5 Landscape and Visual

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This chapter of the EIA Report presents the landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) for the Proposed Development. It has been prepared and reviewed by Chartered Members of the Landscape Institute at OPEN, part of SLR Consulting Ltd (SLR), a registered practice with the Landscape Institute.

5.1.2 The LVIA considers the effects of the Proposed Development on the fabric of the Site, on landscape character and visual amenity. An assessment of cumulative effects in conjunction with other wind farms and also night-time effects is integrated into the assessment of individual landscape and visual receptors contained within this chapter (rather than within separate appendices).

5.1.3 This chapter includes the following sections:

- 5.2 Policy and Guidance;
- 5.3 Consultation
- 5.4 Methodology;
- 5.5 Baseline;
- 5.6 Potential Effects and Mitigation;
- 5.7 Assessment of Physical Effects;
- 5.8 Assessment of Effects on Landscape Character (including Landscape Designations);
- 5.9 Assessment of Visual Effects; and
- 5.10 Summary of Effects.

5.1.4 This LVIA is supported by the following documents:

- **Figures 5.1-5.16** in **EIA Report Volume 2b**;
- Viewpoint visualisations (NatureScot: **Figures 5.17-5.41, and The Highland Council: Figures 5.42-5.66**) in **EIA Report Volume 2c**;
- **Technical Appendix 5.1**: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology;
- **Technical Appendix 5.2**: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment; and
- **Technical Appendix 5.3:** Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance.

5.1.5 Where distances are provided within this chapter of the EIA Report, they generally refer to the distance to the nearest turbine of the Proposed Development, unless stated otherwise.

5.2 Policy and Guidance

5.2.1 The following policy and guidance documents have been considered in carrying out this assessment:

- The Scottish Government (2023). 'National Planning Framework 4';
- Argyll and Bute Council (2024). 'Local Development Plan 2';
- Landscape Institute and IEMA (2013). 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Third Edition' ('GLVIA3');
- NatureScot (2017). 'Visual Representation of Wind Farms. Version 2.2';
- NatureScot (2021). 'Guidance - Assessing the cumulative landscape and visual impact of onshore wind energy developments';
- NatureScot (2017). 'Siting and Designing of Windfarms in the Landscape: Version 3a';
- NatureScot (2018). 'Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities (Working Draft 11)';
- Landscape Institute (2019). 'Technical Guidance Note 2/19 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment';
- Landscape Institute (2024). 'Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition' (GLVIA3);
- Landscape Institute (2011). 'Advice Note 01/11 Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment'; and
- Landscape Institute (2019). 'Visual representation of development proposals. Technical Guidance Note 06/19'.

5.3 Consultation

5.3.1 Consultation for this EIA Report topic was undertaken with the organisations shown in **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1 Consultation Responses

Consultee / Type and Date	Summary of Consultation Response	Response to Consultee
NatureScot Scoping Response 16 April 2024	"We agree with the scoping report that a detailed assessment of potential for significant effects on the Special Landscape Qualities of the [Cairngorms National] Park will be required."	An assessment of the Cairngorms National Park's (CNP) Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) is provided in **Section 5.8** of the LVIA.
	"To allow us to provide more detailed advice on the scope of assessment we recommend that the applicants share a draft list of SLQs they plan to include for assessment, as well as their proposed viewpoint/assessment locations, which we could share	A list of 10 SLQs to be included in the assessment was produced for NatureScot at the pre-application stage.

