VOLUME 2 – CHAPTER 8: LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Figures (Volume 3 of this EIA Report)

Appendices (Volume 4 of this EIA Report)

8. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESMENT

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 This chapter considers the potential effects of the proposed Hurlie 400 kV substation and associated elements (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development') on landscape and visual amenity. The assessment includes potential effects on landscape and visual receptors including landscape character, and views experienced by residential, recreational and road receptors.

8.1.2 The chapter objectives with regard to the Proposed Development are as follows:

- describe the landscape and visual baseline, informed by desk-based studies and field surveys;
- describe how consultation has informed the scope of the assessment;
- describe the assessment methodology and significance criteria used in assessing effects on landscape and visual receptors features;
- describe the mitigation measures proposed to address potential significant effects (if required);
- describe the residual effects (including cumulative effects) on landscape character and resources, including effects upon the physical elements, character and/or special qualities of the landscape (including landscape designations); and
- describe the residual effects (including cumulative effects) on visual amenity, including effects upon potential receptors (people) and viewing groups caused by change in the appearance of the landscape.

8.1.3 Landscape character and resources are considered to be of importance in their own right and are valued independent of whether they are seen by people. Effects on views and visual amenity as perceived by people are clearly distinguished from, although closely linked to, effects on landscape character and resources. The assessment of these two components of LVIA are therefore separate but connected processes. Accordingly, this chapter deals with landscape and visual effects separately, including an assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects, and is supported by **Figures 8.1-8.3** which follow the text at the end of this chapter. Accompanying visualisations are illustrated as **Figures 8.4-8.8** and have been prepared in accordance with the methodology set out in **Appendix 8.1: LVIA and Visualisations Methodology**. Since the preparation of the figures (including the zones of theoretical visibility (ZTVs)) and visualisations, a number of minor changes to the design of the Proposed Substation have been made. This LVIA takes these changes into account and assessment has been based on the final design of the Proposed Development, as detailed in **Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development**. These changes largely comprise the addition of two super grid transformers and two shunt reactors as well slight changes to the arrangement of substation components. These changes however do not increase the parameters of the development, such as platform size and height, and are therefore not considered to be materially different to the previous substation design that the figures and visualisations show. The figures and visualisations are therefore still considered an appropriate aid for a robust LVIA.

8.1.4 This chapter presents information relevant to the Proposed Development. It should be read in conjunction with **Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development (Volume 2)** of the EIA Report for full details of the Proposed Development.

8.1.5 This chapter should also be read in conjunction with the following chapters:

- **Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology**;
- **Chapter 10: Ecology and Biodiversity**;
- **Chapter 11: Ornithology**; and
- **Chapter 15: Cumulative Effects Assessment**.

8.1.6 The LVIA was undertaken by LUC. It was prepared and overseen by experienced landscape planners and architects with appropriate memberships of the Landscape Institute, and experience of LVIA in the context of wind farm, grid and mixed-use developments. Field surveys and data collection were undertaken by landscape professionals who have

extensive experience in undertaking site work and viewpoint (VP) photography, and in the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

8.1.7 The following terminology will be referred to throughout this chapter:

- Site – the area at Hurlie Bog encompassed by the red line boundary and containing the substation platform but excluding wider proposed access tracks that connect to the local road network (**Figure 8.1: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Study Area).**
- Proposed Development – the Hurlie 400 kV air insulated substation located on a level platform, associated earthworks, access, drainage, landscaping, and security, and temporary construction compounds (see **Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development**);
- Proposed Substation – the 400 kV air insulated substation only;
- Landscape character – A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse;
- Magnitude of Change – the degree of change on landscape and visual receptors as a result of the Proposed Development, informed by scale of change, geographical extent, duration and reversibility;
- Receptor – A distinct part of the environment on which effects could occur and can be the subject of specific assessments. Examples of landscape receptors within an LVIA include constituent elements of the landscape, landscape character types, national, regional or local landscape designations. Visual receptors within an LVIA are people, often categorised further such as 'residential', those using areas for amenity or recreation, or those travelling along roads;
- Sensitivity – determined by a combination of the value of the receptor and the susceptibility;
- Study area – the geographical area in which the landscape and visual impacts of the Proposed Development will be assessed;
- Susceptibility – the ability of the receptor to accommodate the type of development proposed without undue consequences;
- Value – the value associated with the landscape and a view or visual amenity based on the presence of landscape designations and/ or aesthetic, perceptual or experiential qualities and the value attached to the landscape or view by communities and visitors; and
- Zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) – A ZTV indicates areas from where the Proposed Substation is theoretically visible, but they cannot show what it would look like, nor indicate the nature or magnitude of landscape or visual impact.

8.2 Scope of the Assessment

Effects Assessed in Full

8.2.1 The EIA Scoping process, baseline conditions and professional judgement have been used to identify the following effects which have been assessed in full:

- Effects on the physical landscape of the study area during construction and operation;
- Effects on the landscape character of the study area during construction and operation;
- Effects on visual amenity experienced by receptors (people) at static locations within or moving around the study area, with reference to representative viewpoints, during construction and operation;
- Effects on views and visual amenity experienced by visual receptors within settlements, communities and residential properties during construction and operation;
- Effects on views and visual amenity experienced by recreational receptors, including on local walking routes and at hill summits within the study area during construction and operation;
- Effects on views and visual amenity experienced by visual receptors travelling along routes in the study area during construction and operation;

- Effects on the landscape character and views at nighttime arising during the construction period of the Proposed Development; and
- Cumulative landscape and visual effects (including combined, successive and sequential visual effects) during operation.

Effects Scoped Out

8.2.2 On the basis of the desk based and field survey work undertaken, the professional judgement of the EIA team, experience from other relevant projects and policy guidance or standards, and feedback received from consultees, the following effects have been 'scoped out' of detailed assessment, as proposed in the EIA Scoping Report:

- Effects on landscape character, landscape designations, and visual receptors (including cumulative) outside the study area, where it is judged that significant visual effects are unlikely to occur;
- Effects on landscape and visual receptors that have minimal or no theoretical visibility (as predicted by the ZTVs) and/or very distant visibility, and are therefore unlikely to be subject to significant effects;
- Cumulative landscape and visual effects during the construction phase, given the transient and temporary nature of these effects;
- Effects on landscape character and visual amenity at night during the operational phase of the Proposed Development, since no operational lighting is proposed; and
- Effects on residential visual amenity, since the closest property to Proposed Substation does not have any theoretical visibility of it and remaining properties within the study area are located beyond 1 km from the Proposed Substation, at distances where effects on residential visual amenity are unlikely to affect 'living conditions' (further information is provided in section 1.4 of this Chapter).

Study Area

8.2.3 The study area for the LVIA is defined as 5 km radius around the Site, as shown on **Figure 8.1: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Study Area** and agreed with Aberdeenshire Council. The Site and study area are located within the Aberdeenshire Council area.

8.2.4 The study area has been informed by professional judgement, reflecting the scale of the Proposed Development, as described in **Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development**, and ZTV mapping**.** Bare earth ZTV mapping has been used to illustrate areas from which the Proposed Substation may be visible from without existing or proposed screening elements, refer to **Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**. A second ZTV has been prepared that takes into account existing screening elements within the study area including existing forestry, woodland and buildings as well as the proposed earth works as part of the Proposed Development is presented in **Figure 8.2b: Substation Screening Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**.

8.2.5 The ZTVs were prepared based on the location of Proposed Substation and its dimensions of approximately 685 m x 300 m and the heights of associated components, the maximum of which being approximately 15 m. The ZTVs are used as a tool for understanding where visual effects may occur. Receptors which are outside the bare earth ZTV would not be affected by the Proposed Development and are therefore not considered further in this LVIA. Whilst the ZTVs indicate potential visibility beyond the study area in some directions, significant effects on landscape character and visual amenity are unlikely beyond 5 km distance.

8.3 Assessment Methodology

8.3.1 This section sets out the legislation, policy and guidance and consultation that have informed the LVIA, as well as the broad principles of the methodology for the LVIA.

Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Legislation

8.3.1 This assessment is carried out in accordance with the principles contained within the following legislation:

- Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997; and
- The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations (2017).

Policy

8.3.2 The following policies of relevance to the assessment have been considered:

- National Planning Framework 4[1] (Policy 4 and 11); and
- Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan[2].

Guidance

8.3.3 This assessment is carried out in accordance with the principles contained within the following documents:

- Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition ('GLVIA3');
- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) (2018) A Handbook on Environmental Impact Assessment, Appendix 2: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Version 5;
- NatureScot (2021) Assessing the cumulative impact of onshore wind energy developments;
- Landscape Institute (2019) Advice Note 01/11 Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment;
- Landscape Institute (2019) Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Visual representation of development proposals;
- SNH (2017) Visual Representation of Wind Farms, Version 2.2;
- SSEN (2022) Substation Site Selection Procedures for Voltages at or above 132kV; and
- SSEN (2022) Substation Site Selection Procedures for Voltages at or above 132kV, Appendix A: Holford Rules: Supplementary Notes on the Siting of Substations.

Consultation

8.3.4 Consultation for the Proposed Development has been carried from initial site selection stage to the scoping stage. This has included consultation events during the initial site selection stages, as well as during the design evolution as part of the Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) process, engaging with the local community, non-statutory consultees and statutory consultees. Comments arising from these stages of consultation that relate to landscape and visual issues are summarised in **Table 8.1:Summary of Consultation.**

8.3.5 An EIA Scoping Report was submitted to Aberdeenshire Council in August 2024. A Scoping Opinion was received in September 2024 which included comments from statutory and non-statutory consultees, some of which were specifically relevant to the approach and scope of the LVIA.

8.3.6 In undertaking the assessment, consideration has been given to the consultation responses which have been received as detailed in **Table 8.1:Summary of Consultation.**

Table 8.1: Summary of Consultation

Consultee and Date	Scoping/Other Consultation	Issue Raised	Response/Action Taken
Community Feedback March 2024	Pre-Application Consultation Event 1	Multiple concerns relating to light pollution, impact on the landscape and views and on the Braes of the Mearns Special Landscape Area (SLA).	Light pollution and impacts on the landscape and views are considered within Section 8.7 and 8.8 of the LVIA, which assess the effects of the Proposed Development on landscape and visual receptors.

[1] Scottish Government (2023) *National Planning Framework* . [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2023/02/national-planning-framework-4/documents/national-planning-framework-4-revised-draft/national-planning-framework-4-revised-draft/govscot%3Adocument/national-planning-framework-4.pdf [Accessed 02/10/24].

[2] Aberdeenshire Council, (2023). Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. [Online] Available at: https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/ldpmedia/LDP2021/AberdeenshireLocalDevelopmentPlan2023IntroductionAndPolicies.pdf [Accessed 02/10/24].

Consultee and Date	Scoping/Other Consultation	Issue Raised	Response/Action Taken
			The Braes of the Mearns SLA is located outside the study area, approximately 3.5 km to the southwest of the Proposed Development. At this distance, significant effects on the SLA are not expected and as such the SLA has not been considered within the LVIA.
Community Feedback June 2024	Pre-Application Consultation Event 2	Concerns about the visual impact of the substation and associated infrastructure on Scotland's landscape are highlighted. Respondents object to the industrialisation of rural areas, the potential destruction of farmland and wildlife habitat, and the overall negative effect on the beauty and character of the local environment.	Noted. Sections 8.7 and 8.8 of the LVIA assess the effects of the Proposed Development on landscape and visual receptors. The list of representative viewpoints considered in the LVIA are set out in **Table 8.2.**
Aberdeenshire Council 10th May 2024	Pre-scoping consultation	Agree that a LVIA study area of 3 km from the Proposed Development is reasonable.	Noted. The LVIA has considered effects on landscape and visual receptors within 5 km of the Site. The study area was extended to include the upland around Raedykes Roman Camp, and reference made to a cultural heritage viewpoint which illustrates the potential effects from this area.
		Agree that the proposed viewpoint list is reasonable with no further viewpoint requests.	Noted agreement with the proposed LVIA viewpoints.
Aberdeenshire Council 24th May 2024	Pre-application advice	Noted that the Site lies on the northeastern edge of LCT 29 and within a transitional landscape particularly as forestry masks landform on lower hill slopes and reduces the contrasting juxtaposition of upland/lowland experienced further south. Agreed that the influence of the Highland Boundary Fault (which produces more complex landform and a highly scenic contrast where the uplands abut the Howe of Mearns) is less prominent closer to Stonehaven and this would minimise adverse effects on landscape character.	Noted. Sections 8.7 and 8.8 of the LVIA assess the effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character.
		Stated that cumulative effects with the existing Fetteresso Substation but also with likely future projects including the Scotwind Substation, potentially multiple terminal towers where transmission lines connect to separate substations and a convertor station need to be thoroughly considered in the detailed design of the proposal and its assessment. The combined effect of these developments could lead to significant cumulative effects on landscape character.	Noted. Existing developments are considered within the primary assessment of landscape and visual receptors within Sections 8.7 and 8.8 of the LVIA. Likely cumulative landscape and visual effects arising as a result of the Proposed Development and other proposed developments within the study area are considered in Section 8.10 of the LVIA.
		Advised that the substation should not be considered in isolation, as it is closely inter-related with the	Likely cumulative effects as a result of the Proposed Development, the Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL and

Consultee and Date	Scoping/Other Consultation	Issue Raised	Response/Action Taken
		proposed Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL. Stated that while the lower components of the proposal appear likely to be partially screened by retained forestry and by the rolling landform of LCT 24 the taller terminal tower(s) and connecting transmission lines are likely to be more visible. Also stated that in general, however, the site selected appears unlikely to be prominent with the extent of visibility being relatively limited. Noted that key views to the proposal are likely to be from nearby minor roads, recreational routes within Fetteresso Forest and possibly also from the main East Coast railway.	other proposed developments within the study area are considered in Section 8.10 of the LVIA. Taller terminal towers do not form part of the Proposed Development however form part of the Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL which is considered in the cumulative assessment. Effects on views and visual amenity, including from the minor road network, Fetteresso Forest and the East Coast railway are considered in Sections 8.7 and 8.8 of the LVIA.
		Advised that the cumulative effects of multiple large-scale infrastructural projects should be considered in the detail design and assessment of the proposal. This should include explanation of the function of the existing Fetteresso sub-station and why a separate site has been selected for a new sub-station.	Noted. Likely cumulative landscape and visual effects arising as a result of the Proposed Development and other proposed developments within the study area are considered in Section 8.10 of the LVIA. Information surrounding the need for the Proposed Development is provided in **Chapter 1: Introduction and Background**.
Aberdeenshire Council (advised by Carol Anderson Landscape Associates) 11th September 2024	Scoping	Agree that the extent of the study areas defined for the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) set out in the Scoping Report are appropriate.	Noted.
		Stated that the description of the proposal in the EIA should confirm the management of forestry within the area and the use of long-term retention of trees to provide screening of the lower components of the substation.	Information on proposed forest management is provided in **Chapter 7: Forestry.** Screening provided by retained forestry is considered where relevant in the assessment tables in Sections 8.7 and 8.8.
		Clear plans showing the design of the proposal and the mitigation measures proposed within the application site should be provided. These should show the retention and management of forestry around the substation including proposed earth bunding and other planting proposals.	Proposed landscape mitigation measures, and areas of retained forestry are presented on **Figure 3.3: Landscape Design.**
		The approach to the design of earth bunding and planting outlined in paragraph 6.6.2 of the Scoping Report is welcomed. Request that the applicant commits to planting hedgerows, field trees and woodlands off-site with the aim of not just providing 'Additional Mitigation' in screening views, for example, but also providing more general landscape and biodiversity enhancement as required by NPF4.	The design of the Proposed Development has no bunding as such, but the platform is located below the crest of the hills thereby ensuring infrastructure is predominately screened from local receptors by the local landform. The western, north and eastern edges of the platform are wrapped in woodland block planting, comprising a mix of deciduous and evergreen species, which will add both biodiversity and strengthen visual screening to what is already a well-

Consultee and Date	Scoping/Other Consultation	Issue Raised	Response/Action Taken
			screened platform, as a result of the topography of the Site. The Applicant is committed to providing 10% BNG (See Appendix 10.4: BNG Report).
		Welcome the opportunity to contribute to the consultation to be undertaken to determine other developments to be considered in the cumulative LVIA.	**Chapter 13** of the scoping report presented a short list of developments to be included within the cumulative assessment. The Applicant has subsequently added Quithel BESS, on request by the Council. The cumulative LVIA considers each of the developments included within the agreed shortlist.
		The provisional representative assessment viewpoints listed in **Table 6.2** of the Scoping Report are acceptable, but consideration should also be given to defining additional representative viewpoint(s) from recreational routes within Fetteresso Forest (if open views occur) where potential receptors are identified in paragraph 6.7.7 of the Scoping Report.	Noted that the provisional viewpoint list is acceptable. Due to changes in the design of the Proposed Development since the scoping stage, the updated bare earth ZTV (refer to **Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**) indicates no theoretical visibility from the previously proposed viewpoint along the Minor Road near Jacksbank. Although the ZTV indicates theoretical visibility further east along the minor road, digital modelling revealed that actual visibility is very limited from this area. As such, a viewpoint from this minor road has not been included within the LVIA. A viewpoint from an open section of forest track on the western slopes of Hill of Swanley has been included within the LVIA (VP5). This viewpoint represents views experienced by recreational receptors on sections of forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest that offer open views towards the Site.

Desk Based Research and Data Sources

8.3.7 The following data sources have informed the assessment:

- Ordnance Survey (OS) maps;
- OS Terrain® 5 mid-resolution height data (DTM);
- Aberdeenshire Council and the Energy Consents Unit (websites) to provide information of projects considered in the cumulative assessment;
- Aerial photography, Google Earth and Google Maps Street View;
- Scottish Natural Heritage (2012) Landscapes of Scotland – descriptions;
- NatureScot (2019) Scottish Landscape Character Types, Map and Descriptions; and,
- Aberdeenshire Council (adopted 2023), Local Development Plan.

Field Survey

8.3.8 Field surveys were carried out to inform this assessment between December 2023 and October 2024. Visualisation photography was captured during both winter, at times when trees were not in leaf to present maximum potential

visibility, and summer to illustrate seasonal variation. Site visits were undertaken in a range of weather conditions, including on clear, dry and bright days.

8.3.9 Field survey work included visits to the site, viewpoints, and extensive travel around the study area to consider potential effects on landscape character and on experiences of views seen from settlements, nearby residential properties and routes.

Methodological Overview

8.3.10 As noted in **Chapter 5: EIA Process and Methodology**, this chapter uses an industry specific assessment methodology which is set out in detail in **Appendix 8.1: LVIA and Visualisations Methodology**. Whilst the assessment process differs and involves professional judgement, the outputs of the assessment have parity with the levels of significance set out in **Table 5.1: Matrix for Determining the Significance of Effects** (which describes significance levels in the EIAR).

8.3.11 The methodology for the production of accompanying visualisations is based on current good practice guidance as set out by NatureScot and the Landscape Institute. Detailed information about the approach to viewpoint photography, and ZTV and visualisation production, is also provided in **Appendix 8.1: LVIA and Visualisations Methodology**.

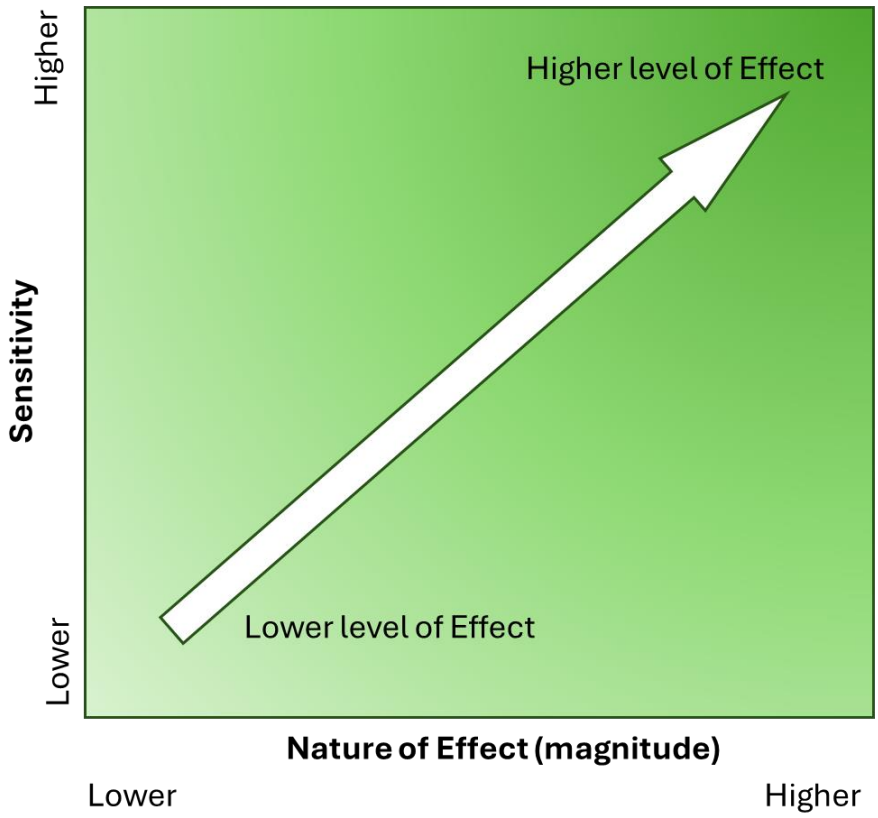
8.3.12 The key steps in the methodology for assessing landscape and visual effects are as follows:

- the landscape of the study area is analysed, and landscape receptors identified, informed by desk and field surveys;
- the area over which the Proposed Substation will potentially be visible is established through the creation of an initial ZTV plan;
- the visual baseline is recorded in terms of the different receptors (groups of people) who may experience views of the Proposed Development (informed by the initial ZTV based on Proposed Substation) and the nature of their existing views and visual amenity;
- potential assessment viewpoints are selected, as advocated by GLVIA3 to represent a range of different receptors and views, in consultation with statutory consultees;
  - *'**Representative viewpoints**, selected to represent the experience of different types of visual receptor, where larger numbers of viewpoints cannot all be included individually and where the significant effects are unlikely to differ - for example, certain points may be chosen to represent the views of users of particular public footpaths and bridleways;*
  - ***Specific viewpoints**, chosen because they are key and sometimes promoted viewpoints within the landscape, including for example specific local visitor attractions, viewpoints in areas of particularly noteworthy visual and/or recreational amenity such as landscapes with statutory landscape designations, or viewpoints with particular cultural landscape associations; and*
  - ***Illustrative viewpoints**, chosen specifically to demonstrate a particular effect or specific issues, which might, for example, be the restricted visibility at certain locations' (GLVIA3, Para 6.19, Page 109);*
- likely significant effects (including cumulative) on both the landscape as a resource and visual receptors are identified; and
- the level (and significance) of landscape and visual effects are judged with reference to the nature of the receptor (commonly referred to as the sensitivity of the receptor), which considers both susceptibility and value, and the nature of the effect (commonly referred to in LVIA as the magnitude of change), which considers a combination of judgements including scale, geographical extent, duration, and reversibility.

Assessing Significance

8.3.13 The predicted significance of the effect was determined through the method of assessment detailed in **Appendix 8.1: LVIA and Visualisation Methodology,** and based on professional judgement, considering both sensitivity and magnitude of effect as shown in **Diagram 1: Judging levels of effect - Landscape or Visual (including cumulative)** below. Major and moderate effects are considered significant in the context of the EIA Regulations.

Diagram 1: Judging levels of effect - Landscape or Visual (including cumulative)



Sensitivity

8.3.14 The sensitivity of the baseline conditions, including the importance of environmental features within the study area or the sensitivity of potentially affected receptors, has been assessed in line with best practice guidance, legislation, statutory designations and / or professional judgement.

8.3.15 Judgements regarding the sensitivity of landscape or visual receptors require consideration of both the susceptibility of the landscape or visual receptor to the type of development proposed and the value attached to the landscape receptor or view. Judgements have been recorded as high, medium, low or negligible. Detailed information about the approach to assessment of sensitivity is provided in **Appendix 8.1: LVIA and Visualisations Methodology**.

Magnitude

8.3.16 The magnitude of change has been identified through consideration of the Proposed Development, the degree of change to baseline conditions predicted as a result of the Proposed Development, the duration and reversibility of the change, and best practice guidance and legislation.

8.3.17 Judgements regarding the magnitude of landscape or visual change have been recorded as high, medium, low or negligible and combine an assessment of the scale and geographical extent of the change, its duration and reversibility. Detailed information about the approach to assessment of magnitude is provided in **Appendix 8.1: LVIA and Visualisations Methodology.**

Significance

8.3.18 The sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of the predicted change has been used as a guide, in addition to professional judgement, to predict the significance of the likely effects.

8.3.19 This determination requires the application of professional judgement and experience to take on board the many different variables which need to be considered, and which are given different weight according to site-specific and location-specific considerations in every instance. Judgements have been made on a case-by-case basis, guided by the principles set out in **Diagram 1: Judging levels of effect - Landscape or Visual (including cumulative)** above and in **Appendix 8.1: LVIA and Visualisations Methodology**.

8.3.20 Although a numerical or formal weighting system has not been applied, consideration of the relative importance of each aspect has been made to feed into the overall decision. Levels of effect have been identified as negligible, minor, moderate or major where moderate and major effects are considered significant in the context of the EIA Regulations.

Direction of Effects

8.3.21 As required by the EIA Regulations, the assessment must identify the direction of effect as either being beneficial (or positive), adverse (or negative) or neutral.

8.3.22 The direction of landscape, visual and cumulative effects is determined in relation to the degree to which the proposal fits with the existing landscape character or views, and the contribution to the landscape or views that the Proposed Development makes, even if it is in contrast to the existing character of the landscape or views. With regard to electricity transmission infrastructure, an assessment is required to take an objective approach. Therefore, to cover the 'maximum case effect' situation, potential landscape and visual effects relating to electricity transmission infrastructure are generally assumed to be adverse (negative).

