Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report

LT384 Tealing to Westfield Overhead Line (OHL) 400 kV Upgrade

November 2024

VOLUME 2: CHAPTER 7 – LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

Figures (Volume 3 of this EIA Report)

Figure 7.1a-c: Landscape Character Types and Landscape Designations

Appendices (Volume 4 of this EIA Report)

There are no Appendices associated with this chapter.

7. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 This chapter of the EIA Report considers the potential for effects on landscape character and visual amenity resulting from the Proposed Development. Details of the scope and approach to the assessment are set out, followed by a description of the baseline conditions and an assessment of impacts and effects on identified receptors.

7.1.2 Landscape and visual effects are interrelated but assessed separately. Landscape effects relate to changes to physical elements and the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of a landscape which contribute to its distinctive character. Visual effects relate to changes to views available to and experienced by people.

7.2 Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

Scope of the Assessment

7.2.1 The Scoping Report identified that the majority of potential effects on landscape character and visual amenity would be limited and temporary in nature and therefore unlikely to be significant. It was therefore concluded that landscape and visual assessment could be scoped out of the EIA Report.

7.2.2 Details of the Proposed Development are now available and include the potential for changes to heights and/or positions of a small number of existing OHL towers and the potential for removal or alteration of existing trees within the nationally recognised Megginch Castle Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL). These represent potential for permanent change and as such a targeted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken.

7.2.3 A detailed project description is included in Chapter 3 (Volume 2) which notes that the following tower works may be required:

- to mitigate a 132 kV clearance constraint, Towers 155 and 156 may need to be extended in height using a 2 m long body extension;
    - due to constraints associated with the conductor type, coupled with an inability to utilise mid-span joints, it may be the case that either Tower 129 or 132 (not both) may need to be replaced. To facilitate these works, a temporary diversion tower (expected to be installed for less than 1 year) would also be required. The maximum dimensions of these towers are:
        - Tower 129 (existing height 45.49 m): The height of the new tower: 45.5 m, and the temporary diversion tower 45.5 m; **or**
        - Tower 132 (existing height 47.02 m): The height of the new tower: 51.15 m, and the temporary diversion tower 51.3 m.

7.2.4 The LVIA recognises that different stages of the Proposed Development may result in different levels of landscape and visual effects and as such the assessment includes consideration of effects resulting from both the construction and operational phases.

Extent of the Study Area

7.2.5 The study areas for the targeted LVIA have been defined as the extent of the Megginch Castle GDL and 1 km offsets from OHL towers that may be subject to change in height and/or position. These extents are considered to represent the outer limit for potential significant effects, informed by an understanding of the existing baseline, nature of potential change and with application of professional judgement. The study areas are shown on Figures 7-1a to 7-1c (Volume 3).

Consultation Undertaken to Date

7.2.6 Consultation has been undertaken through the Scoping process which confirmed that landscape and visual considerations could be scoped out of the EIA Report.

7.3 Method of Baseline Data Collation

7.3.1 The existing baseline conditions have been recorded through a combination of desk and field-based study and provide the basis against which proposed change is measured.

7.3.2 Desk-based research involved a review of mapping and aerial photography, planning and policy documents, landscape character information, and other documents and publications relevant to the baseline environment of the study areas.

7.3.3 Key sources of information for the landscape and visual baseline studies include:

- Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping, and aerial photography;
- relevant national, regional, and local planning policy and guidance;
- published citations and descriptions of landscape designations; and,
- NatureScot Landscape Character Type mapping and descriptions.

7.3.4 Site survey was undertaken in April 2024 on a targeted basis to help identify potential receptors and to review and verify the findings of desk-based study. Survey involved travel to each of the study areas and immediate surroundings to allow an understanding of the baseline conditions and potential change at each of the identified landscape and visual receptors.

Determining Sensitivity of Receptors and Magnitude of Change

7.3.5 The LVIA has been undertaken in accordance with the principes of *Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*[1] (GLVIA3) and other good practice guidance.

7.3.6 GLVIA3 places a strong emphasis on the importance of professional judgement in identifying and defining the significance of landscape and visual effects. Professional judgement has been used in combination with structured methods and criteria to evaluate landscape and visual value and susceptibility, the resulting sensitivity, magnitude, and significance of effect.

7.3.7 Landscape receptors are described as components of the landscape that may be affected by the Proposed Development. These can include overall character and key characteristics, individual elements or features and specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects.