	with the Park Authority, to allow us to refine and agree the scope of assessment ahead of submission."	NatureScot agreed to this list by e-mail dated 29 July 2024.
	"The requirement for visible aviation lighting may further amplify any effects particularly on the wildness and dark sky qualities of the Park."	A night-time visualisation for Viewpoint 17b (see **Figure 5.33j-k**) has been included to illustrate potential effects of aviation lighting upon the wildness and dark sky qualities of the CNP.
	"We are aware of a number of proposals in this area and cumulative impacts will also be an important consideration."	An assessment of the cumulative effects on the SLQ of the CNP is provided in **Section 5.8**.
	"The Cairngorm Mountains NSA lies wholly within the Cairngorms National Park. We therefore consider that the NSA SLQs are subsumed within the National Park SLQs. In our view a separate assessment for the NSA is therefore not required for this proposal."	Noted – no assessment of the SLQ of the Cairngorms Mountains NSA is provided in the LVIA.
	"The proposed development site overlaps with WLA20. The proposed 200m turbine height would mean the development would likely appear prominent in its moorland setting and may result in significant adverse effects on the wild land qualities (WLQs) of WLA 20. The requirement for visible aviation lighting may further amplify any effects on the qualities of this WLA. We are aware of a number of proposals in this area and cumulative impacts will also be an important consideration. We advise that a wild land assessment is undertaken in accordance with our guidance Assessing impacts on Wild Land Areas - technical guidance2 to ensure that any significant effects identified are minimised through careful siting and design…"	Following the movement of wind turbines outside of the boundary of WLA20, it was agreed by NatureScot at the pre-application stage by e-mail dated 29 July 2024 that the assessment of WLAs could be scoped out of the LVIA.
	"We currently recommend that the SLQ assessment follows the methodology set out in the enclosed draft 'Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities' (2018). We are however preparing to consult on a revised draft guidance for assessing special landscape qualities, and request that once this is publicly available (expected to be spring 2024) that this methodology be used instead of the 2018 version. We are happy to engage further on this once it becomes available. "	Given the uncertainties relating to potential changes to the latest consultation draft, NatureScot agreed by e-mail dated 29 July 2024 that the draft 'Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities' (2018) could be used for the assessment of the CNP SLQs.
	"The applicant has proposed a study area of 25km, and 35km for cumulative assessment. We wish to highlight that as the SLQs are a mix of landscape and visual these could potentially be significantly affected at distances greater than 25km, also based on the large size of turbine proposed, effects could be greater. Therefore, we advise a study area of 35km for both the LVIA and cumulative assessment."	A study area of 35km has been used for the basis of the LVIA.
	"We are in agreement with the focus of the assessment on designated landscapes (see additional comments in main text above). The Highland Council will advise on whether they wish to scope in any local landscape designations."	Noted. In the absence of any additional requests from The Highland Council (THC), the landscape designations proposed for assessment in the Scoping Report have been included in the detailed assessment of the LVIA.
	"We advise that additional viewpoints should be scoped in representative of key receptors within the Park and WLA 20… "…we provisionally suggest the following additional viewpoint locations for the applicant's consideration: ▪ Nethy Bridge – a representative viewpoint in more open areas such as to the south-east near Lettoch or Castle Roy to the north; ▪ Loch Morlich around NH971090 if visibility from trees allows; ▪ Possible alternative to Carrbridge (as immediate woodland may screen views) could be the area along the minor road south of the River Dulnain and east of Carrbridge, or the Dalnatratnich/Sluggan Bridge area to the west of Carrbridge; ▪ North-east facing slopes and summit of Carn Sleamhuinn (NH854161); ▪ The Craiggowrie summit above Badaguish, to west of Meall nam Buchaille (NH96321337); ▪ A representative viewpoint in the Achnahannet/Laggan Hill/Beinn Mhor area to the north of Dulnain Bridge/west of Grantown; ▪ Carn Dearg Mor (NN82299112); ▪ A representative viewpoint in the Cromdale Hills area (e.g. Creagan a' Chaise)."	An additional six viewpoints were included in the scope of the LVIA in consultation with NatureScot at the pre-application stage. NatureScot confirmed they were content with the final viewpoint list (see **Table 5.5**) in an e-mail dated 6 August 2024.
	"We advise that a night-time assessment of impacts of any lighting on the SLQs of the Park and the WLQs of WLA 20 will be required, together with details of any proposed mitigation."	A night-time assessment of the effects of aviation lighting on the SLQs of the CNP is provided in **Section 5.8**.
	"We recommend that the applicants explore opportunities for a reduced aviation lighting scheme with the CAA through early discussion."	A reduced aviation lighting scheme has been agreed with the CAA. Further details of this reduced scheme can be found in **Chapter 12: Aviation and Other Issues.**
	"Additional assessment viewpoints will be required, in addition to those proposed, to assess the effects of turbine lighting on the Park and WLA. We would be pleased to advise further on receipt of the final list of proposed viewpoints, and provision of a clearer ZTV and hub height ZTV."	Night-time visualisations have been produced for four viewpoints. NatureScot confirmed they were content with the final viewpoint list (see **Table 5.5**) in an e-mail dated 6 August 2024.
	"We defer to The Highland Council for the most up to date information and proposals to include in the cumulative assessment for the LVIA."	Noted.
Highland Council Scoping Response	"Separate volumes of visualisations should be prepared to both Highland Council Standards and NatureScot guidance."	A set of visualisations produced to Highland Council standards is provided in EIA Report Volume 2c.

