, Dalmally: The Proposed Development would be seen in the distance, backclothed and make up a small proportion of the view. During construction movement of construction plant and access tracks would be discernible in views. The magnitude of impact would be Slight equating to a Moderate (non-significant) effect.
- 171(b) – Kilmore – Loch Nant – Kilchrenan: intervening topography would screen the Proposed Development from view (see **Viewpoint 7: Core Path and Loch an Droighinn , EIAR Volume 3a**). As there would be no visibility this core path is not considered further.

Loch Fyne and Loch Awe

6.4.23 Recreational users on Loch Fyne and Loch Awe would have a High sensitivity. In views from Loch Fyne and Loch Awe, the Proposed Development would be seen backclothed on the hillside above Inveraray. The magnitude of impact would be Slight owing to movement, stockpiles and access tracks forming a small, discernible element in views, equating to a Moderate effect which would not be significant.

Cruachan Visitors Centre

6.4.24 Visitors to Cruachan Visitor Centre would have a High sensitivity. The Proposed Development would be seen in the distance, backclothed and low-lying within the landscape. During construction movement of plant and materials would form a discernible element in views, the magnitude of impact would be Slight, constituting a Moderate (non-significant) effect.

Potential Operational Effects

Landscape Fabric

6.4.25 During operation, following the reinstatement of temporary construction works (e.g. compounds and temporary access tracks) the main impacts on landscape fabric would relate to areas felled for the Operational Corridor and permanent access tracks. These would be permanent impacts. The magnitude of impact would be Slight, and the residual effect would be Moderate and not significant.

Seascape and Landscape Character

6.4.26 During operation impacts on seascape and landscape character would relate to the introduction of towers, conductors, and the permanent removal of characteristic vegetation in the Operational Corridor vegetation and permanent access tracks. These impacts would be permanent.

6.4.27 **Table 6-8** summarises the operational impacts and effects on seascape and landscape receptors within the Study Area. See **Technical Appendix 6.1** and **Technical Appendix 6.3, EIAR Volume 4** for full breakdown of sensitivity ratings and magnitude of impact.

Table 6-8: Summary of Magnitude of Impact on SCT and LCTs during Operation

Seascape or Landscape Character Type	Sensitivity to the type of development proposed	Magnitude of Impact	Effect
Steep Ridgeland and Mountains (1)	Medium	Negligible	Minor (not significant)
High Tops (2)	High	Slight	Moderate (not significant)
Mountain Glens (4)	Medium	Slight	Moderate (not significant)
Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic (6a)	Overall Medium; High within Glen Aray	Substantial	**Major**/ Moderate (significant)
Craggy Upland (7)	Medium	Slight to Negligible	Moderate/Minor to Minor (not significant)
Craggy Upland with Settled Glens (7a)	Medium	Negligible	Minor (not significant)
North Loch Awe Craggy Upland (7c)	Medium	Moderate to Slight	Moderate to Moderate/Minor (not significant)
Rocky Mosaic (20)	High	Substantial to Negligible	**Major** (significant) to Moderate /Minor (not significant)
Loch Fyne/Kilbrannan Sound (25)	High	Negligible	Moderate/Minor (not significant)

Landscape Designations

6.4.28 During operation impacts on landscape designations would be of localised extent and Moderate impact; within the wider area the magnitude of impact would be Slight.

6.4.29 During operation the magnitude of impact on Inveraray Castle GDL would be Slight and Negligible for Ardanaiseig GDL, equating to potential Moderate and Moderate/Minor (non-significant) effects.

Visual Amenity-Settlements

Inveraray

6.4.30 The Proposed Development would be screened from the majority of the settlement by a combination of intervening built forms, vegetation and topography and where visible would form a small element on the skyline inland, away from the critical views across Loch Fyne. In this context the magnitude of impact on the amenity of the settlement would be Negligible, equating to a Moderate/Minor effect that would not be significant.

Lochawe Village

6.4.31 During operation the Proposed Development would introduce additional vertical elements to the Creag Dhubh hillside and felling of the Operational Corridor that would be discernible within views from Lochawe village. Impacts would be long-term, permanent. The magnitude of impact would be Slight and the effect on the amenity of the settlement would be Moderate and non-significant.

6.4.32 During operation, additional vertical elements and the break in forest cover associated with felling of the Operational Corridor would be barely noticeable within the wider panoramic views. The magnitude of impact would be Negligible, equating to a long term/permanent Moderate/Minor effect.

Transport Routes

A819

6.4.33 During operation the Proposed Development is expected to introduce new, large scale engineered structural elements and access tracks to Glen Aray. Some towers would be skylined, particularly where the A819 runs close to the Proposed Development. Changes would be long-term, permanent and prominent with consequent potential for localised substantial impacts and **Major** (significant) effects in respect of tourists and **Major/Moderate** (significant) in respect of local road users and commuters. Such significant effects would be concentrated at locations at the northern extents of Glen Aray, principally where the Proposed Development crosses and/or runs alongside the A819 (approximately 3 km of the glen in total, north of Tullich, where works would be visible on the open slopes of the glen side (See **Figures 6.7a** to **6.7d, 6.8a** to **6.8d and 6.14a** to **6d**, **EIAR Volume 3a**)

A83

6.4.34 The Proposed Development would theoretically be visible from limited extent of this route, by Inveraray. However, such visibility would, in fact, be obscured by a combination of intervening topography, vegetation and built structures. Consequently, no discernible impact or residual effects is expected on this route.

A815

6.4.35 Extensive theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development if predicted between Strachur and St. Catherine's. However, such visibility is expected to be restricted by intervening vegetation between Creggans and St. Catherine's. Where visible, the Proposed Developments towers would be seen distantly and only concern the erection of proposed towers. Given the restricted visibility, transitional experience of road users and the short duration of construction works, the magnitude of impact would be Negligible, and the residual effect on the amenity of this route would be Moderate/Minor in respect of tourists and Minor in respect of local road users/commuters. Neither effect is likely to be significant (See **Figures 6.10a** to **6.10d, EIAR Volume 3a**).

A85

6.4.36 Extensive theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is indicated between the Pass of Brandon Power Station and Drishaig. Such visibility, however, would be transitory and filtered through lochside vegetation. Where visible, the Proposed Development would be seen at distances of over 6.5 km, the erection of the proposed towers just evident on the distant horizon formed by the uplands and commercial forestry south of Cladich.

6.4.37 Given the partly restricted visibility of the Proposed Development, the transitional experience of road users and the short duration of construction works, the magnitude of impact is expected to be Negligible, and the residual effect on the amenity of this route would be Moderate/Minor in respect of tourists and Minor in respect of local road users/commuters. Neither effect would be significant.

B845

6.4.38 Views of the Proposed Development are likely to be confined to around 0.5 km of this route, by Barachander. From this location the Proposed Development's towers are likely to be visible around 6 km to the southeast, forming a minor element on the horizon.

