

**Creag Dhubh to Inveraray 275 kV Connection
Environmental Impact Assessment
Volume 4 | Appendix 6.1**

**Seascape and Landscape Character Types:
Description and Sensitivity**

July 2022



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List of Abbreviations

APQ	Area of Panoramic Quality
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
km	Kilometre
kV	KiloVolt
LCT	Landscape Character Type
LLTNP	Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park
NS	NatureScot
OHL	Overhead Line
SCT	Seascape Character Types
WLA	Wild Land Area
ZTV	Zone of Theoretical Visibility

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.0.1 **Figure 6.3a** and **Figure 6.3b (EIAR Volume 3a)** show the 10 km Study Area and the Carol Anderson and Associates (2017), Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (Capacity Study)¹ and the boundaries of NatureScot's (NS) (2019) Landscape Character Type (LCT) map and associated descriptions (NS LCTs)². The below descriptions are based on the names, boundaries and information provided in the Capacity Study, cross referenced with NS LCTs and confirmed, and where necessary updated, during field reconnaissance.
- 1.0.2 There are eight LCTs within the Study Area, all of which are assessed. These include:
- 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).
- 1.0.3 There is one seascape character type (SCT) within the Study Area, Loch Fyne/Kilbrannan Sound (25).
- 1.0.4 All SCTs and LCTs within the Study Area are listed, with their key characteristics and sensitivity rating in **Table 1.1**.

¹ <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/landscape-wind-energy-capacity-study> [Accessed March 2022]

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

Table 1.1: Seascape and Landscape Character Types: Description and Sensitivity

Seascape or Landscape Character Type	Distance and Direction from Proposed Development ³	Key Characteristics	Sensitivity to the type of development proposed
Steep Ridgeland and Mountains (1)	Glen Shira: 4.2 km south east Loch Fyne: 5.6 km south, south east	<p>There are two units of this LCT within the Study Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Glen Shira unit; and • Loch Fyne unit. <p>These steep-sided mountains are seen in conjunction with the higher and often craggier mountains of the High Tops (2) within Argyll and Bute at the head of Loch Fyne where they contribute to the scenic quality of the fjord-like landscape of sheer-sided mountains plummeting down to the loch. This landscape merges more gradually with the Upland Forest Moor Mosaic (6a) on the eastern side of Loch Fyne.</p> <p><u>Key characteristics include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Steep Ridgeland and Mountains generally rise to around 700 m but with lower hills occurring on the western and southern fringes of the character type. • The higher mountains have a massive scale although the narrow glens and sea lochs which cut into the hills and occasional small basins occurring between peaks are more contained. • Vegetation cover is simple, largely comprising extensive coniferous forestry covering lower steep slopes and with rough grass between scattered boulders, rocky outcrops and traces of birch woodland. • Vegetation cover is simple, largely comprising extensive coniferous forestry covering lower steep slopes and with rough grass between scattered boulders, rocky outcrops and traces of birch woodland. 	<p>It has a Medium sensitivity.</p> <p>Landscape value is high due to the high scenic value as evidenced in part by the LCTs position within the North Argyll APQ and Ben Lui Wild Land Area (WLA), the high recreational value and simple landcover that emphasises the massive scale of the landscape.</p> <p>This LCT is considered to have a Medium susceptibility to the type of development proposed. The massive scale of mountains would be able to accommodate this type of proposed development, however within the small-scale narrow glens and sea lochs the susceptibility would be higher. Extensive coniferous forestry cover on lower slopes would provide backclothing of towers but wayleave felling would draw the eye to the Site. The unit could accommodate such development through careful siting within large-scale landscape areas and within coniferous forestry to provide</p>

³ Based on closest part of LCT or SCT to the Proposed Development, not the closest area with theoretical visibility.