16 April 2024	"We consider that the cumulative assessment should be undertaken over a Study Area the same as the visual assessment, a minimum 45km Study Area as opposed to the 35km currently shown on the supporting information submitted."	Following pre-application discussions with the Council, no objection was raised to the use of a 35km Study Area for the LVIA, including the cumulative assessment.
	"We expect the Landscape Impact Assessment to refer to the Council's Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance and expect an assessment of the proposal against the criterion set out in the Council's OWESG at pages 19 and 20 to be included within the LVIA chapter of the EIAR."	An assessment of the Proposed Development against the receptors detailed within the criteria set out in the Council's Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG) is provided in **Sections 5.8 and 5.9** of the LVIA, and an appraisal of the criteria is provided in **Technical Appendix 5.3**.
	"As noted during pre-application discussion for 23/02727/PREMAJ, an additional viewpoint from Meall Fuar Mhonaidh is required. Whilst the applicant does not consider there is the potential for significant effects from this viewpoint, and more generally from distances of 30km, the viewpoint should be included in the interests of understanding cumulative effects from its summit looking out from and across the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig Special Landscape Area (SLA)."	Viewpoint 25 from the summit of Meall Fuar Mhonaidh illustrates the visibility of the Proposed Development. As agreed with the Council during pre-application discussion, only a wireline is provided for this viewpoint.
	"The site is located within the Black Isle, Surrounding Hills and Moray Firth Coast Landscape Character Areas Study within the Addendum Supplementary Guidance: "Part 2B", December 2017 - being part of the Highland Strategic Capacity content of the suite: "Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance, November 2016 (with addendum, December 2017)."	Upon further review, it is apparent that the Site is located outwith the areas covered by this Study. Consequently, for consistency across the whole Study Area, the landscape assessment has used NatureScot's 2019 characterisation of Scotland's landscape for the basis of the assessment.
	"The site lies within the area of the pilot study, updating and extending coverage of earlier studies in the Dava, Nairn and Monadhliath areas up to the Cairngorms National Park boundary."	The LVIA has considered the findings of the Dava Moor, Nairn and Monadhliath Area Wind Energy Landscape Sensitivity Pilot Study (December, 2021). However, it is relevant to note that the Pilot Study is not adopted Supplementary Guidance.
	"The Landscape Officer considers the application has potential to fail to meet THC's preferred threshold in regard to a number of criteria, including but not necessarily limited to: • Criterion 2: Key gateway locations and routes are respected – with regard to routes and gateways in and around the National Park Boundary. With regards to the settlement at Tomatin, there is potential for a sense of encirclement by turbines. • Criterion 3: Valued natural and cultural landmarks are respected. – with regard to the National Park. • Criterion 4: The Amenity of key Recreational routes and ways – with regards to National Cycle Routes in the locality, and the A9 as a route heavily used by visitors to the area and the Highland Railway Line. • Criterion 5: The Amenity of transport routes is respected – with regard to the A9 and Highland Railway Line. In considering views from routes, the LVIA should take account of the permeability of roadside planting when travelling at speed. For some locations on the A9 static photography will indicate screening by planting which may not be effective from moving vehicles. • Criterion 6: The existing pattern of wind energy is respected – with regard to cumulative impacts which may arise through contrast in size and proportions and typical relationship of development to the landscape. • Criterion 8: The perception of landscape scale and distance is respected – with regard to potential effects on such perception particularly effecting the perception on scale of the moorland hills and plateau when seen from the A9 and Railway, and the effect on perception of scale of the moorland's bounding hills."	An assessment of the Proposed Development against the receptors detailed within these criteria is provided in **Sections 5.8 and 5.9**.
	"An assessment of the impacts of the proposal on landscape should assess the impacts on any landscapes designated at a national and local scale."	Noted. In the absence of any additional requests from Highland Council, the landscape designations proposed for assessment in the Scoping Report have been included in the detailed assessment of the LVIA.
Moray Council Scoping Response 6 March 2024	"Local authority boundaries should be shown in any supporting plans/maps (e.g. ZTV)"	Local authority boundaries have been illustrated on a large proportion of the LVIA GIS figures.
Cairngorms National Park Authority Scoping Response 9 April 2024	"…Policy A4 of the current Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2022 – 27 (Partnership Plan) is therefore relevant in relation to the potential for effects on the Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) of the National Park from wind farm development outwith the National Park…" "In accordance with our casework agreement with NatureScot, available via https://www.nature.scot/agreement-roles-advisory-casework-between-scottish-natural-heritage-and-scottish-national-park, NatureScot lead on providing advice on the potential effects of development outside the National Park on the SLQs of the National Park. We would expect the applicant to include consideration of potential effects on the SLQs as part of the EIA process, and where effects are predicted, to seek advice on how to assess them following the draft joint National Park/NatureScot guidance (Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities – AESLQ)."	An assessment of the Cairngorms National Park's (CNP) Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) is provided in **Section 5.8** of the LVIA. The scope of which has been informed by consultation with NatureScot.