6.4.39 Given the anticipated limited visibility of the Proposed Development, from this route the transitional experience of road users and the short duration of construction works, the magnitude of impact is anticipated to be Negligible, and the residual effect on the amenity of this route Moderate/Minor in respect of tourists and cyclists on the NCR, and Minor in respect of local road users/commuters. Consequently, the operational development would not result in significant effects on the amenity of this route.

Recreational Receptors

NCN Route 78

6.4.40 During operation, the Proposed Development would be visible as backclothed towers in the mid-distance and would form a small part of views. These long-term/ permanent changes would represent a Slight magnitude of impact on NCN Route 78 during operation and a Moderate residual effect (non-significant).

Core Paths

6.4.41 The magnitude of potential operational impacts and effects experienced by core path receptors are as follows:

- C200(b) – Moderate impacts and **Major/Moderate** (significant) effects due to the proximity and prominence of the Proposed Development.
- C201 - Moderate impacts and **Major/Moderate** (significant) effects due to the proximity and prominence of the Proposed Development.
- C450 – Towers would be seen backclothed in the distance. There would be an imperceptible change to views, the magnitude of impact would be Negligible, equating to a Moderate/Minor (non-significant) effect.

Loch Fyne and Loch Awe

6.4.42 Recreational users on Loch Fyne and Loch Awe would have a High sensitivity. In views from Loch Fyne and Loch Awe, the Proposed Development would be seen backclothed on the hillside above Inveraray. However, the towers would be partially obscured by intervening vegetation and so the probable magnitude of impact would be Slight, equating to a Moderate effect which would not be significant.

Cruachan Visitor Centre

6.4.43 Visitors to Cruachan Visitor Centre would have a High sensitivity. The Proposed Development would be seen in the distance, backclothed and low-lying within the landscape. During the operation of the Proposed Development, new vertical engineered structures would occupy a small proportion of views and appear inconspicuous. Consequently, the magnitude of impact would be Negligible, equating to a Moderate/Minor (non-significant) effect.

6.4.44 In views from mountain summits towards the Proposed Development it would be seen in the far distance, backclothed and Low-lying within the landscape. In approaches to and from summits the Proposed Development lies beyond large areas of coniferous forestry providing some screening. The magnitude of impact would be Slight during operation owing to towers being a discernible element in views. This would equate to a Moderate effect which would not be significant.

6.5 Mitigation

6.5.1 Taking account of the sensitive receptors previously identified and potential unmitigated effects discussed in **Section 6.4**, a series of embedded and additional mitigation measures are proposed.

Mitigation by Design

6.5.2 The principal source of mitigation of construction and operational seascape, landscape and visual effects relates to the routeing and design of the Proposed Development. **Chapter 3: Alternatives (EIAR Volume 2)** provides a summary of the process and findings of an extended route selection study that was informed, amongst other environmental and technical considerations, by detailed seascape, landscape and visual analysis. This analysis prioritised receptors according to their sensitivity to the type of development proposed and took cognisance of the principles set out in SSEN's routeing guidance) and based on the guidance and analysis undertaken as part of the SLVIA. Details of the routing and design of the Proposed Development are provided in the following documents:

- SSEN Transmission (2020) North Argyll 275 kV Overhead Line Reinforcement; and
- Draft Route Selection Study Report: Inveraray to Creag Dhubh 275 kV Overhead Line (LT194).
- The Route Selection Study takes account of environmental technical as well as cost constraints and opportunities, based on a comparative appraisal of five alternative routes. The analysis identified the potential for an additional route, Route Option DE, that on balance was considered more advantageous in terms of environmental, engineering and cost considerations. Route Option DE forms the basis of the Proposed Development.

6.5.3 Of the Holford Rules which relate to landscape and visual considerations of relevance to the Proposed Development are as follows:

- Avoid altogether, if possible, the major areas of highest amenity value, by so planning the general route of the line in the first place, even if the total mileage is somewhat increased in consequence.
- Avoid smaller areas of high amenity value or scientific interest, by deviation;
- Provided that this can be done without using too many angle towers (i.e., the more massive structures which are used when lines change direction).
- Other things being equal, choose the most direct line, with no sharp changes of direction and thus fewer angle towers.
- Choose tree and hill backgrounds in preference to sky background wherever possible and when the line has to cross a ridge, secure this opaque background as long as possible and cross obliquely when a dip in the ridge provides an opportunity. Where it does not, cross directly, preferably between belts of trees.
- Prefer moderately open valleys with woods, where the apparent height of the towers would be reduced, and views of the line will be broken by trees.
- In a countryside which is flat and sparsely planted, keep the higher voltage lines, as far as possible, independent of smaller lines, converging routes, distribution lines and other masts, wires and cables so as to avoid a concatenation or 'wirescape'.

6.5.4 Notwithstanding the adoption of these principles, any development of the type proposed is likely to result in some significant landscape and/or visual effects.

Mitigation During Construction

6.5.5 A series of standard mitigation measures have been assumed for the purposes of the construction phase of the Proposed Development. These are set out in **Technical Appendix 2.2: Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan, EIAR Volume 3**. No further additional measures are considered relevant given the largely temporary nature of this stage of the Proposed Development.

Mitigation During Operation

6.5.6 Upon completion of construction works, and in a phased manner concurrent with progress in construction of the Proposed Development, all temporary features would be removed, and the underlying ground reinstated to aid assimilation of the Site into the adjoining landscape. Where the Proposed Development would necessitate permanent changes to landcover, as in the case of the woodland/ forest felling to create an Operational Corridor, a suitable landscape plan would be provided and agreed in consultation with consultees. Typically, such plans provide that would detail felled areas and any replanting or landscaping proposals and provide information about the design standards applied.

6.6 Residual Effects

6.6.1 Having taken into account key sensitive landscape and visual receptors and established suitable mitigation (principally in respect of routeing) to minimise potential significant construction and operational impacts, the residual, or remaining, seascape, landscape and visual effects are assessed and reported below. Some of these effects, principally construction effects, will arise from temporary impacts that are either time limited and/or reversible, and others that are long term or permanent. As the life of the Proposed Development is indeterminate, it is assumed that the operational effects would, for all intents, be permanent.

Residual Construction Effects

Landscape Fabric

6.6.2 **Chapter 2: Description of Proposed Development (EIAR Volume 2)** provides details of the land take needed for the construction of the Proposed Development. The Site is approximately 600 ha (**Figure 2.1: Proposed Development, EIAR Volume 3a**). Within this area the permanent land take would be limited to the Operational Corridor and 8.34 km of new permanent access tracks (**see Table 2.1, Chapter 2: Description of Proposed Development (EIAR Volume 2**).

