

## 3. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

### 3.1 Introduction

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

- Annex C – Landscape Assessment Methodology
- Annex D – Landscape Character Sensitivity Table
- Annex E – Photomontages and figures
  
- Figure E.1 – Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Viewpoints;
- Figure E.2 – Landscape Character;
- Figure E.3 – Landscape Designations and Recreational Routes;
- Figure E.4 – Future Felling; and
- Figure E.5 – Landscape Mitigation Plan.

#### *Study Area*

Taking a proportionate approach, a 5 km radius Study Area has been adopted from the Project for the assessment of landscape and visual effects (“the Study Area”). This has been informed by analysis of Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) maps and an early appraisal of potential effects for a development of this scale. It is considered that any notable landscape or visual effects would be confined within this geographical area. For the purpose of this assessment, the Study Area is extended outwards in an easterly direction over the Kilbrannan Sound, to a distance of 6.5 km. This encompasses receptors on the coast of Arran.

### 3.2 Guidance and Methodology

#### 3.2.1 Guidance

The methodology presented in this Chapter is based on the following best practice guidance:

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

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

- National Landscape Character Assessment (web-based interactive map), NatureScot, 2019;
- The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas, SNH Commissioned Report No.374, NatureScot, 2010;
- Ordnance Survey Land ranger (1:50 000) and Explorer (1:25 000) maps;
- Field surveys; and
- Aerial photography.

### 3.2.2 Methodology

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

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

### 3.3 Planning Policy Context

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

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

#### 3.3.1 Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2015

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

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

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

#### 3.3.2 Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan Supplementary Guidance 2016

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

- SG LDP ENV 1 – Development Impact on Habitats, Species and our Biodiversity: this outlines relevant legislation, policies and conservation objectives that will be consulted in regards to development proposals.
- SG LDP ENV 6 – Development Impact on Trees/Woodland: this outlines that the Council will protect trees and woodland by making Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), and will resist development likely to have adverse effects on trees, with mitigation plans required.
- SG LDP ENV 8 – Protection and Enhancement of Green Networks: this highlights that the Council will encourage developments that contribute towards the overall health of green infrastructure.
- SG LDP ENV 12 – Development Impact on National Scenic Area (NSAs): this policy seeks to protect the integrity of NSAs from inappropriate development.

- SG LDP ENV 13 – Development Impact on Areas of Panoramic Quality (APQs), states that the Council will resist development in, or affecting, an APQ where its scale, location or design will have a significant adverse impact, unless these are outweighed by wider benefits.
- SG LDP ENV 14 – Landscape: this outlines that the Council will consider landscape impact when assessing development proposals, and will look for development that has correct scale, location and design in relation to the site context.

### 3.3.3 Biodiversity Technical Note for Planners and Developers 2017

The Technical Note states that the Council encourage high quality development that will make a positive contribution towards biodiversity within the local environment. The overall aims include the conservation and enhancement of existing biodiversity, as well as improving connectivity between key habitats. The Technical Note incorporates lists of suggested plant species, including native tree species, and their suitability for specific soil conditions and habitat types.

### 3.3.4 Argyll and Bute Woodland and Forestry Strategy 2011

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

## 3.4 Landscape Baseline Environment

### 3.4.1 Local Landscape Context

**Figure E.1** illustrates the geographic location of the Project, which is located within an area of commercial forestry approximately 800 m south of Crossaig and 1.7 km to the north of the dispersed hamlet of Cour.

The local landscape consists of a dense, almost-continuous expanse of commercial forestry that extends across the upland areas to the west, north and south of the Project. This is contrast to the landscape to the east, where the land coverage is characterised by semi-improved grassland, sparsely scattered large shrubs and small-scale tree belts, all of which are situated upon a continually undulating series of landforms. The Kilbrannan Sound is situated further east, and there are open, expansive views across this towards the Isle of Arran in the distance.

The Project Site is located at approximately 85 m AOD. The local landscape rises steadily to the west, reaching 210 m AOD at the summit of Cnoc an Fhithich. To the east, the land slopes downwards towards the coast at the Kilbrannan Sound.

The Project Site and its immediate environs are influenced by existing infrastructure in the form of the existing Crossaig Substation located approximately 120 m to the east. Other existing infrastructure in the form of overhead electricity transmission lines extend outwards from the existing substation and extend broadly north-south along the lower lying coastal hills. In addition, Cour Wind Farm is located 3.5 km to the south west of the Project Site.

The wider landscape is very sparsely settled. The hamlets of Crossaig and Cour represent the closest settlements. Both of these settlements are connected to the wider area by the B842, the only road within the Study Area. This route links Campbelltown and Rockfield on the eastern side of Kintyre. Dry stone walls and post-and-wire fencing are situated on both sides of the carriageway, along with heathland species and species-rich hedgerows. Other buildings are primarily restricted to isolated farmsteads and dwellings.

### 3.4.2 Landscape Character

**Figure E.2** illustrates the Landscape Character Types (LCTs) within the Study Area, as defined within the National Landscape Character Assessment<sup>1</sup>, which represents the most up-to-date assessment of landscape character across the Study Area. The Proposed Development Site and Associated Development are located within the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT. The key characteristics and sensitivities are listed below.

#### *Key Characteristics of the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT*

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

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

#### *Relationship to Adjacent LCTs*

The Rocky Coastland LCT is located to the east of the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT, and extends along the coast of the Kilbrannan Sound. Further afield, the Raised Beach Coast and Cliffs LCT extends along the coastal edge of Arran, approximately 6.2 km to the east of the Project. The key characteristics of these LCTs are listed below:

#### *Key Characteristics of the Rocky Coastland LCT*

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

#### *Key Characteristics of the Raised Beach Coast and Cliffs LCT*

- 'Raised beach, visible as a level shelf backed by a steep, sometimes craggy escarpment representing the former cliff line, above which lies more gently rising land;
- Rocky coastline, sometimes with cliffs, with narrow sand and shingle beaches, and mud flats in estuarine locations;
- Varied land uses but mainly farmed; the raised beaches also provide a level terrace for settlement and communication;
- Large parts of the former cliff line are also characterised by dense, often wind sheared broadleaf woodland;

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<sup>1</sup> National Landscape Character Assessment, NatureScot, 2019

- A number of hillforts, promontory forts, mottes and castles reflecting the strategic importance of this coastal landscape;
- Small, historic settlements sit comfortably against the steep former cliff line and use building materials which reflect the local geology;
- Some modern growth has taken the form of ribbon development and includes caravan parks and holiday development; tall structures such as masts are relatively few;
- Landscape of visual drama and contrast with a strong sense of seclusion, and where less accessible a strong sense of remoteness; and
- Views tend to be longer distance and focussed seaward.'

### 3.4.3 Landscape Designations

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

With reference to **Figure E.3**, the Proposed Development Site and Associated Development are not located within a landscape designation. However, within the wider Study Area the North Arran National Scenic Area (NSA) is located on the opposite side of the Kilbrannan Sound, approximately 6.2 km to the east of the Project. With reference to The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas<sup>2</sup>, the special qualities of the NSA comprise:

- 'A mountain presence that dominates the Firth of Clyde;
- The contrast between the wild highland interior and the populated coastal strip;
- The historical landscape in miniature;
- A dramatic, compact mountain area;
- A distinctive coastline with a rich variety of forms;
- One of the most important geological areas in Britain;
- An exceptional area for outdoor recreation; and
- The experience of highland and island wildlife at close hand.'