Highland Council Landscape Officer E-mail 27 September 2024	"While we are content with the viewpoints, with regard to Cumulative developments, we feel that given Fred Olsen Renewables have applied to the Court of Session for a Judicial Review of the Ministers' refusal of Lethen Wind Farm (ECU00002216) this should be included, unless the Ministers' decision is upheld in the meantime."	The application for Lethen Wind Farm has been included in the application scenario in the cumulative landscape and visual assessment.
NatureScot Gate Check 1 Response 21 October 2024	"The Gate check Report (section 5.1.2) proposes a study area of 20km for night-time effects. The hub height ZTV previously shared with us predicted visibility beyond 20km. Given the sensitivities in this area we advise the study area for night-time effects also extends to 35km, so as to align with the daytime LVIA study area."	Night-time effects have been considered within the wider 35km Study Area, as requested by NatureScot.
	"Given the proposal lies outwith Wild Land Area 20. Monadhliath, we have accepted the principle for the WLA to be scoped out of assessment. We have however encouraged the applicants to still consider the attributes and responses expressed across WLA 20 within the LVIA."	The attributes and responses of WLA20 have informed the assessment of landscape effects for those landscape character types (LCTs) covered by the WLA.
	"During pre-application discussion we have also advised that it would be helpful for the applicants to consider nearby proposals which are at scoping in their cumulative assessment (such as the proposed Balnespick and Highland Wind Farms and Kyllachy Extension)."	At the time of the LVIA's cut-off date in respect of the cumulative situation, Kyllachy and Balnespick Wind Farms had both not reached design freeze, and therefore due to uncertainties regarding their future application layouts, only Highland Wind Farm has been included in the Scoping scenario in the cumulative landscape and visual assessment.

5.4 Methodology

Scope of Assessment

5.4.1 This assessment covers the construction, operational phase and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. The effects associated with the construction phase would be temporary in nature, while the effects associated with the operational phase would be permanent for the period of the consent. The decommissioning effects would be similar in magnitude to the construction effects.

5.4.2 The Proposed Development comprises 26 turbines with associated infrastructure, including access tracks, a control building and substation compound, borrow pit search areas, and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), as described in **Chapter 3 'Proposed Project Description'**. The LVIA is based on a layout consisting of 26 turbines of up to 200 metres (m) to blade tip, with a hub height of approximately 119m and a rotor diameter of approximately 162m. These dimensions are reflected in the visualisations and evaluated in the assessment as this is considered to depict the likely worst-case scenario in relation to landscape and visual effects.

Elements Scoped Out of Assessment

5.4.3 On the basis of the desk based and site survey work undertaken, the professional judgement of the EIA team, experience from other relevant projects, and policy guidance or standards, the following effects have been scoped out of this LVIA, as proposed and agreed through the scoping and pre-application consultation process.

- Effects on landscape character types lying beyond a 35 kilometre (km) radius of the Proposed Development and also where the influence of the Proposed Development on the landscape character types would be limited (see **Table 5.3**);
- Effects on the SLQs of the Cairngorms Mountains NSA (which are considered in the assessment of the SLQs of the CNP instead);
- Effects on the Wild Land Qualities of Wild Land Areas (but not broader landscape effects upon these areas);
- The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in the context of wind farms that lie beyond a 35km radius from the Proposed Development turbines;
- The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in the context of scoping stage wind farms, with the exception of Highland Wind Farm; and
- Effects arising from the process of decommissioning since they are of a similar nature to construction issues, but of a smaller scale and shorter duration. However, the results of decommissioning (i.e. the removal of the wind turbines) are taken into account in assessing on-going and operational effects where appropriate.