6.6.3 The Proposed Development would have a limited effect on the topography of the Site and has been designed to minimise effects on substrates. The key residual effect on landscape fabric would be permanent removal of existing plantation woodland within the Operational Corridor and replacement with grassland and/or scrub habitat.

6.6.4 The creation of access tracks to facilitate the construction and operational maintenance of the Proposed Development would also require additional woodland removal in some locations, as described in **Chapter 14: Forestry (EIAR Volume 2)**. The effects of this woodland removal would be long term for locations where temporary tracks are constructed, until trees, shrubs and/or grassland vegetation is able to regenerate following the removal of temporary tracks. Effects would be permanent where tracks are retained for maintenance purposes.

6.6.5 The loss of characteristic vegetation for the construction of the Proposed Development, including access tracks, would be of a comparatively modest scale in the context of the geographical extent of existing forestry cover within the Study Area.

6.6.6 The routeing process (described in **Chapter 3: Alternatives, EIAR Volume 2**) sought to avoid woodland where possible, while taking account of other environmental, technical and cost constraints.

6.6.7 The Proposed Development would potentially impact on up to 41.7 ha of woodland.

6.6.8 The loss of predominately low sensitivity coniferous woodland 24.21 ha equates to a minor proportion of the regional resource (Argyll & Bute Council area). The Proposed Development would result in an impact on up to 2.6 ha of more sensitive broadleaved woodland.

6.6.9 The woodland removal would be broadly consistent with similar features elsewhere where grid infrastructure is present and such clearances have already occurred. As such, felling operations are not uncharacteristic for landscapes containing areas of commercial forestry and would be accompanied by some notable diversification of forest habitats where reinstatement is implemented. Consequently, the magnitude of impact would be Slight and the residual effect on landscape fabric would be Moderate/ Minor and not significant.

Seascape and Landscape Character

6.6.10 **Technical Appendix 6.3: Residual Effects on Seascape and Landscape Character Types, EIAR Volume 4** contains a detailed assessment of residual effects on landscape and seascape character in the Study Area. From this assessment it is apparent that significant construction effects would occur within the following LCTs and seascape character units:

- Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic (6a) - **Major/ Moderate** (significant), within Glen Aray and open slopes adjoining the Proposed Development;
- North Loch Awe Craggy Upland (7c) south Loch Awe unit - **Major/ Moderate** (significant); but localised effects; and
- Rocky Mosaic (20) River Aray unit - **Major** (significant) within the Aray valley.

6.6.11 Within Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic (6a) there is extensive theoretical visibility throughout this LCT that covers Glen Aray with coniferous forestry reducing visibility where present. Construction operations and access tracks would have considerable, albeit largely temporary significant effects on the medium-scale upland plateaux landscape. Such effects would be confined to Glen Aray, where the construction of the Proposed Development would result in loss of characteristic forest cover and moorland vegetation, and add complexity and movement to this essentially simple landscape.

6.6.12 Within the North Loch Awe Craggy Upland (7c) south Loch Awe unit there would be localised theoretical visibility in close proximity to the Proposed Development. Construction operations and access tracks would have considerable, albeit essentially temporary and localised impacts on the sense of scale and scenic quality of the Craggy Uplands unit of this LCT..

6.6.13 Within the River Aray unit of the Rocky Mosaic (20) LCT the dense riparian woodland would reduce theoretical visibility to glimpsed views except open area of pasture such as around Ladyfield Farm. Construction operations would, however, be localised considerable effects within the glen. Construction activities would introduce temporary noise, traffic, movement, stockpiles, thereby adversely affecting the scenic quality, scale and simplicity of the LCT.

Landscape Designations

6.6.14 **Technical Appendix 6.4: Residual Effects on Landscape Designations and Classifications (EIAR Volume 4)** concludes that there would be significant construction effects on the North Argyll APQ. These would be localised in area surrounding the northernmost towers of the Proposed Development. Such adverse effects would concern alterations to the small-scale pattern of loch fringes and the scenic quality of landscape, and would consequently detract from the landscape scale associated with this APQ. Moreover, the localised residual effects would change over time, ranging from **Major** (significant) to Moderate/Minor (not significant) upon cessation of construction works.

6.6.15 No significant construction effects are anticipated within The Inveraray Castle GDL.

Visual Amenity

<u>Settlements</u>

6.6.16 Of the settlements located within the Study Area, theoretical visibility is only predicted at Inveraray and Loch Awe.

Inveraray

6.6.17 The Proposed Developments construction would be screened from the majority of the settlement by a combination of intervening built forms, vegetation and topography and, where visible, would form a small element on the skyline inland, away from the critical views across Loch Fyne. In this context the magnitude of impact on the amenity of the settlement would be Negligible, equating to a Moderate/Minor residual effect that would not be significant.

Lochawe

6.6.18 Restricted oblique views of the Proposed Developments construction would be provided from a small number of properties within the village from where operations would be seen distantly to the south, southwest, away from the principal outlook from the village. Given its restricted visibility, distance and position relative to the main views out from the village, the magnitude of impacts on the amenity of the village would be Negligible and the residual effect would be Moderate/Minor and not significant.

Scattered Individual Properties

6.6.19 Apart from a small number of settlements, much of the settlement in the Study Area may be characterised as scattered individual or small groups of residential properties. **Technical Appendix 6.6: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) (EIAR Volume 4)** contains a detailed assessment of likely operational effects on the visual amenity of properties. The assessment is based on current technical guidance in respect of the assessment of effects on residential visual amenity[21]. Whilst effects on individual private views/amenity is usually considered a matter of private interest, and therefore outside of the purview of the planning system, the RVAA concerns itself with the potential for effects to be of a degree to which they may be deemed to be a matter of public interest. Specifically, whether impacts breach the visual amenity threshold in the technical guidance and would be deemed to be overbearing, overwhelming, oppressive or pervasive, and to render the property *"an unattractive and thus unsatisfactory (but not necessarily uninhabitable) place in which to live."*[22].

6.6.20 The RVAA does not specifically address construction effects as these are deemed likely to be equivalent or possibly less than those associated with the permanent operational aspects of the Proposed Development. A summary of the findings in respect of the operational development is provided in **Section 6.6.**

Transport Routes

A819

6.6.21 During construction, site plant, operatives, stockpiles, construction compounds, and the construction of towers are likely be visible close by the road at the northern end of Glen Aray. Notwithstanding this, the limited proportion of the route affected, the brief/ transitional experience of road users, and the short duration of the construction impacts the magnitude of impact is anticipated to be Slight, equating to a Moderate/ Minor (non-significant) effect on the amenity of this route (See Viewpoints 1, 2 and 8 for indicative views – **Figures 6.7a** to **6.7d**, **6.8a** to **6.8d** and **6.14a** to **6d, EIAR Volume 3a**).