Assessment Assumptions and Limitations

Assessment Assumptions

8.3.23 The following assumptions have been made when undertaking the assessment of effects:

- It is assumed that the construction phase would last three years.
- It is assumed that once constructed, the Proposed Development will remain in operation permanently. Therefore, effects on decommissioning have not been considered in the LVIA.

Assessment Limitations

8.3.24 No substantial information gaps have been identified during the preparation of baseline information or undertaking of the assessment. It is considered that there is sufficient information to enable an informed decision to be taken in relation to the identification and assessment of likely significant effects on landscape and visual amenity.

8.4 Baseline Conditions

Summary of Landscape Baseline

8.4.1 This section presents an overview of the landscape baseline receptors located within the study area (as shown on **Figure 8.1: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Study Area**) including the existing landscape character and constituent landscape elements, as well as comments on landscape condition and any designations assigned to the landscape.

8.4.2 Potential landscape receptors within the study area are those where physical or perceptual effects may result as a consequence of the Proposed Development. Landscape receptors can be defined as follows:

- Physical Landscape Features: physical features (e.g. topographic features; forestry, woodland, field enclosure) which could be lost or altered through the introduction of the Proposed Development.
- Landscape Character Types (LCTs) which display both physical and perceptual characteristics which could be affected by the Proposed Development.
- Designated Landscapes: areas of landscape which are principally designated for their scenic quality or rarity and considered of particularly increased value. There are no relevant landscape designations within the study area.
- Other designated areas: areas of designation which may in part be designated due to the contribution of landscape or scenic quality in combination with other reasons for designation (e.g. forest parks, conservation areas, biosphere reserves). There are no designations of these types within the study area.

8.4.3 Available documents and guidelines which describe landscape character, landscape condition and landscape designations within the study area were reviewed, and the relevant data is detailed below. The assessment of effects on landscape demonstrates the extent and level of effects likely to occur as a result of the Proposed Development.

The Site and Context

8.4.4 The Site is situated in the Fetteresso Forest, approximately 5 km to the west of Stonehaven and the A90, and 8 km south of the Dee Valley. Slug Road (A957) passes to the north of the Site and connects to the northern Site access track. There are also various minor roads to the north near Snob Cottage and Whitehall as well as a number of minor roads to the south of the Site along southern foothills of Elf Hill and Mid Hill.

8.4.5 The landcover of the Site is largely commercial forestry of non-native conifers, with smaller areas of bog and heath where felling and replanting has occurred. Multiple forestry tracks, some paved, have been carved through the trees. In the centre of the Site lies Hurlie Bog, with some small areas of native trees, shrub and heath interspersed within the areas of forestry. The landform gently undulates, generally descending to the east and north. The Hill of Trusta (321m AOD) sits to the west of the Site boundary and its eastern descending slopes comprise the highest elevations within the Site. At the southern Site boundary Elf Hill (222m AOD) forms a high point, and the incised path of the Burn of Baulks runs along its eastern slopes before joining Carron Water to the southeast. Within the northern half of the Site the Burn of Day originates in Hurlie Bog, before flowing east and north down the slopes towards Cowie Water. Overall elevation on the Site varies from around 300m in the west to around 190m in the east.

8.4.6 Due to dense and mature stands of forest trees, there are very limited views into and out of the Site. Where felling has occurred along the southeastern slopes of the area there may be filtered views out across the Carron Water valley and across the descending slopes of Hill of Swanley (229m AOD) and Hill of Baulk (215m AOD), minor hills adjacent to the eastern edge of the Site. Where views into adjacent slopes are afforded, pastoral fields and scattered farmsteads form the prevailing views.

8.4.7 Adjacent to the southwestern Site boundary lies the Fetteresso Substation, carved out of forestry and cradled by the northern descending slopes of Mid Hill and Elf Hill. A 275kV overhead lines passes along the western edge of the Site, ascending the northwestern slopes of Hill of Trusta before terminating at the Fetteresso Substation in the south.

The Study Area

8.4.8 The study area extends to the forested Cairn-mon-earn Hill (378m AOD) in the north, within the Durris Forest, Monluth Hill in the west, the northern peripheries of Drumlithie in the south, and the Carron Water and Kirktown of Fetteresso in the east. The landscape mainly comprises forestry across its northern extents, with areas of upland hills to the northeast and west. Sloping farmland comprises the south and east, extending towards Stonehaven (outside the study area) to the east.

8.4.9 The landform of the study area generally descends to the south and east, towards the coast and town of Stonehaven. The highest elevation within the study area is at the summit of Leachie Hill (390m AOD) in the west, with other notable summits including Craiginour (356 m AOD), Mongour (376 m AOD), and Cairn-mon-earn in the west, northwest and north, respectively. These hills form part of the undulating forested and moorland ridgeline of the Mounth uplands at the eastern edge of the Grampian Mountains, providing a backdrop to the lower hills within the Site and lower farmland valleys further east and south. The transition between the Lowlands and the Highlands of Scotland is marked by the underlying Highland Boundary Fault zone which runs through this area, a characteristic noted by NatureScot in their 'Landscapes of Scotland' description for the Mounth area[3].

8.4.10 Landcover is characterised by dense commercial forestry across the central and western parts of the study area, forming a patchwork of dark forestry and areas of clear-felling across an extensive area. Small areas of heath and native-tree lined watercourses are intermixed. To the north and northeast landcover is a mix of upland vegetation and rough grazing, with blocks of forestry. Pasture fields and isolated farmsteads cover much of the south and east. Native woodland is mostly concentrated along the watercourses which pass through the southern and eastern parts of the study area.

8.4.11 Existing infrastructure within the study area is evident, with the Fetteresso Substation located at the southern Site boundary. A 275 kV overhead line passes, through the centre of the study area and along the western edge of the Site

[3] NatureScot (2012) The Landscapes of Scotland, 32: Mounth. [Online] Available at https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2024-01/descriptions%20-%20final%20-%2031-40%20-%20July%202012%20-%20copied%20with%20new%20logo%20January%202024.pdf

from the north, connecting to Fetteresso Substation before continuing southwest. Another 275 kV overhead line passes through the eastern part of the study area, connecting to the Tealing Substation, approximately 62 km to the south. A number of communications masts are located across the study area, including three at the summit of Cairn-mon-earn, approximately 4.3 km north of the Site. Two further masts are visible at the summit of Mossmaud 1.8 km to the west of the Site and at Cairnbank, approximately 2 km to the north. Wind turbines under 100m tip height within the study area are frequent to the south. These include isolated farmstead turbines at Tewel and East Town clusters of turbines at Cloch-na Hill and Hillhead of Auquhirie (76 m tip height) and three turbines at Jacksbank (99m tip height). Just beyond the study area the Mid Hill Wind Farm lies to the west, and the Meikle Carewe Wind Farm lies to the northeast.

Landscape Character Types

8.4.12 This section provides a description of landscape character (including constituent landscape elements), drawing on published studies, supplemented with project specific research and field work where relevant.

8.4.13 The landscape character of the study area is described in the online 'Scottish Landscape Character Assessment' published by NatureScot in 2019. There are two Landscape Character Types (LCTs) across the study area, shown in **Figure 8.3a: Landscape Character Types**, and shown overlaid with the screened ZTV in **Figure 8.3b: Landscape Character Types with Substation Screening Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV).**

8.4.14 The Site is located entirely within LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire[4], which covers the northern half of the study area. The LCT encompasses the hills along the eastern edges of the Cairngorms National Park, extending from the upland, heather-covered plateaux in the distant west, across lower forested hills and slopes, and broad pastoral valleys in the east approaching the coastline. Across the western and northern areas of the study area, the land is primarily dense forestry across higher elevations and is sparsely populated, with limited outward views.

8.4.15 The LVIA will also consider LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills - Aberdeenshire[5], which occupies the southern portion of the study area. Part of the southern Site access track will be in this LCT. The LCT comprises the undulating farmland between Fetteresso Forest to the north and the coastline in the east and extends well beyond the study area to the south towards the Hill of Garvock. Several small settlements are concentrated to the south and along the coast, including Kirktown of Fetteresso and Drumlithie. The undulating slopes and shallow valleys afford a tranquil and open character, with frequently open easterly views towards the coast.

Designated Landscapes

8.4.16 There are no nationally, regionally or locally designated landscapes or Wild Land Areas within the study area.

Visual Baseline Conditions

8.4.17 This section describes the extent of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Substation within the study area and identifies the visual receptors that will be assessed. This section also introduces the representative viewpoints that will be used to assess effects on visual receptors, including the reasons for their selection.

Analysis of ZTV

8.4.18 **Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)** and Viewpoint Locations shows the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Substation (based on bare earth). The ZTV indicates widespread visibility across the Site, and across the centre and southeastern extents of the study area, primarily across areas of higher elevation. To the north, theoretical visibility is limited to the south-facing slopes above Rickarton including Glenton Hill and Hill of Pitspunkie (near VP 3), as well as Craigneil and the southern slopes of Cairn-mon-earn further north. The ZTV also extends in a northeasterly direction to encompass the land around Campstone Hill, Raedykes Roman Camp and Garrison Hill. In the east, theoretical visibility extends across the forested slopes between Hill of Baulk and Hill of Swanley (VP 5). In the west theoretical visibility is confined to small areas of higher elevation, including the east-facing

[4] NatureScot (2019) SNH National Landscape Character Assessment. Landscape Character Type 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire. [Online] Available at: https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT%20029%20-%20Summits%20and%20Plateaux%20-%20Aberdeenshire%20-%20Final%20pdf.pdf

[5] NatureScot (2019) SNH National Landscape Character Assessment. Landscape Character Type 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire. [Online] Available at: https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT%20024%20-%20Coastal%20Farmed%20Ridges%20and%20Hills%20-%20Aberdeenshire%20-%20Final%20pdf.pdf

summits of Hill of Trusta, Hill of Quithel, and the public car park and unclassified cycling route to its west, and Leachie Hill. To the south and southeast, theoretical visibility is focused across the Site-facing slopes to the south of Carron Water, along the lower slopes of Carmont Hill and across to Jacksbank to the southwest. It also extends across the area of Hillhead of Auquhirie (VP 1) between Cloch-na Hill, Criggie Belt, Auquhirie, Tewel and across to VP 4.

8.4.19 The ZTV has informed the selection of viewpoints. The viewpoints are located between 0.8 km - 4 km of the Site and are focused upon the main area with potential visibility to the southeast (VPs 1, 2 and 4), where the ZTV indicates visibility. The furthest LVIA viewpoint is located at the Hillhead of Auquhirie (VP 1), a gentle open ridge in the southeast of the study area which is host to three wind turbines. This viewpoint is located approximately 3.5 km from the Site and has been included to represent views experienced by residents and people travelling through this area where the elevated landform affords open views to the northwest towards the Proposed Development. A cultural heritage viewpoint is illustrated from Raedykes Roman Camp (**Figure 9.6**) to the northeast of the Site, at a distance of around 4.6 km. This was used to inform an understanding of the likely visual effects across the hills in this area however has not been assessed as a viewpoint within this LVIA.

Key Receptors

8.4.20 There are a number of potential visual receptors in the study area, including:

- People living in and moving around the study area, including those at individual properties within the study area and those at the western peripheries of settlements including Rickarton;
- People engaged in outdoor recreation such as those using local paths through the fields, and walking/cycling across the hill tracks or to hill tops, as well as people within Fetteresso Forest, and those walking or cycling in rural areas more generally; and
- People travelling along the road or rail network, including minor roads and the A957 (Slug Road).

Selection of Representative Viewpoints for Assessment

8.4.21 This section sets out the viewpoints that are used to represent and assess the visual effects of the Proposed Development. The viewpoint list is a representative selection of locations agreed with the statutory consultees; it is not an exhaustive list of locations from which the Proposed Development will be visible.

8.4.22 A total of five viewpoints were selected following analysis of the ZTV and engagement with consultees (see **).** These viewpoints contribute to the representation of a range of views experienced by people within the surrounding landscape. Each of the five viewpoints are all publicly accessible, as advocated by GLVIA3[6].

8.4.23 The viewpoints are listed in **Table 8.2: Assessment of Viewpoint Locations** and shown alongside the ZTVs in **Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations** and **Figure 8.2b: Substation Screening Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**.

Table 8.2: Assessment of Viewpoint Locations

VP No.	VP Name	Grid Reference		Distance (km) from Site	Reason for inclusion
1	Hillhead of Auquhirie	383164	783698	3.5 km southeast	Represents views to the northwest experienced by residential receptors on the elevated land to the south of the Site and east of Carmont Hill around Hillhead of Auquhirie.
2	Nether Wyndings	381838	785382	1.6 km southeast	Represents views to the northwest experienced by residential receptors along the minor road to the south of the Site around Nether Wyndings, and road users travelling along the minor road.
3	Rickarton	381873	789543	2.7 km northeast	Represents views to the southwest experienced by residential receptors and recreational receptors in and around the settlement of Rickarton. The viewpoint is

[6] Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013). *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3), Routledge

VP No.	VP Name	Grid Reference		Distance (km) from Site	Reason for inclusion
					located on slightly elevated land to the north of the settlement where views towards the Proposed Development are more open, in comparison to lower areas along the A957 where there is likely to be a greater degree of screening due to intervening landform and vegetation.
4	Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso	383469	785638	3.2 km southeast	Represents views to the northwest experienced by residential receptors to the west of Kirktown of Fetteresso and road users, including cyclists, travelling along the minor road.
5	Hill of Swanley	381243	787291	0.8 km northeast	Represents open views to the southwest experienced by recreational receptors walking or cycling along forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest.

Settlements

8.4.24 Settlements are those defined as such within the relevant Local Development Plans for Aberdeenshire Council (2016)[7]. The settlement pattern across the study area is sparse, with small settlements and more isolated properties scattered along the minor road network. The settlement of Drumlithie is located within the southern fringes of the study area, approximately 4.5 km from the Site. Drumlithie however has no theoretical visibility of the Site, as indicated by **Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations** and therefore has not been included for assessment in this LVIA.

8.4.25 The closest large settlement is Stonehaven, located slightly beyond the study area at a distance of approximately 5.2 km east of the Site at its closest point. Given that this settlement is located outside the study area and that significant effects on this settlement are not anticipated at this distance, this settlement has not been included for assessment in this LVIA.

8.4.26 Although not defined as a settlement by Aberdeenshire Council, the small community of Rickarton is included for assessment, as it is located within an area of theoretical visibility and includes at least 10 distinct properties.

Residential Properties

8.4.27 There are a number of individual residential properties within around 5 km of the Site that are not located within a recognised settlement and are well scattered. The closest properties to the Site are at Clachanshiels and Whitehall located approximately 410 m and 750 m respectively to the north of the Site and over 1 km from Proposed Substation, two dwellings at Upper Baulk approximately 630 m to the east and approximately 965m from Proposed Substation, Upper Wyndings approximately 770 m to the southeast and over 1 km from Proposed Substation and Elfstone approximately 470 m to the south of the Site and over 1 km from Proposed Substation. The majority of properties are located alongside the minor road network in the valleys to the north and south, and to the east across gently undulating farmland. There are fewer properties in the west and northwestern portion of the study area, due to heavy forestry use and fewer roads.

8.4.28 Within the Scoping Report[8] for the Proposed Development, submitted in August 2024, it was proposed that effects on residential visual amenity for residential properties within 1 km of Proposed Substation would be considered within a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA). Since the scoping stage and finalisation of the location and design of Proposed Substation, it has been confirmed that only one property at Upper Baulk is located within 1 km of the Proposed Substation, approximately 965 m away. As indicated in the ZTV in **Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**, this property does not have any theoretical visibility of the Proposed Substation. Given that this property will have no visibility of Proposed Substation and that there are no further properties within 1 km of Proposed Substation, RVAA has been scoped out of this LVIA.

[7] Aberdeenshire Council, (2023). Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. [Online] Available at:. https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/ldpmedia/LDP2021/AberdeenshireLocalDevelopmentPlan2023IntroductionAndPolicies.pdf

[8] SSEN (2024) Hurlie 400 kV Substation Scoping Report.

Routes

8.4.29 Visibility from a route is not uniform along its entire length, as views of the surrounding landscape change as one moves along the route depending on the surrounding topography, buildings, structures, tree cover and vegetation.

8.4.30 Theoretical visibility of Proposed Substation from routes across the study area is illustrated by **Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations** and **Figure 8.2b: Substation Screening Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**. The routes generally include main roads and the minor road network. There are relatively few classified roads and no national recreational routes, such as long-distance walking trails or National Cycle Network routes within the study area. The Mid Kinmonth Circular Core Path is located within the southwestern part of the study area, approximately 3.8 km from the Site, and a very short extent of the Ury House Core Path is located over 4 km to the east of the Site. It is recognised that recreational receptors also travel along the local road network as well as unclassified routes within the study area, including within Fetteresso Forest and around Garrison Hill in the northeastern part of the study area near Raedykes Roman Camp. Within Fetteresso Forest the nature of views experienced by recreational receptors travelling along forestry tracks, whether open or contained by forestry, continually changes over time due to forestry felling and restocking as part of current forestry management plans. Most outward views from Fetteresso Forest however are likely to be screened by forestry with occasional sections of forest tracks that offer open views towards the Proposed Development.

8.4.31 Routes within the study area are listed in **Table 8.3: Routes**. Where there is limited theoretical visibility, or where actual visibility from a route is likely to be limited due to localised screening, the routes have not been considered in the LVIA, as the likelihood for significant sequential effects is limited.

Table 8.3: Routes

Routes within study area	Distance (km) and direction from the Site	Theoretical visibility of the Proposed Substation (ZTV coverage) and other considerations to determine if the settlement is carried forward for detailed assessment
Roads and railways		
Minor road network – South of Site – East and southeast of Site	< 0.5 km – 5.0 km	Minor roads across the study area connect with major roads such as the A90 and settlements, including Stonehaven, in addition to isolated properties and farms. The minor road network extends to the outermost regions of the study area. The bare earth ZTV (refer to **Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**) indicates widespread visibility on the minor road network within the study area, particularly to the south and east. **Considered in assessment.**
A957 (Slug Road)	1.6 km north	This route connects the larger settlements of Stonehaven and Deeside. The bare earth ZTV (refer to **Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**) indicates theoretical visibility across a section of approximately 500 m of road that is approximately 2.1 km northeast of the Site. Although this is a short section of the overall road, views in the direction of the Site from this section are open. **Considered in assessment.**
National rail (Dundee to Aberdeen line)	1 km southeast	This railway connects between Dundee and Aberdeen and runs through Stonehaven. The bare earth ZTV (refer to **Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**) indicates limited theoretical visibility along the section of route within the study area, with visibility limited to short sections (approximately 2 km) within the study area, between 2 km and 4 km east of the Site. Actual visibility from this section would be reduced by intervening woodland on either side of the railway line. Due to the presence of intervening woodland and the overall limited visibility across the length

Routes within study area	Distance (km) and direction from the Site	Theoretical visibility of the Proposed Substation (ZTV coverage) and other considerations to determine if the settlement is carried forward for detailed assessment
		of this route, effects on this route are unlikely to be significant. **Not considered further.**
Recreational Routes		
Recreational Routes within Fetteresso Forest	0 km – 3.0 km	There are a number of unclassified recreational routes along forestry tracks within Fetteresso Forest to the west of the Site. The bare earth ZTV (refer to **Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**) indicates some areas of theoretical visibility to the east and west of the Site, largely within 1 km, including from some areas of recently felled forestry immediately to the west of the site near Hill of Trusta and to the east on the western slopes of Hill of Swanley. Views from forestry tracks have the potential to vary over time due to forestry felling and restocking as part of current forestry management plans. **Considered within assessment**.
Mid Kinmonth Circular Core Path	3.7 km	This Core Path forms a short route across the slopes of Mid Kinmonth to the north of Drumlithie. The bare earth ZTV (refer to **Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**) indicates theoretical visibility along a short section of route (approximately 500 m) between 3.7 km and 4.1 km southwest of the Site. Due to the overall limited visibility across the length of this route, effects on this route are unlikely to be significant. **Not considered further.**
Recreational Routes near Garrison Hill	4 km – 5 km	There are a number of unclassified recreational routes across the slopes of Garrison Hill and Meikle Carewe Hill which are informally used for walking. The bare earth ZTV (refer to **Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**) indicates some areas of theoretical visibility in this elevated location in the northeastern part of the study area between 4 - 5 km. These routes offer open, elevated views southwest towards the Site. **Considered within assessment**.
Ury House Core Path	4.8 km	This Core Path runs along the valley slopes of the Cowie Water at Glen Ury, at the eastern edge of the study area. The bare earth ZTV (refer to **Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**) indicates no theoretical visibility from this Core Path. **Not considered further.**

Future Baseline in the Absence of the Proposed Development

8.4.32 In the absence of the Proposed Development, it is likely that the land will continue under the same land use and the character of the Site is therefore likely to continue as an actively managed commercial forest. The landscape and visual amenity of the study area is likely to be influenced by a number of 'forces for change'. Forces for change are those factors affecting the evolution of the landscape and which may, consequently, affect the perception of the study area in the near or distant future. Although prediction of these is necessarily speculative, those of particular relevance are discussed below.

8.4.33 Settlements are likely to continue to locally change the nature of the area. A number of small unrecognised settlements are located in close proximity to each other, with potential future expansion of settlements potentially resulting in merged settlements and further development of individual houses across the rural area.

8.4.34 Further reinforcement and extension of the electricity transmission network, predominantly to connect further renewable energy generation, is likely to occur within the study area, for example additional OHLs connecting to the existing Fetteresso Substation.

8.4.35 Wind farm development is a clear force for change and is likely to continue. As farmers diversify income and seek opportunities to generate energy for domestic and commercial use, interest in this type of development may continue, alongside development of larger wind farms on uplands and forestry land.

Implications of Climate Change for Baseline Conditions

8.4.36 The UK Climate Projections (2018) for Scotland project that by 2050, summer will become hotter with decreased rainfall, while winter will become colder with increased rainfall. The increase in winter rainfall is expected to be lower for the east of Scotland in comparison to the west[9].

8.4.37 The Landscape Institute's Position Statement on Climate Change[10] acknowledges that changes in average temperatures, precipitation and extreme weather events will have an effect on the landscape. However, whilst a change in rainfall and rising temperatures are anticipated, it is not considered that this will appreciably change the baseline landscape conditions.

8.4.1 The Aberdeenshire Council Local Climate Impacts Profile[11] (LCLIP) (2024) highlights the region's vulnerability to severe weather events and the impact it has on infrastructure, based on the 2018 Met Office Climate Projections and analysis of severe weather in the council area from 2019-22. It notes that 2019-22 saw more extreme weather events per year than the previous LCLIP (2012-18). The most frequently experienced severe weather in Aberdeenshire was storms and high winds, and excessive rainfall, which have had a negative effect on infrastructure, including power lines, roads, railways and communications networks. The damage includes structural and access issues as a result of fallen trees and damage to roads.

8.4.2 A number of the 'forces for change' are likely to occur as consequence of climate change, and from the actions responding to climate change. Potential physical and perceptible long-term changes to the landscape may occur, such as changes in soils and vegetation, and the distribution of agricultural land use and forestry. Of particular relevance is the potential increase in renewable energy infrastructure as part of the response to climate change.

Design Considerations

8.4.3 Policy 11(e)i and ii of NPF4 sets out that project design and mitigation for energy developments should demonstrate how significant landscape and visual impacts are addressed, stating that *"where appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they will generally be considered to be acceptable"*.

8.4.4 The Site location has been informed by the objective of mitigating environmental, including landscape and visual constraints, balanced against technical and cost considerations. In comparison to other Site location options, the chosen Site does not affect many residential properties and is sited on undulating terrain which mitigates flood risk and affords suitable access. Refer to **Chapter 4: Consideration of Alternatives**.

8.4.5 The design of the Proposed Development aims to reduce the visual impact by cutting the substation platform into the topography and by introducing blocks of native woodland around the platform, which will be planted on cut and fill

[9] Adaption Scotland (2021). *Climate Projections for Scotland*. [Online] Available at : https://www.adaptationscotland.org.uk/application/files/1316/3956/5418/LOW_RES_4656_Climate_Projections_report_SINGLE_PAGE_DEC21.pdf [Accessed 30/04/24]

[10] Landscape Institute (2021). How Landscape Practice Can Respond to the Climate Crisis. [Online] Available at: https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2021/04/12510-LANDSCAPE-2030_v6.pdf

[11] Aberdeenshire Council (2024). Aberdeenshire Council Local Climate Impacts Profile (LCLIP) 2019-2022. [Online] Available at: https://aberdeenshirestorage.blob.core.windows.net/acblobstorage/4209a2d3-9811-419f-a171-5614962cce76/lclip-2019---2022.pdf

slopes. Given the undulating and forested nature of the Site and its immediate surroundings, the earthworks and woodland will impact visibility towards the Site.

8.5 Development Considered in the Cumulative Assessment

8.5.1 Operational and under construction developments form part of the baseline for the LVIA and therefore inform the 'primary' LVIA assessment. Proposed developments within the study area that are considered reasonably foreseeable to the Applicant are considered within the assessment of potential future cumulative effects, as they may give rise to different potential future cumulative baseline scenarios. Reasonably foreseeable projects include those with planning consent, with valid planning applications, or other projects where sufficient information is available to inform a cumulative assessment.