There are no other landscape designations or Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDLs) within the Study Area. There are some tracts of ancient woodland located to the north and south of the Project, but these areas would be unaffected and are not considered further.

## 3.5 Visual Baseline and Receptors

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

### 3.5.1 Local Residents

With reference to **Figure E.1**, settlements within the Study Area from which there may be views of the Project are limited to small-scale hamlets:

- Crossaig, located 700 m to the north; and
- Cour, located 1.5 km away to the south.

Other residents within the Study Area are limited to dispersed dwellings and farmsteads, comprising:

- Ravensbay, 2.0 km to the north east;
- Allt Romain, 3.2 km to the north east;
- Escart Farm, 3.6 km to the north east;

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<sup>2</sup> The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas, SNH Commissioned Report No.374 (2010)

- Oragaig, 5.0 km to the north east; and
- Sunadal Cottage, 5.0 km to the south.

### 3.5.2 Recreational Receptors

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

- Core Path network;
  - C088 – Campbeltown to Cloanaig, which is located 100 m to the east at the closest point;
  - C303 – Cloanaig to Clachan, 4.6 km to the north at the closest point;
- Sustrans Cycle Route: Caledonia Way (NCR 78), which extends along the route of the B842, 100 m to the east;
- The Kintyre Way, which follows the same route as Core Path C303 within the Study Area, 4.6 km to the north at the closest point.

### 3.5.3 Road and Rail Receptors

The Study Area is accessible from one road, the B842, which runs north-south along the Kintyre coastline. It is located 100 m to the east of the Proposed Development Site at the closest point. There are no other roads or any railway lines within the Study Area.

## 3.6 Future Baseline

In terms of future changes to the baseline, there is ongoing construction work within the Study Area associated with the consented 275 kV Inveraray to Crossaig OHL (hereafter referred to as the 'new 275 kV OHL'). This will gradually extend southwards from Inveraray, parallel to the coast along the lower lying hills on Kintyre's eastern side, and terminate at the existing Crossaig Substation. The new 275 kV OHL is scheduled for completion in June 2023. Following the completion and energising of the new 275 kV OHL, the existing 132 kV OHL to the north of Crossaig Substation (which shares a similar route) will be decommissioned and removed. These works are scheduled for completion by December 2023 / January 2024.

In addition to the above changes to the OHLs within the Study Area, other power-related infrastructure with the potential to influence the future baseline comprise the consented wind energy development at High Constellation Wind Farm. This incorporates 10 turbines, 149.9 m to tip, with the closest turbine located 2.1 km to the southwest of the Proposed Development, and the associated Substation located 250 m to the south.

With reference to **Figure E.4**, each of these developments will involve some localised forestry felling. This includes consented felling activities to the north of the Proposed Development Site (associated with the new 275 kV OHL), and to the west (associated with High Constellation Wind Farm). In addition, future forestry management will result in additional felling between these two areas. These future felling activities are considered within this assessment to ensure consideration of a scenario in which the most open views towards the Project would be experienced. Accordingly, the visualisations in Annex E illustrate views of the Project in a scenario where these areas have been felled.

The developments described above are also considered further within the cumulative assessment.

## 3.7 Embedded Mitigation

By its nature, the Project would result in landscape and visual effects that it would not be feasible to fully mitigate. However, the location of the Project has been chosen to avoid any notable ridgelines or visually prominent sections of skyline. The undulating landform in the locality in combination with extensive areas of forestry would notably restrict views of the Project across wider parts of the Study Area.

Furthermore, the Proposed Development and Associated Development would be located adjacent to existing electricity infrastructure, comprising the existing Crossaig Substation and associated overhead electricity transmission lines to the east. As noted above, the section of this OHL to the north of Crossaig Substation will be replaced by the new 275 kV OHL that is currently under construction. As such, the Project would exert its primary influence over a local landscape already partially characterised by existing electricity infrastructure development, and avoids the spread of such infrastructure into wider parts of the surrounding landscape.

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

- There would be localised felling of forestry within the Proposed Development Site, and adjoining area to the south. However, land clearance and occupation would be limited to necessary areas only to minimise the geographic spread of the infrastructure / required felling, and limit the potential impact on the local landscape fabric;
- The Proposed Development and Associated Development access tracks would utilise existing tracks associated with the new 275 kV OHL, which is currently under construction, and the existing Substation. This would minimise effects associated with peripheral parts of the Proposed Development;
- The number of new towers comprising the Associated Development has been limited as far as possible (two towers in total) to minimise the effects resulting from this component of the Project. The effects would be offset by the removal of three towers forming part of the new 275 kV OHL;
- In terms of colour and materials, the buildings would be painted with a recessive colour (dark-brown, such as RAL 8008: Olive Brown or similar approved) to assist blending in with the surrounding landscape context comprising plantation forestry. This would also reflect the colour of the existing Crossaig Substation to create a more consistent visual appearance;
- The proposed landscape works would focus on the reinstatement of ground cover within the Site to native bog / mire habitat (see **Figure E.5**). This approach reflects the local ground conditions, ensures a natural context to the proposed built form, and also provides valuable ecological habitat to the locality;
- Woodland planting would be employed as a mitigation feature, and would comprise native broadleaved wet woodland, incorporating understorey / scrub species, of local provenance. In addition to mitigating the localised felling of forestry within the Proposed Development Site during construction, this would provide a natural context to the proposed built form, and also provide additional habitat type / biodiversity enhancement to the locality as it steadily establishes. Tree planting would be carefully sited to avoid any potential disturbance to underground cable routes or overhead power lines; and
- A SuDS basin would be created in the southern part of the Proposed Development Site, providing both sustainable drainage and additional wetland habitat.

### 3.8 ZTV and Viewpoint Analysis

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

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

#### 3.8.1 Zone of Theoretical Visibility Analysis

Theoretical visibility mapping of the Proposed Development and Associated Development is illustrated in **Figure E.1**. The ZTV illustrates the maximum overall visibility of the Proposed Development, based on a top height of 18.0 m to the building roof; and the Associated Development, with towers of 59.2 m maximum height.



The ZTV has been prepared on the basis of 'bare ground' and does not take into account the potential screening effects of surrounding vegetation / forestry.

With reference to the ZTV, the geographical extent of potential visibility for the Proposed Development would be predominantly focused within approximately 1 km of the Proposed Development Site, to the north, south and west. This primarily encompasses areas of commercial forestry. There are additional parcels of ZTV coverage at greater distances to the north and south, including the summits / upper slopes of Cnoc Breacam, Cnoc Bhreac and Cnoc an t-Seallaidh Bhig. To the east, ZTV coverage ceases abruptly on the edge of the Proposed Development Site reflecting the containing nature of the undulating landform. Further to the east, there would be potential views from the open water of the Kilbrannan Sound.