[21] Landscape Institute (2019) Residential Visual amenity Assessment (RVAA) – Technical Guidance Note 2/19 – accessed 26th July 2022

[22] Taken from paragraph 66 Land west of Enifer Downs Farm and east of Archers Court Road and Little Pineham Farm, Langdon, Appeal decision APP/X2220/A/08/2071880. 28th April 2009 (SPR78).

A83

6.6.22 Views of construction operations would be obscured by a combination of intervening topography, vegetation and built structures. Consequently, there is unlikely to be a discernible impact or residual effects on the amenity of this route as a result of the construction activities.

A815

6.6.23 Views of construction activities would be restricted by intervening vegetation between Creggans and St. Catherine's. Where visible, construction operations would be seen distantly and only concern the erection of proposed towers. Given the likely restricted visibility, transitional experience of road users and the short duration of construction works, the magnitude of impact is anticipated to be Negligible, and the residual effect on the amenity of this route would be Moderate/Minor in respect of tourists and Minor in respect of local road users/commuters. Neither effect would be significant (see Viewpoint 4, **Figures 6.10a** to **6.10d, EIAR Volume 3a**).

A85

6.6.24 Views of construction activities would be transitory and would be filtered through lochside vegetation. Given the anticipated restricted visibility of the Proposed Development, the transitional experience of road users and the short duration of construction works, the magnitude of impact anticipated would be Negligible, and the residual effect on the amenity of this route would be Moderate/Minor in respect of tourists and Minor in respect of local road users/commuters. Neither effect is considered significant.

B845

6.6.25 Views of the Proposed Development's construction would be confined to around 0.5 km of this route, by Barachander, from where the erection of the Proposed Development's towers are expected to be visible around 6 km to the southeast, forming a minor and temporary element on the horizon.

6.6.26 Given the limited visibility, transitional experience of road users and the short duration of construction works, the magnitude of impact would be Negligible, and the residual effect on the amenity of this route would be Moderate/Minor in respect of tourists and cyclists on the NCR, and Minor in respect of local road users/commuters. Consequently, construction operations are not expected to result in significant effects on the amenity of this route.

Visual Amenity- Recreational Receptors

6.6.27 Given the anticipated limited visibility of the Proposed Development, from this route the transitional experience of road users and the short duration of construction works, the magnitude of impact is anticipated to be Negligible, and the residual effect on the amenity of this route Moderate/Minor in respect of tourists and cyclists on the NCR, and Minor in respect of local road users/ commuters. Consequently, the operational development would not result in significant effects on the amenity of this route.

NCN Route 78

6.6.28 During construction, operations would be backclothed on the Creag Dhubh hillside in the middle-distance. The short-term, temporary changes would form a small, discernible part of views. There is likely to be a Slight magnitude of impact on NCN Route 78 during construction, equating to a localised Moderate (non-significant) effect.

Core Paths

6.6.29 Core paths are used for recreational purposes and as such the receptors will have a High sensitivity. The magnitude of potential impact on the visual amenity of walkers on core path receptors is anticipated to be as follows:

- C200(b) - The magnitude of impact would be Moderate, equating to a temporary **Major/Moderate** (significant) effect.
- C201 - Dun Na Cuaiche, Inveraray: The magnitude of impact would be Moderate equating to a temporary **Major/Moderate** (significant) effect on the amenity of this route.
- C450 – Ducan Ban McIntyre monument, Dalmally: The magnitude of impact would be Slight equating to a Moderate (non-significant) effect.
- 171(b) – Kilmore – Loch Nant – Kilchrenan: There would be no views of construction operations from this core path and therefore no residual construction effects on its amenity.

Loch Fyne and Loch Awe

6.6.30 Recreational users on Loch Fyne and Loch Awe: Construction of the Proposed Development would be short term, of limited visibility and where visible, would be backclothed and occupy a small proportion of views from these lochs. Consequently, the magnitude of impact would be Slight and the residual effect Moderate and not significant.

Cruachan Visitors Centre

6.6.31 Visitors to Cruachan Visitor Centre would have a High sensitivity. The Proposed Development would be seen in the distance, backclothed and Low-lying within the landscape. During construction movement of plant and materials would form a discernible element in views, the magnitude of impact would be Slight, constituting a Moderate (non-significant) effect.

Residual Operational Effects

Landscape Fabric

6.6.32 No additional effects on landscape fabric would occur during the operational phase of the Proposed Development. Reinstated ground within the Site would gradually recover and mature, re-establishing a vegetated land cover Site.

6.6.33 Ongoing maintenance would be required to ensure clearances within the Operational Corridor are achieved. This is not considered to cause any notable effect on landscape fabric.

Landscape Character

6.6.34 **Technical Appendix 6.3: Residual Effects on Seascape and Landscape Character Type (EIAR Volume 4)** contains a detailed assessment of residual effects on landscape and seascape character in the Study Area. From this assessment it is apparent that significant, albeit localised effects, would occur within the following LCTs and seascape character units:

- Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic (6a) - **Major/ Moderate** (significant); and
- Localised impacts Rocky Mosaic (20) River Aray unit – **Major/ Moderate** (significant).

6.6.35 Within the Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic (6a) there would be extensive theoretical visibility within Glen Aray and on hillsides facing towards the Proposed Development covering about half of this LCT within the Study Area. Whilst grid infrastructure is an established feature of this landscape, the introduction of larger towers than currently present would have an adverse effect on the perceived scale of the glen. The introduction of permanent large-scale engineered structures would alter the perceived scale and simplicity of parts of Glen Aray and result in loss of areas of characteristic coniferous forestry to accommodate felling of the Operational Corridor. The magnitude of impact would therefore be Substantial, and the residual effect, albeit localised to Glen Aray, would be **Major/Moderate** (significant).

6.6.36 Within the River Aray unit of the Rocky Mosaic (20) LCT there would be glimpsed views of towers and access tracks from the A819 runs through this LCT unit within Glen Aray. The introduction of permanent large-scale engineered structures with would alter the perceived scale and simplicity of parts of Glen Aray and result in loss of areas of characteristic coniferous forestry. The magnitude of impact would therefore be Substantial, and the residual effect, albeit localised to Glen Aray, would be **Major/Moderate** (significant).

Landscape Designations

6.6.37 **Technical Appendix 6.4: Residual Effects on Landscape Designations and Classifications (EIAR Volume 4)** concludes that there would be localised significant operational impacts on the North Argyll APQ. The Proposed Development would introduce large-scale transmission infrastructure that would be prominent within the intricate, small-scale pattern of land use along loch fringes. Felling of the Operational Corridor to accommodate the Proposed Development would emphasise the difference in scale within this localised area and represent a partial loss to the baseline condition. The localised residual effect would be **Major** (significant) in the vicinity of Creag Dhubh, whilst the majority of the APQ would be subject to Moderate (non-significant) effects.