[1] Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition), Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013.

7.3.8 Sensitivity is defined through evaluation of the value of the landscape receptor (undertaken as part of the baseline study) and its susceptibility to change to the specific type of development being considered.

7.3.9 Landscape value is frequently addressed by reference to international, national and local designations but also considers the following factors:

- *Natural heritage* – extent to which a landscape has clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological, or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape;
- *Cultural heritage* – extent to which a landscape has clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape;
- *Landscape quality / condition* - the measure of the physical state of the landscape including the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements;
- *Association* - extent that connections with notable people, events and the arts contribute to the perception of the landscape receptor;
- *Distinctiveness* – a measure of the strength of identity and expression of characteristics, presence of distinct, rare or unusual features and contribution to character or identity of a settlement;
- *Recreation* - extent of recreational opportunities and activities where appreciation of the landscape is important to the experience / enjoyment;
- *Scenic quality* - the level of visual and sensory appeal of the landscape;
- *Perceptual aspects* - extent to which the landscape receptor is recognised for its perceptual qualities, for example wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies; and,
- *Functional* – extent to which the landscape performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape.

7.3.10 Landscape susceptibility relates to the ability of a particular landscape to accommodate the Proposed Development. It is appraised through consideration of the baseline characteristics of the landscape, and in particular, the scale or complexity of a given landscape.

7.3.11 The appraisal of sensitivity of the landscape receptor is made by applying professional judgement to combine and analyse the factors which contribute to the identified value with those which contribute to susceptibility. Landscape sensitivity is described based on a scale of high, medium, low or very low. Table 7-1, below, outlines indicators that inform landscape value, susceptibility and sensitivity.

Table 7-1: Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

	Higher sensitivity		Lower sensitivity
Value	A nationally designated landscape and/or a landscape in very good condition, exceptional scenic quality, very high recreational opportunities, a very high degree of distinctiveness, with very strong perceptual aspects and/or very important natural and cultural heritage features and functional qualities.	⟷	An undesignated landscape and/or landscape containing few if any notable elements/ features, of poor condition or containing several detracting features and limited aesthetic qualities. Landscapes which have limited recognised associations, natural and cultural heritage features and/or functional qualities.

	Higher sensitivity		Lower sensitivity
Susceptibility	Attributes that make up the character of the landscape which offer very limited opportunities to accommodate change of the type proposed without fundamentally altering key characteristics.	⟷	Attributes that make up the character of the landscape which are tolerant of a large degree of the type of change proposed without fundamentally altering the key characteristics.

7.3.12 Magnitude of landscape change refers to the extent to which the Proposed Development would alter the existing characteristics of the landscape. It is an expression of the size or scale of change to the landscape, the geographical extent of the area influenced, and its duration and reversibility. The variables involved are:

- the extent of existing landscape elements that would be lost, the proportion of the total extent that this represents, and the contribution of that element to the character of the landscape;
- the extent to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered either by removal of existing components of the landscape or by the addition of new ones;
- whether the change alters the key characteristics of the landscape, which are integral to its distinctive character;
- the geographic area over which the change will be felt (within the application boundary itself, the immediate setting, at the scale of the landscape character area, on a larger scale influencing several landscape character areas); and,
- the duration of the change, and its reversibility (whether it is permanent, temporary, or partially reversible). For the purpose of this assessment, short term is defined as up to two years, medium term as between two and 10 years, and long term as over 10 years.

7.3.13 An overall assessment of the magnitude of landscape change on the landscape receptor resulting from the Proposed Development is made by combining and analysing the above factors using evidence and professional judgement. The levels of magnitude of change are described as being high, medium, low, negligible or none, with reference to the criteria descriptions set out in Table 7-2, below.

Table 7-2: Landscape Magnitude of Change

Magnitude	Criteria
High	Large alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact an extensive area or unique characteristics at a local level. May be longer term impacts, permanent or reversible.
Medium	Partial alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact a wide area or characteristics at a local level. May be medium term impacts, permanent or reversible.
Low	Slight alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact a restricted area and few key characteristics. May be short to medium term impacts, permanent or reversible.
Negligible	Very slight alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact a limited area or no key characteristics. May be short term impacts, permanent or reversible.
None	No discernible change to the landscape receptor.

7.3.14 The sensitivity of visual receptors has been defined through an appraisal of the viewing expectation, or value placed on the view as identified in the baseline study, and its susceptibility to change.