The ZTV illustrates that potential views of the Associated Development would be more widespread, in accordance with the increased height of this infrastructure. This incorporates additional areas of lower lying land along the coast to the east, as well as more distant elevated areas to the south (at Cnoc Iaruinn) and north west (at Cruach Tamalabh). These elevated areas primarily comprise upland moorland and forestry, with limited public access.

### 3.8.2 Viewpoint Analysis

Viewpoint analysis has been carried out on a selection of key viewpoint locations to assess the likely level of effects arising as a result of the Project. With reference to the geographical extent of visibility illustrated within the ZTV, a total of two viewpoints have been selected as being representative of the main views from publically accessible locations within the Study Area (see **Figure E.1** for locations).

As described above in Section 3.6: Future Baseline, there are consented felling activities associated with the new 275 kV OHL, High Constellation Wind Farm and future forestry management, which will result in the opening up of existing areas of forestry on the northern side of Crossaig Substation. The visualisations in **Annex E** incorporate these felling activities, thereby illustrating the Project in a scenario with the most open views. As such, the extent of forestry felling shown does not relate solely to the Project, but instead presents a composite approach incorporating felling from all relevant developments. To assist the analysis, the geographic extents of felling attributed to each individual development are annotated within the visualisations.

**Table 3.1 Viewpoint Analysis**

Viewpoint	Description
<b>1. View north from the B842 (near Cour)</b>	<p><b>Existing View (Figure E.5a)</b>            This viewpoint is located to the south of the Proposed Development Site, within the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT. It represents views experienced by walkers / cyclists on Core Path C088 and NCR 78, as well as other road users on the B842. The existing views to the north are characterised by rough grass and moorland, with parcels of woodland and scrub in the foreground. The more distant landscape is influenced by an extensive, near-continuous spread of plantation forestry, which contrasts in colour and texture with the foreground vegetation. Built form within the view comprises residential properties at Cour, as well as sections of overhead electricity transmission line that extend along the edge of the forestry. The B842 forms a recognisable low-lying linear element.</p> <p><b>Predicted View (Figure E.5b – E.5c)</b>            Localised forestry felling associated would open up views of the Proposed Development and Associated Development. There would also be views of the existing Crossaig Substation as a result of these felling activities. These elements of infrastructure would be experienced below the distant horizon and back-clothed by the landscape beyond, thereby reducing their influence upon the view. They would represent relatively discreet elements in the distance, beyond existing towers / OHL. The introduction of the Associated Development would be offset by the removal of three towers forming part of the new 275 kV OHL in the distance. As the mitigation planting within the Site steadily becomes more established, views of the Proposed Development would gradually soften.</p>



	<p><b>Effects on Visual Amenity</b> The sensitivity of walkers / cyclists is assessed as being High. The sensitivity of other road users is considered to be Medium.</p> <p>i) There would be views of localised felling within the Project Site and the introduction of new built form. These elements would be experienced in the distance, beyond existing towers / OHL on the southern side of Crossaig Substation. The Proposed Development would be experienced in the context of retained forestry and moorland in the wider surrounding areas. At this distance, the magnitude of change would be Low. The level of effect experienced by walkers and cyclists would be Moderate. The level of effect experienced by road users would be Moderate/Minor. As the mitigation planting steadily establishes views of the Proposed Development would soften, albeit the effects would remain unchanged at Year 12.</p> <p>ii) The Associated Development would be visible beyond the existing OHL on the southern side of Crossaig Substation. The proposed towers would be partially screened by intervening built form associated with the Proposed Development. The effects would be further offset and balanced by the removal of three towers forming part of the new 275 kV OHL. At this distance, the magnitude of change at completion would be Negligible and the resultant level of effect would be Minor for walkers and cyclists, and Negligible for road users. There would be no notable change at Year 12. The corresponding level of effect would remain Minor to Negligible.</p> <p>iii) The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would be the same as those described for the Proposed Development alone.</p> <p><b>Landscape Effect</b> The Plateau Moor and Forest LCT is of Medium sensitivity to the Project.</p> <p>i) The Proposed Development would result in localised felling and the introduction of new built form within the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT, within an area incorporating existing electricity infrastructure. The effects would be tempered by the reinstatement of ground cover to native bog, which is characteristic of the local ground conditions. The recessive colours of the buildings would reduce their visual influence on the landscape and blend with the surrounding context. At this distance the magnitude of change would be Low/Negligible and the effect on local landscape character would be Minor. There would be no notable change at Year 12.</p> <p>ii) The Associated Development would augment the existing infrastructure within the local area, albeit the overall effects would be offset by the removal of three towers forming part of the new 275 kV OHL. The magnitude of change would be Negligible and the effect on landscape character would be Negligible. There would be no notable change at Year 12. The corresponding level of effect would remain Negligible.</p> <p>iii) The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would be the same as those described for the Proposed Development alone.</p>
<p><b>2. View south from the B842 (near Ravensbay)</b></p>	<p><b>Existing View (Figure E.6a)</b> This viewpoint is located to the north of the Proposed Development Site, within the Rocky Coastland LCT. It represents views experienced by walkers / cyclists on Core Path C088 and NCR 78, as well as other road users on the B842. The existing views to the south are characterised by rough grassland with scattered scrub and tree cover within the foreground. In the middle distance, dense plantation forestry extends across the skyline. Built form within the view comprises the B842, which winds through the lower lying landscape, as well as the upper parts of existing towers within areas of forestry.</p> <p><b>Predicted View (Figure E.6b – E.6c)</b> With reference to consented development in the Study Area, the future baseline will result in forestry felling that will be evident within southerly views at this location. These felling activities are not related to the Project and will happen independently. The main loss of forestry will occur as a result of the new 275 kV OHL (currently under construction) and High Constellation Wind Farm, which will be augmented by future forestry management felling. This will open up views towards the Project Site. As a result, there would be views of localised felling within the Site and new built form associated with the Proposed Development and Associated Development. These elements would be experienced in the distance, in the context of existing towers / OHL.</p>

	<p>The introduction of the Associated Development would be offset by the removal of three towers forming part of the new 275 kV OHL.</p> <p><b>Effects on Visual Amenity</b> The sensitivity of walkers / cyclists is assessed as being High. The sensitivity of other road users is considered to be Medium.</p> <p>i) Forestry felling within the future baseline will open up views of the Proposed Development. There would be views of new built form, as well as localised forestry felling within the Site. These elements would be experienced in the distance, in the context of the new 275 kV OHL in the foreground. The forestry felling associated with the Proposed Development would account for a very minor portion of the overall loss of forestry experienced at this viewpoint. The vast majority of the felling within the view would be due to other (consented) developments. At this distance, the new built form would represent a relatively discreet addition to the view, and its recessive colour would soften its appearance against the background landscape. On balance, the magnitude of change would be Low. The level of effect would be Moderate for walkers and cyclists, and Moderate/Minor for road users. There would be no discernible change at Year 12.</p> <p>ii) Forestry felling within the future baseline will open up views towards the Associated Development. The Associated Development would be visible in close proximity to towers on the new 275 kV OHL, as well as built form within the Proposed Development. The lower section of one tower would be part-screened by intervening forestry. The effects on the view would be offset by the removal of three towers forming part of the new 275 kV OHL. At this distance, the magnitude of change at completion would be Negligible and the resultant level of effect would be Minor for walkers and cyclists, and Negligible for road users. There would be no discernible change at Year 12.</p> <p>iii) The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would be the same as those described for the Proposed Development alone.</p> <p><b>Landscape Effect</b> The Rocky Coastland LCT is of Medium sensitivity to the Project.</p> <p>i) The Proposed Development would result in localised felling and the introduction of new built form on the landscape rising inland from the Rocky Coastland LCT. The vast majority of felling evident across the surrounding landscape would be due to other (consented) developments. The effects of the Proposed Development would be far more localised and would be tempered by the reinstatement of ground cover to native bog, which is characteristic of the local ground conditions. The recessive colours of the buildings would reduce their visual influence on the landscape and blend with the surrounding context. The magnitude of change would be Low/Negligible and the effect on landscape character would be Minor. There would be no notable change at Year 12.</p> <p>ii) The Associated Development would augment the existing electricity infrastructure within the local area, albeit the overall effects would be offset by the removal of three towers forming part of the new 275 kV OHL. The magnitude of change would be Negligible and the effect on landscape character would be Negligible. There would be no notable change at Year 12. The corresponding level of effect would remain Negligible.</p> <p>iii) The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would be the same as those described for the Proposed Development alone.</p>
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### 3.9 Appraisal - Construction Effects