8.5.2 The assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects will be undertaken using a staged approach, summarised as follows:

- Cumulative assessment of potential in-combination effects of the Proposed Development together with the proposed Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL which are inherently linked projects. The proposed Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL is considered as an 'Associated SSEN Transmission Development' as set out in **Table 8.4: Associated SSEN Transmission Developments, other SSEN Transmission Developments and other Third Party Developments considered in the cumulative assessment** and cumulative effects between it and the Proposed Development are considered in **Table 8.33: Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects: Associated SSEN Transmission Development**;
- Cumulative assessment of potential in-combination effects of the Proposed Development together with other consented and proposed developments within the study area. Other consented and proposed developments within the study area that are being proposed by SSEN Transmission are considered as 'Other SSEN Transmission Developments', and any other consented and proposed developments within the study area are considered as 'Other Third Party Developments', as set out in **Table 8.4: Associated SSEN Transmission Developments, other SSEN Transmission Developments and other Third Party Developments considered in the cumulative assessment** The cumulative effects between 'Other SSEN Transmission Developments' and the Proposed Development and 'Other Third Party Developments' and the Proposed Development are considered in **Table 8.34: Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects: Other SSEN Transmission Developments** and **Table 8.35: Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects: Other Third Party Developments,** respectively;
- **Table 8.4: Associated SSEN Transmission Developments, other SSEN Transmission Developments and other Third Party Developments considered in the cumulative assessment** lists all Associated SSEN Transmission Developments, Other SSEN Transmission Developments and Other Third Party Developments that are considered in the cumulative assessment. Where information is available, the location of these developments are presented on **Figure 5.1: Cumulative Developments**. Further developments identified within the Hurlie Scoping Report (see **Appendix 6.1**) and listed in **Chapter 15: Cumulative Effects Assessment** that are not included in **Table 8.4: Associated SSEN Transmission Developments, other SSEN Transmission Developments and other Third Party Developments considered in the cumulative assessment** below have not been included in the assessment due to their location outside of the 5 km study area and are therefore considered to have limited potential for significant cumulative effects.

Table 8.4: Associated SSEN Transmission Developments, other SSEN Transmission Developments and other Third Party Developments considered in the cumulative assessment

Name	Distance (km) from the Proposed Development Site	Status
Associated SSEN Transmission Development to be included in the assessment of cumulative effects		
Proposed Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL (LT455)	Overlap with the Site	Proposed
Other SSEN Transmission Development to be included in the assessment of cumulative effects		
Fetteresso 400 kV substation extension	<0.1 km	Proposed

Name	Distance (km) from the Proposed Development Site	Status
Network Rail Drumlithie – new transformers at Fetteresso Substation and two new cable connections	<0.1 km	Proposed
Fiddes 132kV replacement - possible requirement to install a new double circuit 132 kV connection from the existing Fiddes substation to the existing/ upgraded Fetteresso substation	<0.1 km	Proposed
SSEN Transmission Ofshore Grids Project - onshore element likely to include onshore HVDC converter station and underground cables	Overlap with the Site	Proposed
Glendye wind farm grid connection - new 132kV overhead line supported by steel trident poles to connect Glendye wind farm to the existing Fetteresso substation. The final 1 km of the connection would be undergrounded	<0.1 km	Proposed
Other Third Party Developments to be included in the assessment of cumulative effects		
Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection - this commercial developer led project would involve the construction of a new substation/convertor station in the vicinity of the Proposed Development together with an underground cable connecting to a new landfall on the East Coast.	Overlap with the Site	Proposed
Quithel BESS – battery energy storage system with 50mW capacity	1 km	Proposed
Fetteresso Wind Farm– underground cable to provide grid connection between the consented Fetteresso Wind Farm and Fetteresso substation (Fetteresso Wind Farm is located outside the study area and is therefore not considered within the cumulative assessment)	<0.1 km	Consented
Craigneil Wind Farm	2.5 km	Proposed

8.6 Mitigation and Monitoring

Embedded Mitigation

8.6.1 Topic-specific embedded mitigation (mitigation achieved through design) is outlined below. Details of the landscape design are set out in **Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development** and illustrated in **Figure 3.3: Landscape Design**.

8.6.2 The landscape design includes cut slopes along the west and southwestern edges of the Proposed Substation and fill slopes to the northeast, east and southeast to create a level platform to allow the Proposed Substation to sit below the surrounding landform and be partially screened by some of the higher surrounding landform. The landscape design also includes blocks of native woodland, shrubs and grasses around the Proposed Substation, primarily to the north, east and south. The principles of the landscape design are to help reduce the visibility of the Proposed Substation at both year 0 (due to the lower elevation of the platform and the earthworks around it) and year 10 (once proposed woodland and scrub has reached semi-maturity). The landscape design would also help to somewhat compensate for the loss of landscape features, including small areas of native trees, shrub and heath within the Site. The landscape design has been developed to help better integrate the Proposed Substation into the landscape.

Applied Mitigation

8.6.3 The assessment recognises that environmental considerations were taken into account during the design process. Standard good practice measures will be implemented during construction and operation of the Proposed

Development, and are detailed in SSEN Transmission's General Environmental Management Plans (GEMPs) (refer to **Chapter 5: EIA Process and Methodology**). This will include the control of lighting.

8.6.4 In accordance with the conditions of contract between the Applicant and the Principal Contractor (see **Chapter 5: EIA Process and Methodology**) a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be produced in discussion with statutory stakeholders, prior to the commencement of the construction of the Proposed Development. It is anticipated that the CEMP will also be secured through a suitably worded planning condition. The following will be key features of the CEMP:

- Existing landscape features such as native or broadleaved woodland, tree belts and stone dyke field enclosures will be retained as far as practical.
- Any disturbance to or temporary removal of existing field boundaries (e.g. hedgerows, fences or stone dykes), particularly along access routes, will be undertaken sensitively to ensure successful reinstatement of these features following completion of construction activities.
- Construction vehicles will not track across undisturbed areas outside their defined working areas and access corridor.
- Materials and machinery will be stored tidily during the works and will not be left in place for longer than required for construction purposes to minimise effects on views and visual amenity.
- Construction lighting will be specified and controlled to avoid light pollution and effects upon dark night skies.
- Following the introduction of the main components of the Proposed Development, construction works (e.g. construction working areas, access tracks) and previously disturbed areas will be restored and revegetated during the construction phase.
- Topsoil, and the seedbank within it, will be carefully stripped and will be stored in areas where it will not be disturbed or tracked upon in low uncompacted mounds. Stored topsoil will be used for the progressive restoration of disturbed areas in line with the landscape mitigation proposals shown on **Figure 3.3: Landscape Design**. Soft materials will be used to regrade slopes prior to promotion of natural recolonisation of vegetation.
- Seeding will be undertaken using locally native species of plants, and to tie in with adjacent vegetation types, where considered appropriate and essential to prevent erosion.
- On completion of the construction phase, all equipment and temporary infrastructure not required for future operational use will be dismantled and removed, including removal of construction waste and its appropriate disposal.

Table 8.5: Applied Mitigation

Mitigation Measure	Project Stage/Timing	Responsibility
LV1: Adherence to all relevant SSEN GEMPs, including soil management, working in sensitive habitats, forestry and restoration.	Construction	Principal contractor
LV2: Preparation and implementation of CEMP which shall include soil management, ecological management and general construction practices, including the specification and control of lighting.	Construction	Principal contractor
LV3: Minimal use of operational lighting within the Site, only used during periods of maintenance when absolutely necessary. The specified lighting shall be low level, face into the Site and directed onto the ground and not onto elevated structures, with limited glare and light spill.	Operation	Applicant

Further Survey Requirements and Monitoring

Table 8.6: Monitoring

Monitoring Measure	Project Stage/Timing	Responsibility
Survey and monitoring of the proposed landscape design, and replacement planting where required, to ensure the implemented planting successfully establishes and the predicted mitigation of landscape and visual effects is delivered.	Post-construction on an annual basis for five years.	Principal contractor

8.7 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects – Construction

8.7.1 The assessment of effects identified above is based on the project description as outlined in **Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development**. Unless otherwise stated, potential effects identified are considered to be adverse.

Potential Sources of Construction Effects

8.7.2 During the proposed three year construction period, there would be landscape effects arising from the presence of partially constructed infrastructure and construction activities on Site (as described in **Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development**). Effects occurring during the construction phase are considered to be short-term and reversible unless otherwise stated. Potential sources of effects during the three-year construction period include:

- felling of existing forestry (across the Site in phases);
- set up initial establishment compound;
- construction of temporary and permanent access tracks;
- introduction of construction activity and vehicular/personnel movements within the Site route and on local roads;
- topsoil stripping and stockpiling (across the Site in phases);
- earthworks to form the access;
- excavation, including rock drilling and blasting for cut slopes, and fill to create the platform, and Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) features;
- site levelling and laying of hardcore for the compound and offices;
- establishment of initial planting, to establish early filtering and screening of views;
- erection of control building and switchgear buildings;
- steel work supporting the electrical equipment;
- installation of the transformers, conductors and associated electrical equipment;
- use of lighting during hours of darkness/dusk, notably during Autumn and Winter;
- removal of temporary compounds and restoration of disturbed areas; and
- implementation and establishment of remaining landscape planting.

Predicted Construction Effects

Landscape Effects – Construction

The Site

Table 8.7: Construction Effects on the Site

The Site
Baseline Description
The Site is described from paragraphs **8.4.4** - **8.4.7**.
Sensitivity (susceptibility and value)
The Site forms part of a large-scale, enclosed landscape, with extensive and dense forestry forming a simple landcover pattern across both the Site and surrounding study area. The landform is undulating and gradually falls

The Site
to the east, with converging and descending slopes from Hill of Trusta to the west and Elf Hill to the south. A number of incised watercourses dissect the eastern half of the Site. An existing OHL follows the western boundary and terminates at Fetteresso Substation, adjacent to the southern Site boundary, exerting an existing human influence and reducing susceptibility to the type of development proposed. Therefore, susceptibility of the Site is judged to be low. There are no national or local landscape designations located within the Site. The Site however sits within an upland landscape that forms part of the widely recognised Highland Boundary Fault. Therefore, the overall value is judged to be **medium**. Taking into account the judgements of susceptibility and value, the sensitivity of the Site is judged to be **medium**.
Magnitude of Change during Construction (size and scale, geographical extent, duration, and reversibility)
Physical effects on the fabric of the Site would arise from the introduction of construction activities. The main construction activities with the potential to affect the fabric of the Site include excavations and track construction, including for the laydown area, offices, and car park, and preparation for hardscaping around the substation compounds. A significant change within the Site would be the areas of felling that must take place in preparation for construction. In addition, vehicle movement, diggers and cranes, and the use of lighting would impact the Site. Lighting would be present during the winter months when working hours would be partially within darkness, and would form a notable contrast to the dark, forested surroundings. Physical changes to the landscape during construction would be limited to areas within the Site boundary and along access roads to it, for a period of three years. The level of reversibility would be varied, from fully reversible changes associated with some ground and vegetation disturbance where vegetation would be re-instated (with changes being largely reversed as vegetation gradually matures), to longer lasting effects associated with tree felling, permanent changes to topography, and the installation of infrastructure that forms part of the Proposed Development, including substation compounds and hard landscaping, that are irreversible. Proposed landscape elements such as changes to topography to create bunding will be permanent. Changes to vegetation resulting from grassland and scrub planting would be partially reversible (largely reversed upon vegetation maturing and effectively tying into that which exists today). Effects on landscape elements which would be removed, such as forestry, would be long-term. Construction effects relating to earthworks associated with the cut and fill slopes and SuDs that form structural softworks changes to the Proposed Development would be irreversible. The scale of change would be large, and would be experienced within the Site, which is judged to be a small geographical extent. The magnitude of change is judged to be **high**.
Effect and Significance during Construction
Drawing on professional judgement, the effect of construction on the Site is judged to be **Major (significant)**.

Landscape Character

Table 8.8: Construction Effects on LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire

LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire
Baseline Description
Within the study area, this LCT is found as one unit which covers the northern and western extents of the study area. The LCT also extends to approximately 25 km west of the Site, where it transitions to the neighbouring LCT 123: smooth Rounded Hills - Cairngorms, and approximately 22 km to the southwest, adjacent to three separate LCTs at the junction of the Glen Esk and Howe of Mearns. The entirety of the Proposed Development is located within this LCT. Key characteristics of the LCT include: ▪ *"An expansive upland plateau with a smooth rolling landform and rounded hill summits. Landform is more complex along the Highland Boundary Fault;* ▪ *Foreground to the Cairngorm massif and Cairngorms National Park;* ▪ *Extensive central and western ridges covered with expansive heather and grass moorland;* ▪ *Coniferous forested lower hills, particularly extensive in the north-east. Wind farm development also present in this area;* ▪ *Wild character experienced in the less modified central and western parts of this landscape;* and ▪ *Dramatic juxtaposition of the steep scarp slopes of these rugged uplands with the expansive low-lying farmed and settled Howe of the Mearns."*[12] There is a sense of wildness and isolation within the LCT which is more pronounced in the west closer to the Cairngorms, and which lessens as the landform descends eastwards. The presence of contemporary human

[12] NatureScot (2019) National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 29 Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire. Available at: https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT%20029%20-%20Summits%20and%20Plateaux%20-%20Aberdeenshire%20-%20Final%20pdf.pdf

LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire
influence within the LCT is limited with no major settlements and only scattered properties, which are mostly concentrated in the east. The built-up city of Stonehaven is a notable feature located adjacent to the eastern boundary of this LCT unit. Other human influence includes the A974 main road which cuts across the eastern extents of the study area, and the B974 in the centre of the LCT. There are also a number of large-scale wind farm developments within the central and eastern sections of this LCT, as well as a number of domestic and small-scale wind turbines particularly concentrated to the south and northeast of the Site, across the lower foothills. Existing electricity transmission infrastructure is located within the LCT, including the operational Fetteresso Substation, located west of Stonehaven, in the centre of the study area. Several existing OHLs cross through the LCT, converging at Kintore Substation.
Sensitivity (susceptibility and value)
The LCT is large-scale, stretching from the upland plateaux in the west to the smooth and rolling farmed lowlands in the east. The landcover is varied, with a mixture of farmland, forestry and moor, and the smaller-scale and semi-enclosed nature of the landscape in the east indicates a higher susceptibility to the type of development proposed. The elevated nature of the landform, which contrasts with and provides a backdrop to the surrounding lowlands to the east and south. However, the susceptibility is lessened by the existing prominence of electricity infrastructure including wind turbines, overhead lines and substations within the study area. The susceptibility is therefore judged to be **medium**. There are no national or local landscape designations located within the parts of the LCT within the study area however the Highland Boundary Fault, a recognised and prominent transitional landscape feature, is located along the southern edge of the LCT. Within the part of the LCT within the study area, the Highland Boundary Fault is less pronounced (as recognised by Aberdeenshire Council in Table 8.1) however is still a notable and contrasting feature within the surrounding lowland landscape. There are also a number of informal recreational routes within the LCT including within Fetteresso Forest. Therefore, the overall value is judged to be **medium**. Taking into account the judgments of susceptibility and value, the sensitivity of the LCT is judged to be **medium**.
Magnitude of Change during Construction
Physical effects on this LCT would arise through the construction phase of the Proposed Development and the construction of any associated infrastructure within the Site, which is located in the easternmost area of this LCT, as well as the construction of passing points along the local road network. Perceptual effects on this LCT would extend to elevated areas in the centre and north of the study area, with visibility of taller construction elements such as cranes and the movement of construction vehicles across roads and access tracks, at distances of approximately 5 km (see the ZTV in **Figure 8.3b**). Construction works for the Proposed Development are expected to last three years. Construction of the Proposed Development would lead to physical disturbance and activity across the Site, including construction of access tracks across fields and a construction compound, with associated fencing, equipment, lighting, signage and other temporary features. Felling associated with construction of the Proposed Development would be notable within the surroundings of Fetteresso Forest. Construction works may extend into hours of darkness in the winter months, when construction lighting may be visible. Overall, there would be a notable change from a large area of forestry to a construction site. Construction activity associated with the creation of passing points is likely to be more modest in scale and is likely to require the removal of some forestry along track sides. Construction effects are considered short term (three years) in nature and partly reversible, in that some areas affected by the construction compounds would be restored to their pre-existing condition as forestry land. However, the main works for the Proposed Development are non-reversible as the Proposed Development would become a permanent feature. On completion of the Proposed Development, construction disturbance would be restored to pre-existing conditions and the operational phase of the Proposed Development would commence. Planting of trees and shrubs with whips and transplants, typically 2-5 years old, would be undertaken towards the end of the construction period to provide a landscape framework, and to assist in filtering and screening of views. This will take in the order of 10-15 years to grow to semi-maturity. Within the LCT, the scale of change is judged to be **medium**, occurring across a small area of the landscape away from the more isolated landscapes further west, and within the context of existing electrical infrastructure. The geographical extent is judged to be **medium**, particularly in the area surrounding the Site within 1.5 km. Overall, the magnitude of change during construction is considered to be **medium** within around 1.5 km of the Proposed Development, reducing to **low** or **negligible** elsewhere.
Effect and Significance during Construction
Taking into account the medium sensitivity and the medium magnitude of change, the effect of construction on this LCT is judged to be **Moderate (Significant)** within up to 1.5 km of the Proposed Development, reducing to **Minor (Not Significant)** elsewhere within the study area and LCT.

Table 8.9: Construction Effects on LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills - Aberdeenshire Ranges

LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills - Aberdeenshire
Baseline Description
Within the study area, this LCT is found as one unit which covers an area of low hills to the south. It covers an extensive area of farmland to the southwest of Stonehaven and extends further south to the Hill of Garvock as well as the Highland Boundary Fault. The LCT is flanked by LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire to the north and LCT 22: Broad Valley Lowlands - Aberdeenshire to the south, and is within 0.1 km of the Site to the north. Key characteristics of the LCT include: ■ *A large scale and open landscape of smoothly rolling ridges and shallow valleys;* ■ *Narrow ravines cutting through the ridges towards the coast;* ■ *Large fields of arable land and pasture with red-pink soils present a rich tapestry of colours with the strong patchwork pattern influenced by different crops and ploughed fields;* ■ *Sparse woodland with coniferous shelterbelts planted on some ridges. Broadleaf woodlands, although small, commonly emphasise the landform, tracing watercourses or planted on knolls;* ■ *Scattered settlement pattern with varied architectural styles including some large stately homes, farms and traditional cottages, often built of local red sandstone;* ■ *Comprehensive network of minor roads, as well as the main A90 which provides glimpses of the sea;* ■ *Telecommunication masts located on the highest hills;* ■ *Frequent single and small groups of large wind turbines;* ■ *Strong coastal influence particularly where more open slopes fall gently to the top of cliffs or raised beach allowing views of the sea;* and ■ *Popular use for informal recreation by nearby large centres of population.* Settlement within the LCT is well-established, with numerous small villages and scattered farmsteads located along the lower slopes and ridges. The transport network consists of the A90 along the eastern edge of the LCT, connected to an extensive minor road network throughout the western and southern extents of the LCT. Other human influence includes telecommunication masts on the highest hilltops, as well as single and small groups of larger wind turbines across Jacksbank and Cloch-na-Hill within the study area, and near the Moor of Auchendreich further south. Existing electrical infrastructure includes several existing OHLs which cross through the LCT, converging at Kintore Substation. The southwestern extents of this LCT, near Drumochty Forest are included within the Braes of the Mearns Local Landscape Area (LLA). The easternmost areas of the LCT fall within the South East Aberdeenshire Coast LLA. These are both local designations.
Sensitivity (susceptibility and value)
The large-scale, smooth and rolling landform presents distant views to the hills in the south and west and towards the lower-lying coastline in the east and indicates a higher susceptibility to the type of development proposed. Landcover is varied, primarily formed by a patchwork of farmland interspersed with shelterbelts and woodland. The existing influence of human settlement and infrastructure, including telecommunication masts and wind turbines, lessens susceptibility to the type of development proposed. The susceptibility is therefore judged to be **medium**. The Braes of Mearns LLA and South East Aberdeenshire Coast LLA, locally designated landscapes, are partly located within this LCT outside the study area in the southwest and east, respectively. There are no other landscape designations located within the remaining parts of the LCT. The Highland Boundary Fault, a recognised and prominent transitional landscape feature, is located along the northern edge of the LCT. Where the Highland Boundary Fault meets the northwestern boundary of the LCT, it is less pronounced (as recognised by Aberdeenshire Council in Table 8.1) however is still a notable and contrasting feature within the surrounding lowland landscape within the LCT. Therefore, the overall value is judged to be **high**. Taking into account the judgments of susceptibility and value, the sensitivity of the LCT is judged to be **high**.
Magnitude of Change during Construction
No construction would take place within this LCT, and all effects would be perceptual and expected to last three years. Visibility of construction activity from this LCT would primarily extend across the rising slopes south of Carron Water, at distances up to around 4 km as indicated by the ZTV (**Figure 8.3b**). Construction activity that would be seen would include felling, changes to topography through excavation works and the creation of areas of fill, and presence of tall structures including cranes and partially built gantry structures, visible beyond the southern hills of Fetteresso Forest. In addition, construction works may extend into hours of darkness, particularly in winter months,

LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills - Aberdeenshire
and construction lighting would be notable across the Site, seen to contrast with the surrounding darkness of Fetteresso Forest. Construction effects are considered partly reversible, in that the visible areas affected by the construction compounds would be restored to their pre-existing condition as forestry land. Visibility of construction activity would also cease once the Proposed Development is built. However, the main works for the Proposed Development are non-reversible as the changes to the topography to create a flat development platform, and the Proposed Substation upon it, would become a permanent feature, experienced in views seen from this area. On completion of the Proposed Development, areas of vegetation disturbed by construction would be seeded or replanted with young tree and shrub saplings, or would gradually naturally regenerate, and over time would return to pre-existing conditions. A combination of landscape earthworks, with native grass, tree and shrub planting would be implemented to provide a landscape structure, helping to filter and screen of views of the Proposed Substation, which will gradually mature over time. The scale of change is judged to be **medium** and the geographical extent is judged to be **medium**, with visibility mostly concentrated across Site-facing slopes within around 4 km, to the south-east, above Carron Water. Overall, the magnitude of change during construction would be considered to be **medium**.
Effect and Significance during Construction
Drawing on professional judgement, the effects of construction on this LCT would be perceptual and are judged to be **Moderate (Significant)** within around 4 km of the Proposed Development, concentrated across Site-facing slopes above Carron Water, reducing to **Minor (Not Significant)** elsewhere within the study area and LCT.

Visual Effects – Construction

Effects on Visual Receptors at Viewpoints

Table 8.10: Construction Effects on Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie

Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie				
Grid Reference		**Figure Number**	**LCT**	**Distance and Direction from Site**
383164	783698	8.4	LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills - Aberdeenshire	3.5 km southeast
Baseline Description				
This viewpoint is southeast of the Site, located along a low ridge associated with a minor hill, Carmont Hill (236 m AOD). This local summit sits within a low ridge of hills and is host to a small cluster of wind turbines. The undulating and elevated nature of the viewpoint affords relatively long-distant views to the north and east, across the surrounding valleys and coastal lowlands. Views towards the Site in the northwest look out over the farmed valley slopes of Carron Water, with the rising hills of Fetteresso Forest in the distance. In the foreground, grazed rough grassland bound by post and wire fencing stretches to the east and west, with a minor road extending northwest from the viewpoint location. Directly west, turbines of the Hillhead of Auquhirie Wind Farm (3 turbines, 92.5 m tip height) form prominent vertical features in close views. Turbines of the Clochna Hill Wind Farm (4 turbines, 83m tip height) are seen immediately adjacent to the Hillhead of Auquhirie turbines, further west. In the foreground to the south, shelterbelts form dark features adjacent to farm buildings. In longer-distant views north and northwest, the northern slopes of Carron Water form an arable patchwork, backclothed by the dark and expansive forestry of Fetteresso Forest which caps the low summits of Elf Hill and Hill of Baulk adjacent to the southern edge of the Site. In further distant views to the northeast and east, mature forestry appears on the skyline of successive gentle ridgelines, descending towards the coast, with scattered farmsteads seen on the slopes. In addition to the wind farms near the viewpoint, other existing electricity infrastructure including overhead lines and small, isolated wind turbines, are visible in close and middle distant views to the north and east. Steel lattice towers, part of a 275 kV OHL (Tealing to Kintore) cross over the western slopes of Hill of Swanley and extend past the viewpoint to the west. A 132 kV OHL runs parallel to the 275 kV, passing in between the turbines of Hillhead of Auquhirie and Clochna Hill. A telecommunications mast is visible over Hill of Swanley in the north. In the distance to the northeast, the turbines of Meikle Carewe (12 turbines, 70 m tip height) can be seen across the upland slopes of Meikle Carewe Hill (12 turbines, 70 m tip height). To the northwest, the blade tips of Mid Hill Wind Farm (33 turbines, 125 m tip height) are just visible over the forested summits of Leachie Hill (39 6m AOD) and Scare Hill, in front of the distinctive form of Kerloch (534 m AOD). Numerous wooden telegraph poles follow the roadways and criss-cross the lower farmed slopes in all directions.			

Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie
Sensitivity (susceptibility and value)
This viewpoint is representative of views experienced by residential receptors along the northern facing slopes near Carmont Hill and Hillhead of Auquhirie, whose interest is likely to be focussed on the surrounding landscape. Residential receptors are considered to be of **high** susceptibility to changes in the view, as local residents take an interest in their surroundings. The viewpoint is not located within any designated landscapes and is not a promoted viewpoint or located at a natural stopping point. The view however does look across to the Highland Boundary Fault to the northwest, which is a recognised and prominent transitional landscape feature between the Mounth uplands to the northwest and the lowland farmland valleys to the south. Therefore, the value of this view is judged to be **medium**. Taking into account the judgments of susceptibility and value, the overall sensitivity of receptors at this viewpoint are judged to be **medium**.
Magnitude of Change during Construction
The construction of the Proposed Substation would be seen from a distance of approximately 4 km in northwesterly views, with some visibility of felling and earthworks from distances of approximately 3.8 km or more. Construction activity, including the presence of cranes, earthwork resulting in changes to topography, vehicle movements, fencing and lighting at night would be partially visible from this viewpoint, seen behind intervening landform along the southern edge of the Site. Felling across a section of the forest beyond Elf Hill and Hill of Baulk would be partially visible due to the elevated location of the viewpoint. However, mature forestry at the southernmost edge of the Site and Fetteresso Forest (scheduled for long-term retention as per Forestry and Land Scotland's Mearns Forest Design Plan[13]) would provide filtering of views of the smaller elements within the Site. Taller construction elements including cranes and partially built items such as gantries would be visible above the treeline, but would be backclothed by landform, and would occupy a relatively small horizontal field of the view seen from this location. Construction works for the Proposed Development are expected to last three years. Construction effects are considered partly reversible, in that some construction effects will completely cease once construction is complete (e.g., use of cranes and construction lighting). However, the main works for the Proposed Development are non-reversible as the Proposed Development would become a permanent feature. On completion of the Proposed Development, construction effects would be superseded by the operational phase of the Proposed Development, including the proposed landscape earthworks and planting which is designed to help filter and screen views, as it gradually grows over time. The scale of change is judged to be medium. The geographical extent is judged to be large, with similar views experienced from isolated farmsteads on the ridgeway to the east and west within 2 km, and the minor roadway as it runs north and south. Overall, the magnitude of change during construction would be **medium**.
Effect and Significance during Construction
It is assessed that the sensitivity of the receptor is medium, and the magnitude of change is medium. Overall, the effect on this viewpoint is judged to be **Moderate (Significant).**

Table 8.11: Construction Effects on Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings

Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings				
Grid Reference		**Figure Number**	**LCT**	**Distance and Direction from Site**
381838	785382	8.5	LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills - Aberdeenshire	1.6 km southeast
Baseline Description				
This viewpoint is located on a minor road which roughly parallels the Carron Water, and runs between the Glen of Drumtochty in the southwest and Stonehaven in the east. In the foreground of views, the road continues to the east and west and is bound by post and wire fencing, bands of low shrub with intermittent hedgerow trees, and wooden telegraph poles which form repetitive vertical features into the distance in both directions. Open and expansive arable and pasture fields comprise views to the north, west and south. Immediately south-east, a block of woodland borders the road, partially enclosing a farmstead and				

[13] Forestry and Land Scotland (2014). Mearns Forest Design Plan. [Online] Available at: https://forestryandland.gov.scot/media/qlbn55aa/mearns-management-map.pdf

Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings
occupying a medium horizontal field of view. The landform gradually slopes down from the northwest and continues to descend past the viewpoint towards the south and east. To the northwest views extend across improved pasture and arable fields, although the rising landform, clumps of trees and a livestock structure curtail longer distance views. The top of a farmstead (Upper Wyndings) is visible at the top of the slope to the northwest, and is backclothed by a mix of deciduous and coniferous forestry. Wooden telegraph poles cut in front of the buildings, and the top of a telecommunications tower is visible just beyond the stone structures. In the middle-distance to the northwest and north, blocks of forestry define the skyline, and bands of deciduous woodland define the incised watercourses which descend the slopes. Wooden telegraph poles and high voltage OHLs are intermittently silhouetted against the sky. Another farmstead is seen to the north, backclothed by forestry further up the slopes. To the west and south, views extend over rolling pastoral hills, with large blocks of forestry defining the summits and valleys. Turbines of the Hillhead of Auquhirie Wind Farm (3 turbines, 92.5 m tip height) form vertical features above the treetops to the south, evenly spaced along the ridgeline. Further southwest, turbines of the Clochna Hill Wind Farm (4 turbines, 83 m tip height) are seen, partially screened by woodland. To the east, pastoral fields extend into the distance, continuing to descend towards the coast. A single turbine is visible in the middle distance, associated with a farmstead. Just beyond this turbine, steel lattice towers are seen extending north-south on the slopes before vanishing behind intervening woodland.
Sensitivity
This viewpoint is representative of views experienced by road users along the minor road network, as well as residential receptors to the south of the Site near Nether Wyndings. Residential receptors are considered to be of **high** susceptibility to changes in the view, as local communities take an interest in their surroundings, and views are static in nature. Road users are considered to be of lower susceptibility to changes in the view, due to the transient nature of views and the primary focus on the road ahead instead of outward views. Overall, receptors from this viewpoint are considered to be of **medium** susceptibility. The viewpoint is not located within any designated landscapes although occasional longer distance views are afforded towards the coastline in the east towards the South East Aberdeenshire Coast LLA and views are afforded across a landscape associated with the Highland Boundary Fault, which is a recognised and prominent transitional landscape feature. Therefore, the value of this view is judged to be **medium.** On balance, taking account of the judgements of susceptibility and value, overall sensitivity of receptors at this viewpoint is judged to be **medium**.
Magnitude of Change during Construction
The construction of the Proposed Substation would be seen from a distance of approximately 2 km in northwesterly views, with some felling and earthworks visible from distances of 1.8 km or more. Construction activity, including the presence of cranes, earthworks, vehicle movements, fencing and lighting at night would be visible from this viewpoint. Forestry along the southern edge of the Site (scheduled for long-term retention as per Forestry and Land Scotland's Mearns Forest Design Plan[13]), combined with the lower elevation of the viewpoint and intervening landforms of Hill of Baulk and Elf Hill would almost entirely screen smaller elements and movements within the Site. Felling across large areas of the Site further north would be apparent and would create visual contrast with the dark forested surroundings, in addition to altering the appearance of the skyline and reducing screening. Vehicle movements and lights both within the Site and across the slopes to the west of the Site would be intermittently visible, as would construction traffic along the minor roadway which passes along Carron Water. Construction works for the Proposed Development are expected to last three years. Construction effects are considered partly reversible, in that some construction effects will completely cease once construction is complete (e.g., use of cranes and construction lighting). However, the main works for the Proposed Development are non-reversible as the Proposed Development would become a permanent feature. On completion of the Proposed Development, construction effects would be superseded by the operational phase of the Proposed Development, including landscape screening. The scale of change is judged to be small, and the geographical extent is judged to be medium, with similar views experienced along the minor roadway to the east. Overall, the magnitude of change during construction would be **low**.
Effect and Significance during Construction
It is assessed that the sensitivity of the receptor is medium, and the magnitude of change is medium. Overall, the effect on this viewpoint is judged to be **Minor (Not Significant)**.

Table 8.12: Construction Effects on Viewpoint 3: Rickarton

Viewpoint 3: Rickarton				
Grid Reference		**Figure Number**	**LCT**	**Distance and Direction from Site**
381873	789543	8.6	29: Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire	2.7 km northeast
Baseline Description				
This viewpoint is located on rising agricultural fields to the north of Rickarton, approximately 2.7 km northeast of the Site between Cairnbank and Rooten. This viewpoint offers slightly elevated open views to the south and west, overlooking Slug Road (A957) to the south and the Cowie Valley. The foreground views overlooks gradually descending agricultural fields that lead down to Slug Road which is visible in the middle distance to the south and southwest. Wooden telegraph poles are visible, crossing fields in the foreground and middle distance in and east to west orientation. Scattered properties within the settlement of Rickarton are also visible in the middle distance to the southwest along Slug Road. To the south, the rising slopes of Glenton Hill (174 m AOD) form the backdrop in these views in the middle distance and screen more distance views in this direction. To the southwest views are backed by the dark and dense forested hills of Fetteresso Forest including Hill of Swanley (229 m AOD) and Hill of Trusta (321 m AOD), which form the skyline and contain any longer distance views in these directions. Steel lattice towers associated with existing high voltage OHLs are also visible across these forested skylines above the treetops. To the west, views overlook adjacent ascending farmland with scattered areas of woodland and forestry on the upper extents of these slopes, and glimpsed views of distance hills in the distance. Views north are curtailed by rising landform and belts of coniferous forestry, and to the east views are contained by an adjacent block of coniferous forestry.				
Sensitivity				
This viewpoint is representative of views experienced by residential and recreational receptors to the north of the Site near Rickarton. Residential and recreational receptors are considered to be of **high** susceptibility to changes in the view, as local communities and those carrying out recreational activities take an interest in their surroundings. The viewpoint is not located within any designated landscapes and is not at a natural stopping point. The view however does look south and southwest across to the Highland Boundary Fault, which is a recognised and prominent transitional landscape feature between the Mounth uplands and the surrounding lowland farmland to the south and east. Therefore, the value of this view is judged to be **medium**. On balance, taking account of the judgements of susceptibility and value, overall sensitivity of receptors at this viewpoint is judged to be **medium**.				
Magnitude of Change during Construction				
The construction of the Proposed Development would be partially visible at a distance of approximately 2.7 km in southerly views. Taller elements associated with construction activity, such as cranes and partially built gantry structures, would be seen above the skyline, beyond the rising slopes of Hill of Swanley and elevated northern slopes of Fetteresso Forest, although would be partially screened by both landform and trees. Considering intervening landform and dense forestry along the northern edge of the Site, smaller elements within the Site would be largely or entirely filtered or screened. Lighting on taller elements would be notable against the darker forested surroundings. Lights in proximity to this viewpoint along Slug Road and from travelling vehicles would make lighting less apparent. Construction effects are considered partly reversible, in that some construction effects would completely cease once construction is complete (e.g., use of cranes and construction lighting). However, the main works for the Proposed Development are non-reversible as the Proposed Development would become a permanent feature. On completion of the Proposed Development, construction effects would be superseded by the operational phase of the Proposed Development, including landscape screening. Given that visibility of construction activity would be limited to taller elements, which would be partially screened, the scale of change is judged to be small, and the geographical extent is judged to be small, with similar views limited to other parts of the rising slopes between Rooten to the east and Hill of Bogheadley to the west. Overall the magnitude of change during construction would be **low**.				
Effect and Significance during Construction				
It is assessed that the sensitivity of the receptor is medium, and the magnitude of change is medium. Overall, the effect on this viewpoint is judged to be **Minor (Not Significant)**.				

Table 8.13: Construction Effects on Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso

Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso				
Grid Reference		**Figure Number**	**LCT**	**Distance and Direction from Site**
383469	785638	8.7	29: Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire	3.2 km southeast
Baseline Description				
This viewpoint is located along a minor road connecting to the small community of Kirktown of Fetteresso, a small suburb of Stonehaven, and is approximately 3.2 km southeast of the Site. The viewpoint offers open views to the north and west, out across expansive and undulating arable fields, and forested hills in the distance. Arable fields, bound by post and wire fencing and low shrub comprise the foreground of views to the west, north, and east. A dense block of woodland largely screens views south. In the north, the elevated landform curtails further distance views as it gradually descends towards Carron Water in the west and south. In middle distance views to the west and northwest the field pattern becomes marginally smaller, with shelterbelts and hedgerows defining field boundaries. Scattered farmsteads are seen on the slopes, along with a singular wind turbine and numerous wooden small-scale transmission lines. Large-scale steel lattice towers are clearly visible in the middle distance, partially backclothed as they descend from the north down the slopes towards Carron Water. In the distance to the northwest, larger blocks of forestry of Fetteresso Forest cap the hilltops and form vertical elements on the skyline. In the distance to the west, Goyle Hill (464 m AOD) and the surrounding forested hills of Drumtochty Forest form a backdrop in views. To the south, the turbines of Hillhead of Auquhirie Wind Farm (3 turbines, 92.5 m tip height) and Clochna Hill Wind Farm (4 turbines, 83 m tip height) are mostly screened by intervening woodland, although views open to the south as the road moves further west. In the distance to the southwest, turbines of Jacksbank Wind Farm (3 turbines, 99m tip height) and Droop Hill Wind Farm (2 turbines, 100 m tip height) are seen on the skyline.				
Sensitivity				
This viewpoint is representative of views experienced by residential receptors to the west of Kirktown of Fetteresso, and road users along the minor road network. Residential receptors are considered to be of **high** susceptibility to changes in the view, as local communities take an interest in their surroundings, and views are static in nature. Road users are considered to be of lower susceptibility to changes in the view, due to the transient nature of views and the primary focus on the road ahead instead of outward views. Overall, receptors from this viewpoint are considered to be of **medium** susceptibility. The viewpoint is not located within any designated landscapes and is not at a natural stopping point. The view however does look across to the Highland Boundary Fault to the northwest, which is a recognised and prominent transitional landscape feature between the Mounth uplands to the northwest and the lowland farmland valleys to the south. Therefore, the value of this view is judged to be **medium**. On balance, taking account of the judgements of susceptibility and value, overall sensitivity of receptors at this viewpoint is judged to be **medium**.				
Magnitude of Change during Construction				
The construction of the Proposed Substation would be seen from a distance of approximately 3.5 km in northwesterly views, although there would be some visibility of felling and earthworks from within approximately 3.3 km. Construction activity, including the presence of cranes, earthworks, vehicle movements, fencing, and lights at night, would be partially visible from this viewpoint. Seen backclothed by landform and forestry within Fetteresso Forest to the northwest, the construction works would occupy a small horizontal field of view from this location. Mature trees and woodland around the fields would help filter views of lower-level works, reducing visibility of construction lighting. Construction effects are considered partly reversible, in that some construction effects will completely cease once construction is complete (e.g., use of cranes and construction lighting). However, the main works for the Proposed Development are non-reversible as the Proposed Development would become a permanent feature. On completion of the Proposed Development, construction effects would be superseded by the operational phase of the Proposed Development, including landscape screening. The introduction of the substation compound and earthworks, and associated felling would result in a small-scale change in views northwest. Similar views could be obtained from along the minor road as it continues west, and therefore the geographical extent is medium. Overall, the magnitude of change is considered to be **low**.				
Effect and Significance during Construction				
It is assessed that the sensitivity of the receptor is medium, and the magnitude of change is low. Overall, the effect on this viewpoint is judged to be **Minor (Not Significant).**				

Table 8.14: Construction Effects on Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley

Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley				
Grid Reference		**Figure Number**	**LCT**	**Distance and Direction from Site**
381243	787291	8.8	29: Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire	0.8 km northeast
Baseline Description				
This viewpoint is located along an open section of forest track on the western slopes of Hill of Swanley in Fetteresso Forest, approximately 0.8 km northeast of the Site. Situated within the Fetteresso Forest, open views to the west, southwest and northwest are afforded from this viewpoint due to recent forestry felling that has taken place across the descending slopes to the west of the viewpoint. To the west and southwest, views overlook a foreground of steep descending slopes that lead down to the Burn of Day and form part of the valley of this watercourse. In the middle distance, the view comprises layers of dense commercial forestry that rise towards Hurlie Bog and Hill of Trusta (321m AOD) further west. In this direction some further areas of recently felled forestry or recently restocked forestry in the middle distance break up the dense expanse of forestry on these slopes. The skyline in these views is formed by the upper slopes of the Hill of Trusta which contain longer distance views to the west, with steel lattice towers associated with an existing high voltage OHL visible across these forested skylines above the treetops. The hubs and blades of three operational wind turbines at Jacksbank are visible across extending above the forested skyline to the southwest. To the northwest, longer ranging views are available beyond the foreground of felled forestry and retained forestry. In the middle distance, the undulating slopes of the Cowie Valley are visible, with agricultural fields interspersed with areas of broadleaved woodland along the Cowie Water and some linear block of further commercial forestry near Mergie. The existing high voltage OHL that is visible to the west is also visible in these views as it passes northwards across the Cowie Valley and up onto the slopes of Craigneil (270 m AOD) and Cairn-mon-earn (378 m AOD) where three met masts are visible on the horizon. Further northwest, Hill of Mossmaud (343 m AOD) and Craigbeg (321 m AOD) form the distant backdrop, with a solitary and slim met mast is visible above the skyline formed by Hill of Mossmaud. To the north, the forest track is visible in the foreground as well as northern forested slopes of Hill of Swanley that descend across the foreground and middle distance. Beyond this, the view comprises the moorland and forested hills that form the skyline to the north, including Hill of Pitspunkie (203 m AOD) and Hill of Auquhollie (219 m AOD). To the east and south, views are contained by the surrounding commercial forestry and intervening landform.				
Sensitivity				
This viewpoint is representative of views experienced by recreational receptors to the east Site travelling along forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest. Recreational receptors are considered to be of **high** susceptibility to changes in the view, as those carrying out recreational activities take an interest in their surroundings. The viewpoint is not located within any designated landscapes and the nature of views from the track that primarily overlook an active commercial forestry plantation are considered to be of **low** value. On balance, taking account of the judgements of susceptibility and value, overall sensitivity of receptors at this viewpoint is judged to be **medium**.				
Magnitude of Change during Construction				
The construction of the Proposed Development would be seen in the middle distance, at a distance of approximately 0.8 km in southwesterly views. Construction activity would be partially visible in the middle distance, particularly taller elements associated with construction activity, such as cranes and partially built gantry structures, which would be seen to extend over the treetops of intervening forestry. Forest felling required within the Site to facilitate construction is also likely to be partially visible in these middle distant views. Ground level activity is likely to be partially visible with some glimpsed views of machinery, earthworks, vehicle movements, fencing, and lighting between intervening layers of forestry between the Site and the viewpoint. Where lighting within the Site is visible, it would be notable against the darker forested surroundings. Construction effects are considered partly reversible, in that some construction effects will completely cease once construction is complete (e.g., use of cranes and construction lighting). However, the main works for the Proposed Development are non-reversible as the Proposed Development would become a permanent feature. On completion of the Proposed Development, construction effects would be superseded by the operational phase of the Proposed Development, including landscape earthworks, and planting to gradually provide filtering and screening of views over time. The introduction of the substation compound and earthworks, and associated felling would result in a medium scale change in views southwest. Similar views could be obtained from a small section of the forestry track south				

Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley
of the viewpoint, before views become screened by intervening forestry and landform, therefore the geographical extent is small. Overall, the magnitude of change is considered to be **medium**.
Effect and Significance during Construction
It is assessed that the sensitivity of the receptor is medium, and the magnitude of visual change during construction is judged to be medium. Overall, the effect on this viewpoint is judged to be **Moderate (Significant)**.

Effects on Visual Receptors from Settlements

Table 8.15: Construction Effects on Rickarton

Rickarton			
Representative viewpoints	VP 3	Distance and direction from Site	2 km northeast
Baseline Description			
Although not a defined settlement in Aberdeenshire Council LDP, Rickarton is a small community approximately 2 km northeast of the Site. Properties are arranged along the A957 / Slug Road, generally along its southern edge. Rickarton is located on the northern slopes of Glenton Hill, along the northern valley side of Cowie Water. Properties within the community have a variety of outlooks and degrees of screening, typically provided by surrounding buildings or mature trees and garden vegetation. Low hedgerows and scattered trees along the southern edge of the settlement provide partial filtering of views, although the descending landform to the south affords relatively open outlook across Cowie Water towards the rising hills within Fetteresso Forest. The rising landform to the south is mostly occupied by mature and dense forestry. Existing electrical infrastructure is present in proximity to the settlement, with numerous wooden telegraph poles parallel the A957. In the distance to the northwest, a met mast is visible over the top of intervening rolling hills. In the distance to the southwest, large scale steel lattice towers are visible above the treeline of Fetteresso Forest, and the turbines of Mid Hill Wind Farm are visible further west, visible between the forms of Cairn Kerloch and Craiginour.			
Sensitivity			
Residential receptors are considered to be of **high** susceptibility to changes in the view. The settlement is not located within any nationally or locally designated landscapes however views are afforded across the Highland Boundary Fault to the south and southwest, which is a recognised and prominent transitional landscape feature. Therefore, the value of this view is judged to be **medium**. Taking into account the judgements of susceptibility and value, overall sensitivity or receptors at this settlement are judged to be **medium**.			
Magnitude of Change during Construction			
Visibility of the construction of the Proposed Substation would be limited to areas of higher land to the north of the settlement, where construction activity would be partially visible from distances within approximately 2.7 km in southerly views. From these more elevated areas around the settlement, taller elements, such as cranes, would be partially visible extending above treetops along the skyline however ground level construction activity, including the presence of construction machinery, earthworks, vehicle movements, and fencing would be screened by the rising slopes of Hill of Swanley and intervening forestry to the north of the Site. Visibility of construction lighting within the Site would also be largely screened by intervening landform and forestry however any lighting that would be visible would be seen on the context of lights in proximity to the settlement along the roadway and from vehicles passing through the settlement which would lessen the contrast of construction lighting. From lower parts of the settlement, along the A957, views of construction activity will be largely screened by intervening landform and forestry as well as foreground vegetation surrounding properties and along the A957. Construction effects are considered partly reversible, in that some construction effects will completely cease once construction is complete (e.g., use of cranes and construction lighting). However, the main works for the Proposed Development are non-reversible as the Proposed Development would become a permanent feature. On completion of the Proposed Development, construction effects would be superseded by the operational phase of the Proposed Development, including landscape screening. Seen in limited views in the middle distance and with a large amount of screening, the scale of change is judged to be small, and the geographical extent is judged to be small, with similar views experienced across a small extent of higher land to the north of the settlement. Overall, the magnitude of change during construction would be **low**.			
Effect and Significance during Construction			
It is judged that the sensitivity of the settlement is medium, and the magnitude of change is low. Overall, the effect on this settlement is judged to be **Minor (Not Significant).**			

Effects on Visual Receptors along Routes

Table 8.16: Construction Effects on Minor Road Network south of the Site

Minor road network south of the Site			
Representative viewpoints	N/A	Distance and direction from Site	Between 0.5 km and 5 km south
Baseline Description			
The minor road network south of the Site is generally oriented east-west, paralleling the Carron Water and situated along the valley floor and along the elevated slopes further south. Views across the landscape are generally open, extending across broad arable and pastoral fields, with scattered mature trees and shelterbelts of woodland. Minor roads which are closer to the valley floor have a more contained outlook, with rising ground to the north and south. Roads which traverse the more elevated slopes further south are afforded extensive and open views to the north across Fetteresso Forest, and east and west directed along Carron Water. Wooden telegraph poles are frequent features within the landscape, generally following the valley form. Wind turbines are occasionally visible, particularly from the lower laying roads looking south up the slopes. Steel lattice towers cross the roadways north-south and extend up the valley slopes either side of Carron Water.			
Sensitivity			
Road users including cyclists are considered to be of **medium** susceptibility to changes in the view. This network of roads is not within any designated landscape. The view however does look across to the Highland Boundary Fault to the north, which is a recognised and prominent transitional landscape feature between the Mounth uplands to the northwest and the lowland farmland valleys to the south. Therefore, the value of this view is judged to be **medium**. Taking account of the judgements of susceptibility and value, overall sensitivity of receptors using these routes is judged to be **medium**.			
Magnitude of Change during Construction			
The construction of the Proposed Substation would be theoretically visible from intermittent stretches of the minor road network south of the Site, primarily concentrated along the minor ridgeline along the southern banks of Carron Water. Across the valley floor there is very limited theoretical visibility, as outward northerly views are generally screened by steeply rising landform. Across minor roads on the rising southern slopes of Carron Water within 3 km, the elevated position of the roadways would afford glimpsed views of construction activity, although intervening landform, vegetation and forestry would provide filtering of views. As earth works are constructed along the southern Site boundaries, construction movements would be partially visible in middle-distant views, where not screened by forestry. From further afield from the south across the elevated slopes, the presence of lights and taller elements such as cranes and partially built gantry structures would be noticeable, seen through and against the backdrop of dark forestry. Ground activities and vehicular movements would be largely screened by intervening landform and vegetation. Construction effects are considered partly reversible and temporary. However, main works for the Proposed Development would be considered permanent and non-reversible. On completion of the Proposed Development, construction effects would be superseded by the operational phase of the Proposed Development, including landscape screening. The scale of change is judged to be low from short stretches across the minor ridgeline south of Carron Water, and barely perceptible elsewhere across the minor road network. Overall, the magnitude of change during construction is considered to be **low**.			
Effect and Significance during Construction			
It is assessed that the sensitivity of the receptor is medium, and the magnitude of change is low. Overall, the effect is judged to be **Minor (Not Significant).**			

Table 8.17: Construction Effects on Minor Road Network east and southeast of the Site

Minor Road Network east and southeast of the Site			
Representative viewpoints	VP 1, 2 and 4	Distance and direction from Site	Between 1 km and 5 km south
Baseline Description			
The minor road network east and southeast of the Site extends from the easternmost extents of Fetteresso Forest, extending down the slopes towards Kirktown of Fetteresso. Roads which are on the northern slopes of Carron Water are more contained in views, with rising slopes and forestry to the north, and views primarily directed south across the valley. Roadside vegetation is intermittent, with mature trees and woodland blocks providing some			

Minor Road Network east and southeast of the Site
filtering of views. Views towards the Site are generally screened by intervening landform and forestry along the eastern edge of Fetteresso Forest. In views south across the valley, turbines of Clochna Hill Wind Farm and Hillhead of Auquhirie are prominent along the skyline, with Jacksbank Wind Farm and Droop Hill Wind Farm visible in the distance to the southwest. To the north and east, views extend out over a smaller-scale landscape, broken by more frequent bands of woodland and isolated farmsteads. Large-scale steel lattice towers and wooden transmission lines are consistent vertical features across the landscape and extend above the skyline in views. Views southeast extend across gently descending landform towards the coast and the North Sea beyond.
Sensitivity
Road users including cyclists are considered to be of **medium** susceptibility to changes in the view. The minor road network is not located within a designated landscape however the road network affords views northwest across to the Highland Boundary Fault, which is a recognised and prominent transitional landscape feature between the Mounth uplands to the northwest and the lowland farmland valleys to the south. Therefore, the value of this view is judged to be **medium**. Taking account of the judgements of susceptibility and value, overall sensitivity is judged to be **medium.**
Magnitude of Change during Construction
The construction of the Proposed Substation would be theoretically visible across intermittent stretches of the minor road network east and southeast of the Site, primarily concentrated along the minor roads east of Upper Baulk and near the Bridge of Graham and around the hill slopes south of the Carron Water. Further east near Cheyne Burn, there is very limited theoretical visibility, as outward westerly views are generally screened by steeply rising landform. Across minor roads near the southeastern slopes of Hill of Baulk, there would be glimpsed and limited views of construction activity, with intervening landform, vegetation and forestry along the eastern edge of the Site providing extensive screening. As earth works are constructed along the southeastern and eastern Site boundaries, construction movements would be visible in mid-range views. From further afield from the east, the presence of lights and taller elements such as cranes and partially built gantry structures would be partially visible, seen against the backdrop of dark forestry. Ground activities and vehicular movements within the Site would be partially screened by intervening landform and vegetation. From parts of the road network across hill slopes south of the Carron Water, around Hillhead of Auquhirie, the construction of the Proposed Substation would be seen in open elevated views to the northwest from roads within the area. There would be some visibility of felling and earthworks as well as the presence of cranes, vehicle movements and fencing. Lighting at night would also be partially visible from sections of roads in this area, seen behind intervening landform along the southern edge of the Site. Felling across a section of the forest beyond Elf Hill and Hill of Baulk would be partially visible due to the elevated location of this part of the road network. Construction effects are considered partly reversible and temporary. However, main works for the Proposed Development would be considered permanent and non-reversible. On completion of the Proposed Development, construction effects would be superseded by the operational phase of the Proposed Development, including landscape screening. The scale of change is judged to be medium across the minor road network to the southeast. Overall, the magnitude of change during construction is considered to be **medium**.
Effect and Significance during Construction
It is assessed that the sensitivity of the receptor is medium, and the magnitude of change is medium. Overall, the effect is judged to be **Moderate (Significant)**.