7.3.15 The value of the view is an appraisal of the value attached to views and is often informed by the appearance on OS or tourist maps and in guidebooks, literature and art, or identified in policy. Value can also be indicated by the

provision of parking or services and signage and interpretation. The nature and composition of the view, and its scenic quality, are also an indicator.

7.3.16 The susceptibility of visual receptors to change has been established as a function of the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view, and the extent to which their attention or interest is focussed on the view and the visual amenity they experience. For example, residents in their home, walkers whose interest may tend to be focused on the landscape or a particular view, or visitors at an attraction where views are an important part of the experience, indicate a higher level of susceptibility. Conversely receptors engaged in outdoor sport where views are not important or receptors at their place of work are considered less susceptible to change.

7.3.17 The overall sensitivity assessment of the visual receptor is determined by employing professional judgement to combine and analyse the identified value and susceptibility on a scale from high, medium, low to very low. Table 7-3, below, provides an indication of how value and susceptibility relate to overall sensitivity judgements.

Table 7-3: Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

	Higher sensitivity		Lower sensitivity
Value	Views protected by designation and/or are nationally recognised or iconic view of the Scottish landscape. Views which are promoted on maps and in guidebooks or with very strong cultural associations. Views that have very high scenic qualities relating to content and composition of the view.	⟷	Views which are not documented or protected, with minimal or no cultural associations and no facilities and/or interpretation. Views that exhibit low scenic qualities relating to content and composition of the view.
Susceptibility	Viewers whose attention or interest is focused on their surroundings and for whom views are highly important to their enjoyment.	⟷	People whose attention or interest is not focused on their surroundings and where the view is incidental to their enjoyment.

7.3.18 Visual magnitude of change relates to the extent to which the Proposed Development would alter the existing view and is an expression of the size or scale of change in the view, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. The variables involved are:

- the scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the Proposed Development;
- the degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the form, scale, composition, and focal points of the view;
- the nature of the view of the Proposed Development in relation to the amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views will be full, partial or glimpsed;
- the angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor, the distance of the viewpoint from the Proposed Development and the extent of the area over which the changes would be visible; and
- the duration of the change and its reversibility (whether it is permanent, temporary, or partially reversible). For the purpose of this assessment, short term is defined as up to two years, medium term as between two and 10 years, and long term as over 10 years.

7.3.19 An overall assessment of the magnitude of visual change on the visual receptor resulting from the Proposed Development is made by combining and analysing the above factors using evidence and professional judgement.

The levels of magnitude of change are described as being high, medium, low, negligible or none, with reference to the criteria descriptions set out in Table 7-4, below.

Table 7-4: Visual Magnitude of Change

Magnitude	Criteria
High	A pronounced change to the composition of the view or change that may occupy a large part of the foreground of the main views and detract from the existing focus. May be longer term impacts, permanent or reversible.
Medium	A noticeable change to the composition of the view or change that may be viewed in the middle ground or indirectly. May be medium term impacts, permanent or reversible.
Low	An unobtrusive change in the composition of the view or change that may be viewed in the background or obliquely. May be short to medium term impacts, permanent or reversible.
Negligible	A barely perceptible change in the composition of the view or change that may be viewed in the background and/or very obliquely. May be short term impacts, permanent or reversible.
None	No discernible change to the view.

7.3.20 Determination of the significance of landscape and visual effects has been undertaken by employing professional judgement and experience to combine and analyse the magnitude of change against the identified sensitivity of the receptor. While the matrix outlined in Table 5-1 of Chapter 5: EIA Approach and Methodology (Volume 2) can act as a general guide or indication of the likely level of effect, good practice guidance for LVIA places greater weight on application of professional judgement. There may therefore be occasions where the LVIA reaches a conclusion that differs from application of the matrix in Chapter 5.

7.3.21 The landscape assessment takes account of direct and indirect change on existing landscape elements, features and key characteristics, and evaluates the extent to which these would be lost or modified in the context of their importance in determining the existing baseline character. The visual assessment considers likely changes to the visual composition, including the extent to which new features would distract or screen existing elements in the view or disrupt the scale, structure, or focus of the existing view.

7.3.22 The levels of landscape and visual effects are described with reference to the criteria outlined in Table 7-5, below. For the purposes of this assessment, and in line with the approach set out in Chapter 5 (Volume 2), effects of **moderate or major** are generally considered to be significant.