Whilst it is the operational stage of the Project that would give rise to prolonged landscape and visual effects, the construction works detailed in **Chapter 2: Project Description** would give rise to medium-term temporary landscape and visual effects. The detailed construction programme is not known at this stage, although it is anticipated that construction of the Proposed Development and Associated Development would take approximately 30 months.

These effects would be temporary and would mainly arise through the gradual introduction of proposed buildings/infrastructure in combination with localised felling of forestry within the Site. The effects arising from

other operations, including the vehicle movement, construction of the fencing and excavation works (for SuDS, building foundations and cable routes) would be localised, and whilst potentially visible, would not appear prominently in views from the surrounding areas. As such, the construction phase effects would be limited in extent and duration.

### 3.9.1 Construction Landscape Effects

The Proposed Development and Associated Development are located in an area of commercial forestry. During the construction stage, the coniferous forestry within the Proposed Development Site would be removed, along with any groundcover and understorey planting to facilitate construction activities. In addition, there would be localised areas of excavation required for the parking and access, foundations of the buildings and cable routes, resulting in a change to the current landscape fabric. The Associated Development would result in very limited felling on the basis that it extends through an area of forestry scheduled to undergo managed felling in the future (see **Figure E.4**). In addition, the construction phase would incorporate a temporary OHL bypass in the vicinity of the existing OHL, and there would be a short term, temporary increase in vehicle movements to and from the Project Site.

In terms of landscape fabric; the existing plantation forestry is considered to be of Low sensitivity to the Project based on the scale and extent of the surrounding forestry, and the ability of such landscapes to regenerate in a relatively short period of time. The magnitude of change on existing landscape fabric based on the Proposed Development would be Medium, resulting in a Moderate/Minor effect. The magnitude of change on landscape fabric based on the Associated Development would also be Medium based on the linear nature of the development and managed forestry felling along the route, resulting in a Moderate/Minor effect. The combined magnitude of change based on the addition of the Project would be High/Medium at most, resulting in a Moderate effect on landscape fabric.

In terms of landscape character; the construction stage effects would be limited to a very localised part of the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT (which is considered to be of Medium sensitivity to the Project with reference to **Annex D**). The magnitude of change associated with the localised felling, disturbance of ground cover, additional presence of vehicles, and the introduction of the temporary OHL bypass would be tempered by the extensive spread of surrounding forestry that predominates throughout the local landscape, as well as the close geographical location of the Project to the existing Crossaig Substation and overhead electricity transmission lines. Within such landscapes, electricity infrastructure and localised tree felling is considered to be a standard occurrence.

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

### 3.9.2 Construction Effects on Visual Amenity

The visual effects of the activities during the construction phase would be temporary and limited to very localised areas in the vicinity of the Project. This is due to the containing influence of surrounding forestry and scattered tree cover, woodland and roadside vegetation in the wider landscape, in combination with the underlying landform, and generally low-lying nature of activities associated with site clearance / excavation.

As such, despite consented forestry felling activities in the local landscape (as shown in Figure E.4) potential views would be experienced intermittently by road users on localised sections of the B842, and walkers / cyclists on Core Path C088 (which follows the same route as the road). These receptors are considered to be of Medium and High sensitivity respectively.

In each case, the visual impact would be limited by intervening topography and tree cover, including vegetation along the roadside and surrounding forestry. The visual influence of construction activities would also be restricted by the presence of the existing substation and OHL (comprising existing OHL to the south, and the new 275 kV OHL to the north). The linear arrangement of towers extending outwards from the existing substation to the north and south would typically be experienced in the foreground. In more open views, the construction activities would be experienced below the skyline, in the context of existing commercial plantation and electricity infrastructure.

The influence of construction activities on existing views would be tempered by the introduction of new areas of planting within the Proposed Development Site, and the gradual reinstatement of ground cover along the route of the Associated Development as works progress. This incorporates native bog habitat, which is characteristic of the locality and quick to establish. The effects would be further reduced through good site management and the temporary nature of the construction activities.

In summary, the visual magnitude of change during the construction phase would be Low at most based on the Proposed Development, resulting in a Moderate effect on walkers and cyclists, and a Moderate/Minor effect on other road users. The magnitude of change based on the Associated Development would be Low/Negligible, resulting in a Moderate/Minor effect on walkers and cyclists, and a Minor effect on other road users. The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would be Low. The resultant effect on views would be Moderate at most on nearby receptors.

### 3.10 Appraisal - Operational Landscape Effects

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

#### 3.10.1 Effects on Landscape Fabric

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

The Proposed Development would result in the permanent loss of a localised area of forestry and its replacement with the proposed buildings, site services and control equipment, electrical switchgear and associated infrastructure. The Associated Development would result in very limited felling (due to consented / managed felling), as well as the introduction of the two proposed towers.

In both cases, the proposed infrastructure would account for a small parcel of land within an expansive area of surrounding forestry, adjacent to the existing Crossaig Substation. Upon completion of the works, any areas of disturbed ground within the Site would be reinstated with new areas of native wet woodland, incorporating understorey / scrub species, and new areas of native bog / mire at the first available season (see **Figure E.5: Landscape Mitigation**). These elements would represent the addition of beneficial landscape features to the locality that would exert increasing influence over time as they become more established. The native bog habitat in particular would establish quickly, and return areas of disturbed ground to condition that is characteristic of the local landscape.

In addition, the effects of the Associated Development would be offset by the removal of three nearby towers forming part of the new 275 kV OHL (as well as the removal of the temporary OHL bypass installed during the construction phase).

Accordingly, the magnitude of change based on the Proposed Development would be Medium, giving rise to a Moderate/Minor effect on landscape fabric. The magnitude of change based on the Associated Development would be Low at most, resulting in a Minor effect. The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would be Medium, resulting in a Moderate/Minor effect. Whilst the replacement of parcels of

forestry with hard-standing and built form is regarded as adverse, the introduction of additional new areas of native broadleaved trees and bog / mire represents beneficial change.