6.6.38 Temporary significant (**Major/Moderate**) effects would be experienced at Inveraray Castle GDL but would be confined to the tower at Dun na Cuiache (See **Figures 6.9a** to **6.9d**, **EIAR Volume 3a**).

Visual Amenity

Settlements

6.6.39 Of the settlements located within the Study Area, views of the operational development are only predicted at Inveraray and Lochawe.

Inveraray

6.6.40 The operational development would be screened from the majority of the settlement by a combination of intervening built forms, vegetation and topography and where visible would form a small distant element on the skyline inland, away from the critical context of views across Loch Fyne. In this context the magnitude of impact on the amenity of the settlement would be Negligible, equating to a Moderate/Minor residual effect that would not be significant.

Lochawe

6.6.41 Restricted oblique views would be provided towards the operational Proposed Development from a small number of properties within the village from where it would be seen distantly to the south, southwest, away from the principal outlook from the village. On the basis of its restricted visibility, distance and position relative to the main views out from the village, the magnitude of impacts on the amenity of the village would therefore be Negligible and the residual effect would be Moderate/Minor and not significant.

Scattered Individual Properties

6.6.42 Operational effects on scattered properties within a 1 km radius are set out in **Technical Appendix 6.6: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) (EIAR Volume 4)**. The RVAA concludes that no properties within 1 km of the Proposed Development would be subject to such effects that could be deemed overbearing, overwhelming, oppressive or pervasive, or to render the property *"an unattractive and thus unsatisfactory (but not necessarily uninhabitable) place in which to live."*

6.6.43 Whilst it is undoubtable that the Proposed Development would result in significant visual effects at a number of the properties in LVIA terms, such effects were not considered likely to prove *"overbearing"* or *"overwhelming"*, having regard to the criteria examined to assess the nature of the predicted changes as a consequence of the Proposed Development. On this basis it is contended that the properties would not be affected by the Proposed Development to the extent that they would be considered unattractive places in which to live.

6.6.44 Moreover, when taking into consideration the in-combination cumulative effect, the RVAA assessment makes a distinctive difference between impacts associated to just the Proposed Development, and those in-combination developments, which include proposed, existing, consented and in-planning developments. Those impacts related to the Proposed Development range from Moderate – Low and therefore not significant, whereas the inclusion of the in-planning developments, specifically Ladyfield Wind Farm, would increase the in-combination effect to in some cases Major/ Moderate, however this increase is solely attributed to Ladyfield Wind Farm. Additionally, given, the in-planning status of Ladyfield Wind Farm, it is anticipated, that if the scheme was to obtain planning permission, the size, scale and number of turbines would be substantially reduced, therefore reducing the overall in-combination effect. However, for the RVAA assessment a worst-case scenario was agreed, utilising the most recent layout and dimensions of the scheme.

Transportation Routes

A815

6.6.45 Views of the Proposed Development would occur between Strachur and St. Catherine's but would be restricted by intervening vegetation between Creggans and St. Catherine's. Where visible, the Proposed Developments towers would be seen distantly and only concern the top of proposed towers. Given the restricted visibility, transitional experience of road users, the magnitude of impact would be Negligible, and the residual effect on the amenity of this route would be Moderate/Minor in respect of tourists and Minor in respect of local road users/commuters. Neither effect is likely to be significant (see indicative view at Viewpoint 4, **Figures 6.10a** to **6.10d: EIAR Volume 3a**).

A85

6.6.46 Extensive visibility of the Proposed Development is indicated between the Pass of Brandon Power Station and Drishaig. Such visibility, however, would be transitory and filtered through lochside vegetation. Where visible, the Proposed Development would be seen distantly, and towers would just be evident on the distant horizon formed by the uplands and commercial forestry south of Cladich.

6.6.47 Given the partly restricted visibility of the Proposed Development, the transitional experience of road users the magnitude of impact is expected to be Negligible, and the residual effect on the amenity of this route would be Moderate/Minor in respect of tourists and Minor in respect of local road users/commuters. Neither effect would be significant.

B845

6.6.48 Views of the Proposed Development are likely to be confined to around 0.5 km of this route, by Barachander. From this location the Proposed Development's towers would be seen distantly to the southeast, forming a

minor element in the view. On this basis the magnitude of impact is anticipated to be Negligible, and the residual effect on the amenity of this route Moderate/Minor in respect of tourists and cyclists on the NCR, and Minor in respect of local road users/commuters. Consequently, the operational development would not result in significant effects on the amenity of this route.

Recreational Receptors

NCN Route 78

6.6.49 During operation, the Proposed Development would be visible as backclothed towers in the mid-distance and would form a small part of views. These long-term/ permanent changes would represent a Slight magnitude of impact on NCN Route 78 during operation and a Moderate residual effects (non-significant).

Core Paths

6.6.50 The magnitude of potential operational impacts and effects experienced by core path receptors are as follows:

- C200(b) – Moderate impacts and **Major/Moderate** (significant) effects due to the proximity and prominence of the Proposed Development, which would detract from the .
- C201 - Moderate impacts and **Major/Moderate** (significant) effects due to the proximity and prominence of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development, which would detract from the ..
- C450 – Towers would be seen backclothed in the distance. There would be an imperceptible change to views, the magnitude of impact would be Negligible, equating to a Moderate/Minor (non-significant) effect. The Proposed Development, which would detract from the .

Loch Fyne and Loch Awe

6.6.51 In views from Loch Fyne and Loch Awe, the Proposed Development would be seen backclothed on the hillside above Inveraray. However, the towers would be partially obscured by intervening vegetation and so the magnitude of impact would be Slight, equating to a Moderate effect which would not be significant.

Cruachan Visitor Centre

6.6.52 The Proposed Development would be seen in the distance, backclothed by topography and forestry, and low-lying within the landscape. During the operation of the Proposed Development, new vertical engineered structures would occupy a small proportion of views and appear inconspicuous. Consequently, the magnitude of impact would be Negligible, equating to a Moderate/Minor (non-significant) effect.

6.6.53 In views from mountain summits towards the Proposed Development it would be seen in the distance, backclothed and low-lying within the landscape. In approaches to and from summits the Proposed Development lies beyond large areas of coniferous forestry providing some screening. The magnitude of impact would be Slight during operation owing to towers being a discernible element in views. This would equate to a Moderate effect which would not be significant.

6.7 Cumulative Effects

6.7.1 **Table 6-9** summarises potentially significant cumulative effects of the Proposed Development along with a number of cumulative developments on key seascape, landscape and visual receptors. This should be read in conjunction with **Technical Appendix 6.3:Residual Effects on Seascape Landscape Character Types** and **Technical Appendix 6.4: Residual Effects on Landscape Designations and Classifications, EIAR Volume 4**.