Table 7-5: Significance of Effect

Level of effect	Landscape criteria	Visual criteria
Major	Alterations that result in a considerable change to a highly sensitive landscape, resulting in a fundamental change to its character.	Alterations that result in a considerable change affecting a large extent of a highly sensitive view and becoming a very prominent or dominant feature.
Moderate	Alterations that result in a partial change to key characteristics in a highly sensitive landscape or considerable change in a medium sensitivity landscape, with some influence on the overall impression of its character.	Alterations that result in a noticeable change affecting an important part of a highly sensitive view or a wider extent of a medium sensitivity view, becoming prominent or detracting from the existing focus
Minor	Alterations that result in a small change affecting few characteristics in a medium to highly sensitive landscape or more noticeable change to a less sensitive landscape, resulting in a limited or localised influence on the impression of its character.	Alterations that result in a small change affecting a limited and/or unimportant part of a medium to highly sensitive view or an important part of a less sensitive view, unlikely to distract from the existing focus.

Level of effect	Landscape criteria	Visual criteria
Negligible	Alterations that result in very little change to the existing landscape resource, not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.	Alterations that typically result in very little or a barely perceptible change in the existing view.

Limitations and Assumptions

7.3.23 The landscape and visual assessments have been informed by both desk-based research and targeted survey in the field. Field survey was undertaken from publicly accessible locations, including roads and public footpaths, and did not include access to private land or residential properties. Assumptions as to the main orientation of views from residential properties have been made, informed by observations on site, review of aerial photography and other imagery and application of professional judgement. A worst-case approach has been taken when considering the nature and importance of potential views towards the Proposed Development.

7.4 Baseline Conditions

Landscape Designations - Megginch Castle Garden and Designed Landscape

7.4.1 Megginch Castle GDL is located approximately 1 km north of Errol, bordered by the A90 to the north and railway line to the south and with two existing OHLs within its boundary. The GDL consists largely of parkland, tree lined avenues, woodland and shelterbelts, with more formal gardens arranged around the castle. The core area around the castle is largely enclosed by mature woodland policies and the outer park area is slightly more open, although with woodland defining the southern and northern boundaries. The woodlands at Megginch are a notable feature within the surrounding more open, generally flat and intensively managed farmland. Existing OHLs and other linear infrastructure, such as the A90 dual carriageway, have a strong local influence on views, particularly from the outer area of the GDL. The location of Megginch Castle GDL is shown on Figure 7-1c (Volume 3).

7.4.2 Overall and considering the recognised national importance, the landscape value of Megginch Castel GDL is considered to be **high**.

Landscape Character

7.4.3 The OHL route passes through a rural landscape consisting of undulating dipslope farmland in the north, transitioning to flatter land close to the Firth of Tay, before rising on the irregular slopes of the Ochil Hills towards the south. Land use is predominantly agricultural, consisting of a series of large-scale arable fields on the flatter and lower lying areas, transitioning to semi-improved and rough grassland on the hills. Occasional trees and woodland often associated with historic estates, and forestry on the higher ground, provides a local sense of enclosure within an otherwise open agricultural landscape.

7.4.4 NatureScot have undertaken a review of the landscape character of Scotland in order to identify, map and describe a series of distinct Landscape Character Types (LCTs). The following three LCTs have been identified within the study areas, as shown on Figures 7-1a and 7-1b (Volume 3):

- Dipslope Farmland LCT;
- Lowland Hill Ranges LCT; and,
- Firth Lowlands LCT.

Dipslope Farmland LCT

7.4.5 This LCT covers an extensive area from south of the Sidlaw Hills in the west to the Montrose Basin in the north-east. It is characterised by lowland farmland, consisting predominantly of productive arable land in a simple pattern of geometrical fields. Within the study area the landform is undulating, offering a range of open, long-distance views over the surrounding landscape from higher points. Settlement is limited to scattered farms, although polytunnels used for agriculture locally increase the sense of development within the landscape. Two existing OHLs and associated towers are also locally notable features within the study area.

7.4.6 Within the study area, this is a largely agricultural landscape with few notable or distinct features, or heritage or ecological sites, with the exception of small areas of ancient woodland. There are no landscape designations within this area. It is a heavily managed and productive landscape with limited sense of naturalness, tranquillity or remoteness. There is a degree of scenic quality in the rolling farmland and some local recreational opportunities. On balance, the landscape value of the part of the Dipslope Farmland LCT found within the study area is considered to be **low**.