### 3.10.2 Effects on Landscape Character

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

#### *Plateau Moor and Forest LCT*

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

In terms of direct effects, there would be localised loss of forestry within the Proposed Development Site to facilitate introduction of the proposed buildings and associated infrastructure. Felling in relation to the Associated Development would be minimal due to consented forestry felling activities in the locality, which will go ahead in the future independently of the Project. The short sections of new permanent access track required would be assimilated with the existing pattern of development and would not result in any notable loss of landscape elements.

Due to the small footprint of the Project within an expansive area of actively managed forestry, adjacent to an existing substation, this would exert a limited impact upon local landscape character. The surrounding context would continue to be characterised by large-scale coniferous forestry, open moorland and localised electrical infrastructure.

In terms of indirect effects, ZTV coverage for the Proposed Development is relatively continuous across local parts of the LCT within approximately 1.0 km to the north, south and west, which are predominantly forested. To the east, ZTV coverage ceases abruptly on the edge of the Proposed Development Site. Across wider parts of the LCT, ZTV coverage is more fragmented and predominantly limited to more elevated geographic areas to the north and south. This reflects the characteristic '*rounded ridges, craggy outcrops and... irregular slope profile*' of the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT, and signifies that views of the Proposed Development would be partially or completely screened across the vast majority of the LCT. As such, indirect effects resulting from the introduction of the Proposed Development would be limited to localised geographic areas.

Theoretical views of the Associated Development would be more widespread based on the higher height of the towers. However, ZTV coverage also predominantly coincides with areas of plantation forestry that would restrict intervisibility, or more distant elevated areas where the visual influence of these elements would be reduced based on the open, latticework nature of these structures (see Viewpoint 1).

Within the most open views, the Project would represent a new element of built form within the landscape. This contrasts with the more rural characteristics of the LCT as a whole, which is described as having '*very few buildings*' other than '*isolated dwellings on edges of the moor*'. However, the local landscape is influenced by the existing Crossaig substation to the east and the associated overhead power lines. Given its close proximity, the Project would represent an extension to these existing elements, thereby containing the potential effects of larger scale built objects to a localised area within the wider landscape. Furthermore, the effects would be offset by the removal of three towers forming part of the new 275 kV OHL. As a result, the Project would reinforce the presence of electrical infrastructure as a characteristic within the immediate locality and exert extremely limited influence across wider parts of the LCT (thereby reducing the potential cumulative spread of development upon the surrounding landscape).

With reference to the characteristic *'large-scale mosaic of open moorland and forestry'*, the Project would exert limited influence. The future felling of forestry associated with the new 275 kV OHL, High Constellation Wind Farm and forestry management to the north / north west of the Site would open up views towards the Project (primarily from parts of the LCT to the north). However, the undulating landform and retained forestry in other areas would restrict views of the Proposed Development and all but the upper-most parts of the Associated Development across the majority of the LCT. As a result, the majority of the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT would be unaffected.

In summary the main effects of the Proposed Development would be focused within 100-200 m of the Site to the east due to the containment by landform, extending outwards to approximately 400 m to the north, south and west, where the landscape will be more open (based on future felling). Within this localised area, the magnitude of change would be Medium and the level of effect would be Moderate. At greater distances, the Proposed Development would represent a more discreet presence in the landscape, and typically would be subject to increased screening based on intervening forestry and landform. As such, across the wider LCT the magnitude of change would be Low/Negligible, and the resultant effect would be Minor or less.

The main effects resulting from the Associated Development would also be restricted by the surrounding forestry and landform, and would be focused within approximately 400 m of the towers as a result. The effects would be offset by the removal of three towers forming part of the new 275 kV OHL, which will be located in the local landscape to the east. As such, the Associated Development would not represent an increase in the number of towers within the local landscape, or represent the addition of elements that are completely new to it. Correspondingly, the magnitude of change would be Low/Negligible at most and the effect would be Minor. Across wider parts of the LCT the magnitude of change based on the Associated Development would be Negligible, and the resultant effect would be Negligible.

The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would be Medium across the local landscape within 100 - 200 m to the east, and approximately 400 m to the north, south and west, resulting in a Moderate effect. The combined effects would reduce abruptly at greater distances, reducing to Minor or less at distances beyond 400 m.

#### *Rocky Coastland LCT*

The Rocky Coastland LCT is located 400 m to the east of the Proposed Development Site at its closest point and is considered to be of Medium sensitivity to the Project. The Project would not have any direct impacts upon the landscape character of the LCT.

With reference to the ZTV, views from the LCT towards the Proposed Development would be limited to localised areas comprising Ravensbay and Eascairt Point to the north / northeast, and Cour to the south. Future felling activities in relation to the new 275 kV OHL, High Constellation Wind Farm and forestry management will open up views towards the Site from more northern areas. However, potential views would remain limited by woodland and scrub within the Rocky Coastland LCT, in combination with retained areas of forestry within the intervening landscape. Within more open views, the Proposed Development would be experienced on the lower hillside that rises above the Rocky Coastline LCT (spatially separate from the coast). The new built form would be experienced below the skyline, beyond existing overhead lines extending north – south along the edge of this LCT (see Viewpoint 2).

Potential views of the Associated Development would be more widespread across the LCT, albeit would also be restricted by intervening forestry and scattered tree cover. In more open views, the towers would be experienced in the context of existing OHL (see Viewpoint 2). The effects would be offset by the removal of three towers in the vicinity of the existing substation (located in closer proximity to the Rocky Coastland LCT).

In summary, there would be extremely limited influence on the 'hummocky landform', 'raised beaches', 'indented coastline' or 'wooded cliffs' and no loss of 'archaeological sites'. Easterly views outwards towards the Isle of Arran and the Kilbrannan Sound would be completely unaffected.



On balance, based on the addition of the Proposed Development, the magnitude of change on the Rocky Coastland LCT would be Low/Negligible, and the effect on landscape character would be Minor at most. The magnitude of change based on the Associated Development would be Negligible, resulting in a Negligible effect. The combined magnitude of change for the Project would be Low/Negligible, and the combined effect of the Project on landscape character would be Minor at most. Extensive parts of the Rocky Coastline LCT would be completely unaffected.

#### *Raised Beach Coast and Cliffs LCT*

The Raised Beach Coast and Cliffs LCT is located 6.2 km to the east of the Project on the Isle of Arran. Despite relatively continuous ZTV coverage across this LCT, the Proposed Development and Associated Development would exert extremely limited influence on the existing landscape characteristics due to the distance of view and geographically separate landscape context of the Proposed Development Site (separated from the Raised Beach Coast and Cliffs LCT by the open water of Kilbrannan Sound). The Project would represent a barely discernible component in the distant forested / moorland landscape on the far side of the water, in the context of existing electricity infrastructure.

In summary, the magnitude of change would be Negligible based on the addition of the Proposed Development or the Associated Development, resulting in a Negligible level of effect in each case. The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would also be Negligible and the combined effect on landscape character would be Negligible.