Study Area

5.4.4 The initial step in the LVIA is the establishment of the Study Area for the assessment. Guidance developed by NatureScot (Visual Representation of Wind Farms Version 2.2, February 2017) indicates that an area with a radius of 45km from the nearest turbine is generally appropriate for turbines of the size proposed. However, given the topography of the local landscape, and the scale of the Proposed Development, it has been agreed with NatureScot that significant landscape and visual effects are likely to be found within a 35km radius of the Proposed Development. A 35km Study Area has therefore been used for the basis of the LVIA.

5.4.5 This Study Area is shown in **Figure 5.1**. A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) analysis has therefore been carried out for this area (see **Figures 5.6a-d** and **5.7a-d**), as has mapping of landscape character (**Figure 5.3a-c**), landscape related designations (**Figure 5.4**), and principal visual receptors (**Figure 5.5**).

5.4.6 As confirmed by the Scoping Opinion, cumulative effects are assessed with other existing, consented and proposed wind farms within a 35km radius Cumulative Study Area. **Figure 5.12** shows the locations of wind farms within 35km that are operational, under construction, consented or proposed, and where the turbines are greater than 50m to blade tip.

5.4.7 A cut-off date of the 21 June 2024 was applied in respect of the cumulative situation to enable the completion of the visualisations and assessment.

5.4.8 Due to the degree of uncertainty in relation to the progression of a number of the scoping stage sites, and also elements of their design, a number of them are not considered in the detailed assessment of cumulative effects. Further information related to the projects included in the cumulative assessment is provided in **Section 5.5**.

Baseline Survey Methodology

Desk Study

5.4.9 The assessment is initiated through a desk study of the Site and the 35km radius Study Area. This desk study identifies aspects of the landscape and visual resource that may need to be considered in the landscape and visual assessment, including landscape-related planning designations (i.e. National Scenic Areas), landscape character typology, Wild Land Areas, operational and potential cumulative wind farms, and views from routes (including roads, railway lines, National Cycle Routes, long-distance walking routes and recreational sailing routes), and settlements.

5.4.10 The desk study also utilises Geographic Information System (GIS) and Resoft Windfarm software to explore the potential visibility of the Proposed Development. The resultant ZTV maps and wirelines provide an indication of which landscape and visual receptors are likely to be of most relevance in the assessment.

Field Survey

5.4.11 Field surveys are carried out throughout the 35km radius Study Area, although the focus is on the areas shown on the ZTV to gain theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development. The baseline field survey has four broad stages:

- A preliminary familiarisation around the Study Area in order to visit the aspects of the landscape and visual resource that have been identified through the desk study and verify their existence and importance. Important features and characteristics that have not become apparent through the desk study are also identified, and particularly sensitive receptors are noted in order to inform the design process.
- A visit around the Site, in order to establish its potential for wind farm development and identify the most suitable areas for Proposed Development in landscape and visual terms, along with any constraints that may restrict the area available for development.
- Further field survey around the Study Area, concurrent with the design process for the Proposed Development, to identify those receptors that are likely to be particularly important in the assessment and inform the layout design, possible turbine height, and the extent of the Proposed Development.
- The identification and photography of representative viewpoints to include in the landscape and visual assessment, including a wide range of receptors, landscape character, and directions and distances from the Proposed Development.

Methodology for the Assessment of Effects

5.4.12 The significance of the potential effects of the Proposed Development has been classified by professional consideration of the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of the potential change. This section summarises the methodology and guidance used to carry out the LVIA, which is described in full in **Technical Appendix 5.1**.

Categories of Effects

5.4.13 The LVIA is intended to determine the effects that the Proposed Development would have on the landscape and visual resource. For the purpose of assessment, the potential effects on the landscape and visual resource are grouped into the following five categories:

- physical effects;
- effects on landscape character;
- effects on landscape designations;
- effects on visual receptors (during daytime and night-time); and
- cumulative effects.