Lowland Hill Ranges LCT

7.4.7 This LCT covers an extensive area of higher ground encompassing the Sidlaw Hills, stretching from Perth in the south-west, and between Dundee and Forfar in the east. A second extensive area covers the Ochil Hills further to the west. The low hills appear as relatively consistent ridgelines contrasting with and providing a backdrop to the adjacent flatter agricultural land to the south and east. There is a greater variety of landcover and increased trees, woodland, and forestry within this LCT, and settlement is generally more limited and focused on the lower slopes and fringes. The part of this LCT located within the study area is less characteristic of the wider area and is located at the transition to the adjacent Dipslope LCT. The settlement of Piperdam and the associated leisure facilities and golf course have a strong local influence within the study area. Two existing OHLs and associated towers are also locally notable features.

7.4.8 Within the study area this is a largely developed or modified landscape. Piperdam Loch is a notable and distinct, although modified, feature and this and the adjacent golf course and rolling agricultural land provide a setting to Piperdam settlement. No landscape designations are present within the study area. There are good opportunities for recreation, although limited sense of naturalness or tranquillity. Overall, the landscape value of the part of the Lowland Hills LCT found within the study area is considered to be **low**.

Firth Lowlands LCT

7.4.9 This LCT covers the Carse of Gowrie, located on the north side of the Firth of Tay, extending from Perth in the west to Dundee in the east. It is characterised by a predominantly flat, intensively managed and productive farmland, consisting of large-scale geometric arable fields. There are relatively few trees within this landscape, except within historic estates and close to settlement, and many of the field boundary hedgerows have become fragmented or lost, adding to the strong sense of openness. This is a relatively well settled landscape, with a series of villages often located on slightly higher ground and subject to notable expansion adding to their prominence within the landscape. The A90, east coast rail line and existing OHLs add notable linear features within the landscape.

7.4.10 Within the study area, this is a productive agricultural landscape with few notable or distinct features, or heritage or ecological sites, with the exception of the Scheduled Monument and Conservation Area in Inchture settlement. There are no landscape designations within this area. It is an intensively managed landscape with limited sense of naturalness, tranquillity or remoteness and with recreational opportunities limited to minor roads and occasional paths along field margins. Overall, the landscape value of the part of the Firth Lowlands LCT found within the study area is considered to be **low**.

Visual Amenity

7.4.11 In the northern study area, potential visual receptors largely consist of residents and visitors to Piperdam, a small number of scattered farms and rural properties, and recreational users of the golf course and local core paths. Residential properties tend to be orientated to the south, with a range of open views over the surrounding agricultural land and/or golf course, and more enclosed views limited by trees and other buildings. Views from the local path network are also variable, with relatively open and slightly elevated views from some sections and more limited and enclosed views where passing through woodland or trees. Views from the golf course are typically more open and include the loch and settlement of Piperdam and the surrounding landscape. In most cases, where outward views are possible from the identified receptors, they include one or more existing OHL towers, often in relatively close proximity.

7.4.12 In the southern study areas potential visual receptors consist primarily of residents on the edge of Inchture and scattered rural properties along the minor road south of West Mains of Inchture and around Balgay Farm. In general, most properties are orientated towards the south, although with some also orientated to the east and west. Views from the settlement edge of Inchture and many of the scattered rural properties tend to be relatively open and expansive due to the flat and open nature of the landscape. Views from properties towards the interior of Inchture tend to be more restricted and/or inward facing. Some of the rural properties include mature garden vegetation which limits and/or filters outward views. Views from the local path network to the east of Inchture tend to be open with expansive views across the flat landscape. In each case, where outward views are possible, they tend to include a number of existing OHL towers, often in relatively close proximity.

7.4.13 Views from the visual receptors identified within the study areas are relatively typical of the area and not specifically recognised on mapping, with no public facilities or interpretation provided, and as such are considered to be of **low** value.

Future Baseline

7.4.14 It is anticipated that the overall landscape character and views experienced by visual receptors would remain largely unchanged, with current agricultural land use continuing in most areas and the existing OHL remaining in place. Within the study areas there is potential for further expansion of settlements at Piperdam or at Inchture which may influence the landscape and views to a limited extent. There is potential for additional electrical infrastructure, although this is likely to be focused towards Tealing substation and therefore distant from the study areas considered in this assessment.