### 3.10.3 Effects on Landscape Designations

#### *North Arran NSA*

The North Arran NSA is located 6.2 km to the east of the Project, on the opposite side of the Kilbrannan Sound. ZTV coverage is relatively continuous across parts of the NSA within the Study Area. However, due to the distance of view and geographical separation, the Project would represent a very distant element in the background landscape on the far side of the Sound. With reference to the special qualities of the NSA, there would be no discernible effect on the *'historical landscape'* or the *'mountain presence that dominates the Firth of Clyde'*. There would be minimal influence on the views experienced during *'outdoor recreation'*. As such, the magnitude of change would be Negligible based on the Proposed Development or the Associated Development, resulting in a Negligible level of effect in each case. The combined magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Project would also be Negligible and the combined effect on landscape character would be Negligible.

## 3.11 Appraisal - Operational Visual Effects

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

### 3.11.1 Visual effects experienced by Local Residents

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

#### *Crossaig*

Crossaig is a small, dispersed hamlet located 700 m to the north of the Proposed Development Site. The hamlet includes the detached dwellings of South Crossaig, Crossaig House, North Cottage, Lower Crossaig, Crossaig Farm, and Crossaig Bungalow at the side of the B842. ZTV coverage is relatively continuous across the settlement, with the exception of Crossaig Farm, where there would be no views. From the other properties, there will be partial views of future felling activities in relation to the new 275 kV OHL to the southwest. However,



potential views of the Proposed Development and Associated Development would remain restricted by garden vegetation / tree cover surrounding the properties in combination with intervening forestry (to be retained) on the rising landform to the south. The clearest views would be experienced in winter months, albeit would typically be limited to the top of the towers within the Associated Development at most. These elements would be experienced in the context of electricity infrastructure associated with the new 275 kV OHL, and would be offset by the removal of three towers at its southern end.

In summary, the magnitude of change based on the addition of the Proposed Development and the Associated Development would be Negligible in each case, resulting in a Negligible level of effect. The combined effects of the Project would also be Negligible. Many residents would experience no views and no effect.

#### *Cour*

Cour is a small hamlet located 1.5 km to the south of the Proposed Development Site, with loosely dispersed properties on and around the B842. These comprise Sperasaig, March Cottage and McFarlanes Cottage on the B842, a small cluster of properties at Cour Farm, and Cour House. With reference to the ZTV, potential views of the Project would be limited to Cour House and Cour Farm (which are on the edge of the ZTV). Views from the other dwellings would be fully screened by the intervening landform (no effect).

Potential views of the Proposed Development from Cour Farm would be restricted by intervening tree cover and forestry. The Associated Development would also be predominantly screened by intervening tree cover and forestry, restricting views to the upper-most parts of the towers at most. Potential views of the Proposed Development from Cour House would be slightly clearer based on its higher elevation and more open outlook to the north. There would be partial views of the Proposed Development, including localised feeling within the Site. There would also be views of the Associated Development in the landscape to the north. In both cases, these elements would be experienced in the distance, behind the existing overhead line that extends along the edge of the intervening forestry. The effects would be further offset by the removal of three towers forming part of the new 275 kV OHL in the distance.

On balance, the magnitude of change based on the addition of the Proposed Development would be Low/Negligible at most, resulting in a Moderate/Minor effect. The magnitude of change based on the addition of the Associated Development would be Negligible, resulting in a Negligible level of effect. The combined effects of the Project would be the same as those described for the Proposed Development alone. Many residents would experience no views and no effect.

#### *Isolated Residential Dwellings / Steadings*

Ravensbay is a detached dwelling located 2.0 km to the north east of the Proposed Development Site. The single storey property is primarily south east facing to focus upon views across the Kilbrannan Sound, albeit also has windows on its south western façade. Potential views towards the Project would be restricted by intervening clusters of trees and large shrubs along the B842, in combination with intervening forestry (to be retained) in the landscape to the south. As a result, views of the Proposed Development would be extremely limited. Potential views of the Associated Development would be restricted to the tops of the towers, which would be experienced in a forested context, in the distance beyond the new 275 kV OHL. The effects would be further offset by the removal of three towers at its southern end. The magnitude of change based on the Proposed Development and the Associated Development would be Negligible, resulting in a Negligible effect. The combined effects of the Project would be Negligible, and the level of effect would be Negligible. There would be no effect on the primary views out across the Kilbrannan Sound towards the Isle of Arran.

Allt Romain is located 3.2km to the north east of the Proposed Development Site and is north west – south east facing. Potential views of the Project would be fully screened by the intervening landform. There would be no views and no effect.

Escart Farm is located 3.6 km to the north east of the Proposed Development Site. The two-storey farmhouse is primarily east facing, with views focused towards the coast and Isle of Arran in the distance. Views towards the Project would be oblique to the primary direction of view, and would be restricted by intervening barns on the southern side of the dwelling, in combination with intervening woodland and forestry in the more distant landscape to the south. As such, there would be no views of the Proposed Development. Potential views of the Associated Development would also be extremely limited, and restricted to the upper-most part of the towers at most. These elements would be experienced in the distance, beyond existing telegraph lines and the new 275 kV OHL that will extend across the intervening landscape. On balance, the Associated Development would represent a very minor element in the wider landscape to the south. The magnitude of change based on the Associated Development and the Project would be Negligible, and the level of effect would be Negligible. There would be no effect on the primary views out across the Kilbrannan Sound towards the Isle of Arran.

Oragaig is located on the outer edge of the Study Area, 5.0 km to the north east of the Proposed Development Site. The two-storey farmhouse is primarily south east-facing, with an open outlook across the Kilbrannan Sound. Views towards the Project would be oblique to the primary direction of view, and would be restricted by an intervening ridgeline, as well as forestry in the landscape to the south. Based on the extent of intervening screening and the increasing distance of view, there would be no views of the Proposed Development, and the Associated Development would be barely discernible. The magnitude of change based on the Associated Development and the Project would be Negligible at most, and the level of effect would be Negligible. There would be no effect on the primary views out across the Kilbrannan Sound towards the Isle of Arran.

Sunadal Cottage is located 5.0 km to the south of the Proposed Development Site. The single storey dwelling occupies a relatively low-lying position at the coast, outside the ZTV. Residents would experience no views and no effect.

### 3.11.2 Visual effects experienced by Recreational Receptors

Recreational receptors are of High sensitivity in all cases. The Appraisal is described below, listed in order of increasing distance from the Proposed Development.

#### *Core Path C088 – Campbeltown to Cloanaig*

Within the Study Area, Core Path C088 follows the route of the B842, which is located approximately 100 m to the east of the Proposed Development Site at its closest point. With reference to the ZTV, potential views of the Project would be fragmented across the route, and limited to localised sections.