Table 1.1: Seascape and Landscape Character Types: Description and Sensitivity

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These uplands are very sparsely settled with isolated farms and estate houses located on narrow coastal edges and within glens accessible by road. • The narrowness of the sea lochs allows close views of opposites peninsulas, where the steep outer slopes, sharp ridges and hills tops of this LCT being prominent in views. There are elevated views across this landscape from Corbetts and Munros within Argyll and Bute and the adjacent Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park (LLTNP). • An Area of Panoramic Quality (APQ) covers the western Strone Peninsula, Loch Striven and the western part of the peninsula that Dunoon is located on. The special qualities of this APQ are likely to include the scenic juxtaposition of mountains and sea lochs. • The Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park borders this character type to the north east. 	backclothing with due attention paid to orientation of the proposed OHL to reduce the impact of wayleave felling.
High Tops (2)	<p>Loch Fyne: 7.9 km south east</p> <p>Lochan Shira: 6 km east</p> <p>Ben Cruachan: 6.6 km north</p>	<p>There are three distinct areas of this LCT within the Study Area, one to the south (Loch Fyne), east (Lochan Shira) and north (Ben Cruachan). The massive peaks and ridges of these mountains are highly visible and form a scenic, rugged backdrop to the lower settled loch shores and coastal areas of Argyll and Bute.</p> <p>Key characteristics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of these mountains have an instantly recognisable form and are important landmark features (Ben Cruachan and Black Mount) seen across a wide area. • These mountains have a massive scale although the narrow valleys which cut into mountains, upland basins and corries are strongly contained by deep slopes. • These rugged and often complex, bulky mountains with multiple ridges, rocky summits and scooped corries, have steep slopes patterned with scree and exposed rock faces. • Vegetation cover is simple, largely comprising grass moorland with patchy heather. The landscape is strongly patterned with exposed rock, crags, small lochs and myriad water courses significantly increasing complexity. Coniferous forestry occurs on the edges of this landscape and broadleaved woodlands trace burns, gullies and lower slopes. • This mountainous area is very sparsely populated with roads and dispersed settlement occurring only on its fringes. • Interior has high wild land qualities resulting from its inaccessibility and that it is largely uninhabited. 	<p>It has a High sensitivity.</p> <p>This LCT has a high value determined in part as this LCT is entirely covered by the North Argyll APQ and partially covered by the Loch Etive and Ben Lui WLAs within the Study Area. The LCT has a high scenic and recreational value, the summits are popular with walkers climbed to experience the panoramic views.</p> <p>It would have a high susceptibility to the type of development proposed. This is due to the landscape's complex topography, simple landcover and limited human intervention within the landscape reduces its capacity to house this type of proposed development.</p>

Table 1.1: Seascape and Landscape Character Types: Description and Sensitivity

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These uplands are popular with walkers because of their highly natural and rugged character and the presence of Munro and Corbett hills. The higher summits offer extensive views into the less visited interior of the hills and the wider area. • In terms of views to this character type, these mountains are frequently visible in views from roads including main tourist routes and from settlements. Key views include those to these High Tops at the head of Loch Fyne and Ben Cruachan seen extensively from the A85 and in the upper Loch Awe/Loch Etive area. • This mountainous area extends into the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park to the east. • The North Argyll APQ designation covers this character type. 	
Mountain Glens (4)	Glen Shira: 2 km south east Lochawe: 7 km north	<p>There are two LCT units within the Study Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glen Shira; and • Lochawe. <p>These narrow glens are visually isolated from other landscape types, with the exception of the immediate edges of the surrounding upland character types, including the 'Steep Ridgeland and Mountains' (1), 'High Tops' (2), 'Craggy Uplands with Settled Glens' (7a) and the 'Upland Forest Moor Mosaic' (6) which form the upper rim of the glen sides. There is a strong contrast between the settled and farmed floors of these glens and the rugged (and often forested) steep glens sides and skylines of the adjacent upland character types.</p> <p>Key characteristics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These glens have strong sense of enclosure due to their narrow, steep slopes and flat bottoms. This is emphasised when found adjacent to High Tops LCT (2), for example the Strath of Orchy. • Small field enclosures, individual trees, woodlands and scattered buildings equate to a small-scale landscape that is emphasised by the juxtaposition to massive scale landscapes adjacent to the glens. • Lower glen sides vary from complex craggy outcrops to smoother glen sides. Coniferous forestry and policy woodlands are a common feature of glen sides although rough pasture is also present. 	<p>It has a Medium sensitivity.</p> <p>This LCT has a high value based in part on these LCTs being covered by the North Argyll APQ. They have a small-to-medium scale and high scenic value and contribute to the mountain setting sitting below the summits of High Tops and/or Steep Ridgeland and Mountains LCTs.</p> <p>Susceptibility is medium. This LCT type contains a number of existing OHLs, particularly within the Strath of Orchy. The steep glen sides are often covered in coniferous forestry that would provide backclothing and filtering of views, however careful siting would be required to mitigate against wayleave felling drawing the eye to this type of proposed development. The susceptibility to this type of proposed development would increase in areas where there are existing OHLs.</p>