7.5 Issues Scoped Out

7.5.1 As outlined in Section 7.2, above, and detailed in the Scoping Report, consideration of landscape and visual aspects have largely been scoped out of the EIA Report. This is due to the majority of potential impacts on landscape character and visual amenity being temporary in nature and of a short duration, related to construction operations. There is also potential requirement for removal of trees to create a wider wayleave corridor along the OHL route and for localised track improvements to facilitate access, with the potential to result in longer term or permanent change. However, it is anticipated that these aspects would be limited and very localised, and as such would have little or no influence on the character of the landscape or nature of views.

7.5.2 Targeted assessment has been provided where there is potential for impacts on trees within a nationally important landscape (Megginch Castle GDL) and where there is potential for changes to heights and/or positions of a small number of existing OHL towers. All other elements of the Proposed Development have been scoped out of the assessment.

7.5.3 In relation to consideration of cumulative effects, an initial review has indicated that none of the identified potential cumulative schemes are located within 3 km of the targeted elements of the Proposed Development included

within the LVIA. An assessment of potential cumulative landscape and visual effects has therefore been scoped out.

7.5.4 The assessment is therefore targeted.

7.6 Assessment of Effects, Mitigation and Residual Effects

Mitigation by Design

7.6.1 The principal design measure which has helped to limit potential landscape and visual effects is the reuse of existing OHL towers through reconductoring, rather than the need to construct a new OHL. Other design considerations which help to mitigate effects include the following:

- Use of existing tracks for construction access where possible, and use of temporary tracks, trackway panels and/or (All-Terrain Vehicles) ATVs for access where existing tracks are not present or are unsuitable;
- Minimising vegetation clearance as far as possible and reinstating areas affected as part of the construction phase;
- Minimising tree loss as far as possible, including through crown reduction and/or pruning, and only undertaking felling on a targeted basis where unavoidable;
- Limiting the need to replace or extend the heights of existing towers as far as possible and limiting height increases to up to 2 m;
- Siting the new tower as close to the position of the existing tower, where a replacement is required; and,
- Extending the height of existing towers where an increased offset is required, rather than erecting replacement towers requiring temporary towers and increased construction duration.

7.6.2 The above measures are embedded in the design of the Proposed Development. The requirement for additional secondary measures has not been identified and therefore the effects reported below are residual, with all embedded mitigation measures considered.

Construction Phase

7.6.3 The following provides an assessment of potential effects on identified landscape and visual receptors during the construction phase of the Proposed Development.

Megginch Castle GDL

7.6.4 Landscape value has been identified as high. The GDL includes two distinct areas, an inner zone which contains the castle and many of the important historic components and features; and an outer zone which acts as a transition to the surrounding landscape. Existing OHLs are present within the outer zone somewhat increasing the tolerance to change. On balance, susceptibility to the type of change proposed is considered to be low. Considering the factors which contribute to the identified high value and low susceptibility, Megginch Castle GDL is considered to be of **medium** sensitivity.

7.6.5 Construction of the Proposed Development would make use of the existing eastern access to the GDL, provided this can be accommodated without the need for widening and/or loss of any trees. An alternative approach of using trackway panels will be taken if necessary to avoid impacts on existing trees. Temporary access to Tower 113 to Tower 115 will be taken from the west and will be removed and reinstated as part of the construction phase. Construction would also result in increased movement and activity within the outer southern area of the GDL along the existing OHL corridor. Policy woodland which encloses the inner part of the GDL would limit influence of construction on the core area around the castle. Potential change would be of a short duration and

would be temporary in nature, with areas affected reinstated as part of the construction phase. Although there would be localised direct and indirect change, the limited duration and temporary nature are such that the magnitude of change would be **negligible**.

7.6.6 Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity, together with those which indicate a negligible magnitude of change, the level of effect on the Megginch Castle GDL resulting from construction of the Proposed Development would be **negligible adverse**.

Dipslope Farmland LCT and Lowland Hill Ranges LCT

7.6.7 These LCTS are of a medium to large scale and within the study area are influenced by a range of development, including existing OHLs and/or intensive agricultural use. Susceptibility to change of the type proposed is low. Considering the factors which contribute to the identified low value and low susceptibility, Dipslope Farmland and Lowland Hill Ranges LCTs are considered to be of **low** sensitivity.

