

APPENDIX 8.2: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

Sensitivity Assessment of NatureScot Landscape Character Type (LCT) 20 Undulating Agricultural Heartland

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Susceptibility / Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT <i>Words in italics are quotes from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment</i>	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE RATING			OVERALL SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE
			Lower	↔	Higher	
SUSCEPTIBILITY						
Scale	<i>Large fields.</i>	Large scale open landscape, with gentle undulation.	▪			LCT 20 is predominantly characterised by gently undulating terrain with broad shallow valleys, featuring sparse woodland cover and scattered small settlements. Detracting features include small windfarms, overhead transmission lines, major roads, and quarry. The LCT is large scale and very open, with far-reaching views of the surrounding landscape. The skyline is non distinctive and cultivated landscapes, such as this, indicate reduced susceptibility. The susceptibility to change is Medium .
Landform	<i>Gently undulating, rolling landform of low hills and ridges, with broad shallow valleys. Smoothly rounded terrain.</i>	A moderately undulating landscape.		▪		
Land cover	<i>Frequent, regularly dispersed medium-sized farms, with pockets of smaller farms and crofts. Mixed arable and pasture. Large fields, divided by fences or more rarely low walls. Generally sparse woodland cover, with broadleaf trees concentrated in shelterbelts along ridges and around farms. Large coniferous forests occur in some areas. Some mixed woodland in the north of the Study Area around Cuminstown where a particular strong framework of beech shelterbelts is a feature. Pockets of moorland around New Pitsligo.</i>	Agricultural landscape consisting of arable and pasture with woodland plantations and shelter belts offers opportunity to accommodate change.		▪		
Texture	<i>Open expansive character. Occasional beech and thorn hedges, with stone dykes more common in parts. Generally sparse woodland cover, with broadleaf trees concentrated in shelterbelts along ridges, and around farms. Larger coniferous forests occur in some areas, and estate policies and occasional beech shelterbelts also occur.</i>	Pattern of vegetation of large geometric fields with occasional woodland, hedge and tree cover offers opportunity for screening.		▪		
Built Environment	<i>A well settled landscape with a number of small settlements including historic planned fermtowns, castles and designed landscapes.</i>	Few settlements present. Contemporary towers and turbines present.	▪	▪		
Detracting features	<i>Small single wind turbines are associated with many farms with single and small groups of commercial scale turbines infrequently located on low ridges and local hills. Overhead transmission line present. Major roads present.</i>	Presence of detracting features, turbines, overhead lines.	▪			
Perceptual aspects	<i>This landscape has an open and expansive character with long views across the surrounding landscape a key feature. Views to landmark hills within Aberdeenshire and Moray are also possible with Bennachie, Tap o'Noth, Knock Hill, Mormond Hill and Ben Rinnes visible in good weather. The relatively limited relief and openness of this landscape give big skies and a notably strong sense of space and light. Movement of the clouds overhead form patterns of light and shade across the fields.</i>	<i>Long distance views allow feeling of openness.</i>		▪		
Visual Amenity	<i>Open, expansive character with views to landmark hills; the Culsh monument above New Deer is a key landmark feature.</i>	Open views with elevated land and occasional focal points.		▪		
VALUE						
Recognition	The Deveron Valley Special Landscape Area lies approximately 10 km to the west of the Site, within the LCT.	There are no national landscape designations within the LCT. Regional designation is the Aberdeenshire SLA to northwest of LCT. Locally valued. Some long-distance recreational routes present.	▪	▪		There are no national landscape designations in the LCT. Aberdeenshire SLA present to northwest of the LCT on the perimeter. The Core Paths / designated public path network within the LCT is
Features	Several monuments and castle ruins within the LCT. Key views – from Hill of	Predominantly rural agricultural and forestry		▪		

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			Lower	↔	Higher	
Susceptibility / Value	<p>Culsh, the Culsh Monument a local monument.</p> <p>Visually detracting features present, wind turbines and overhead lines.</p> <p>NCN Route 1 crosses the LCT from Turriff to Maud.</p> <p>Formantine and Buchan Way Long distance path.</p> <p>Few local paths.</p>	<p>landscape. Some recreational routes.</p> <p>Detracting elements present. Few paths present.</p> <p>Ordinary landscape.</p>				<p>relatively sparse. A few cycle routes are present.</p> <p>The value of the landscape is Medium.</p>
Quality / Condition	<p>Ordinary to good quality rural landscape containing visual detractors such as single wind or clusters of wind turbines and existing overhead lines.</p>	<p>Ordinary to good quality landscape, reasonably attractive.</p>		▪		

OVERALL SENSITIVITY
The sensitivity of LCT 20 Undulating Agricultural Heartland is judged to be **Medium** because both the susceptibility and value of the LCT are **Medium**.