Table 8.18: Construction Effects on Slug Road / A957

Slug Road / A957			
Representative viewpoints	VP 3	Distance and direction from Site at closest point	1.6 km north
Baseline Description			
This A-road passes north of the Site, connecting from Stonehaven in the east to the A93 near Crathes in the northwest. Heading northwest from Stonehaven, the road enters the study area near Torr Wood and Rickarton House, ascending the gentle northern slopes of Glenton Hill. Dense forestry is interspersed with open arable fields along this section, and open pasture stretches to the south and west, with gorse and blocks of forestry breaking up the fields. Large-scale steel lattice towers cross the road at the eastern edge of the study area, cutting through open fields in the north and continuing across gradually rising ground to the south. Past the small cluster of properties at Rickarton, views open to the north, south and west, extending across open arable fields to the north and across undulating and forested valley slopes to the south and west, associated with the confluence of Black Burn and			

Slug Road / A957
Cowie Water. Scattered hedgerow trees and gorse line the road in this stretch, affording a relatively open outlook, while further afield blocks of forestry break up southerly views. Approaching the northern access road towards Swanley, the road bends further north and enters a shallow valley, with stands of forestry largely screening southerly views and more open views across upland hills to the north. Further west, views become more open, with a mix of rough grassland and scrub vegetation to the north and west. Another large-scale steel latticed overhead line passes from northwest to south, extending up and over the gradual and forested slopes in the south. Dark blocks of forestry define the skyline in views south and west, with mixes of gorse and grassland to the north. This continues as the road runs northwest, until it curves around the lower slopes of Craigbeg and exits the northwest edge of the study area. In the distance to the west, the turbines of Mid Hill Wind Farm Phase 1 and 2 (33 turbines, 125 m tip height) are partially visible behind Hill of Trusta and Craiginour (355m AOD). To the east, the turbines of Meikle Carewe (12 turbines, 70 m tip height) are partially visible behind intervening landforms. To the northwest, a solitary and slim met mast is visible above the skyline.
Sensitivity
Road users including cyclists are considered to be of **medium** susceptibility to changes in the view. The A-road is not located within a designated landscape; however, it does pass through the foothills of the Grampians and is a key route within this part of the study area, and as such views from the road are considered to be **medium** in value. Taking account of the judgements of susceptibility and value, overall sensitivity is judged to be **medium.**
Magnitude of Change during Construction
The construction of the Proposed Development would be theoretically visible from distances of between approximately 2.5 km and 3.3 km from Slug Road, seen looking in south and southwesterly views looking up to the forest. Most of these views would be concentrated within the section of road between Rickarton and where the northern access track meets Slug Road. In reality, from this section, views of construction activity within the Site would be largely limited to taller elements such as the use of cranes and the partial construction of gantry structures, with smaller elements and ground level activity screened by intervening landform and forestry as well as foreground vegetation along the A957. From this stretch of the road, visibility of vehicle movement and construction lights, which would extend beyond the boundaries of the Site may be visible. In particular, where the northern access track meets Slug Road / A957 to the northwest of the Site, construction activity would be apparent as construction vehicles enter and exit the Site. Construction lighting within the Site would be largely screened by intervening landform and forestry however where visible would be seen in the context of lights in proximity to isolated residences along the roadway and from oncoming vehicles which would lessen the contrast of construction lighting. Construction effects are considered partly reversible and temporary. However, main works for the Proposed Development would be considered permanent and non-reversible. On completion of the Proposed Development, construction effects would be superseded by the operational phase of the Proposed Development, including landscape screening. The scale of change is considered to be low, near a short section of the route near Rickarton and the northern access track, and barely perceptible elsewhere along the route. Overall, the magnitude of change during construction is considered to be **low**.
Effect and Significance during Construction
It is assessed that the sensitivity of the receptor is medium, and the magnitude of change is low. Overall, the effect is judged to be **Minor (Not Significant).**

Table 8.19: Construction Effects on Recreational Routes within Fetteresso Forest

Recreational Routes within Fetteresso Forest			
Representative viewpoints	VP 5	Distance and direction from Site	<3 km to the north, east, south and west
Baseline Description			
The network of unclassified forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest, informally used for recreational activity such as walking and cycling, extend across most of Fetteresso Forest. From most of these tracks, views are contained by the surrounding commercial forestry which limits longer ranging views across the forest and the surrounding landscape beyond. Due to the continued forestry felling and restocking as part of current forestry management plans however, the nature of views across Fetteresso Forest continually changes over time, resulting in some open views from sections of track that pass through areas of felled forestry. Recent forestry felling immediately west of the Site around Hill of Trusta allows some open and longer distant views to be obtained from forestry tracks. Similarly, further areas of recent forestry felling east of the site, including to the north of Upper Baulk and west of Hill of Swanley also allow some open views across Fetteresso Forest and parts of the surrounding			

Recreational Routes within Fetteresso Forest
landscape beyond. From other parts of Fetteresso Forest, views towards the Site are generally screened by intervening landform and/ or forestry.
Sensitivity
Recreational receptors, whose attention is focused on their surroundings, are of **high** susceptibility to changes in the view. No forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest are located within a designated landscape and views from the tracks are typically overlooking an active commercial forestry plantation, however the landscape is associated with the Highland Fault Boundary and views are considered to be of **medium** value. Taking account of the judgements of susceptibility and value, overall sensitivity of receptors along these routes is judged to be **medium.**
Magnitude of Change during Construction
Along the forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest, views towards the Site vary due to screening provided by commercial forestry and open views afforded by areas of recent felling. Along a section of forest track in an area of recently felled forestry immediately east of the Site, north of Upper Baulk, there would be some open and close proximity views of construction activity on the approach to the Site (at distances between 0.4 - 1 km). This would comprise views of taller elements such as cranes and partially constructed gantry structures that would extend above intervening forestry that would be retained along the eastern boundary of the Site. Forest felling required within the Site to facilitate construction is also likely to be partially visible in these views. Ground level construction activity including machinery, earthworks, vehicle movements, fencing, and lighting is likely to be screened by the retained forestry along the eastern boundary of the Site. Similar views would be obtained from a section of track to the west of the Site, south of Hill of Trusta, where recent forestry felling in this area would afford some open close-range views of the taller elements involved in construction (at distances between 0.6 – 1.5 km), however retained forestry on the western boundary of the Site is likely to screen ground level construction activity. Slightly further away to the northeast, along the section of forest track to the west of Hill of Swanley, where recent felling opens up views west towards the Site, construction activity would be partially visible in the middle distance, particularly forestry felling within the Site, earthworks and the taller elements involved in construction. Intervening forestry and vegetation between Hill of Swanley and the Proposed Development however is likely to filter some of this activity, particularly ground level activity, and reduce overall visibility. From tracks near Hill of Quithel, views of construction activity would be largely screened by intervening forestry. Construction effects are considered partly reversible and temporary. However, main works for the Proposed Development would be considered permanent and non-reversible. On completion of the Proposed Development, construction effects would be superseded by the operational phase of the Proposed Development, including landscape screening. The scale of change is judged to be medium over a medium geographical extent across the sections of forestry track north of Upper Baulk, south of Hill of Trusta and west of Hill of Swanley, where there will be close to medium range views of taller construction elements. Elsewhere within Fetteresso Forest the scale of change would be small due to intervening landform and forestry that would screen most views towards the Site. Overall, the magnitude of change during construction is considered to be **medium** around Upper Baulk, Hill of Trusta and Hill of Swanley, reducing to **low** for people travelling along remaining tracks within Fetteresso Forest.
Effect and Significance during Construction
It is assessed that the sensitivity of the receptor is medium, and the magnitude of change is medium. Overall, the effect is judged to be **Moderate (Significant)** for people travelling along sections of track around Upper Baulk, Hill of Trusta and Hill of Swanley, reducing to **Minor (Not Significant)** for people travelling along remaining tracks within Fetteresso Forest.

Table 8.20: Construction Effects on Recreational Routes near Garrison Hill

Recreational Routes near Garrison Hill			
Representative viewpoints	CH VP 1 (**Figure 9.6**)	Distance and direction from Site	Between 4 - 5 km to the northeast
Baseline Description			
The limited network of informal tracks across the slopes of Garrison Hill (192m AOD) and Meikle Carewe Hill (266m AOD) are informally used for walking, crossing undulating upland slopes which are mainly used for grazing. From most of these tracks, views are relatively open, extending across large-scale fields of rough grassland interspersed with clumps of heather and gorse, and small-scale forestry blocks. Views to the south-west towards the Site extend over undulating grassy fields with scattered farmsteads and forestry blocks on lower slopes, with the forested form of Fetteresso Forest rising in the distance, forming a dark backdrop. In the middle distance, steel latticed pylons cross the fields, moving towards Fetteresso Substation in the distance. Views east and north extend towards the small summits of Meikle Carewe Hill and the neighbouring Curlethney Hill (246m AOD), which			

Recreational Routes near Garrison Hill
are covered in upland scrub and rough grassland. The turbines of Meikle Carewe Wind Farm are intermittently visible above the summits, appearing partially screened from tracks further down the slope to the west, and appearing in close range views from sections of the tracks further east.
Sensitivity
Recreational receptors, whose attention is focused on their surroundings, are of **high** susceptibility to changes in the view. No tracks near Garrison Hill are located within a designated landscape and views are generally of upland grassy fields with commercial coniferous forestry blocks, however views extend over a landscape associated with the Highland Boundary Fault and are considered to be of **medium** value. Taking account of the judgements of susceptibility and value, overall sensitivity of receptors along these routes is judged to be **medium.**
Magnitude of Change during Construction
Along the tracks near Garrison Hill, views towards the Site are generally open, and there would be intermittent and longer distance views (between 4 km and 5 km) of construction activity, seen on the northern slopes of Fetteresso Forest. This would comprise occasional views of taller elements such as cranes and partially constructed gantry structures, which would be seen against a darker backdrop of forestry. Forest felling required within the Site to facilitate construction is also likely to be partially visible in these views. Ground level construction activity including machinery, earthworks, vehicle movements, fencing, and lighting is likely to be partially screened by the retained forestry along the north and eastern boundary of the Site, although earthworks including cut slopes along the southern edge of the Proposed Substation would be visible and noticeable in views. Views towards the Proposed Development would be similar from the entirety of the informal track network across the western slopes of Garrison Hill, Meikley Carewe Hill and Campstone Hill. From the informal track network, activity and elements associated with construction would be seen in the context of existing high voltage OHLs to the east and west of the Site. From sections of the track network further east, intervening landform would screen views towards the Proposed Development. Construction effects are considered partly reversible and temporary. However, main works for the Proposed Development would be considered permanent and non-reversible. On completion of the Proposed Development, construction effects would be superseded by the operational phase of the Proposed Development, including landscape screening. The scale of change is judged to be **medium** over a medium geographical extent across the sections of informal track along the western slopes of Campstone Hill, Garrison Hill and Meikle Carewe Hill, where there will be long range views of taller construction elements and earthworks. Overall, the magnitude of change during construction is considered to be **medium**.
Effect and Significance during Construction
It is assessed that the sensitivity of the receptor is medium, and the magnitude of change is medium. Overall, the effect is judged to be **Moderate (Significant)** for people travelling along sections of track on the western slopes of Campstone Hill, Garrison Hill and Meikle Carewe Hill, reducing to **Minor (Not Significant)** for people travelling along tracks east of Garrison Hill and south of Meikle Carewe Hill.

Additional Mitigation

8.7.1 No effective mitigation has been identified that is not already included as embedded mitigation or applied mitigation, as set out in Section 8.6. No additional mitigation measures are proposed.

8.8 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects – Operation

Potential Sources of Operation Effects

8.8.1 During operation, effects would arise from the introduction of above ground infrastructure elements in the landscape including the electrical infrastructure, security fencing, occasional emergency lighting and access tracks. There is potential for these effects to result in significant adverse effects on landscape character and visual receptors within the study area.

8.8.2 Cumulative effects on landscape character may also arise from the Proposed Development and other existing or proposed developments. These are assessed in Section 8.10.

8.8.3 All operational effects are considered to be long-term, permanent and adverse, unless stated otherwise.

Predicted Operational Effects

Landscape Effects – Operation

The Site

Table 8.21: Operational Effects of the Site

The Site
Baseline Description
The description of the existing baseline is set out in **Table 8.7**.
Sensitivity
The Site is judged to be of medium sensitivity as set out in **Table 8.7** above.
Magnitude of Change during Operation – Year 0
The introduction of the Proposed Development would result in a large-scale change to the Site, with the introduction of a large substation (measuring approximately 685 m (L) x 300 m (W) x 15 m (H)) and associated infrastructure, including permanent access tracks. Some elements of the electrical infrastructure would be up to 15 m in height, although the majority would be lower. This would change the character of the Site, from an undulating and densely forested area, to that of a large electrical substation surrounded by forestry and landscape earthworks and planting. Development of the Site would result in permanent loss of landscape features mainly consisting of coniferous trees, and smaller areas of heath and bog that are present in the centre of the Site. Other changes would include earthworks which will permanently change the topography, including fill slopes at the southern and eastern boundaries and cut slopes in the west, and hardscape access tracks connecting into the surrounding local road network to the north and south. The cut slopes along the western and southwestern edges of the Proposed Substation would allow the Proposed Substation to sit lower than the surrounding topography. The cut and fill slopes would help provide immediate screening of some of the lower elements of the Proposed Substation, particularly those located in the west of the Site. The scale of change is considered to be **large** and would be experienced across a **large** geographical area of the Site. The overall magnitude of change is judged to be **high**.
Effect and Significance during Operation – Year 0
Drawing on professional judgement, the effect on the Site during operation would be **Major (Significant).**
Mitigation and Residual Effect and Significance during Operation - Year 10
Mitigation has been embedded into the design of the Proposed Development through the provision of a Landscape Design plan, as illustrated in **Figure 3.3**. This includes the creation of fill slopes around the southern, eastern, and northeastern edges of the Proposed Substation. Cut slopes would be present along the western and southwestern edges of the Proposed Substation, allowing the substation elements and ancillary infrastructure to sit lower than the surrounding topography. The cut and fill slopes would help provide immediate screening of some of the lower elements of the Proposed Substation, particularly in the west of the Site. These slopes would be planted with trees which, once semi-mature (e.g., after 10-15 years), would help provide further filtering and screening of the Proposed Development, and better integrate it into the surrounding existing forestry. Given that the Proposed Development and its mitigation earthworks and planting are contained within the Site, the overall magnitude of change at the Site is considered to remain **high** at Year 10/15. The residual effect would remain as **Major (Significant).**

Landscape Character

Table 8.22: Operational Effects of LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire

LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire
Baseline Description
The description of the existing baseline is set out in **Table 8.8**.
Sensitivity
The LCT is judged to be of medium sensitivity as set out in **Table 8.8** above.
Magnitude of Change during Operation – Year 0
Physical operational effects on this LCT would arise through the introduction of the Proposed Development (electrical substation) and its associated infrastructure within the Site.

LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire
The introduction of the Proposed Development would locally alter the character of the LCT from the *"coniferous forested lower hills"*[14] however would be in keeping with the existing energy infrastructure, including '*wind farm development present in this area'* as noted by NatureScot. The *'wild character experienced in the less modified central and western parts'* of the LCT, beyond the western edge of the study area, would not be affected by the introduction of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development would be mostly screened by areas of surrounding landform and dense forestry and would not alter the already semi-enclosed nature of the LCT in this area. The Proposed Development would be introduced nearby (within 0.1 km) of the existing Fetteresso Substation and would be seen in the context of the existing substation, two overhead lines, and larger wind farms adjacent to the study area. The ZTV (**Figure 8.3b**) indicates that there would be intermittent theoretical visibility from this LCT within the study area mainly concentrated within the area immediately surrounding the Site, and to the northeast across higher elevations. Site infrastructure, particularly taller elements within the Proposed Substation, would be visible from the more elevated areas within the LCT in proximity to the east and west of the Site. Visibility of proposed access tracks would be mostly limited to their immediate surroundings, except for the southern-most section of the southern access track, which would be intermittently visible as it crosses Hill of Quithel. Theoretical visibility of the site from this LCT would be more limited in the areas to the northwest and west of the site, due to rising plateau landforms at the eastern edge of the Grampians which curtail easterly views to the site. To the southwest, there are areas of theoretical visibility indicated across the higher elevation areas of Drumtochty Forest, although in practice dense forestry would limit outward views from these areas. The Proposed Development is likely to form a noticeable feature in views from within the LCT, mostly limited to the forested hills immediately east and west of the Site, as well as the upland hills to the northeast of the study area. From these locations, the Proposed Development would be seen in the context of existing electricity infrastructure and would be filtered in views, due to the surrounding dense forestry and elevated surrounding landform. Generally, more distant views from within the LCT would be afforded extensive filtering or screening by intervening topography and dense forestry in proximity to the Site, reducing the perceived effects on landscape character. A **medium** scale change would be experienced over a small geographic extent in the area surrounding the Site, generally within 1.5 km across elevated slopes to the east and south, reducing elsewhere within the LCT. Therefore, the magnitude of change across the LCT is judged to be **moderate** within 1.5 km of the Proposed Development. The scale and magnitude of change would reduce with distance.
Effect and Significance during Operation – Year 0
Drawing on professional judgement, the effect of the Proposed Development on this LCT is judged to be **Moderate (Significant)** within up to 1.5 km of the Proposed Development, reducing to **Minor (Not Significant)** with increasing distance from the site.
Mitigation and Residual Effect and Significance during Operation - Year 10
Mitigation has been embedded into the design of the Proposed Development through the provision of the Landscape Design plan in **Figure 3.3**. The landscape earthworks and planting/mitigation plan includes the creation of cut and fill slopes around the edges of the Proposed Substation. Cut slopes along the western and southwestern edges of the Proposed Substation would allow the proposed substation elements and ancillary infrastructure to sit lower than the surrounding topography, mostly screened from the wider landscape and LCT. These slopes would be planted with trees and shrubs which, which once semi-matured (e.g., after 10-15 years), would help provide further screening of the Proposed Development, and better integrate it into the surrounding existing forestry. The mitigation planting would reduce the visibility of the Proposed Development across the study area and wider LCT, as well as introducing landscape features along the Site boundaries which would help it blend with the local character in this part of the LCT, including the '*forested lower hills'*. Overall, it is judged that the magnitude of change would remain moderate at Year 10/15, although as the planting gradually matures and increasingly filters and screens the Proposed Development in views from across the study area and wider LCT the effect would become more localised. The residual effect would remain **Moderate (Significant)** within 1.5 km, reducing to Minor (Not Significant) with increasing distance from the site.

[14] NatureScot (2019) National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 29 Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire. Available at: https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT%20029%20-%20Summits%20and%20Plateaux%20-%20Aberdeenshire%20-%20Final%20pdf.pdf

Table 8.23: Operational Effects of LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills - Aberdeenshire

LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills - Aberdeenshire
Baseline Description
The description of the existing baseline is set out in **Table 8.9**.
Sensitivity
The LCT is judged to be of high sensitivity as set out in **Table 8.9** above.
Magnitude of Change during Operation – Year 0
The Proposed Development would be located entirely outside of this LCT; therefore, any effects would be limited to perceptual effects experienced through views of the Proposed Development from within the LCT. The *"large scale and open landscape"*[15] character associated with this LCT is unlikely to be affected by the introduction of the Proposed Development, which would perceptually affect the northeasternmost areas of the LCT. Additionally, the introduction of the Proposed Development is unlikely to alter the foreground of key, longer distance '*sea views to the east and views westwards across the Howe of the Mearns'*, as the Proposed Development would be to the north, away from these key views. Primary views within this LCT are generally directed southwest and east, across the rolling farmland and towards the hills in the distance, and towards the coastline. Additionally, the LCT already experiences visibility of existing electricity infrastructure, with three overhead lines crossing north-south through the LCT, as well as scattered groups of wind turbines. The Proposed Development would be introduced adjacent to the existing Fetteresso Substation and would be seen in the context of the existing substation, one 132kV OHL and two 275kV OHL which pass through the centre and eastern edge of the study area. The ZTV (refer to **Figure 8.3b**) indicates intermittent theoretical visibility across this LCT within the study area, concentrated across Site-facing elevated slopes, including Jacksbank, Cloch-na-Hill, and Hillhead of Auquhirie. The simple landcover of agricultural fields, grassland and sparse woodland across these slopes affords more open views to the north and south. However, the rising landform at the southern edge of the Site and forested hills within the neighbouring LCT 29 provides increased filtering of views towards the Proposed Development. Site infrastructure, particularly taller vertical elements, are likely to be partially visible from the northernmost elevated areas of this LCT. The Proposed Development would be a noticeable feature in views from the northern-most elevated slopes of the LCT. However, the Proposed Development would be seen in the context of existing electricity infrastructure, seen beyond the Fetteresso Substation, and would be filtered in views due to intervening landform and mature forestry along the southern edge of the Site. Additionally, primary views within this LCT are likely to be directed away from the Site, towards the south and east. A **medium** scale change would be experienced over a **medium** geographic extent, concentrated along the more elevated Site-facing slopes in the south of the study area, stretching between Carmont Wood in the south to the Hillhead of Auquhirie and Berry Brae in the southeast. Overall, the magnitude of change is judged to be **medium** in the south-east of the study area, reducing to **low** elsewhere.
Effect and Significance during Operation – Year 0
Drawing on professional judgement, the effect of the Proposed Development on this LCT is judged to be **Moderate (Significant)** within 4 km to the south-east of the Site, reducing to **Minor (Not Significant)** elsewhere within the study area**.**
Mitigation and Residual Effect and Significance during Operation - Year 10
Mitigation has been embedded into the design of the Proposed Development through the provision of the Landscape Design plan in **Figure 3.3**. This includes the creation of cut and fill slopes around the edges of the Proposed Substation. Cut slopes along the western and southwestern edges of the Proposed Substation would allow the proposed substation elements and ancillary infrastructure to sit lower than the surrounding topography, mostly screened from the wider landscape and LCT. Fill slopes along the eastern southeastern edge of the proposed substation platform would descend to the lower existing grades further east. These slopes would be planted with trees and shrubs which would gradually help blend the earthworks into the surrounding landscape, and once semi-mature (e.g., after 10/15 years), would help provide further filtering and screening of the Proposed Development, integrating it into the surrounding existing forestry. The mitigation planting would reduce the visibility of the Proposed Development across the study area and wider LCT and would introduce landscape features cohesive with the surrounding Fetteresso Forest. Overall, it is judged that the magnitude of change would continue to be **medium** at Year 10/15. The planting would gradually mature and increasingly filter and screen the Proposed Development in views from across the study area and wider LCT, however the effect would remain locally significant, and would continue to be visible from elevated Site-facing

[15] NatureScot (2019) National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 24 Coastal and Farmed Ridges - Aberdeenshire. Available at: https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT%20024%20-%20Coastal%20Farmed%20Ridges%20and%20Hills%20-%20Aberdeenshire%20-%20Final%20pdf.pdf

LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills - Aberdeenshire
slopes near Hillhead of Auquhirie. The residual effect would remain **Moderate (Significant),** reducing to **Minor (Not Significant)** elsewhere within the study area**.**

Visual Effects – Operation

Effects on Visual Receptors at Viewpoints

Table 8.24: Operational Effects on Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie

Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie				
Grid Reference		**Figure Number**	**LCT**	**Distance and Direction from Site**
383164	783698	8.4	LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills - Aberdeenshire	3.5 km southeast
Baseline Description				
The description of the existing baseline is set out in **Table 8.10**.				
Sensitivity				
The viewpoint is judged to be of medium sensitivity as set out in **Table 8.10** above.				
Magnitude of Change during Operation– Year 0				
The ZTV (see **Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**) indicates theoretical visibility of both the substation components and associated earthworks from the viewpoint location and along the elevated ridge immediately west and northeast of this location; however, in practice, intervening forestry and buildings would reduce visibility, as illustrated by **Figure 8.2b: Substation Screening Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**. The Proposed Substation would be seen in northwest facing views at a distance of approximately 4 km. Substation components, primarily vertical elements of up to 15 m height, would be visible in views filtered by existing mature forestry along the southern, eastern and southeastern edges of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Substation would be seen within an area of cleared forestry within Fetteresso Forest, immediately north of the existing Fetteresso Substation. Areas of hardscaping (lighter concrete materials) and newly constructed cut and fill slopes would be partially visible from this viewpoint due to its elevated location and would create visual contrast with the surrounding areas of dark coniferous trees. Cut slopes along the western and southwestern extents of the Proposed Substation would provide some screening of electrical infrastructure, with intervening landform and forestry screening smaller elements. The Proposed Substation would occupy a medium horizontal field of view to the northwest, looking up the longer axis of the Proposed Development, with its southeastern face most visible from this location. Fill slopes along the southeastern boundary would be noticeable, with newly laid earth devoid of trees, although new planting across these areas would help mitigate this contrast over time. The introduction of the Proposed Development would intensify the presence of energy infrastructure present in views towards Fetteresso Forest, with existing forestry providing partial filtering and screening. Considering the existing presence of electrical infrastructure in close and middle-distance views to the northwest and west, and the extent of filtering from intervening landform and forestry along the southern edge of the Site, the scale of change would be medium. The geographical extent would be medium, as the ZTV indicates that similar views would be experienced along the elevated ridge which continues approximately 2 km to the west and northeast. The magnitude of change is considered to be **medium**.				
Effect and Significance during Operation – Year 0				
It is assessed that the sensitivity of the receptor is medium, and the magnitude of change is medium. Overall, the effect is judged to be **Moderate (Significant)**.				
Mitigation and Residual Effect and Significance during Operation - Year 10				
At Year 10, proposed planting as part of the embedded mitigation detailed in **Figure 3.3: Landscape Design** would have reached semi-maturity and grown to heights of approximately 7-10 m. This planting would be visible across the cut and fill slopes to the south, east and southeast of the Proposed Substation. The semi-mature tree and shrub planting would provide increased filtering and screening of views towards the Proposed Substation and would introduce intervening landscape elements which would be cohesive and integrated with the surrounding area. Lower elevation elements within the Site would be largely screened by the then semi-mature planting, although taller elements would remain partially visible above the treelines.				

Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie
Although the semi-matured vegetation would increase the extent of filtering and screening of views, the elevated location of the viewpoint would still allow partly obscured views towards the Proposed Development and into the Site. However, the planting would help integrate the Proposed Development into the surrounding forest. Therefore magnitude of change would remain medium and the effect would be **Moderate (Significant**) although the effect would be more localised, and the Proposed Development would have reduced prominence in views across north-facing slopes along the ridgeline.

Table 8.25: Operational Effects on Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings

Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings				
Grid Reference		**Figure Number**	**LCT**	**Distance and Direction from Site**
381838	785382	8.5	LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills - Aberdeenshire	1.6 km southeast
Baseline Description				
The description of the existing baseline is set out in **Table 8.11**.				
Sensitivity				
The viewpoint is judged to be of medium sensitivity as set out in **Table 8.11** above.				
Magnitude of Change during Operation– Year 0				
The Proposed Substation would be seen in northwest facing views at a distance of approximately 1.8 km, seen along the skyline in a shallow dip between the elevated forms of Hill of Baulk (238m AOD) to the east and Elf Hill (222m AOD) to the southwest. The Proposed Development would occupy a small horizontal field of middle-distance views due to the intervening landform of the Hill of Baulk which provides screening of the northwestern half of the Site, while new cut slopes would provide screening along the southwestern edge of the Proposed Substation. Newly constructed and planted fill slopes at the southeastern edge of the Site would provide additional screening, and smaller substation components would be mostly filtered or screened from views. Taller vertical elements within the Proposed Development would be seen above the intervening treeline; however, these would not exceed the height of the elevated landforms to the east and southwest and would be backclothed. The ZTV (**Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**) indicates that similar views would be experienced along the minor road as it passes to the east. Considering the existing elements of human influence in views, including the multiple wooden telegraph pole lines, telecommunications tower and scattered farmsteads, existing presence of electrical infrastructure in close and middle-distance views to the northwest and west, and the extent of filtering from intervening landform and forestry along the southern edge of the Site, the scale of change is considered small, with similar views experienced across a medium geographical extent. Therefore, the magnitude of change during operation (at year 0) is considered to be **low**.				
Effect and Significance during Operation – Year 0				
It is assessed that the sensitivity of the receptor is medium, and the magnitude of change is low. Overall, the effect is judged to be **Minor (Not Significant)**.				
Mitigation and Residual Effect and Significance during Operation - Year 10				
At Year 10, proposed planting as part of the embedded mitigation detailed in **Figure 3.3: Landscape Design** would have reached semi-maturity and grown to approximate heights of 7-10 m. It would be visible across the cut and fill slopes to the south, east and southeast of the Proposed Substation. The semi-mature tree and shrub planting would provide increased filtering and screening of views towards the Proposed Substation and would introduce intervening landscape elements which would appear cohesive and integrated with the surrounding area. Lower elevation elements within the Site would be largely screened by the semi-mature planting, although taller elements would remain partially visible above the treeline. Semi-mature planting would help integrate the Proposed Development into the surrounding forested landscape and would reduce its prominence. The magnitude of change would remain low as at year 0, and the effect would be **Minor (Not Significant**).				

Table 8.26: Operational Effects on Viewpoint 3: Rickarton

Viewpoint 3: Rickarton				
Grid Reference		**Figure Number**	**LCT**	**Distance and Direction from Site**
381873	789543	8.6	29: Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire	2.7 km northeast
Baseline Description				
The description of the existing baseline is set out in **Table 8.12**.				
Sensitivity				
The viewpoint is judged to be of medium sensitivity as set out in **Table 8.12** above.				
Magnitude of Change during Operation– Year 0				
The Proposed Development would be theoretically seen in southwesterly views at a distance of approximately 2.7 km, seen on the skyline beyond the rising form of Hill of Swanley and the slopes of Cowie Water. As indicated by the ZTV in **Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations,** theoretically, the Proposed Substation would be partially visible across a small horizontal field of view, with glimpses of taller vertical elements of the Proposed Substation visible across the skyline. In reality however the Proposed Development would be barely perceptible in views due to intervening landform and forestry to the north and northeast of the Site, including across Hare Bog and the slopes of Hill of Swanley, which would fully screen the Proposed Substation, as indicated by the screening ZTV in **Figure 8.2b: Substation Screening Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**. Views of other elements of the Proposed Development, such as access tracks will also be limited due to the screening function provided by existing forestry around the Site and intervening landform. In the event that intervening forestry is felled as part of ongoing forestry management within Fetteresso Forest, visibility of the Proposed Substation would increase however it would remain partially screened by intervening landform and would still occupy a small horizonal field of view. Where glimpsed views are possible in the event of forest felling, the Proposed Substation would be seen in the context of the existing high voltage OHL that passes over Hill of Trusta, as well as wood pole lines in the surrounding landscape. Considering the limited visibility of the Proposed Development, the scale of change would be barely perceptible across a small geographical extent as views from other parts of the higher land north of Rickarton will also be screened by existing intervening forestry. Therefore, the magnitude of change during operation (at year 0) is considered to be **low**.				
Effect and Significance during Operation – Year 0				
It is assessed that the sensitivity of the receptor is medium, and the magnitude of change is low. Overall, given that the Proposed Development would be barely perceptible from this viewpoint the effect is judged to be **None (Not Significant)**.				
Mitigation and Residual Effect and Significance during Operation - Year 10				
At Year 10, proposed planting as part of the embedded mitigation detailed in **Figure 3.3: Landscape Design** would have reached semi-maturity and reached approximate heights of 7-10m. The planting would reinforce the filtering and screening that would be provided by existing forestry to the north and northeast of the Site. Where intervening forestry is felled as part of ongoing forest management, the semi-mature tree and shrub planting, implemented as part of the embedded mitigation, would provide filtering and screening of views towards the Proposed Substation, and would introduce intervening landscape elements which would appear cohesive and integrated with the surrounding area. Lower elevation elements within the Site would be largely screened by the semi-mature planting, although taller elements would remain partially visible above the treeline. Given that intervening forestry would filter and screen the Proposed Substation and that the by now semi-mature proposed planting would only have a notable affect in these views in the event of forestry felling, the magnitude of change would remain as low and the effect would remain as **None (Not Significant).**				

Table 8.27: Operational Effects on Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso

Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso				
Grid Reference		**Figure Number**	**LCT**	**Distance and Direction from Site**
383469	785638	8.7	29: Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire	3.2 km southeast
Baseline Description				
The description of the existing baseline is set out in **Table 8.13**.				
Sensitivity				
The viewpoint is judged to be of high sensitivity as set out in **Table 8.13** above.				
Magnitude of Change during Operation– Year 0				
The Proposed Substation would be partially visible in northwest facing views at a distance of approximately 3.5 km, seen just below the skyline in a shallow dip between the elevated forms of Hill of Baulk (238m AOD) to the east and Elf Hill (222m AOD) to the southwest. The Proposed Development would occupy a small horizontal field of view, due to the angle of view and intervening landform of the Hill of Baulk, which would provide partial screening of the northeastern extents of the Site. Newly constructed and planted fill slopes at the eastern edge of the Site would provide some screening, although the fill slopes would still provide contrast from the surrounding forestry. Larger vertical elements within the Proposed Development would extend above the substation platform, but would not exceed the height of the surrounding landform to the east and west, and would be backclothed by forestry further north within the Proposed Development. Additionally, the vertical elements within the Site would be seen beyond the existing wind turbines that are seen in close range views from this viewpoint and would be seen in the context of existing high voltage OHLs and large-scale steel lattice towers. The ZTV (**Figure 8.2b: Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**) indicates that similar views would be experienced along the minor road further east. Considering the intervening distance, existing presence of electrical infrastructure in close and middle-distance views to the northwest and west, and the extent of filtering from intervening landform and forestry along the eastern edge of the Site and fields to the southeast, the scale of change is considered small, with similar views experienced across a medium geographical extent. Therefore, the magnitude of change is considered to be **low**.				
Effect and Significance during Operation – Year 0				
Drawing on professional judgement, it is assessed that the sensitivity of the receptor is medium, and the magnitude of change is low. Overall, the effect is judged to be **Minor (Not Significant).**				
Mitigation and Residual Effect and Significance during Operation - Year 10				
At Year 10, proposed planting as part of the embedded mitigation detailed in **Figure 3.3: Landscape Design** would have reached semi-maturity and grown to approximate heights of 7-10m and would be visible across the cut and fill slopes to the south, east and southeast of the Proposed Substation. The semi-mature tree and shrub planting would provide increased filtering and screening of views towards the Proposed Substation and would introduce intervening landscape elements which would appear cohesive and integrated with the surrounding area and existing forestry. Lower elevation elements within the Site would be largely screened by the semi-mature planting, although taller elements would remain partially visible above the treeline. Semi-mature planting would better integrate the Proposed Development into the surrounding forested landscape and would reduce its prominence. The magnitude of change would remain low and the effect would remain as **Minor (Not Significant**).				

Table 8.28: Operational Effects on Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley

Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley				
Grid Reference		**Figure Number**	**LCT**	**Distance and Direction from Site**
381243	787291	8.8	29: Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire	0.8 km east
Baseline Description				
The description of the existing baseline is set out in **Table 8.14**.				
Sensitivity				
The viewpoint is judged to be of medium sensitivity as set out in **Table 8.14** above.				
Magnitude of Change during Operation – Year 0				
The Proposed Development would be partially visible in the middle distance, at a distance of approximately 0.8 km in southwesterly views against the forested slopes of the Hill of Trusta (321m AOD) beyond. The Proposed Development would occupy a medium horizontal field of view due to the angle of the view and the intervening distance. The Proposed Substation would be partially visible with some lower elements filtered by intervening forestry, and larger vertical elements visible extending above the intervening forestry, particularly elements at the southeastern end of the Proposed Substation. These larger elements would form prominent features within these views. Most of the Proposed Development would be backclothed by forestry and the rising slopes of the Hill of Trusta behind, however a small extent of taller elements in the southeast would break the skyline. Newly constructed and planted fill slopes at the eastern edge of the Site would also be visible as well as the newly constructed and planted cut slopes to the west which provide an immediate backdrop to the Proposed Substation. Both the cut and fill slopes would create a visual contrast with the surrounding forestry. The Proposed Development would be seen in the context of the existing high voltage OHL to the west of the Site, that is visible across the western skyline, as well as the three operational turbines at Jacksbank to the southwest. The ZTV (**Figure 8.2b: Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**) indicates that similar views would be experienced from approximately 2 km of the forest track around Hill of Swanley, however in reality open views towards the Proposed Development would not be available from this entire 2 km due to areas of intervening forestry. Considering the prominence of larger substation elements together with the filtering and backclothing provided by surrounding forestry, the scale of change is considered to be medium, with similar views experienced across a small geographical extent. Therefore, the magnitude of change is considered to be **medium**.				
Effect and Significance during Operation – Year 0				
It is assessed that the sensitivity of the receptor is medium, and the magnitude of change is high. Overall, the effect is judged to be **Moderate (Significant)**.				
Mitigation and Residual Effect and Significance during Operation - Year 10				
At Year 10, proposed planting, as part of the embedded mitigation detailed in **Figure 3.3: Landscape Design,** would have reached semi-maturity, and grown to heights of approximately 7-10m. This vegetation would be visible across the fill slopes to the east, south and southeast of the Proposed Substation. The semi-mature tree and shrub planting would provide increased filtering and screening of views towards the Proposed Substation and would introduce intervening landscape elements which would appear cohesive and integrated with the surrounding area. Lower elevation elements within the Site would be largely screened by the semi-mature planting, although taller elements would remain partially visible above the treeline and remain as prominent features above the treeline. Semi-mature planting would better integrate the Proposed Development into the surrounding forested landscape and would reduce its prominence in these views from the east. Larger vertical elements within the Site that would extend above established mitigation planting would still form prominent features in this close proximity view. The magnitude of change would remain as medium and the overall effect would remain as **Moderate (Significant)**.				

Effects on Visual Receptors from Settlements

Table 8.29: Operational Effects on Rickarton

Rickarton			
Representative viewpoints	VP 3	Distance and direction from Site	2 km northeast
Baseline Description			
The description of the existing baseline is set out in **Table 8.15**.			
Sensitivity			
The settlement is judged to be of medium sensitivity as set out in **Table 8.15** above.			
Magnitude of Change during Operation – Year 0			
The ZTV (**Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**) indicates theoretical visibility across the entirety of the small community, between approximately 2.7 km and 3 km of the Proposed Substation in southwesterly views. In these views, the Proposed Substation would theoretically be seen on the skyline beyond the rising form of Hill of Swanley and the rising slopes of Cowie Water; however, in reality, the Proposed Substation would be fully screened in views from the settlement due to intervening existing forestry and landform, as illustrated in **Figure 8.2b: Substation Screening Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**. Views of other elements of the Proposed Development, such as access tracks will also be limited due to the screening function provided by existing forestry around the Site and intervening landform. In the event that intervening forestry is felled as part of ongoing forestry management within Fetteresso Forest, visibility of the Proposed Substation would increase however it would remain partially screened by intervening landform and would still occupy a small horizonal field of view. In addition, intervening built development within the village and vegetation along the southwestern edge of the settlement, as well as forestry across the slopes to the south in Fetteresso Forest would assist in filtering any views made available by forestry felling. Where glimpsed views are possible, the Proposed Substation would be seen in the context of the existing high voltage OHL that passes over Hill of Trusta, as well as wood pole lines in the surrounding landscape, and in sequential views with a large-scale wind farm to the west. Considering the limited visibility of the Proposed Development, the scale of change would be barely perceptible, and would be experienced over a small geographical extent. Overall, the magnitude of change during operation (at year 0) is considered to be **low**.			
Effect and Significance during Operation – Year 0			
It is judged that the sensitivity of the receptor is medium, and the magnitude of change is low. Overall, given that the Proposed Development would be barely perceptible from this settlement the effect is judged to be **None (Not Significant)**.			
Mitigation and Residual Effect and Significance during Operation - Year 10			
At Year 10, proposed planting, as part of the embedded mitigation detailed in **Figure 3.3: Landscape Design,** would have reached semi-maturity and grown to approximate heights of 7-10m. The planting would reinforce the filtering and screening that would be provided by existing forestry to the north and northeast of the Site. Where intervening forestry is felled as part of ongoing forest management, the matured tree and shrub planting, implemented as part of the embedded mitigation, would provide filtering and screening of views towards the Proposed Substation, and would introduce intervening landscape elements which would appear cohesive and integrated with the surrounding area. Lower elevation elements within the Site would be almost entirely filtered and screened by the semi-mature planting, although taller elements would remain partially visible above the treeline. Intervening forestry would screen the Proposed Substation as the proposed planting grows. The by then semi-mature planting would only have a notable affect in these views in the event of forestry felling. The magnitude of change would remain as low and the effect would remain as **None (Not Significant)**.			

Effects on Visual Receptors along Routes

Table 8.30: Operational Effects on Minor Road Network south of the Site

Minor Road Network south of the Site			
Representative viewpoints	N/A	Distance and direction from Site	Between 0.5 km and 5 km south
Baseline Description			
The description of the existing baseline is set out in **Table 8.16.**			
Sensitivity			
Receptors on this route network are judged to be of **medium** sensitivity as set out in **Table 8.16** above.			
Magnitude of Change during Operation – Year 0			
From the minor roads which run along bottom and lower slopes of Carron valley, within 1 km of the Site, views towards the Proposed Development would be screened by steeply rising landform to the north. Further afield to the south, from the elevated slopes above Carron Water and near Jacksbank, availability of views towards the Site become more extensive. The Proposed Development would be seen on the skyline to the north, in generally direct views from the slopes of Jacksbank and near Little Bogburn, as travellers head west and northwest, at distances between 2.5 km and 3.5 km. Views would generally be open on the elevated upland slopes, with limited roadside vegetation or intervening development to filter outward views. However, newly constructed and planted cut and fill slopes along the southern edge of the Site as well as existing blocks of forestry (scheduled for long-term retention as per Forestry and Land Scotland's Mearns Forest Design Plan16) as well as clumps of woodland scattered across intervening fields would provide some degree of screening, particularly of lower elements within the Site. Turbines at Jacksbank and further along the valley to the east would be seen in front of the Proposed Development, as would existing high voltage OHLs with large scale steel lattice towers, which cross the Carron valley in two locations. The following viewpoint is located within the minor road network to the south, and is generally representative of views likely to be experienced: • Viewpoint 1: A *medium* magnitude of change was identified from this viewpoint. The ZTV indicates that similar views would be experienced from the minor road which rounds the form of Jacksbank towards Newmill, however views become more oblique further east. There is also indicated theoretical visibility along the western side of Jacksbank, although views are directed north across Carron Water, and views towards the Site would be oblique. Elsewhere along the minor road network to the south, intervening landform would screen views towards the Site. Considering the nature of glimpsed views from higher elevation, existing presence of electrical infrastructure in close and middle-distance views to the north and northeast, and the extent of filtering from intervening landform and forestry along the southern edge of the Site, the scale of change is considered small, with similar views experienced across a medium geographical extent. Therefore, the magnitude of change during operation (at year 0) is considered to be **low**.			
Effect and Significance during Operation – Year 0			
Taking account of the low magnitude of change and the medium sensitivity, the introduction of the Proposed Development would result in a **Minor (Not Significant)** effect			
Mitigation and Residual Effect and Significance during Operation - Year 10			
After 10 years, new woodland planting along the cut and fill slopes to the south of the Site would have reached semi-maturity and grown to heights of approximately 7-10 m, filtering and screening views towards the Proposed Development, particularly in summer months. The new planting would be cohesive and integrated with the surrounding forestry of Fetteresso Forest, and would reduce the prominence of the Proposed Development seen in glimpsed and mostly oblique views. In closer range views the Proposed Substation and electrical infrastructure would remain as noticeable features within the landscape. The magnitude of change at year 10 would remain low, as identified in year 0. The effect would remain as **Minor (Not Significant)**.			

[16] Forestry and Land Scotland (2014). Mearns Forest Design Plan. [Online] Available at: https://forestryandland.gov.scot/media/qlbn55aa/mearns-management-map.pdf

Table 8.31: Operational Effects on Minor Road Network east and southeast of the Site

Minor Road Network east and southeast of the Site			
Representative viewpoints	VP 1, 2 and 4	Distance and direction from Site	Between 1 km and 5 km south
Baseline Description			
The description of the existing baseline is set out in **Table 8.17**.			
Sensitivity			
Receptors on this route network are judged to be of **medium** sensitivity as set out in **Table 8.17** above.			
Magnitude of Change during Operation – Year 0			
From the minor roads which run along the southern and eastern slopes of Hill of Baulk and Hill of Swanley, within 1 km of the Site, views towards the Proposed Development would generally be direct and from close to middle distance. However, due to the angle of view, the Proposed Development would occupy a small horizontal field of view. Additionally, landform along the eastern edge of the Site associated with Hill of Swanley would largely screen the northern and western extents of the Proposed Development. From further afield to the southeast within 3 km and concentrated along the valley floor (represented by Viewpoint 2 and Viewpoint 4), views towards the Site would extend across a larger horizontal field of view. The Proposed Development would be seen on the skyline to the northwest and west, seen in generally direct views and at distances between 2.5 km and 3.5 km. Views would be intermittently open with limited intervening roadside vegetation, but intervening clumps of woodland scattered across the slopes. However, constructed fill slopes along the southeastern and eastern edge of the Site as well as existing mature blocks of forestry (scheduled for long-term retention as per Forestry and Land Scotland's Mearns Forest Design Plan[17]) would provide a large degree of screening, particularly of lower elements within the Site. From minor roads further up the slopes of Carron Water (represented by Viewpoint 1), the elevated landform would afford more extensive views of the Proposed Development, although roadside vegetation and bands of woodland along the slopes would provide increased filtering. In these views, fill slopes along the southeastern boundary of the site would also be noticeable. The Proposed Development would also be seen in glimpsed consecutive views with turbines at Jacksbank and further west along the valley, along with existing OHLs and steel lattice towers, which cross the Carron valley. The following viewpoints are located within the minor road network to the east and southeast, and are generally representative of views likely to be experienced: • Viewpoint 1: A *medium* magnitude of change was identified from this viewpoint. • Viewpoint 2: A *low* magnitude of change was identified from this viewpoint. • Viewpoint 4: A *low* magnitude of change was identified from this viewpoint. The ZTV indicates that similar views would be experienced from across the minor road network between Nether Wyndings and East Tewel. Views would be more extensive from the minor road network along the southern elevated slopes of the Carron Water, within the area around Viewpoint 1. Elsewhere within the network, within 1 km of the Site, the Proposed Development would be more obscured by intervening landform and forestry along the eastern and southeastern edges of the Site. Considering the availability of open extensive views from minor roads south of the Carron Water, as well as some filtering from intervening landform and forestry along the southern edge of the Site, the scale of change is considered to be medium, with similar views experienced across a medium geographical extent. Therefore, the magnitude of change is considered to be **medium**.		
Effect and Significance during Operation – Year 0			
Taking account of the low magnitude of change and the medium sensitivity, the introduction of the Proposed Development would result in a **Moderate (Significant)** effect.			
Mitigation and Residual Effect and Significance during Operation - Year 10			
At Year 10, proposed planting as part of the embedded mitigation detailed in **Figure 3.3: Landscape Design** would have reached semi-maturity and grown to heights of approximately 7-10 m. This planting would be visible across the cut and fill slopes to the south, east and southeast of the Proposed Substation. The semi-mature tree and shrub planting would provide increased filtering and screening of views towards the Proposed Substation and would introduce intervening landscape elements which would be cohesive and integrated with the surrounding area. Although the semi-matured vegetation would increase the extent of filtering and screening of views, partly obscured views towards the Proposed Development would still be available from parts of the minor road network, particularly from the elevated slopes south of the Carron Water. In closer range views, from closer sections of the minor road network, the Proposed Substation and electrical infrastructure would remain as noticeable features		

[17] Forestry and Land Scotland (2014). Mearns Forest Design Plan. [Online] Available at: https://forestryandland.gov.scot/media/qlbn55aa/mearns-management-map.pdf

Minor Road Network east and southeast of the Site
within the landscape, albeit with reduced prominence. The magnitude of change at Year 10 would remain medium, as identified in year 0. The effect would remain as **Moderate (Significant)**.

Table 8.32: Operational Effects on Slug Road / A957

Slug Road / A957			
Representative viewpoints	VP 3	Distance and direction from Site	1.6 km north
Baseline Description			
The description of the existing baseline is set out in **Table 8.18** above**.**			
Sensitivity			
Receptors on this route are judged to be of **medium** sensitivity as set out in Table 8.18 above.			
Magnitude of Change during Operation – Year 0			
The ZTV (**Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**) indicates theoretical visibility of the Proposed Substation across a short section of Slug Road at Rickarton at distances of between approximately 2.8 km and 3.3 km in southwesterly views. In these views, the Proposed Substation would be theoretically seen on the skyline beyond the rising form of Hill of Swanley and the rising slopes of Cowie Water, bound by existing forestry to the east and west. However, in reality, the Proposed Substation would be fully screened in views from the entirety of this road due to intervening existing forestry and landform, as illustrated in **Figure 8.2b: Substation Screening Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**. Views of other elements of the Proposed Development, such as access tracks will also be limited due to the screening function provided by existing forestry around the Site and intervening landform. In the event that intervening forestry is felled as part of ongoing forestry management within Fetteresso Forest, visibility of the Proposed Substation would increase however it would remain partially screened by intervening landform and would occupy a small horizonal field of view. Where glimpsed views are possible, the Proposed Substation would be seen in the context of the existing high voltage OHL that passes over Hill of Trusta, as well as wood pole lines in the surrounding landscape, and in sequential views with a large-scale wind farm to the west. The following viewpoint is located in proximity to this route, and is generally representative of views likely to be experienced: • Viewpoint 3: A *low* magnitude of change was identified from this viewpoint. The ZTV in **Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations** indicates that similar views would be experienced from a short section of the road (<500 m). Further west and east along the roadway, intervening landform and forestry would screen views towards the Site. Considering the limited visibility of the Proposed Development, the scale of change would be barely perceptible, and would be experienced over a small geographical extent. Overall, the magnitude of change during operation (at year 0) is considered to be **low**.			
Effect and Significance during Operation – Year 0			
Taking account of the medium sensitivity and the low magnitude of change, and given that the Proposed Development would be barely perceptible from this road, the effect is judged to be **None (Not Significant)**.			
Mitigation and Residual Effect and Significance during Operation - Year 10			
At Year 10, proposed planting as part of the embedded mitigation detailed in **Figure 3.3: Landscape Design** would have reached semi-maturity and grown to approximate heights of 7-10m. The planting would reinforce the filtering and screening that would be provided by existing forestry to the north and northeast of the Site. Where intervening forestry is felled as part of ongoing forest management, the semi-mature tree and shrub planting, implemented as part of the embedded mitigation, would provide filtering and screening of views towards the Proposed Substation, and would introduce intervening landscape elements which would be cohesive and integrated with the surrounding area. Lower elevation elements within the Site would be largely screened by the semi-mature planting, although taller elements would remain partially visible above the treeline from the section of the road at Rickarton. Intervening forestry would screen the Proposed Development prior to and during the establishment of proposed planting. As such, the proposed planting would only have a notable affect in these views in the event of forestry felling. The magnitude of change would therefore remain as low and the effect would remain as **None (Not Significant)**.			