7.6.8 Construction relating to potential increase in the height of Tower 155 and Tower 156 would largely make use of existing tracks, although a short section of temporary track would be required for Tower 156. The main potential change during construction would be increased activity and movement within the landscape. Adjacent trees and woodland would reduce the extent of potential indirect change, particularly relating to activity around ground level and movement of vehicles. This activity would be experienced in the context of a landscape which is intensively managed, where movement of agricultural vehicles and equipment are commonplace. Construction and associated activity related to Tower 155 and Tower 156 is anticipated to be of a short duration and would be temporary in nature. On balance the magnitude of change relating to construction would be **negligible**.

7.6.9 Considering the factors which contribute to a low sensitivity, together with those which indicate a negligible magnitude of change, the level of effect on both the Dipslope Farmland and Lowland Hill Ranges LCTs from construction of the Proposed Development would be **negligible adverse**.

Firth Lowlands LCT

7.6.10 This is a large scale, open landscape largely defined by agricultural land use. It is intensively managed and within the study area includes existing OHLs. Susceptibility to change of the type proposed is low. Considering the factors which contribute to the identified low value and low susceptibility, the Firth Lowlands LCT is considered to be of **low** sensitivity.

7.6.11 Construction would involve the replacement of one of the existing OHL towers, either at Tower 129 or Tower 132. In both cases this would involve construction of a temporary tower adjacent to the existing OHL, followed by dismantling of the existing tower and construction of a new permanent tower. Construction would therefore introduce increased movement and activity, temporary access tracks and a temporary structure into the landscape. Movement of machinery and equipment is commonplace within this productive agricultural landscape and although construction related to Tower 129 or Tower 132 would be concentrated for a period of time it would be temporary in nature and of a short duration (up to a year, but likely only six months). On balance, and considering one year as a worst-case duration, it is considered that magnitude of change resulting from construction would be **low**.

7.6.12 Considering the factors which contribute to a low sensitivity together with those which indicate a low magnitude of change, the level of effect on the Firth Lowlands LCT from construction would be **minor adverse**.

Visual sensitivity

7.6.13 Views from residential properties are generally considered to be important within which even minor changes are likely to be noticed. Susceptibility of users of recreational facilities, such as a golf course, are generally lower as

views are not the primary focus. Taking a worst-case approach based on residential receptors, susceptibility to change is judged to be high. Considering the factors which contribute to the identified low value and high susceptibility, sensitivity of the visual receptors identified within the study areas is considered to be **medium**.

Visual receptors near Tower 155 and Tower 156

7.6.14 Construction works to increase the heights of Tower 155 and Tower 156 would result in increased activity and movement in localised parts of views experienced by nearby residential and recreational receptors. In many cases activity around ground level and movement of vehicles would often be at least partially screened by vegetation and/or other buildings, limiting the sense of change. Taller equipment may be more visible, although would generally occupy a small part of wider views from properties and/or recreational routes and areas. The greatest level of change is likely to be experienced from parts of the local path network, golf course and from a small number of properties in close proximity to the east of Tower 155. Potential change would be temporary in nature and of a short duration. Temporary construction activity and structures would be seen in the context of existing OHL towers and would often be filtered or partially screened by vegetation. On balance, it is considered that the magnitude of change resulting from construction would be **low**.

7.6.15 Taking a worst-case approach, considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity together with those which indicate a low magnitude of change, the level of effect on views and visual receptors within up to 1 km of Tower 155 and Tower 156 would be **minor adverse** during construction.

Visual receptors near Tower 129 and Tower 132

7.6.16 Construction related to replacement of Tower 129 or Tower 132 would introduce temporary access tracks, increased movement and activity and a temporary OHL tower into views. If Tower 132 is selected to be replaced, construction activity and the temporary additional OHL tower would be visible in relatively close proximity to properties on the southern edge of Inchture, with more limited visibility from receptors further to the west. Conversely if Tower 129 is selected to be replaced, construction activity and the temporary additional OHL tower would generally be visible in oblique and side on views from scattered rural properties including at Meggatland Farm and around Balgay Farm. Visibility from Inchture and receptors towards the east would be more limited.

7.6.17 In both cases, change would be seen in the context of two existing OHLs and existing movement and activity associated with agricultural land use. Change would be greatest from nearby receptors, but would occupy a relatively small part of the view and would be both temporary in nature and of a short duration (up to 1 year, but likely only six months). On balance, given the existing context and the short duration of construction, magnitude of change is considered to be **low**.

7.6.18 Taking a worst-case approach, considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity together with those which indicate a low magnitude of change, the level of effect on views and visual receptors within up to 1 km of Tower 129 or Tower 132 would be **minor adverse** during construction.