Table 6-9: Summary of Potential Significant Cumulative Effects[23]

Receptor	Residual Cumulative Effect
Seascape and Landscape Character	
High Tops (2)	**In-addition** *Operational and Consented* Moderate (not significant) *Operational, Consented and in Planning* Moderate (not significant) *Operational, Consented, in Planning and in Scoping* **Major/ Moderate** (significant) **In-combination** *Operational and Consented* Moderate (not significant) *Operational, Consented and in Planning* **Major/ Moderate** (significant). The Proposed Development would contribute to energy development being brought closer to this LCT whose key characteristics include being sparsely populated and having high wild land qualities. *Operational, Consented, in Planning and in Scoping* **Major** (significant). The result of the development of a sizeable cluster of energy development visible in the mid-distance would impact on the sense of scale when viewed from the massive-scale mountains. It would also bring large-scale elements closer to this LCT whose largely uninhabited and inaccessibility key qualities would be impacted.
Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic (6a)	**In-addition** *Operational and Consented* Ranging from **Major/Moderate to Major** (significant). The medium scale landscape within Glen Aray would be impacted by the introduction of large-scale engineered structures with this contained landscape. Wayleave felling would disrupt areas of extensive forestry cover and access tracks would disturb areas of open moorland. These key characteristics would be substantially impacted by the Proposed Development. *Operational, Consented and in Planning* Ranging from **Major/Moderate** to **Major** (significant). The addition of the Proposed Development would consolidate the emerging pattern of transmission infrastructure within this LCT and extend these features from the north west coast further inland. *Operational, Consented, in Planning and in Scoping* The medium scale, sparsely settled landscape would be significantly impacted by the addition of the large-scale Proposed Development. Consequently, residual effects woudl range from **Major/Moderate** to **Major** (significant) depending on the sensitivity of the area affected. **In-combination** *Operational and Consented*

[23] Reference TAs 6.3 and 6.4 for detailed assessments

Receptor	Residual Cumulative Effect
	Major (significant). The Proposed Development would impact on the medium scale and land cover within this LCT. Energy development would become a key element within Glen Aray. *Operational, Consented and in Planning* **Major** (significant). Operational, consented and in planning schemes, combined with the Proposed Development would represent a considerable effect on the character of this LCT from transmission. *Operational, Consented, in Planning and in Scoping* **Major** (significant). Existing, consented, in-scoping wind farms would form a key defining feature of this LCT along with the Proposed Development, and would substantially impact on the sense of scale within Glen Aray.
North Loch Awe Craggy Upland (7c)	**In-addition** *Operational and Consented* **Moderate** (not significant) with localised **Major/Moderate** (significant) impacts in the vicinity of the Site, in the area of the Creag Dhubh substation, the Proposed Development adding to exitsing grid infrastructure, thereby reducing the percieved scale, essentially simple and open charater of this landscape. *Operational, Consented and in Planning* Moderate (not significant) with localised **Major/Moderate** (significant) impacts in the vicinity of the Site, close to Creag Dhubh substation, the Proposed Development would add significanty to exitsing and proposed grid infrastructure, reducing the percieved scale, essentially simple and open charater of this landscape. *Operational, Consented, in Planning and in Scoping* Moderate (not significant) with localised **Major/Moderate** (significant) impacts in the vicinity of the Siteand Creag Dhubh substation. The Proposed Development would add significantly to exitsing, proposed, and in-scoping schemes, and contribute to the reduction of the percieved scale, essentially simple and open charater of this landscape. **In-combination** *Operational and Consented* Moderate (not significant) *Operational, Consented and in Planning* Moderate (not significant) *Operational, Consented, in Planning and in Scoping* Moderate (not significant)
Rocky Mosaic (20)	**In-addition** *Operational and Consented* Northern half of Glen Aray unit: **Major/Moderate** (significant) due to cumulative visibility with existing and consented infrastructure, both concurrently and sequentially. Remainder of LCT and LCT units would be Moderate (not significant) *Operational, Consented and in Planning* Northern half of Glen Aray unit: **Major/Moderate** (significant) due to cumulative visibility with existing, consented and proposed infrastructure, both concurrently and sequentially.

Receptor	Residual Cumulative Effect
	Remainder of LCT and LCT units would be Moderate (not significant) *Operational, Consented, in Planning and in Scoping* Northern half of Glen Aray unit: **Major/Moderate** (significant) due to cumulative visibility with existing, consented and proposed infrastructure and with inclusion of scoping schemes. Cumulative effects wud be experiencd both concurrently and sequentially. Remainder of LCT and LCT units would be Moderate (not significant) **In-combination** *Operational and Consented* Northern half of Glen Aray unit: **Major** (significant) Remaining units: Moderate (not significant).Large-scale structures within the northern half of the Glen Aray unit would significantly impact on the perceived sense of scale of small-scale landscape features such as small knolls and rolling landform that contributes to a strong sense of containment within this LCT. *Operational, Consented and in Planning* Northern half of Glen Aray unit: **Major** (significant) North and South Loch Awe units: **Major/ Moderate** (significant) Strachur unit: Moderate (not significant).Combined with operational, consented and in planning developments, the Proposed Development would significantly impact on the sense of scale of this LCT through the introduction of large-scale engineered structures. *Operational, Consented, in Planning and in Scoping* Northern half of Glen Aray unit: **Major** (significant) Remaining units: **Major/ Moderate** (significant)
Loch Fyne/Kilbrannan Sound (25)	**In-addition** *Operational and Consented* The small-scale seascape that are highly contained would be imperceptibly altered during operation of the Proposed Development. The residual effect would be Moderate/Minor (not significant). *Operational, Consented and in Planning* Moderate/Minor (not significant). *Operational, Consented, in Planning and in Scoping* Moderate/Minor (not significant). **In-combination** *Operational and Consented* Moderate (not significant) *Operational, Consented and in Planning* Moderate (not significant) *Operational, Consented, in Planning and in Scoping* **Major/ Moderate** (significant)
Landscape Designations	