Table 1.1: Seascape and Landscape Character Types: Description and Sensitivity

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small, enclosed fields, bands of mature mixed species trees and riparian woodland following rivers and burns cover glen floors providing contrast and reducing the overall scale of the landscape. • Rivers become meandering creeks through mudflats at mouth of glens with views into them from key routes of A85 and A83 focused towards irregular rim of valleys. Occasional lochans are found within the glens, for example Dubh Loch within Glen Shira. • Settlement is scattered becoming sparse towards head of glen, with occasional castles and estates as important landmarks (i.e. Kilchurn Castle). • All of the Mountain Glens LCT areas are found within the North Argyll APQ within the Study Area. 	
Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic (6a)	Host LCT	<p>This landscape forms a backdrop of rugged, largely forested hills to the more diverse and settled low-lying fringes of Loch Fyne and Kilmichael Glen (Rocky Mosaic (20)). It comprises a narrow band of relatively low hills which are orientated to face the narrow inner Loch Fyne and frame views up and down its length. This is a transitional landscape between the loch fringe and the more extensive uplands of the Craggy Uplands and the Steep Ridgeland and Mountains. It is a large LCT that extends from Glen Shira down to Lochgilphead, the Study Area includes the northernmost third of this unit.</p> <p>Key characteristics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upland plateau with narrow bands of hills with a complex knolly and craggy landform found close to the north western shores of Loch Fyne. The topography combined with extensive forestry, provides containment and reduces scale. Some broader, shallower basins occur at the transition with the Craggy Upland (7) where scale is increased. • A large-scale mosaic of extensive forestry and open moorland with some blanket bog cover. Some small areas of broadleaved woodland and pockets of small pastures occur on lower slopes and within valleys at the transition with Rocky Mosaic (20). • A sparsely settled landscape with clusters of houses and farms (many old townships) located in valleys and lower hill slopes at the transition with Rocky Mosaic (20). • Transmission lines, masts and forest roads are often prominent features on the NW side of Loch Fyne. • Views from within this landscape are limited due to its sparsely settled nature and extensive forest cover. 	<p>Overall sensitivity is Medium, within Glen Aray this increases to High.</p> <p>Overall, this unit has a medium value landscape based on extensive forestry, existing OHLs and forestry infrastructure and limited access for recreation. It covers Glen Aray where there is a mix of forestry cover and open moorland whose medium scale, medium pasture and knolly landform give it a high landscape value.</p> <p>Overall susceptibility is Medium due to medium scale landscape, existing forestry cover would provide some screening and backclothing which, along with careful siting of any proposed development, could reduce impacts of wayleave felling. Existing OHLs indicates there is capacity for this type of proposed development, however this will reduce the overall susceptibility in some areas where additional OHLs would result in cumulative sensitivities. Within Glen Aray</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of this landscape is not designated although some of the hills close to Loch Fyne fall within the APQ covering the shores of the loch. 	the existing 132 kV Taynuilt to Inveraray OHL and LT40 increase susceptibility to high.
Craggy Upland (7)	<p>North Loch Awe: 6.3 km north west</p> <p>South Loch Awe: 4 m west</p>	<p>There are two units of this LCT within the Study Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Loch Awe; and South Loch Awe. <p>This extensive upland character type forms a backdrop to Loch Awe and the Rocky Mosaic (20). It often merges with the Upland Forest Moor Mosaic character type (6) to the south east where it has similar elevation, landform and vegetation cover.</p> <p>Key characteristics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An expansive upland area attaining an average elevation of around 300 m but with occasional hills extending to over 500 m. The area appears as an undulating plateau dominated by sweeping horizontal scale. On closer inspection, the long ridges which create this impression from afar, contain well defined valleys and scale is reduced in valleys and basins such as those occupied by Loch Avich and Loch Nant. A craggy landform with numerous rocky outcrops and a knobbly texture. These uplands are dissected by steep glens to form ridges with an irregular silhouette. Rounded knolls, rock out crops and numerous lochs in low-lying hollows. Open moorland predominates, but extensive conifer plantations also occur. Stone walls enclose an irregular patchwork of pastures within glens on margins of moorland. This area is sparsely settled and does not appear to be extensively used for recreation. Views are generally restricted by landform and extensive forestry although breaks in forest/tree cover allow open views across Loch Awe to the higher core (including existing windfarm development) of this character type. Views into the interior of this landscape are also limited from the wider area. Isolated farmsteads on lower slopes within the glens. Narrow roads extend alongside Loch Awe, through the valley accommodating Loch Avich and partially accessing the interior at Musdale via Glen Feochan from the west. 	<p>It has a Medium sensitivity.</p> <p>Landscape value is medium due to extensive conifer plantations, limited scenic quality and recreational interest.</p> <p>Susceptibility is medium due to the contrast between the rugged, natural character found in parts and areas of extensive coniferous plantations.</p>