Operational Phase

7.6.19 The following provides an assessment of potential effects on identified landscape and visual receptors during the operational phase, and once construction and reinstatement has been completed.

Megginch Castle GDL

7.6.20 At operation all areas affected by construction would have been reinstated and as such change would be limited to localised pruning and/or targeted removal of trees in close proximity to the north of Tower 115. Tree removal would be limited as far as possible with the majority of the woodland and all broadleaf trees retained. However, there may be a requirement for selective crown reduction of broadleaves and removal of a small number of

conifers from the woodland edge where they could cause a risk of damage to the OHL. Although this may result in a very localised direct and indirect change the overall integrity of the woodland and GDL as a whole would be unaffected. It is therefore considered that the magnitude of change during operation would be **negligible**.

7.6.21 Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity together with those which indicate a negligible magnitude of change, the level of effect on the Megginch Castle GDL at operation would be **negligible adverse**.

Dipslope Farmland LCT and Lowland Hill Ranges LCT

7.6.22 At operation all areas affected by construction would have been reinstated and as such change would be limited to a small (up to 2 m) increase in the height of two existing OHL towers (Tower 155 and Tower 156). The limited nature of the height increase, and the existing context of OHL towers within these LCTs, would result in little or no perceptible change to the baseline conditions and as such the magnitude of change would be **negligible**.

7.6.23 Considering the factors which contribute to a low sensitivity together with those which indicate a negligible magnitude of change, the level of effect on both the Dipslope Farmland and Lowland Hill Ranges LCTs during operation would be **negligible adverse**.

Firth Lowlands LCT

7.6.24 At operation the temporary tower would have been removed and all areas affected by construction would have been reinstated, and as such change would be limited to the introduction of a new tower, acting as a replacement for an existing tower (Tower 129 or Tower 132). Although the new tower may appear slightly different from that of the existing tower, this would result in little to no perceptible change to the nature or impression of the landscape. It is therefore considered that magnitude of change during operation would be **negligible**.

7.6.25 Considering the factors which contribute to a low sensitivity together with those which indicate a negligible magnitude of change, the level of effect on the Firth Lowlands LCT during operation would be **negligible adverse**.

Visual receptors near Tower 155 and Tower 156

7.6.26 At operation all areas affected by construction would have been reinstated and as such potential change would be limited to a small (up to 2 m) increase in the height of two existing OHL towers (Tower 155 and Tower 156). Taking account of the minor nature of the height increase and the existing context and visibility of the OHL towers, there would be little perceptible change to the baseline view and as such the magnitude of change at operation would be **negligible**.

7.6.27 Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity together with those which indicate a negligible magnitude of change, the level of effect on views and visual receptors within 1 km of Tower 155 and Tower 156 during operation would be **negligible adverse**.

Visual receptors near Tower 129 and Tower 132

7.6.28 At operation the temporary tower would have been removed and all other areas affected by construction would have been reinstated. Potential change would therefore be limited to the difference between the existing tower and the proposed replacement tower at either Tower 129 or Tower 132. In both cases, although the new tower may appear slightly different, this would result in little to no perceptible change to the composition or nature of existing views experienced by receptors throughout the study area. Magnitude of change at operation would therefore be **negligible**.

7.6.29 Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity together with those which indicate a negligible magnitude of change, the level of effect on views and visual receptors within 1 km of Tower 129 or Tower 132 during operation would be **negligible adverse**.

Cumulative Effects

7.6.30 As outlined in Section 7.4, above, assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects have been scoped out of this assessment.

7.7 Summary

7.7.1 The majority of potential landscape and visual change would be related to construction and as such would be temporary in nature and of a short duration, with no potential for significant effects. The Scoping process confirmed that consideration of landscape and visual effects could therefore be scoped out. A targeted assessment has been provided to consider locations where changes and/or replacement to existing tower structures would be required and where there is potential for direct change to trees within Megginch Castle GDL.

7.7.2 The targeted LVIA has concluded that effects on each of the identified landscape and visual receptors resulting from construction would be minor or negligible adverse. At operation the assessment has identified that change would be more limited, resulting in negligible adverse effects on each of the landscape and visual receptors considered. These conclusions take account of the identified embedded mitigation measures. Due to the limited and localised nature of change and no potential for significant effects, additional mitigation measures are not considered necessary.