Table 8.33: Operational Effects on Recreational Routes within Fetteresso Forest

Recreational Routes within Fetteresso Forest			
Representative viewpoints	VP 5	Distance and direction from Site	<3 km to the north, east, south and west
Baseline Description			
The description of the existing baseline is set out in **Table 8.19.**			
Sensitivity			
Receptors on this route network are judged to be of **medium** sensitivity as set out in **Table 8.19**.			
Magnitude of Change during Operation – Year 0			
The bare earth ZTV in **Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations** indicates visibility across parts of Fetteresso Forest within 3 km of the Proposed Substation around Upper Baulk and Hill of Swanley to the east and Hill of Trusta and Hill of Quithel to the west and southwest. Along a section of forest track in an area of recently felled forestry immediately east of the Site, north of Upper Baulk, there would be some open and close proximity views of the taller components of the Proposed Development that would extend above retained forestry along the eastern boundary of the Site. Visible elements of the Proposed Development would be seen at distances ranging between 0.4 - 1 km and would form notable features above intervening forestry. Similar views would be obtained from a section of track to the west of the Site, south of Hill of Trusta, where recent forestry felling in this area would afford some open close range views of the taller elements of the Proposed Development, including cranes and partially built items such as gantries, that would be seen extending above retained forestry on the western boundary of the Site, at distances between 0.6 – 1.5 km). Slightly further away to the northeast, along the section of forest track to the west of Hill of Swanley, where recent felling opens up views west towards the Site, the Proposed Development would be partially visible in the middle distance, particularly larger vertical elements and the new construction cut and fill slopes. Intervening forestry and vegetation between Hill of Swanley and the Proposed Development however would filter some of Proposed Development, particularly lower-level components, and would reduce overall visibility in this area, as indicated by the screening ZTV in **Figure 8.2b**. In these views, the Proposed Development would be seen in the context of existing high voltage OHLs to the east and west of the Site. From tracks near Hill of Quithel, views of the Proposed Development would be largely screened by intervening forestry. The following viewpoint is located along the section of forest track to the west of Hill of Swanley, and is representative of open views likely to be experienced within Fetteresso Forest: • Viewpoint 5: A *medium* magnitude of change was identified from this viewpoint. From sections of track that currently offer some open views towards the Proposed Development, visibility would reduce overtime as areas of felled forestry are re-stocked and increasingly obscure the view as they grow over time. Due to the continued forestry felling and restocking as part of current forestry management plans within Fetteresso Forest, the nature of views experienced by people travelling along forest tracks will continually change over time, however the potential for views of the Proposed Development would only ever occur within the areas within the bare earth ZTV in **Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations**. The scale of change is judged to be medium over a medium geographical extent across the sections of forestry track north of Upper Baulk, south of Hill of Trusta and west of Hill of Swanley, where there will be close to medium range views of taller elements of the Proposed Development. Elsewhere within Fetteresso Forest the scale of change would be small due to intervening landform and forestry that would screen most views towards the Proposed Development. Overall, the magnitude of change during operation is considered to be **medium** around Upper Baulk, Hill of Trusta and Hill of Swanley, reducing to **low** for people travelling along remaining tracks within Fetteresso Forest.			
Effect and Significance during Operation – Year 0			
Taking account of the medium magnitude of change from open sections of track with theoretical visibility and the medium sensitivity, the introduction of the Proposed Development would result in a **Moderate (Significant)** visual effect on people travelling along sections of track around Upper Baulk, Hill of Trusta and Hill of Swanley, reducing to **Minor (Not Significant)** for people travelling along remaining tracks within Fetteresso Forest.			
Mitigation and Residual Effect and Significance during Operation - Year 10			
After 10 years, new woodland planting to the north, east and south of the Proposed Substation will have reached semi-maturity, providing increased filtering and screening of views towards the Proposed Substation. It would introduce intervening landscape elements which would appear cohesive and integrated with the surrounding area. Lower elevation elements within the Site would be largely screened by the semi-mature planting, although taller elements would remain partially visible above the treeline and remain as prominent features above the treeline including from sections of track around Hill of Swanley. From sections of tracks where the Proposed Development is visible, semi-mature planting would help integrate the Proposed Development into the surrounding forested landscape and would help reduce its prominence in views.			

Recreational Routes within Fetteresso Forest
However, given larger vertical elements within the Site that would extend above established mitigation planting would still form prominent features from some sections of open track, the magnitude of change would remain as medium. The overall effect would remain as **Moderate (Significant)**.

Table 8.34: Operational Effects on Recreational Routes near Garrison Hill

Recreational Routes near Garrison Hill			
Representative viewpoints	CH VP 1 (**Figure 9.6**)	Distance and direction from Site	Between 4 - 5 km to the northeast
Baseline Description			
The description of the existing baseline is set out in **Table 8.20.**			
Sensitivity			
Receptors on this route network are judged to be of **medium** sensitivity as set out in **Table 8.20.**			
Magnitude of Change during Operation – Year 0			
The bare earth ZTV in **Figure 8.2a: Substation Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations** indicates visibility across the western slopes of Campstone Hill, Garrison Hill, and the lower slopes of Meikle Carewe Hill, between approximately 4 km and 5 km to the northeast of the Site. Informal tracks which are generally oriented north-south along the ridgelines would have relatively open views to the south and west, across the lower-lying Cowton Burn and towards Fetteresso Forest to the southwest and the rising forested hills of the Grampians further west. There would be open and longer distance views of the taller components of the Proposed Development that would extend above retained forestry along the north and eastern boundary of the Site, however the proposed components would be backclothed by forestry further south. Occasionally, intervening forestry blocks in the foreground and middle distance would provide partial screening in views towards the Proposed Development. Views would be similar from most of the informal track network across the southwest and west facing slopes. In sections of track on lower slopes further west, views would become increasingly screened by intervening landform and more frequent areas of forestry along the tracks, and would filter some of the Proposed Development, particularly lower-level components. In these views, the Proposed Development would be seen in the context of existing high voltage OHLs to the east and west of the Site, as well as the Mid Hill Wind Farm seen along the skyline in the distance to the west. The Cultural Heritage Viewpoint 1 (**Figure 9.6**) is located at the summit of Garrison Hill, along an informal track, and is representative of open views likely to be experienced across the hills to the northeast. The scale of change is judged to be medium over a medium geographical extent across the slopes of Garrison Hill, Campstone Hill and the lower slopes of Meikle Carewe Hill, where there would be longer range views of taller elements of the Proposed Development. Further down the slopes to the west the scale of change would be small due to intervening landform and blocks of forestry that would increasingly filter views towards the Proposed Development. Overall, the magnitude of change during operation is considered to be **medium** around the summits and upper slopes of Garrison Hill and Campstone Hill, reducing to **low** for people travelling along lower slopes or further west.			
Effect and Significance during Operation – Year 0			
Taking account of the medium magnitude of change from open sections of track with theoretical visibility and the medium sensitivity, the introduction of the Proposed Development would result in a **Moderate (Significant)** visual effect on people travelling along the summits and upper slopes of Garrison Hill and Campstone Hill, reducing to **Minor (Not Significant)** for people travelling along the informal tracks further west on lower slopes.			
Mitigation and Residual Effect and Significance during Operation - Year 10			
After 10 years, new woodland planting to the north and east of the Proposed Substation would have reached semi-maturity, providing increased filtering and screening of views towards the Proposed Substation. It would introduce intervening landscape elements which would appear cohesive and integrated with the surrounding area. Lower elevation elements within the Site would be increasingly filtered and screened by the semi-mature planting, although taller elements would remain partially visible above the treeline, particularly from sections of the tracks which cross higher elevation along the hill summits. From sections of tracks where the Proposed Development is visible, semi-mature planting would help integrate the Proposed Development into the surrounding forested landscape and would help reduce its prominence in views. However, the magnitude of change would remain **Moderate (Significant)** for sections of the tracks near the summits of Campstone Hill and Garrison Hill, from which the elevated landform would afford views into the Site and of taller components. As in the year 0 assessment, from sections of track further west along lower slopes the overall effect in these areas would reduce to **Minor (Not Significant)**.			

Additional Mitigation

8.8.4 No effective mitigation has been identified that is not already included as embedded mitigation or applied mitigation, as set out in Section 8.6.

Residual Operational Effects

8.8.5 The residual effects once additional mitigation measures (landscape mitigation design planting) have been implemented are set out within the Assessment of Likely Significant Effects – Operation in section 8.8. The assessment tables have considered the operational effects at year 0, when mitigation planting is considered to provide no screening, and at Year 10, once mitigation planting has reached semi-maturity and grown to heights of approximately 7-10 m.

8.9 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects – Decommissioning

8.9.1 It is assumed that once constructed, the Proposed Development would remain in operation permanently. Therefore, effects on decommissioning have not been considered in the LVIA.

8.10 Assessment of Likely Cumulative (In-Combination) Effects

Introduction

8.10.1 The assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects focuses on changes which may result from the introduction of the Proposed Development in addition to future development including Associated SSEN Transmission Developments, Other SSEN Transmission and Other Third Pary Developments. As discussed in section 8.5 of this chapter, in-combination cumulative effects are assessed across three stages including Associated SSEN Transmission Developments, Other SSEN Transmission and Other Third Party Developments, focussing on the cumulative proposals listed in **Table 8.4**. Each of the three stages are assessed during both the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development. Existing development within the study area is considered within the primary assessment of this LVIA in section 8.8.

8.10.2 **Table 8.33: Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects: Associated SSEN Transmission Development** provides a cumulative assessment of the Proposed Development with the proposed Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL defined in **Chapter 1: Introduction** and listed in **Table 8.4: Associated SSEN Transmission Developments, other SSEN Transmission Developments and other Third Party Developments** considered in the cumulative assessment.

8.10.3 **Table 8.34: Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects: Other SSEN Transmission Developments** and **Table Table 8.35: Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects: Other Third Party** Developments provide a cumulative assessment of the Proposed Development with the other developments proposed by SSEN Transmission, and other third party developments as listed in **Table 8.4: Associated SSEN Transmission Developments, other SSEN Transmission Developments and other Third Party Developments** considered in the cumulative assessment.

Table 8.33: Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects: Associated SSEN Transmission Developments

Cumulative Development	Construction		Operation	
	Landscape	Visual	Landscape	Visual
The Proposed Development	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire:** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects on landscape character within 1.5 km of the Proposed Development, reducing to not significant beyond this distance. **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects on landscape character within 4 km of the Proposed Development, concentrated along Site-facing slopes south of Carron Water, reducing to not significant beyond this distance.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** - The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso -** The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects on the minor road networks east and southeast of the Site, sections of forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest around Upper Baulk, Hill of Trusta and Hill of Swanley. The Proposed Development is also expected to have significant effects on recreational routes near Garrison Hill, along sections of track on the western slopes of Campstone Hill, Garrison Hill and Meikle Carewe Hill. Effects on remaining routes within the study area, including the minor road networks south, east and southeast of the Site and Slug Road / A957 are not expected to be significant.	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire:** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects on landscape character within 1.5 km of the Proposed Development, reducing to not significant beyond this distance. **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects on landscape character within 4 km of the Proposed Development, concentrated along Site-facing slopes south of Carron Water, reducing to not significant beyond this distance.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** - The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso -** The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects on the minor road networks east and southeast of the Site, sections of forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest around Upper Baulk, Hill of Trusta and Hill of Swanley and recreational routes near Garrison Hill, along sections of track on the western slopes of Campstone Hill, Garrison Hill and Meikle Carewe Hill. Effects on remaining routes within the study area, including the minor road networks south of the Site and Slug Road / A957 are not expected to be significant.
Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire** and **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** Construction of the Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL would have physical and perceptual effects on LCT 29 and LCT 24. It is expected to have significant effects on these LCTs, although effects are expected to be localised. The Proposed Development in combination with the Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL is expected to have significant cumulative effects on the landscape character of both LCT 29 and LCT 24 during construction, due to the overlap of construction programmes.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** Construction of the Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** Construction of the Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** - Construction of the Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso -** Construction of the Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** Construction of the Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL is expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton** - The Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL is expected to have significant effects on the settlement of Rickarton. **Routes:** The construction of Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL is expected to have significant effects on the minor road network south, east and southeast of the Site, on Slug Road / A957 and on localised sections of forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest and around Garrison Hill. The Proposed Development in combination with the Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL is expected to have significant cumulative effects on the visual receptors in the southeastern and central parts of the study area (notably from VPs 1 and 5 and on parts of the minor road network east and southeast of the Site, as well as parts of Fetteresso Forest and around Garrison Hill) during construction. This is due to the elevated and open nature of these views towards both developments and the overlap of construction programmes.	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire** and **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** The Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL, once operational, would have physical and perceptual effects on LCT 29 and LCT 24. It is expected to have significant effects on these LCTs. The Proposed Development in combination with the Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL is expected to have significant cumulative effects on the landscape character of LCT 29 during operation as it would intensify the presence of electrical infrastructure, and the OHL would be afforded limited screening. Combined cumulative effects on the landscape character of LCT 24 are also expected to be significant due to the exerting influence of both developments in views from this LCT.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** The Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** The Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** – The Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso –** The Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** The Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL is expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton** - The Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL is expected to have significant effects on the settlement of Rickarton. **Routes:** The Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL is expected to have significant effects on the minor road network south, east and southeast of the Site, on Slug Road / A957 and on localised sections of forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest and around Garrison Hill. The Proposed Development in combination with the Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL is expected to have significant cumulative effects on the visual receptors in the southeastern and central parts of the study area (notably from VPs 1 and 5, and on parts of the minor road network east and southeast of the Site as well as parts of Fetteresso Forest and around Garrison Hill) during operation. This is due to the elevated and open nature of these views towards both developments and the scale of the OHL and Proposed Development in views.

Cumulative Development	Construction		Operation	
	Landscape	Visual	Landscape	Visual
Summary	The Proposed Development is expected to give rise to significant cumulative landscape and visual effects when combined with the Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL, during its construction phase. This is largely due to the scale of construction activities associated with the Proposed Development and the Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL, and the overlap of construction phases. Construction activity associated with the Proposed Development would be experienced from much the area surrounding the Site particularly to the southeast and within Fetteresso Forest, and would be experienced alongside large-scale construction of new steel lattice towers associated with the Tealing to Kintore 400 kV OHL.		The Proposed Development is expected to give rise to significant cumulative landscape and visual effects when combined with the Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL, during its operational phase. This is largely due to the spatial scale of Proposed Development, combined with the vertical prominence of the numerous new steel lattice towers associated with Tealing to Kintore 400 kV OHL. Significant effects on visual receptors would be largely concentrated to the southeast and within the surrounding Fetteresso Forest. In these locations, the Tealing to Kintore 400 kV OHL would form the most prominent feature in views.	

Table 8.34: Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects: Other SSEN Transmission Developments

Cumulative Development	Construction		Operation	
	Landscape	Visual	Landscape	Visual
The Proposed Development	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire:** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects on landscape character within 1.5 km of the Proposed Development, reducing to not significant beyond this distance. **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects on landscape character within 4 km of the Proposed Development, concentrated along Site-facing slopes south of Carron Water, reducing to not significant beyond this distance.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** - The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso -** The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects on the minor road networks east and southeast of the Site, sections of forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest around Upper Baulk, Hill of Trusta and Hill of Swanley. The Proposed Development is also expected to have significant effects on recreational routes near Garrison Hill, along sections of track on the western slopes of Campstone Hill, Garrison Hill and Meikle Carewe Hill. Effects on remaining routes within the study area, including the minor road networks south, east and southeast of the Site and Slug Road / A957 are not expected to be significant.	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire:** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects on landscape character within 1.5 km of the Proposed Development, reducing to not significant beyond this distance. **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects on landscape character within 4 km of the Proposed Development, concentrated along Site-facing slopes south of Carron Water, reducing to not significant beyond this distance.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** - The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso -** The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects on the minor road networks east and southeast of the Site, sections of forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest around Upper Baulk, Hill of Trusta and Hill of Swanley and recreational routes near Garrison Hill, along sections of track on the western slopes of Campstone Hill, Garrison Hill and Meikle Carewe Hill. Effects on remaining routes within the study area, including the minor road networks south of the Site and Slug Road / A957 are not expected to be significant.
Fetteresso 400kV substation extension	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire:** The Fetteresso 400kV substation extension would have physical and perceptual effects on LCT 29. It is expected to have localised significant effects on this LCT during construction. **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** The Fetteresso 0kvkV substation extension is not expected to have significant effects on the landscape character of LCT 24 during construction.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** Construction of the Fetteresso 400kV substation extension is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** Construction of the Fetteresso 400kV substation extension is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** – Construction of the Fetteresso 400kV substation extension is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso –** Construction of the Fetteresso 400kV substation extension is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** Construction of the Fetteresso 400kV substation extension is not expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** Construction of the Fetteresso 400kV substation extension is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The construction of the Fetteresso 400kV substation extension is expected to have significant effects on the minor road network south of the Site and on localised sections of forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest. Effects on more distant tracks within Fetteresso Forest and on the minor road network east and southeast of the Site, Slug	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire:** The Fetteresso 400kV substation extension, once operational, would have physical and perceptual effects on LCT 29. It is expected to have localised significant effects on this LCT. **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** The Fetteresso 400kV substation extension is not expected to have significant effects on the landscape character of LCT 24 during operation.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** The Fetteresso 400kV substation extension is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** The Fetteresso 400kV substation extension is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** – The Fetteresso 400kV substation extension is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso –** The Fetteresso 400kV substation extension is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** The Fetteresso 400kV substation extension is not expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** The Fetteresso 400kV substation extension is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The Fetteresso 400kV substation extension is expected to have significant effects on the minor road network south of the Site and on localised sections of forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest. Effects on more distant tracks within Fetteresso Forest and on the minor road network east and

Cumulative Development	Construction		Operation	
	Landscape	**Visual**	**Landscape**	**Visual**
	Construction of the Fetteresso 400 kV substation extension is expected to commence in 2026 and overlap with the construction of the Proposed Development. Therefore, it is expected that significant localised cumulative effects would occur on both operaduring construction, due to the overlap of construction programmes.	Road / A957 and recreational routes around Garrison Hill are not expected to be significant. Construction of the Fetteresso 400kV substation extension is expected to commence in 2026 and overlap with the construction of the Proposed Development. As such, the Proposed Development in combination with the Fetteresso 400kV substation extension is expected to have significant cumulative effects on the visual receptors in the central parts of the study area (notably in views from parts of Fetteresso Forest, not including viewpoint 5) during construction. This is due to the close proximity of receptors to both developments, the affording of some open views, and the overlap of construction programmes.	The Proposed Development in combination with the Fetteresso 400kV substation extension is expected to have significant cumulative effects on the landscape character of LCT 29 during operation as it would intensify the presence of electrical infrastructure within the LCT. Combined cumulative effects on the landscape character of LCT 24 are not expected to be significant due to the filtered nature of views towards the Fetteresso 400kV substation extension.	southeast of the Site, Slug Road / A957 and recreational routes around Garrison Hill are not expected to be significant. The Proposed Development in combination with the Fetteresso 400kV substation extension is expected to have significant cumulative effects on the visual receptors in the central part of the study area within Fetteresso Forest (not including viewpoint 5) during operation. This is due to the close proximity of receptors to both developments and the provision of some open combined and sequential views towards both developments within Fetteresso Forest.
Network Rail Drumlithie (new transformers at Fetteresso substation extension and two new cable connections)	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire** and **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** Construction of the Network Rail Drumlithie development would have physical and perceptual effects on LCT 29 and LCT 24 due to the installation of transformers at the Fetteresso substation extension and the instalment of two cables that connect to the railway to the southeast. It is expected to have significant effects on these LCTs during construction, although effects are expected to be localised. Construction of the Network Rail Drumlithie development is expected to commence in 2027 and overlap with the construction of the Proposed Development. Therefore, the Proposed Development in combination with the Network Rail Drumlithie development is expected to have localised significant cumulative effects on the landscape character of both LCT 29 and LCT 24 during construction, due to the overlap of construction programmes.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** Construction of the Network Rail Drumlithie development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** Construction of the Network Rail Drumlithie development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** – Construction of the Network Rail Drumlithie development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso –** Construction of the Network Rail Drumlithie development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** Construction of the Network Rail Drumlithie development is not expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** Construction of the Network Rail Drumlithie development is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The construction of the Network Rail Drumlithie development is expected to have some significant effects on localised sections of the minor road network south of the Site where the new cable connections are likely to run. Effects on other routes within the study area are not expected to be significant. Construction of the Network Rail Drumlithie development is expected to commence in 2027 and overlap with the construction of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development in combination with the Network Rail Drumlithie development however is not expected to have significant cumulative effects on the visual receptors due to the limited opportunity for extensive visibility of construction activity for both developments. There would be some combined and sequential cumulative views experienced within the southern and southeastern parts of the study area but the effects of these would be localised and are not expected to be significant. There is a high level of uncertainty attached to this due to the lack of information about the Network Rail Drumlithie development.	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire** and **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** the Network Rail Drumlithie development is not expected to have significant effects on the landscape character of LCT 29 and LCT 24 during operation. The Proposed Development in combination with the Network Rail Drumlithie development is not expected to have significant cumulative effects on the landscape character of LCT 29 and LCT 24 during operation. This is due to the likely size and scale of the proposed transformers and cable connections, and the presence of existing infrastructure within these LCTs.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** The Network Rail Drumlithie development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** The Network Rail Drumlithie development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** – The Network Rail Drumlithie development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso –** The Network Rail Drumlithie development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** The Network Rail Drumlithie development is not expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** The Network Rail Drumlithie development is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The Network Rail Drumlithie development is not expected to have significant effects on the minor road networks south, east and southeast of the Site, Slug Road / A957 or forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest and around Garrison Hill. The Proposed Development in combination with the Network Rail Drumlithie development is not expected to have significant cumulative effects on the visual receptors within the study area. This is due to the likely size and scale of the proposed transformers, which are likely to be filtered in views by surrounding forestry, and the likely scale and extent of the cable connections. There is a high level of uncertainty attached to this due to the lack of information about the Network Rail Drumlithie development.