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<p>Craggy Upland with Settled Glens (7a)</p>	<p>9 km north west</p>	<p>This is a transitional landscape between Craggy Uplands (7) and coast beyond outside of the Study Area. It is a small-to-medium landscape of deep, contained glens to craggy, steep-sided ridges.</p> <p><u>Key characteristics include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This landscape comprises a number of deep glens separated by craggy steep-sided ridges rising to around 300 m with two areas of more plateau like landform. • Many glens have hummocky terrain interspersed with flat, smooth valley floor and lochs provide contrast and increase the diversity and scenic qualities of these glens. • Areas of wood pasture and mixed policy plantings feature within the glens together with occasional wetlands and heath. • Small fenced and walled fields of smooth pasture cover the flat glen floor. • Rough pasture, heather and grass moorland cover craggy hill slopes. • Lochs within the glens form landmark features. • Views out from this LCT are generally restricted by the incised landform of the glens, however more extensive views of this landscape are possible from the adjacent Craggy Uplands (7). • Settlement is concentrated within the glens, sited on the edge of farmland covering the flatter glen floor. Large estate houses and lodges are sited in some of these glens. 	<p>It has a Medium sensitivity.</p> <p>Landscape value is medium based on its varying scenic quality and limited recreational value.</p> <p>The Taynuilt to Inveraray OHL crosses through this LCT indicating there is capacity for the type of proposed development. However, the small-to-medium scale of this landscape and the potential for cumulative sensitivities result in a medium susceptibility.</p>
<p>North Loch Awe Craggy Upland (7c)</p>	<p>South Loch Awe (host LCT) Ardanaiseig: 4.4 km north, north west</p>	<p>There are two units of this LCT within the Study Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Loch Awe (host unit); and • Ardanaiseig. <p>This is an upland plateau landscape with a complex landform. Two LCT units are found within the Study Area, one sits below the High Tops (2) within Argyll and Bute between Loch Fyne and Loch Awe, and the second adjacent to the Craggy Upland (7) on the Ardanaiseig peninsula.</p> <p><u>Key characteristics include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This elevated moorland of horizontal ridges abuts steep-sided vertical hills, a contrast which is most dramatic when seen against the hills to the north. This juxtaposition limits the sense of expansive scale of this type, as the sense of horizontal expanse is curtailed by the massiveness of some of the High Tops, such as Ben Cruachan. Elevated to around 200-300 m but with the highest ridge of hills extending to over 500 m, the area appears as an 	<p>It has an overall Medium sensitivity; however along loch shores sensitivity would increase to High.</p> <p>Ridgelines overlooking Loch Awe would have a high sensitivity due to the steep embankments that provide prominent skylines to neighbouring small-scale Rocky Mosaic (20) LCTs. These edges would have a lower capacity for the type of proposed development.</p> <p>Landscape value is medium based in part on the North Argyll APQ and Ben Lui</p>