Assessment of Effects

5.4.14 The broad principles used in the assessment of significance of the various categories of effects are the same and are described below. The detailed methodology for the assessment of significance does, however, vary, and the specific criteria used are described in **Technical Appendix 5.1**.

5.4.15 The objective of the assessment of the Proposed Development is to predict the likely significant effects on the landscape and visual resource. In accordance with the EIA

Regulations the LVIA effects are assessed to be either significant or not significant. The LVIA does not define intermediate levels of significance as the EIA Regulations do not provide for these.

5.4.16 The significance of effects is assessed through a combination of two considerations; the sensitivity of the landscape receptor or view and the magnitude of change that will result as a consequence of the addition of the Proposed Development.

Sensitivity

5.4.17 Sensitivity is an expression of the ability of a landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the Proposed Development. Sensitivity is determined through a combination of the value of the receptor and its susceptibility to development. The factors that determine these criteria are described in **Technical Appendix 5.1**.

5.4.18 Levels of sensitivity - high, medium-high, medium, medium-low and low - are applied in order that the judgement used in the process of assessment is apparent.

Magnitude of Change

5.4.19 Magnitude of change is an expression of the extent of the impact on landscape and visual receptors that will result from the introduction of the Proposed Development. The magnitude of change is assessed in terms of a number of variables, including the size and scale of the impact and the extent of the affected area. The factors that determine these criteria are described in **Technical Appendix 5.1**.

5.4.20 Levels of magnitude of change - high, medium-high, medium, medium-low, low and negligible - are applied in order that the judgement used in the process of assessment is apparent.

Assessment of Significance

5.4.21 The significance and level of effects are assessed through a combination of the sensitivity of the landscape or visual receptor and the magnitude of change that will result from the addition of the Proposed Development. While this methodology is not reliant on the use of a matrix to determine a significant or not significant effect, a matrix is included in **Table 5.2** to illustrate how combinations of sensitivity and magnitude of change ratings can give rise to significant effects, and the level of those effects in terms of whether they are major, moderate or minor. The matrix also gives an understanding of the threshold at which significant effects may arise, where a moderate level of effect is assessed.

Table 5.2 Assessment of Significance Matrix

		Magnitude of Change					
		High	**Medium-High**	**Medium**	**Medium-Low**	**Low**	**Negligible/ No Change**
Sensitivity	**High**	Major Significant	Major Significant	Major/ moderate Significant	Moderate Significant or Not Significant	Moderate/ minor Not Significant	Minor Not Significant
	Medium -High	Major Significant	Major/ moderate Significant	Major/ Moderate Significant	Moderate Significant or Not Significant	Moderate/ minor Not Significant	Minor Not Significant
	Medium	Major/ moderate Significant	Major/ Moderate Significant	Moderate Significant or Not Significant	Moderate/ minor Not Significant	Minor Not Significant	Minor Not Significant
	Medium -Low	Moderate Significant or Not Significant	Moderate Significant or Not Significant	Moderate/ minor Not Significant	Minor Not Significant	Minor Not Significant	Negligible Not Significant
	Low	Moderate Significant or Not Significant	Moderate/ minor Not Significant	Minor Not Significant	Minor Not Significant	Negligible Not Significant	Negligible Not Significant

5.4.22 Effects within the dark grey boxes in the matrix are considered to be significant with either a Major or Major/ Moderate level of effect. Effects within the light grey boxes may be significant or not significant depending on the specific relevant factors that arise at a particular landscape or visual receptor and here the level of effect is Moderate. Effects within the white boxes are considered to be not significant at either a Moderate/ Minor, Minor or Negligible level. In accordance with GLVIA3, experienced professional judgement is applied to the assessment of all effects and reasoned justification is presented in respect of the findings of each case.

5.4.23 A significant effect occurs where the Proposed Development will provide one of the defining influences on a landscape element, landscape character receptor or view. A not significant effect occurs where the effect of the Proposed Development is not material, and the baseline characteristics of the landscape element, landscape character receptor, view or visual receptor continue to provide the definitive influence. In this instance, the Proposed Development may have an influence but this influence will not be definitive.

Cumulative Assessment

5.4.24 NatureScot's 'Guidance – Assessing the cumulative landscape and visual impact of onshore wind energy development' (2021) is widely used across Scotland to inform

the specific assessment of the cumulative effects of wind farms. This guidance provides the basis for the methodology for the cumulative assessment. The Guidance notes that:-

"The purpose of a Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (CLVIA) is to describe, visually represent and assess the ways in which a proposed wind farm would have additional impacts when considered with other consented or proposed wind farms. It should identify the significant cumulative impacts arising from the proposed wind farm."