Cumulative Development	Construction		Operation	
	Landscape	**Visual**	**Landscape**	**Visual**
Fiddes 132 kV replacement (possible requirement to install a new double circuit 132 kV connection from the existing Fiddes substation to the existing/ upgraded Fetteresso substation)	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire** and **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** The Fiddes 132 kV replacement would have physical and perceptual effects on LCT 29 and LCT 24 due to the potential installation of a new 132 kV circuit that would connect to the upgraded Fetteresso substation from the south. It is expected to have significant effects on these LCTs during construction. It is unknown when construction of the Fiddes 132 kV replacement would take place. Should construction programmes of the Fiddes 132 kV replacement and the Proposed Development overlap, there is potential for localised significant effects from parts of LCT 29 and LCT 24 in the southern part of the study area.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** Construction of the Fiddes 132 kV replacement is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** Construction of the Fiddes 132 kV replacement is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** – Construction of the Fiddes 132 kV replacement is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso –** Construction of the Fiddes 132 kV replacement is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** Construction of the Fiddes 132 kV replacement is not expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** Construction of the Fiddes 132 kV replacement is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The construction of the Fiddes 132 kV replacement is expected to have significant effects on localised sections of the minor road network south, east and southeast of the Site where the new 132 kV circuit is likely to run, as well as on localised sections of track within Fetteresso Forest. Effects on other routes within the study area are not expected to be significant. Should construction of the Proposed Development and the Fiddes 132 kV replacement overlap, there is potential for some significant cumulative effects on visual receptors travelling along the minor road network east and southeast of the Site and within Fetteresso Forest due to the close proximity of views of both developments. In the southern and eastern parts of the study area, there would be some combined and sequential cumulative views however the effects of these would be localised and are not expected to be significant. There is a high level of uncertainty attached to this due to the lack of information about the Fiddes 132 kV replacement.	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire** and **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** the Fiddes 132 kV replacement, once operational, would have physical and perceptual effects on LCT 29 and LCT 24. It is expected to have significant effects on these LCTs. The Proposed Development in combination with the Fiddes 132 kV replacement is expected to have localised significant cumulative effects on the landscape character of both LCT 29 and LCT 24 during operation, as it would intensify the presence and/ or influence of electrical infrastructure within these LCTs.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** The Fiddes 132 kV replacement is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** The Fiddes 132 kV replacement is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** – The Fiddes 132 kV replacement is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso –** The Fiddes 132 kV replacement is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** The Fiddes 132 kV replacement is not expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** The Fiddes 132 kV replacement is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The Fiddes 132 kV replacement is expected to have significant effects on localised sections of the minor road network south, east and southeast of the Site where the new 132 kV circuit is likely to run, as well as on localised sections of track within Fetteresso Forest. Effects on other routes within the study area are not expected to be significant. The Proposed Development in combination with the Fiddes 132 kV replacement is expected to have significant cumulative effects on some visual receptors in the central and southeastern parts of the study area (notably from parts of the minor road network east and southeast of the Site, from VP 1 and from parts of Fetteresso Forest) during operation. This is due to the close proximity of receptors in the Fetteresso Forest to both developments and the provision of some open combined and sequential views towards both developments from southeastern parts of the study area. There is a high level of uncertainty attached to this due to the lack of information about the Fiddes 132 kV replacement.
SSEN Transmission offshore grids project (onshore element likely to include onshore HVDC converter station and underground cables)	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire** and **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** Construction of the SSEN Transmission offshore grids project would have physical and perceptual effects on LCT 29 and LCT 24 due to the construction of a converter station near the Proposed Development in LCT 29 and instalment of underground cables within both LCT 29 and LCT 24 that would connect the converter station to the coast. It is expected to have significant effects on these LCTs during construction, although effects are expected to be localised. It is unknown when construction of the SSEN Transmission	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** Construction of the SSEN Transmission offshore grids project is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** Construction of the SSEN Transmission offshore grids project is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** – Construction of the SSEN Transmission offshore grids project is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso –** Construction of the SSEN Transmission offshore grids project is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** Construction of the SSEN Transmission offshore grids project is expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** Construction of the SSEN Transmission offshore grids project is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The construction of the SSEN Transmission offshore grids project is expected to have significant effects on localised sections of the minor road network south, east and southeast of the Site where the underground cables are likely to run, as well as on localised sections of track within Fetteresso Forest where construction of the converter station is likely to be visible. Significant effects are also expected from along tracks around Garrison Hill where open elevated views to the south are afforded. Effects on other routes within the study area are not expected to be significant.	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire:** The SSEN Transmission offshore grids project, once operational, would have physical and perceptual effects on LCT 29 due to the presence of the converter station. It is expected to have localised significant effects on this LCT. **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** The SSEN Transmission offshore grids project is not expected to have significant effects on the landscape character of LCT 24 during operation. The Proposed Development in combination with the SSEN Transmission offshore grids project is expected to have localised significant cumulative	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** The SSEN Transmission offshore grids project is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** The SSEN Transmission offshore grids project is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** – The SSEN Transmission offshore grids project is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso –** The SSEN Transmission offshore grids project is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** The SSEN Transmission offshore grids project is expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** The SSEN Transmission offshore grids project is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The SSEN Transmission offshore grids project is expected to have significant effects on localised sections of the minor road network south, east and southeast of the Site, as well as sections of Slug Road / A957, tracks around Garrison Hill to the north of the Site, and from localised sections of track with Fetteresso Forest, due to visibility of the proposed converter station. The Proposed Development in combination with the SSEN Transmission offshore grids project is expected to have significant cumulative effects on some visual receptors in the central, northern and southern parts of the study

Cumulative Development	Construction		Operation	
	Landscape	**Visual**	**Landscape**	**Visual**
	offshore grids project would take place. Should construction programmes of the SSEN Transmission offshore grids project and the Proposed Development overlap, there is potential for localised significant effects from parts of LCT 29 and LCT 24 in the southern part of the study area.	Should construction of the Proposed Development and the SSEN Transmission offshore grids project overlap, there is potential for some significant cumulative effects on the visual receptors travelling along the minor road network east and southeast of the Site as well as those within Fetteresso Forest due to the close proximity of views of both developments. There is a high level of uncertainty attached to this due to the lack of information about the SSEN Transmission offshore grids project.	effects on the landscape character of LCT 29 during operation as it would intensify the presence of electrical infrastructure within the LCT. Combined cumulative effects on the landscape character of LCT 24 are not expected to be significant due to the underground nature of cables associated with the SSEN Transmission offshore grids project.	area (notably from VPs 1 and 5, as well as from parts of the minor road network east and southeast of the Site and parts of Fetteresso Forest and around Garrison Hill) during operation. This is due to the likely extent of visibility of the converter station, which is likely to extend above intervening forestry, as well as the provision of some open combined and sequential views towards both developments. There is a high level of uncertainty attached to this due to the lack of information about the SSEN Transmission offshore grids project.
Glendye wind farm grid connection (new 132kV overhead line supported by steel trident poles to connect Glendye wind farm to the existing Fetteresso substation. The final 1 km of the connection would be undergrounded)	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire** and **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** The Glendye wind farm grid connection would have some physical and perceptual effects on the landscape character of LCT 29 and 24. However due to the scale and nature the proposed overhead line, effects are not expected to be significant during construction. Construction of the Glendye wind farm grid connection is expected to commence in 2026 and overlap with the construction of the Proposed Development. Given that the construction of the Glendye wind farm grid connection is not expected to give rise to significant effects on landscape character, no significant cumulative effects are expected during construction.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** Construction of the Glendye wind farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** Construction of the Glendye wind farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** – Construction of the Glendye wind farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso –** Construction of the Glendye wind farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** Construction of the Glendye wind farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** Construction of the Glendye wind farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The construction of the Glendye wind farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects on the minor road networks south, east and southeast of the Site, Slug Road / A957 or on forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest and around Garrison Hill. Construction of the Glendye wind farm grid connection is expected to commence in 2026 and overlap with the construction of the Proposed Development. However, given that the construction of the Glendye wind farm grid connection is not expected to give rise to any significant visual effects, no significant cumulative visual effects are expected. There is a high level of uncertainty attached to this due to the lack of information about the Glendye wind farm grid connection.	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire** and **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** The Glendye wind farm grid connection, once operational, would have some physical and perceptual effects on the landscape character of LCT 29 and 24. However due to the scale and nature the proposed overhead line, effects are not expected to be significant during operation. Given the proposed scale and nature of the Glendye wind farm grid connection, combined cumulative effects with the Proposed Development on landscape character are not expected to be significant.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** The Glendye wind farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** The Glendye wind farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** – The Glendye wind farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso –** The Glendye wind farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** The Glendye wind farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** The Glendye wind farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The Glendye wind farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects on the minor road networks south, east and southeast of the Site, Slug Road / A957 or on forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest and around Garrison Hill. The Proposed Development in combination with the Glendye wind farm grid connection is not expected to have significant cumulative effects on the visual receptors within the study area. This is primarily due to the proposed scale and nature of the overhead line and the presence of larger existing vertical infrastructure in views. There is a high level of uncertainty attached to this due to the lack of information about the Glendye wind farm grid connection.

Cumulative Development	Construction		Operation	
	Landscape	**Visual**	**Landscape**	**Visual**
Summary	There is a high level of uncertainty associated with a number of cumulative developments listed above. Therefore, it is difficult to predict the cumulative effects that may arise as a result of the combination of the Proposed Development and the inter-projects, during construction. However, should construction overlap, or for developments where the construction period is known to overlap with that of the Proposed Development (Fetteresso 400kV substation extension, Network Rail Drumlithie and Glendye wind farm grid connection) there is potential for the Proposed Development to give rise to localised significant cumulative landscape and visual effects when combined with the construction of other inter-project developments, during construction. Localised effects on landscape character are likely to occur within the central and southern parts of the Site, primarily within LCT 29 within and around Fetteresso Forest where the Proposed Development and most of the Other SSEN Transmission Developments are located. Significant cumulative visual effects are also likely to be experienced within the central and southern parts of the study area, primarily related to in-combination effects with the numerous proposed grid infrastructure projects within and to the south of Fetteresso Forest. There is limited potential for significant cumulative visual effects with the Glendye wind farm grid connection as significant effects during the construction of this development alone are not expected to be significant.		There is a high level of uncertainty associated with a number of cumulative developments listed above. Therefore, it is difficult to predict the cumulative effects that may arise as a result of the combination of the Proposed Development and the inter-projects, during operation. The Proposed Development is expected to give rise to significant cumulative landscape and visual effects when combined with Other SSEN Transmission Development, during its operational phase. This is largely due to the Proposed Development and most of the Other SSEN Transmission Development being located within or near Fetteresso Forest, which together would intensify the presence of electrical infrastructure within this area. Localised significant cumulative effects on landscape character are likely to occur within the central and southern parts of the Site, primarily within LCT 29 which the Proposed Development and most of the Other SSEN Transmission Developments are located within. Significant effects on visual receptors would be largely concentrated within the central part of the study area, particularly from parts of Fetteresso Forest where receptors would be in close proximity and have some open views towards a number of the Other SSEN Transmission Developments adjacent to the Site. Significant effects on visual receptors would also occur within some northern and southern parts of the study area where some open combined, successive and sequential views of the Proposed Development and a number of the Other SSEN Transmission Developments may be available. There is limited potential for significant cumulative visual effects with the Network Rail Drumlithie development and the Glendye wind farm grid connection due to the limited visibility or the proposed size, scale and nature of these developments.	

Table 8.35: Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects: Other Third Party Developments

Cumulative Development	Construction		Operation	
	Landscape	**Visual**	**Landscape**	**Visual**
The Proposed Development	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire:** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects on landscape character within 1.5 km of the Proposed Development, reducing to not significant beyond this distance. **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects on landscape character within 4 km of the Proposed Development, concentrated along Site-facing slopes south of Carron Water, reducing to not significant beyond this distance.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** - The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso -** The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects on the minor road networks east and southeast of the Site, sections of forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest around Upper Baulk, Hill of Trusta and Hill of Swanley. The Proposed Development is also expected to have significant effects on recreational routes near Garrison Hill, along sections of track on the western slopes of Campstone Hill, Garrison Hill and Meikle Carewe Hill. Effects on remaining routes within the study area, including the minor road networks south, east and southeast of the Site and Slug Road / A957 are not expected to be significant.	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire:** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects on landscape character within 1.5 km of the Proposed Development, reducing to not significant beyond this distance. **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects on landscape character within 4 km of the Proposed Development, concentrated along Site-facing slopes south of Carron Water, reducing to not significant beyond this distance.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** - The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso -** The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** The Proposed Development is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The Proposed Development is expected to have significant effects on the minor road networks east and southeast of the Site, sections of forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest around Upper Baulk, Hill of Trusta and Hill of Swanley and recreational routes near Garrison Hill, along sections of track on the western slopes of Campstone Hill, Garrison Hill and Meikle Carewe Hill. Effects on remaining routes within the study area, including the minor road networks south of the Site and Slug Road / A957 are not expected to be significant.
Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection (onshore underground export cables and substation	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire** and **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** Construction of the Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection would have	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** Construction of the Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** Construction of the Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** – Construction of the Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection is not expected to have significant effects.	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire:** The Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection, once operational, would have physical and perceptual effects on LCT 29 due to the presence of the	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** The Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** The Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** – The Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection is expected to have significant effects.

Cumulative Development	Construction		Operation	
	Landscape	**Visual**	**Landscape**	**Visual**
near proposed Hurlie 400 kV substation)	physical and perceptual effects on LCT 29 and LCT 24 due to the construction of a substation near the Proposed Development in LCT 29 and instalment of export cables within both LCT 29 and LCT 24 that would connect offshore wind farm to the substation. It is expected to have significant effects on these LCTs during construction, although effects are expected to be localised. It is unknown when construction of the Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection would take place. Should construction programmes of the Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection and the Proposed Development overlap, there is potential for localised significant effects from parts of LCT 29 and LCT 24 in the southern part of the study area.	**Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso –** Construction of the Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** Construction of the Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection is expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** Construction of the Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The construction of the Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection is expected to have significant effects on localised sections of the minor road network south, east and southeast of the Site where the export cables are likely to run, as well as on localised sections of track within Fetteresso Forest where construction of the substation is likely to be visible. Effects on other routes within the study area are not expected to be significant. Should construction of the Proposed Development and the Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection overlap, there is potential for some significant cumulative effects on visual receptors travelling along the minor road network east and southeast of the Site and those within Fetteresso Forest due to the close proximity of views of construction activity for both developments. In the southern and eastern parts of the study area, there would be some combined and sequential cumulative views however the effects of these would be localised and are not expected to be significant.	substation. It is expected to have localised significant effects on this LCT. **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** The Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection is not expected to have significant effects on the landscape character of LCT 24 during operation. The Proposed Development in combination with the Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection is expected to have localised significant cumulative effects on the landscape character of LCT 29 during operation as it would intensify the presence of electrical infrastructure within the LCT. Combined cumulative effects on the landscape character of LCT 24 are not expected to be significant due to the underground nature of the export cables associated with Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection.	**Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso –** The Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** The Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection is expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** The Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection is expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The SSEN Transmission offshore grids project is expected to have significant effects on localised sections of the minor road network south, east and southeast of the Site, as well as sections of Slug Road / A957 and tracks around Garrison Hill to the north of the Site to the north of the Site, and from localised sections of track within Fetteresso Forest, due to visibility of the proposed substation. The Proposed Development in combination with the Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection is expected to have significant cumulative effects on some visual receptors in the central and southern parts of the study area (notably from VPs 1 and 5, as well as from parts of the minor road network east and southeast of the Site, parts of Fetteresso Forest and around Garrison Hill) during operation. This is due to the likely extent of visibility of the substation, which would potentially extend above intervening forestry, as well as the provision of some open combined and sequential views towards both developments.
Quithel BESS (battery energy storage system with 50mW capacity)	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire** and **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** Construction of the Quithel BESS would have physical and perceptual effects on LCT 29 and LCT 24 due to the construction of the BESS facility within LCT 24 and the construction of an underground cable that would connect the BESS facility to Fetteresso Substation in LCT 29. The construction of the BESS facility is expected to have significant effects on LCT 24, although effects are expected to be localised. Effects on LCT 29 during the construction of the	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** Construction of the Quithel BESS is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** Construction of the Quithel BESS is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** – Construction of the Quithel BESS is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso –** Construction of the Quithel BESS is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** Construction of the Quithel BESS is not expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** Construction of the Quithel BESS is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The construction of the Quithel BESS is expected to have significant effects on localised sections of the minor road network south of the Site where construction of the BESS facility is likely to be visible. Effects on other routes within the study area are not expected to be significant. Should construction of the Proposed Development and the Quithel BESS overlap, there is potential for some significant cumulative effects on visual receptors within the southern and southeastern parts of the study area (notably from VPs 1 and parts of the	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire:** The Quithel BESS, once operational, would have perceptual effects on LCT 29 due to the proximity of the BESS facility to this LCT and the exerting infrastructural influence it would have on the LCT. It is expected to have localised significant effects on this LCT. **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** The Quithel BESS, once operational, would have physical and perceptual effects on LCT 24 due to the presence of the BESS facility within the LCT. It is expected to have localised significant effects on this LCT.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** The Quithel BESS is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** The Quithel BESS is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** – The Quithel BESS is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso –** The Quithel BESS is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** The Quithel BESS is not expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** The Quithel BESS is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The Quithel BESS is expected to have significant effects on localised sections of the minor road network south of the Site due to visibility of the BESS facility. The Proposed Development in combination with the Quithel BESS is expected to have significant cumulative effects on some visual receptors in the southern and southeastern parts of the study area (notably from VPs 1 and parts of the road network south of the Site) during operation. This is due to the likely extent

Cumulative Development	Construction		Operation	
	Landscape	**Visual**	**Landscape**	**Visual**
	underground cable are not expected to be significant. It is unknown when construction of the Quithel BESS would take place. Should construction programmes of the Quithel BESS and the Proposed Development overlap, there is potential for localised significant effects from parts of LCT 24 in the southern part of the study area.	road network south of the Site), where there would be some combined and sequential cumulative views of construction activity however the effects of these would be localised. There is a high level of uncertainty attached to this due to the lack of information about the Quithel BESS.	The Proposed Development in combination with the Quithel BESS is expected to have have localised significant cumulative effects on the landscape character of both LCT 24 and LCT 29 during operation as it would intensify the influence and presence of electrical infrastructure within these LCTs. These effects however are considered to be localised within the northwestern edge of LCT 24 and the southern edge of LCT 29.	of visibility of the BESS facility, as well as the provision of some open combined and sequential views towards both developments. There is a high level of uncertainty attached to this due to the lack of information about the Quithel BESS.
Fetteresso Wind Farm Grid Connection - (underground cable between proposed Fetteresso Wind Farm and Fetteresso substation)	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire** and **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** The Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects on the landscape character of LCT 29 or 24 during construction. It is unknown when construction of the Fetteresso Wind Farm and its associate grid connection would take place. Should construction programmes of the future wind farm connection and the Proposed development overlap, no significant cumulative effects on the landscape character of LCT 29 and LCT 24 are expected during construction.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** Construction of the Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** Construction of the Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** – Construction of the Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso –** Construction of the Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** Construction of the Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** Construction of the Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The construction of the Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects on the minor road networks south, east and southeast of the Site, Slug Road / A957 or on forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest and around Garrison Hill. Should construction of the Proposed Development and the Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection overlap, no significant cumulative visual effects are expected given that the construction of the Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection is not expected to give rise to any significant visual effects. There is a high level of uncertainty attached to this due to the lack of information about the grid connection element of the consented Fetteresso Wind Farm.	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire** and **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** The Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects on the landscape character of LCT 29 and LCT 24 during operation. The Proposed Development in combination with the Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection is not expected to have significant cumulative effects on the landscape character of LCT 29 and LCT 24 during operation. This is due to the underground nature of the cable connection between Fetteresso Wind Farm and the existing Fetteresso substation.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** The Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** The Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** – The Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso –** The Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** The Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** The Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection is not expected to have significant effects on the minor road networks south, east and southeast of the Site, Slug Road / A957 or on forest tracks within Fetteresso Forest and around Garrison Hill. The Proposed Development in combination with the Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection is not expected to have significant cumulative effects on the visual receptors within the study area due to the underground nature of the cable connection between Fetteresso Wind Farm and the existing Fetteresso substation. There is a high level of uncertainty attached to this due to the lack of information about the grid connection element of the consented Fetteresso Wind Farm.

Cumulative Development	Construction		Operation	
	Landscape	**Visual**	**Landscape**	**Visual**
Craigneil Wind Farm	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire:** Craigneil Wind Farm would have physical and perceptual effects on LCT 29. It is expected to have localised significant effects on this LCT during construction. **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** Craigneil Wind Farm is not expected to have significant effects on the landscape character of LCT 24 during construction. It is unknown when construction of Craigneil Wind Farm would take place. Should construction programmes of Craigneil Wind Farm and the Proposed development overlap, there is potential for localised significant effects from parts of LCT 29 between Fetteresso Forest and south of Durris Forest.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** Construction of Craigneil Wind Farm is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** Construction of Craigneil Wind Farm is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** – Construction of Craigneil Wind Farm is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso –** Construction of Craigneil Wind Farm is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** Construction of Craigneil Wind Farm is not expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** Construction of Craigneil Wind Farm is expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** The construction of Craigneil Wind Farm is expected to have significant effects on localised sections of Slug Road / A957 and sections of tracks around Garrison Hill. Effects on other routes within the study area are not expected to be significant. Should construction of the Proposed Development and Craigneil Wind Farm overlap, no significant cumulative visual effects are expected given that there are limited locations where the construction of both developments will be visible in combined, successive or sequential views.	**LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire:** Craigneil Wind Farm, once operational, would have physical and perceptual effects on LCT 29. It is expected to have significant effects on this LCT. **LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire:** Craigneil Wind Farm, once operational, would have perceptual effects on LCT 24. It is expected to have localised significant effects on this LCT. The Proposed Development in combination with Craigneil Wind Farm is expected to have localised significant cumulative effects on the landscape character of LCT 29 during operation as it would intensify the presence of electrical infrastructure within the LCT. Combined cumulative effects on the landscape character of LCT 24 are also expected to be significant due to the increased perceptual influence of electrical infrastructure as a result of both developments. These effects however are considered to be localised within the north and north-western parts of the LCT.	**Viewpoint 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie –** Craigneil Wind Farm is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 2: Nether Wyndings –** Craigneil Wind Farm is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 3: Rickarton** – Craigneil Wind Farm is expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 4: Minor road west of Kirktown of Fetteresso –** Craigneil Wind Farm is not expected to have significant effects. **Viewpoint 5: Hill of Swanley –** Craigneil Wind Farm is expected to have significant effects. **Settlements: Rickarton -** Craigneil Wind Farm is expected to have significant effects. **Routes:** Craigneil Wind Farm is expected to have significant effects on localised sections of Slug Road / A957 and localised sections of tracks around Garrison Hill and within Fetteresso Forest due to visibility of the proposed wind farm. Effects on other routes within the study area are not expected to be significant. The Proposed Development in combination with Craigneil Wind Farm is expected to have significant cumulative effects on some visual receptors in the northern and central parts of the study area, including from sections of track around Garrison Hill and from some tracks within Fetteresso Forest during operation. This is due to the proximity of receptors to both developments and the provision of some open combined, successive and sequential views towards both developments.

Cumulative Development	Construction		Operation	
	Landscape	**Visual**	**Landscape**	**Visual**
Summary	There is a high level of uncertainty associated with a number of cumulative developments listed above. Therefore, it is difficult to predict the cumulative effects that may arise as a result of the combination of the Proposed Development and the Other Third Party Developments, during construction. However, should construction overlap, there is potential for the Proposed Development to give rise to localised significant cumulative landscape and visual effects when combined with the construction of the Other Third Party Developments during construction. Localised effects on landscape character are likely to occur within the central and southern parts of the Site, primarily within LCT 29 within and around Fetteresso Forest where the Proposed Development and most of the Other Third Party Developments are located. Significant cumulative visual effects are also likely to be experienced within the central, southern and southeastern parts of the study area, primarily related to in-combination effects with the Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Cable Connection, within Fetteresso Forest and the Quithel BESS to the south of Fetteresso Forest. There is limited potential for significant cumulative visual effects with the Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection and Craigneil Wind Farm as significant effects during the construction of these developments alone are not expected to be significant.		There is a high level of uncertainty associated with a number of cumulative developments listed above. Therefore, it is difficult to predict the cumulative effects that may arise as a result of the combination of the Proposed Development and the Other Third Party Developments, during operation. The Proposed Development is expected to give rise to significant cumulative landscape and visual effects when combined with the Other Third Party Developments, during its operational phase. This is largely due to the Proposed Development and most of the Other Third Party Developments being located within or near Fetteresso Forest, which together would intensify the presence of electrical infrastructure within this area. Localised significant cumulative effects on landscape character are likely to occur within the central and southern parts of the Site, primarily within LCT 29 which the Proposed Development and most of the Other Third Party Developments are located within. Significant effects on visual receptors would be largely concentrated within the central, southern and southeastern part of the study area, including from parts of Fetteresso Forest where receptors would be in close proximity and have some open views towards a number of the Other Third Party Developments adjacent to the Site. Significant effects on visual receptors would also occur within some southern and southeastern parts of the study area where some open combined, successive and sequential views of the Proposed Development and some of the Other Third Party Developments may be available. There is limited potential for significant cumulative visual effects with the Fetteresso Wind Farm grid connection due to the limited visibility of this development.	

8.11 Summary of Significant Effects

8.11.1 **Table 8.36** and **Table 8.37** summarise the predicted residual effects of the Proposed Development on landscape and visual receptors prior to and following application of additional mitigation.

Table 8.36: Summary of Significant Effects during Construction

Predicted Effects	Significance of Effect	Mitigation	Significance of Residual Effects
Construction			
The Site	**Major (Significant)**	N/A	N/A
LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire	**Moderate (Significant)** within 1.5 km of the Proposed Development.	N/A	N/A
LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills - Aberdeenshire	**Moderate (Significant)** within 4 km of the Proposed Development.	N/A	N/A
VP 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie	**Moderate (Significant)**	N/A	N/A
VP 5: Hill of Swanley	**Moderate (Significant)**	N/A	N/A
Minor Road Network east and southeast of the Site	**Moderate (Significant)**	N/A	N/A
Recreational Routes within Fetteresso Forest	**Moderate (Significant)** for people travelling along sections of track around Upper Baulk, Hill of Trusta and Hill of Swanley.	N/A	N/A
Recreational Routes near Garrison Hill	**Moderate (Significant)** for people travelling along sections of track on the western slopes of Campstone Hill, Garrison Hill and Meikle Carewe Hill.	N/A	N/A

Table 8.37: Summary of Significant Effects during Operation

Predicted Effects	Significance of Effect (Year 0)	Change between Year 0 and Year 10	Significance of Residual Effects (Year 10)
Operation			
The Site	**Major (Significant)**	Gradual maturation of landscape mitigation planting around the north, eastern and southern sides of the Proposed Development.	**Major (Significant)**
LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire	**Moderate (Significant)** within 1.5 km of the Proposed Development.	Gradual maturation of landscape mitigation planting around the north, eastern and southern sides of the Proposed Development.	**Moderate (Significant)**
LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills - Aberdeenshire	**Moderate (Significant)** within 4 km of the Proposed Development.	Gradual maturation of landscape mitigation planting around the north, eastern and southern sides	**Moderate (Significant)**

Predicted Effects	Significance of Effect (Year 0)	Change between Year 0 and Year 10	Significance of Residual Effects (Year 10)
		of the Proposed Development.	
VP 1: Hillhead of Auquhirie	**Moderate (Significant)**	Gradual maturation of landscape mitigation planting around the north, eastern and southern sides of the Proposed Development.	**Moderate (Significant)**
VP 5: Hill of Swanley	**Moderate (Significant)**	Gradual maturation of landscape mitigation planting around the north, eastern and southern sides of the Proposed Development.	**Moderate (Significant)**
Minor Road Network east and southeast of the Site	**Moderate (Significant)**	Gradual maturation of landscape mitigation planting around the north, eastern and southern sides of the Proposed Development.	**Moderate (Significant)**
Recreational Routes within Fetteresso Forest	**Moderate (Significant)** for people travelling along sections of track around Upper Baulk, Hill of Trusta and Hill of Swanley.	Gradual maturation of landscape mitigation planting around the north, eastern and southern sides of the Proposed Development.	**Moderate (Significant)** for people travelling along sections of track around Upper Baulk, Hill of Trusta and Hill of Swanley.
Recreational Routes near Garrison Hill	**Moderate (Significant)** for people travelling along the summits and upper slopes of Garrison Hill and Campstone Hill.	Gradual maturation of landscape mitigation planting around the north, eastern and southern sides of the Proposed Development.	**Moderate (Significant)** for people travelling along the summits and upper slopes of Garrison Hill and Campstone Hill.

Table 8.38: Summary of Significant Cumulative Effects

Predicted Effects	Significance of Effect at Construction	Significance of Effect at Operation
Cumulative		
Landscape character (LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire and LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire)	Potential for significant cumulative effects on landscape character (LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire and LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire)	Potential for significant cumulative effects on landscape character (LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire and LCT 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills – Aberdeenshire)
Visual Receptors	Potential for significant cumulative effects on visual receptors, including from: Viewpoint 1 Viewpoint 5 Recreational routes in Fetteresso Forest and around Garrison Hill	Potential for significant cumulative effects on visual receptors, including from: Viewpoint 1 Viewpoint 5 Recreational routes in Fetteresso Forest and around Garrison Hill Minor Road Network south of the Site