For walkers travelling south, the first views of the Project would be experienced whilst traveling past Oragaig Farm. Views would be predominantly screened by intervening topography and distant forestry, and therefore limited to the upper-most parts of the Associated Development at most in the distance. Views would then be fully screened by the landform until the walker approaches Escart Farm. From a localised 500 m section of the route near the farm, walkers would once again experience views of the Associated Development, limited to the tops of the towers, in the distance beyond the new 275 kV OHL. Beyond Escart Farm, views would again be lost until a 1.5 km section on approach to Crossaig. From this section of the route, the future forestry felling activities associated with the new 275 kV OHL, High Constellation Wind Farm and forestry management will open up views towards the Project Site. From the most open vantage points, there would be views of the Proposed Development, including new built form and localised felling within the Site, as well as the Associated Development, in the context of existing electricity infrastructure (see Viewpoint 2). However, these views would be intermitted due to the presence of roadside vegetation that foreshortens views at regular intervals along this section of the route. As the walker travels through Crossaig, views of the Project would be well screened by established parcels of woodland and retained forestry. Further south, as the route passes the junction leading to the existing Crossaig Substation, views of the Proposed Development would remain screened by the intervening landform / roadside embankments, albeit there would be views of the top part of the Associated Development.

The effects would be offset by the removal of three towers forming part of the new 275 kV OHL in the foreground. Thereafter the Project would be located behind the direction of travel.

For walkers travelling north, the first potential views of the Project would be experienced from a 600 m section approaching Cour. This section of the route is relatively elevated, with an open outlook to the north and across the Kilbrannan Sound to the east. There would be views of the Proposed Development, comprising built form and localised felling within the Site, which would also open up views of the existing Crossaig Substation. There would also be views of the Associated Development. These elements would be experienced in the relatively distant landscape to the north, below the skyline, beyond existing overhead electricity transmission lines. The effects would be partly offset by the removal of three towers on the new 275 kV OHL near the Site. Further north, the route descends and potential views of the Project would become increasingly restricted by the intervening landform and roadside vegetation. There would be no further views until the route approaches the junction to the existing Crossaig Substation. From this localised section of the route, the Proposed Development would be screened by the intervening landform / roadside embankments, albeit there would be views of the top part of the Associated Development. Thereafter the Proposed Development would be located behind the direction of travel.

In summary, views of the Project would be limited to localised sections of the route. In all cases, views of the proposed infrastructure and associated felling activities would be experienced below the skyline, within the context of electrical infrastructure in the form of overhead power lines. The effects would be further offset by the removal of three towers on the new 275 kV OHL. With reference to the most open views, the magnitude of change based on the Proposed Development would be Low, and the effect would be Moderate. The magnitude of change based on the Associated Development would be Negligible, and the effect would be Minor. The combined magnitude based on the Project would be Low, leading to a Moderate effect at most. From lengthy parts of the route there would be no views and no effect.

#### *Sustrans Cycle Route: Caledonia Way (NCR 78)*

Within the Study Area the Caledonia Way cycle route extends along the route of the B842, 100 m to the east of the Proposed Development Site at the closest point. It shares the same route as Core Path C088, assessed above. The effects experienced by cyclists would be the same as those described above. The magnitude of change based on the Project would be Low at most and the level of effect would be Moderate or less. From lengthy parts of the route there would be no views and no effect.

#### *Core Path C303 – Cloanaig to Clachan, and the Kintyre Way*

These promoted paths share the same route within the Study Area, 4.6 km to the north of the Proposed Development Site at the closest point. The routes are completely outside the ZTV, hence walkers would experience no views of the Project and no effect.

### 3.11.3 Visual effects experienced by Road Receptors

#### *B842*

The B842 runs on a north-south basis along the eastern coast of the Kintyre peninsula, linking Campbeltown and Rockfield. It is located 100 m to the east of the Proposed Development Site at its closest point. Within the Study Area the B842 follows the same route as Core Path C088 (and the Caledonia Way / NCR 78 cycle route) as described above. The effects experienced by road users would therefore be the subject to the same influences, including screening by intervening landform, roadside vegetation and forestry, and would typically be experienced transiently at greater speed (and therefore of lesser duration). In summary, the sensitivity of road users is considered to be Medium. The magnitude of change based on the Project would be Low at most and the level of effect would be Moderate/Minor. For the majority of the route there would be no views and no effect.

### 3.12 Appraisal - Cumulative Effects

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

- Existing Crossaig Substation (to the immediate east of the Proposed Development Site);
- Existing overhead power lines (extending south from Crossaig Substation);
- Operational Cour Wind Farm, comprising 10 turbines (111.25 m to tip) located 3.5 km to the south west;
- New 275 kV OHL, replacing the existing OHL to the north of Crossaig Substation (under construction);
- Consented High Constellation Wind Farm, comprising 10 turbines (149.9m to tip) located 2.1 km to the south west of the Proposed Development at the closest point (extending north of Cour Wind Farm);
- Consented High Constellation Substation, located 250 m to the south of the Proposed Development / existing Crossaig Substation.

It is recognised that in addition to the above, there will be ongoing forestry activity within the surrounding locality in accordance with the Long Term Forestry Plan. Other proposals within the surrounding area comprise Forest Grant Schemes for land west of Crossaig Farm, upgrading of existing forestry tracks and associated extraction of stone from borrow pits, as well as a proposed fish farm in the Kilbrannan Sound. However, these activities and proposals are excluded from further consideration in the cumulative assessment based on their geographic separation from the Project, differing nature of development, and/or limited size. Similarly, proposals at pre-app or scoping stage are also excluded based on the uncertainty of these developments progressing to formal planning submissions and the potential changes to the proposals in the intervening time.

Landscape and visual receptors described within the main LVA as undergoing / experiencing a Low/Negligible magnitude of change (or less) are excluded from consideration in the cumulative assessment on the basis the Project would exert such limited effects in its own right that it would not meaningfully contribute to potential cumulative effect. As such, it would not tip the balance from a minor cumulative effect to a notable cumulative effect. To this end, cumulative effects are considered in relation to those on landscape character, specifically the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT, as well as potential cumulative views from Core Path C088 / Caledonia Way / B842, which all share the same route within the Study Area.

#### 3.12.1 Cumulative Landscape Effects on the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT

In addition to the Project; the operational Cour Wind Farm, existing Crossaig Substation, and sections of overhead power lines (including the route of the new 275 kV OHL) are all located within the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT, thus exert direct effects upon local landscape character in their own right. In addition, the consented High Constellation Wind Farm and associated High Constellation Substation will also be located within the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT and exert direct effects.

With reference to the preceding assessment of effects on landscape character, the primary effects of the Project on the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT would be focused within approximately 100 – 200 m to the east, and 400 m to the north, south & west (where the magnitude of change would be Medium and the level of effect would be Moderate).

There would be some coalescence of these effects with the characterising influence exerted by the existing Crossaig Substation and associated overhead lines to the east, as well as the consented High Constellation Substation to the south. Given the close proximity, the Project would augment the presence of these elements of infrastructure and represent an extension to the existing / consented footprint of development within the LCT. However, the Project would not contribute towards more widespread effects across geographically separate parts of the LCT. As such, the combined cumulative effects would remain localised and largely contained within an area of actively managed forestry.

In terms of the operational Cour Wind Farm and consented High Constellation Wind Farm; the close geographical proximity of these developments means that the consented wind turbines will loosely form an

extension to the existing wind farm, increasing the spread of effects in a northerly direction. In both cases, the height of the wind turbines increases the spread of potential visibility and characterising effects across wide parts of the LCT. However, due to the intervening landform and forestry (to be retained), as well as the spatial separation from the Proposed Development Site, there would be limited coalescence of these effects with those of the Project. The existing characteristics of the LCT would re-exert themselves across the intervening landscape.