Receptor	Residual Cumulative Effect
North Argyll Area of Panoramic Quality	Given the geographical extent of this designation and its highly variable nature, residual cumulative effects would differ according to a range of factors such as visibility, distance, elevation and consequent intervisibility with cumulative schemes. **In-addition** *Operational and Consented* Moderate (not significant). *Operational, Consented and in Planning* Moderate (not significant) *Operational, Consented, in Planning and in Scoping* Moderate (not significant) **In-combination** *Operational and Consented* Ranging from No Effect at the northern end of Glen Aray to Moderate at Hazelbank, Cruachan Reservoir, Lochan Shira Reservoir and Stac a Chuirn, and **Major/Moderate** (significant) at Monadh Driseig and Major at Inveraray Castle Tower. Consequently, significant in combination effects would occur at Monadh Driseig and Inveraray Castle's watch Tower. *Operational, Consented and in Planning* In-combination would range from None at the northern end of Glen Aray to Moderate at Hazelbank, Cruachan Reservoir, Lochan Shira Reservoir, and **Major/Moderate** (significant) at Monadh Driseig, Cruachan Reservoir and Stac a Chuirn. *Operational, Consented, in Planning and in Scoping* In-combination would range from None at the northern end of Glen Aray to **Major/Moderate** (significant) at Hazelbank, Cruachan reservoir and Lochan Shira Reservoir, and **Major** (significant) at Monadh Driseig and the watch tower at Inveraray Castle GDL and Stac a Chuirn.
Inveraray Castle	**In-addition** *Operational and Consented* Ranging from No Effect to localised **Major/ Moderate** (significant) effects at the Tower at Dun na Cuiache Operational, Consented and in Planning Ranging from No Effect to localised **Major/ Moderate** (significant) effects at the Tower at Dun na Cuiache Operational, Consented, in Planning and in Scoping Ranging from No Effect to localised **Major/ Moderate** (significant) effects at the Tower at Dun na Cuiache **In-combination** *Operational and Consented* **Major/ Moderate** (significant) *Operational, Consented and in Planning*

Receptor	Residual Cumulative Effect
	Major/ Moderate (significant) *Operational, Consented, in Planning and in Scoping* Ranging from No Effect to localised **Major** (significant) effects at the Tower at Dun na Cuiache
Visual Receptors	
Settlements	Inveraray The Proposed Development and operational Inveraray - Crossaig 275 kV Circuit would be visible from a small proportion of the settlement. Moreover, the Proposed Development would be seen beyond the Inveraray - Crossaig 275 kV Circuit and would therefore represent a Negligible in-addition impact and Moderate/Minor (non significant) residual cumulative effect. This would remain the case if the proposed An Carr Dubh susbtation is taken onto and account, and also if the in-scoping An Carr Dubh and Ladyfield turbines are included. Similarly, in-combination effects within the town would be non-significant due to the restricted nature of cumulative visibility within the town. Lochawe Restricted oblique views would be provided towards the operational Proposed Development from a small number of properties within the village from where it would be seen distantly to the south, south west, away from the principal outlook from the village. Similarly, operational developments, including An Suidhe, and the consented Blarghour wind farm developments would be seen distantly to the south, south west and represent relatively minor elements in the views from this settlement. In this context, in addition impacts attributable to the south and south east Proposed Development would be Negligible and the residual cumulative effect would be Moderate/Minor and not significant. This would remain the case with the inclusion of the proposed and in scoping developments. In-combination effects would also be Moderate/Minor in respect of operational and consented developments, but would increase to Moderate (non significant) with the inclusion of the proposed Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection, that would be seen in the middle distance to the east. Moderate in combination effects would persist in the event of the in-scoping Ladyfield and An Carr Dubh wind farms progressing.
Transport Routes	A815 Views of the Proposed Development would occur between Strachur and St. Catherine's but would be restricted by intervening vegetation between Creggans and St. Catherine's. Where visible, the Proposed Developments towers would be seen distantly and only concern the top of proposed towers, and would be seen beyond the intervening Inveraray - Crossaig 275 kV Circuit and as such would represent an overall Negligible cumulative impact and a Moderate/Minor (non significant) in addition effect on the amenity of this route. Similarly, in-combination effects on the route would be non-significant in respect of the Proposed Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection and Creag Dhubh substation, and when in scoping Ladyfeld and an Carr Dubh turbines are included.. In-combination impacts on this route would be Slight equating to Moderate (non-significant) effects in respect of the Proposed Development and operational/consented developments. This would remain the case if the proposed Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection and Creag Dhubh developments and in-scoping Ladyfield and An Carr Dubh turbines were taken into account.

Receptor	Residual Cumulative Effect
	A85 Extensive visibility of the Proposed Development is indicated between the Pass of Brandon Power Station and Drishaig. Such visibility, however, would be transitory and filtered through lochside vegetation. Where visible, the Proposed Development would be seen distantly and towers would just be evident on the distant horizon formed by the uplands and commercial forestry south of Cladich. The Proposed Development would be seen in conjuction with the distant Caraig Gheal turbines (just visible to the southwest of this route). In this context, the Proposed Develoment would represent a Negligible cumulative impact and Moderate/Minor in addition effect (non significant). This would remain the case in the event of the proposed Creag Dhubh substation and Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection being consented and constructed. Additionally, the in addition effects would remain Moderate/Minor (non significant) if the in-scoping An Carr Dubh and Ladyfield turbines are incorporated. *B845* Sequential and concurrent cumulative views of the Proposed Development and the operational Beinn Ghlas and An Suidhe from sections of this route by Barachander. From this location the Proposed Development's towers would be seen distantly to the south east, forming a minor element in the view whereas the Bien Ghlass turbines would form more prominent features on the skyline to the west. On this basis the magnitude of impact is anticipated to be Negligible, and the residual effect on the amenity of this route Moderate/Minor in respect of tourists and cyclists on the NCR, and Minor in respect of local road users/commuters. This would remain the case if the proposed Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection and the in scoping Ladyfield and An Carr Dubh arrays are taken into account. In combination impacts on this route would also be limited and not significant due to the restricted nature of cumulative visibility and the relative distance and separation of cumulative developments, whether they are focused on operational/consented developments or include in planning and/or in-scoping developments.
Recreational Receptors	NCN Route 78 See findings of assessment of B845, above. *Loch Fyne and Loch Awe* In views from Loch Fyne and Loch Awe, the Proposed Development would be seen backclothed on the hillside above Inveraray. However, the towers would be partially obscured by intervening vegetation. In contrast the consented Blarghour and operational Caraig Gheal turbines would form prominent features in views from Loch Awe, and the Inveraray - Crossaig 275 kV Circuit would form a prominent feature in views from Loch Fyne. On this basis, the in addition impact attributable to the Proposed Development would be Negligible (the Proposed Development having limited visibility and being seen behind the Inveraray - Crossaig 275 kV Circuit towers). In this context, the Proposed Development would constitute a Negligible cumulative impact and Moderate/Minor residual cumulative effect. This would remain the case if the proposed Creag Dhubh substation and Creag Dhubh to

Receptor	Residual Cumulative Effect
	Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection are included and also when the in-scoping Ladyfield and An Carr Dubh wind farms are taken into account. In combination impacts at Loch Awe would vary from none to Moderate, equating to localised incidents of **Major/Moderate** (significant effects) around Loch Awe, and Slight impacts (Moderate non significant effects) in respect of Loch Fyne, due to the lower lying backclothed position of LT129 and the Inveraray - Crossaig 275 kV Circuit and restricted visibility of other existing, consented developments. *Cruachan Visitor Centre* The Proposed Development would be seen in the distance, backclothed by topography and forestry, and would appear as a minor low-lying feature in the landscape. No other operational or consented development would be visble from the Centre and so there would be no in-addition effects in respect of operational and consented developments. However, the proposed Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection would introduce a development context, within which the Proposed Development would constitute a Negligible additional impact and a Moderate/Minor (non significant) cumulative effect. This would remain the same with the introduction of the Ladyfield Wind Farm. In combination effects would also be non-significant. The Proposed Development would be seen in conjunction with the proposed Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection as well as the in-scoping Ladyfield array, which, taken together would represent a Slight magnitude of in combination impacts and a Moderate (non-significant) cumulative effect.