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		<p>undulating plateau, but on closer inspection is made up of a more complex series of long slopes, low ridges and valleys which create a medium scale landscape.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open upland moorland predominates with some large conifer plantations. • Rivers wind their way through some of the elevated glens, and small lochans, often at high elevations punctuate this landscape. • This upland area is very sparsely settled. There is some additional infrastructure, including tracks and a dammed reservoir (Lochan Shira). • Although this upland area is difficult to access and can feel remote, the presence of extensive forestry, tracks and the reservoir as well as its overall limited extent combine to limit the sense of naturalness. • 'A' class roads, including the A85, smaller roads along Loch Awe, settlements, the railway line, recreational watercraft on Loch Awe and views from surrounding 'Munros' and hill tops ensure that this area is generally widely visible. • Within the North Argyll APQ. 	<p>WLA, which cover part of this LCT. Although large areas are difficult to access, existing OHLs, forestry and hydropower infrastructure limit the sense of naturalness and the scenic quality of the landscape.</p> <p>Susceptibility is medium owing to the large areas of coniferous forestry and existing infrastructure that are found within this LCT. There is capacity for this type of proposed development, but existing infrastructure would impact on cumulative sensitivities.</p>
<p>Rocky Mosaic (20)</p>	<p>River Aray: 142 m east North Shore of Loch Awe: 3.8 km north South Shore of Loch Awe: 1.8 km north Strachur: 6.9 km south</p>	<p>There are four LCT units within the Study Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Aray; • North Shore of Loch Awe; • South Shore of Loch Awe; and • Strachur. <p>This landscape forms a narrow coastal or shoreline band often contained by steeply rising ground. In the Kintyre and Loch Fyne area, it is adjacent to the Upland Forest Moor Mosaic (6) and in the Loch Awe area it sits below the Craggy Upland (7).</p> <p>Key characteristics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This landscape forms a linear band against loch or coast and its narrowness limits its extensiveness. It is of low relief rising to 180 m at most. • It has an irregular coastal edge of raised beaches, cliffs, small knolls and often rolling landform that provide strong containment to the small-scale landscape reinforced by the presence of small woodlands, fields and settlement. • Pronounced craggy hills, steep wooded cliffs and hummocky, gorse-covered slope pattern this landscape and these form particularly distinctive features when seen close to the coast. 	<p>It has a High sensitivity.</p> <p>Large areas of this LCT fall within the North Argyll APQ. The contrast in scale with its mountainous backdrop, land use and landcover are key valued characteristics identified along with high scenic quality giving this LCT a high value.</p> <p>The susceptibility of this LCT to the type of proposed development is high. The complexity of the landform and small-scale of the landscape would be disrupted when seen in conjunction with large-scale OHL of the type proposed.</p>

Table 1.1: Seascape and Landscape Character Types: Description and Sensitivity

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse vegetation including small, enclosed fields, bracken covered hill slopes, broadleaved and conifer woodland and designed landscape features such as avenue trees and parkland. Shoreline vegetation varies from scrub to pockets of wetlands to wood pasture. • This landscape is relatively settled, within the Study Area Inveraray is located close to the Glen Shira inlet. Small villages and dispersed houses and farms are concentrated along the loch shore/coastal roads. • A number of major roads are aligned through this landscape type that include the A83 and A85 which are promoted tourist routes. Views from these roads, and the narrower winding roads accessing the less frequented shores of Loch Awe and east Loch Fyne, tend to give glimpsed views through woodland which are limited up and down the sea/loch but rather focus on views across water to opposite shores and upland backdrops. • An APQ covers much of this landscape character type including the shores of inner Loch Fyne and the shores of north Loch Awe. 	
Loch Fyne/Kilbrannan Sound (25)	3.1 km south east	<p>Key Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow stretches of sea particularly in Loch Fyne. • Heavily forestry, especially on the edges of peninsulas and in the hinterland. • Settlement concentrated on coast and within some connecting glens and comprises mainly scattered and small-scale settlements. However, there are a few larger settlements, some of which are picturesque, e.g. Inveraray. • Roads following very close to coastal edge for much of this area. • Small scale settlements some urban, e.g. Lochgilphead, Campbeltown. • This is a small-scale seascape that is highly contained with narrow stretches of sea particularly Loch Fyne. Open views of sea rare. • The sea lochs are narrow and long stretches of water enclosed by raised beaches and hills. Narrow rocky shores are evident and are indented in places with very occasional sandy shores. 	<p>It has a High sensitivity.</p> <p>This seascape is highly valued for its amenity and scenic quality.</p> <p>The highly contained nature and distinctive form would generally be susceptible to large scale vertical elements of the type proposed. Open views of the sea are rare, and development would usually be viewed within a landscape pattern of forestry and small settlements on the edges of lochs.</p>