In summary, the Project would contribute to cumulative effects in combination with the existing Crossaig Substation, consented High Constellation Substation, and nearby overhead power lines. The net result would be very slight and localised, and equivalent to that of an extension to the west of the existing substation. The localised loss of forestry within the Site would merge with the wider (consented) felling to the north, associated with the new 275 kV OHL, High Constellation Wind Farm and forestry management activities. However, the influence of felling on the LCT is tempered by the nature of commercial plantation, in which managed felling will always occur. Furthermore, the reinstatement of the Site to native bog is in accordance with the wider characteristics of the LCT. As such, the surrounding landscape would continue to be characterised by parcels of forestry and upland moorland / bog, and the wider character of the LCT would remain predominately unchanged. The cumulative magnitude of change across the LCT as a whole would be Medium/Low, and the cumulative level of effect would be Moderate/Minor.

### 3.12.2 Cumulative Visual Effects on Core Path C088 / Caledonia Way (NCR 78) / B842

As described above, walkers on Core Path C088, cyclists on the Caledonia Way, and other road users on the B842 follow the same route within the Study Area, hence are assessed together here. In each case, there are / will be views of the existing OHL and new 275 kV OHL extending parallel to the route, experienced at relatively close proximity in the landscape to the west. Views of the existing / consented wind farms located further inland are / will be tempered by the intervening landform and tree cover.

In addition to infrastructure, there will be views of future forestry felling activities associated with the new 275 kV OHL, High Constellation Wind Farm and forestry management. The clearest views will be experienced along a 1-2 km section between Escart Farm and Crossaig (see Viewpoint 2). This will open up views towards the Project, resulting in views of the proposed built form and localised felling within the Site.

The proposed built form within the Site would augment the existing infrastructure visible within the surrounding area, albeit would represent a discreet addition to the view, recessive in colour, and accounting for a very narrow angle of view. Similarly, the proposed felling activities would be experienced in combination with consented felling, but would account for a limited proportion of the overall felling. The reinstatement of ground cover within the Site to native bog would establish quickly, and visually blend into wider areas of surrounding moorland. The proposed wet woodland areas within the Site would take longer to establish, but would gradually soften the appearance of the Project, particularly within views from southern sections of the route (see Viewpoint 1).

On balance, the combined magnitude of change would be Moderate, resulting in a Major/Moderate cumulative effect for walkers and cyclists (of High sensitivity), and a Moderate cumulative effect for road users (of Medium sensitivity). These effects would primarily be attributed to the views of the existing / consented OHL visible in the foreground and the combined felling activities associated with the new 275 kV OHL and High Constellation Wind Farm. The Project would exert limited incremental influence on views from this route.

### 3.13 Summary of Effects

In summary, the Project would be located in an area of actively managed commercial forestry on the eastern side of Kintyre between Cour and Crossaig. Parcels of forestry to the north of the Site are scheduled to be felled in the near future as a result of other (consented) development / forest management. The Project would result in the permanent loss of a localised area of forestry within the Site, which represents an additional small parcel of land within an expansive area of surrounding forestry, immediately adjacent to existing electricity infrastructure.

Electricity infrastructure in the surrounding landscape comprises the existing Crossaig Substation and associated high voltage overhead power lines.

In terms of landscape effects; the location of the Project in close proximity to the existing Crossaig Substation and associated OHL means that landscape effects would be very localised. The key effects would primarily be focused within approximately 100 – 200 m to the east, and 400 m to the north, south and west. This accounts for a small part of the Plateau Moor and Forest LCT. The effects on the LCT as a whole would be extremely limited. There would be no notable effects on surrounding landscape character areas or designations.

Visual effects would also be limited based on the location of the Project. Potential views would be restricted by a combination of intervening landform, woodland and retained forestry. In more open views, the Proposed Development would be experienced beyond existing OHL infrastructure, and the recessive colour of the proposed built form would assist in blending into the surrounding landscape. As such, the Proposed Development would represent a minor element within the most open views and would be fully screened in many wider vistas. The Associated Development would be visible over wider geographic areas (reflecting its height), although would also be part-screened by forestry and landform. In more open views the Associated Development would be experienced in the context of towers along the existing OHL to the south and / or the new 275 kV OHL to the north. The Associated Development would typically be experienced behind these elements. The effects would be further offset by the removal of three towers forming part of the new 275 kV OHL. On balance, there would be no notable effects on the views experienced by residents, recreational receptors or road users.

In terms of cumulative effects; the Project would augment the presence of power-related infrastructure in the locality, in particular the existing Crossaig Substation, consented High Constellation Substation, and associated overhead power lines. The net result would be a very slightly increase the influence of this infrastructure in a westerly direction. As such, there would be limited cumulative effects on landscape character.

In terms of cumulative visual effects, these would be primarily limited to walkers, cyclists and road users on Core Path C088, the Caledonia Way (NCR 78), and the B842, which share the same route in the Study Area. From this route, the Project would be experienced simultaneously with existing OHL and new 275 kV OHL, as well as future forestry felling associated with consented development and forestry management. The Project would augment these elements within more open views, albeit would account for a narrow angle of view, at greater distance. As such, its incremental influence on cumulative views would be limited.

The Project would not notably contribute to cumulative effects on any landscape designation or views experienced by any other residents, recreational receptors or road users.

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



**Table 3.2 Appraisal of Landscape and Visual Impact**

Receptor	Project Interaction	Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude (Project)	Effect (Project)
<b>Landscape Fabric</b>	Direct effects within Proposed Development Site	Low	Medium	Moderate/Minor
<b>Plateau Moor and Forest LCT</b>	Direct Effects within Proposed Development Site, and indirect across wider LCT based on views.	Medium	Medium within 100 - 200 m to the east, and 400 m to the north, south & west  Low/Negligible across wider LCT	Moderate within 100 - 200 m to the east, and 400 m to the north, south & west  Minor or less across wider LCT
<b>Other LCTs</b>	Indirect effects based on views	High to Medium	Low/Negligible to Negligible	Minor to Negligible
<b>Landscape Designations: North Arran NSA</b>	Indirect effects based on views	High	Negligible	Negligible
<b>Crossaig</b>	Views experienced by Residents	High	Negligible	Negligible
<b>Cour</b>	Views experienced by Residents	High	Low/Negligible or less	Moderate/Minor or less
<b>Isolated Dwelling: Ravensbay, Escart Farm, and Oragaig</b>	Views experienced by Residents	High	Negligible	Negligible
<b>Isolated Dwelling: Allt Romain, and Sundal Cottage</b>	Views experienced by Residents	High	No View	No Effect
<b>Core Path C088, and the Sustrans Cycle Route: Caledonia Way (NCR 78)</b>	Views experienced by Recreational Walkers	High	Localised section: Low  Wider route: No View	Localised section: Moderate  Wider route: No Effect
<b>Core Path C303, Kintyre Way</b>	Views experienced by Recreational Walkers	High	No Views	No effect
<b>Road Users on B842</b>	Transient views experienced from B road	Medium	Localised section: Low  Majority of route: No View	Localised section: Moderate/Minor  Majority of route: No Effect

### 3.14 References

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