6.8 Summary

6.8.1 The preceding SLVIA is intended to identify potential seascape landscape and visual impacts and residual effects, as well as significant in-addition and in-combination cumulative effects assessment. The scope and approach taken in the completion of the assessment was agreed during consultations with statutory and non-statutory consultees, including the selection of a series of representative assessment viewpoints.

6.8.2 The assessment has been undertaken with the current guidance outline in **Section 6.2**.

6.8.3 **Table 6-10**, summarises potential significant effects. It should be noted, however, that all developments of the type proposed are expected to generate some significant landscape and/or visual effects, both during their construction and operational life. The Proposed Development is not exceptional in this regard. Moreover, it has been sited and designed to avoid the most sensitive and valued landscapes and visual receptor locations, including nationally important landscapes key settlements and main concentrations of residential properties. The Proposed Developments designed was informed by established industry guidance (Holford Rules[24] and SSEN routeing guidance[25]) and based on the guidance and analysis undertaken as part of the SLVIA. Details of the routing and design of the Proposed Development are provided in the following documents:

- SSEN Transmission (2020) North Argyll 275 kV Overhead Line Reinforcement; and
- Draft Route Selection Study Report: Inveraray to Creag Dhubh 275 kV Overhead Line (LT194).

[24] Available at https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/document/82851/download [last accessed 20-9-22]

[25] SSEN Transmission (2020) PR-NET-ENV-501: Procedures for Routeing Overhead Lines and Underground Cables of 132kV [last accessed 20-9-22] and above. REV 2.00 and SSEN Transmission (2020) Procedures for Routeing Overhead Lines and Underground Cables of 132kV and above, PR[(last accessed 20-9-22] NET-ENV-501, REV 2.00;

Table 6-10: Summary of Potential Significant Effects of the Proposed Development

Possible Significant Effect	Mitigation Proposed	Means of Implementation	Outcome/Residual Effect
Construction			
Seascape and Landscape Character Types	Embedded and additional mitigation in accordance with **Section 6.5** and **Technical Appendix 2.2: Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan, EIAR Volume 4**.	Layout and Construction methods	Significant effects as follows: • Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic (6a) – localised significant effects, within Glen Aray and open slopes adjoining the Proposed Development. • North Loch Awe Craggy Upland (7c) south Loch Awe unit – localised significant effects • Rocky Mosaic (20) River Aray unit -Localised significant effects within the Aray valley.
Designated Landscapes (APQ)	Embedded and additional mitigation in accordance with **Section 6.5.**	Layout and Construction methods	Significant localised effect within North Argyll APQ in the area surrounding the northernmost towers of the Proposed Development. Moreover, the localised residual effects would change over time, ranging from **Major** (significant) to Moderate/Minor (not significant) upon cessation of construction works.
Gardens and Designed Landscapes	Embedded and additional mitigation in accordance with **Section 6.5.**	Layout and Construction methods	No significant effects
Settlements	Embedded and additional mitigation in accordance with **Section 6.5.**	Layout and Construction methods	No significant effects
Transportation Routes	Embedded and additional mitigation in accordance with **Section 6.5.**	Layout and Construction methods	No significant effects
Recreational routes/ locations	Embedded and additional mitigation in accordance with **Section 6.5.**	Layout and Construction methods	Significant cumulative effects as follows: • C200(b) - The magnitude of impact would be Moderate, equating to a temporary significant effect. • C201 - Dun Na Cuaiche, Inveraray: The magnitude of impact would be Moderate equating to a temporary signficant effect on the amenity of this route.

Possible Significant Effect	Mitigation Proposed	Means of Implementation	Outcome/Residual Effect
Operation			
Seascape and Landscape Character Types	Embedded and additional mitigation in accordance with **Section 6.5.**	Layout	Significant effects as follows: • Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic (6a) • Localised significant effects on the Rocky Mosaic (20) River Aray unit
Designated Landscapes (APQ)	Embedded and additional mitigation in accordance with **Section 6.5.**	Layout	Localised Signficant effects in the vicinity of Creag Dhubh, whilst the majority of the APQ would be subject to non-significanteffects.
Gardens and Designed Landscapes	Embedded and additional mitigation in accordance with **Section 6.5.**	Layout	Temporary Significant effects at Inveraray Castle GDL but would be confined to the tower at Dun na Cuiache.
Settlements	Embedded and additional mitigation in accordance with **Section 6.5.**	Layout	No significant effects
Transportation Routes	Embedded and additional mitigation in accordance with **Section 6.5.**	Layout	No significant effects
Recreational routes/locations	Embedded and additional mitigation in accordance with **Section 6.5.**	Layout	Significant cumulative effects as follows: • C200(b) • C201 - Dun Na Cuaiche, Inveraray:
Cumulative Operation			
Seascape and Landscape Character Types	Embedded and additional mitigation in accordance with **Section 6.5.**	Alignment and Layout	Significant cumulative effects as follows: In Addition • High Tops (2) • Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic (6a) • Rocky Mosaic (20) In Combination • High Tops (2) • Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic (6a) • Rocky Mosaic (20)
Designated Landscapes (APQ)	Embedded and additional mitigation in accordance with **Section 6.5.**	Alignment and Layout	In Addition None In Combination

Possible Significant Effect	Mitigation Proposed	Means of Implementation	Outcome/Residual Effect
			Significant effects at Monadh Driseig and the watch tower at Inveraray Castle GDL and Stac a Chuirn.
Gardens and Designed Landscapes	Embedded and additional mitigation in accordance with **Section 6.5.**	Alignment and Layout	In Addition Significant localised effects at the Tower at Dun na Cuiache at Inverarary Castle GDL In Combination Significant localised effects at the Tower at Dun na Cuiache at Inverarary Castle GDL
Settlements	Embedded and additional mitigation in accordance with **Section 6.5.**	Alignment and Layout	No significant cumulative effects at Inverarary or Loch awe settlements
Transportation Routes	Embedded and additional mitigation in accordance with **Section 6.5.**	Alignment and Layout	No significant cumulative effects on transportation routes assessed
Recreational routes/locations	Embedded and additional mitigation in accordance with **Section 6.5.**	Alignment and Layout	Significant localised in-combination effects along the edges of Loch Awe.