5.4.25 The outcome of the above process is the identification of any significant cumulative effects that may arise from the addition of the Proposed Development to the cumulative situation, in accordance with NatureScot (2021) Guidance, which states that the cumulative assessment should "focus on the likely significant impacts and those which are likely to influence the outcome of the consenting process".

5.4.26 In relation to the significance of cumulative landscape effects, GLVIA3 notes (paragraph 7.28) that:-

"the most significant cumulative landscape effects are likely to be those that would give rise to changes in the landscape character of the study area of such an extent as to have major effects on its key characteristics and even, in some cases, to transform it into a different landscape type. This may be the case where the project being considered itself tips the balance through its additional effects."

5.4.27 GLVIA3 (paragraph 7.38) goes on to state the following in relation to the significance of cumulative visual effects:

"Higher levels of significance may arise from cumulative visual effects related to:

- *developments that are in closer proximity to the main project and are clearly visible together in views from the elected viewpoints;*
- *developments that are highly inter-visible, with overlapping ZTVs – even though the individual developments may be at some distance from the main project and from individual viewpoints, and when viewed individually not particularly significant, the overall combined cumulative effect on a viewer at a particular viewpoint may be more significant."*

5.4.28 The methodology used in the assessment of cumulative effects differs in some respects from that used in the rest of the assessment and is described in **Technical Appendix 5.1**. It is important to remember that the objective of the cumulative assessment is different from the assessment of effects of the Proposed Development itself; in the cumulative assessment, the intention is to establish whether or not the addition of the Proposed Development to various scenarios of other relevant operational (and under-construction), consented, application and scoping stage wind farms may lead to wind farm development becoming a prevailing characteristic of a view. Significant cumulative effects will arise where a 'wind farm landscape' is apparent in a view as a result of the addition of the Proposed Development to other existing or proposed wind farms, so that the Proposed Development results in wind turbines becoming sufficiently prolific that they become a prevailing or key visual characteristic.

5.4.29 It should be noted that if the Proposed Development itself is assessed to have a significant effect, it does not necessarily follow that the cumulative effect will also be significant.

Nature of Effects

5.4.30 The 'nature of effects' relates to whether the effects of the Proposed Development are positive/beneficial or negative/adverse. Guidance provided in GLVIA3 states that "*…thought must be given to whether the likely significant landscape and visual effects are judged to be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse) in their consequences for landscape or for views and visual amenity…*" (para. 3.22) but does not provide an indication as to how that may be established in practice. The nature of effect is therefore one that requires interpretation and reasoned professional opinion.

5.4.31 In relation to many forms of development, the EIA will identify beneficial and adverse effects under the term 'nature of effect'. The landscape and visual effects of wind farms are difficult to categorise in either of these brackets as, unlike other disciplines, there are no definitive criteria by which these effects can be measured as being categorically beneficial or adverse. For example, in disciplines such as noise or ecology it is possible to identify the nature of the effect of a wind farm by objectively quantifying its effect and assessing the nature of that effect in prescriptive terms. However, this is not the case with landscape and visual effects, where the approach combines quantitative and qualitative assessment.

5.4.32 In this assessment, beneficial, neutral and adverse effects are defined as follows:

- Beneficial effects contribute to the landscape and visual resource through the enhancement of desirable characteristics or the introduction of new, beneficial attributes. The removal of undesirable existing elements or characteristics can also be beneficial, as can their replacement with more appropriate components;
- Neutral effects occur where the Proposed Development neither contributes to nor detracts from the landscape and visual resource and is accommodated with neither beneficial nor adverse effects, or where the effects are so limited that

the change is hardly noticeable. A change to the landscape and visual resource is not considered to be adverse simply because it constitutes an alteration to the existing situation; and

- Adverse effects are those that detract from or weaken the landscape and visual resource through the introduction of elements that contrast, in a detrimental way, with the existing characteristics of the landscape and visual resource, or through the removal of elements that are key in its characterisation.

Duration and Reversibility of Effects

5.4.33 The effects of the Proposed Development are of variable duration, and are assessed as short-term or long-term, and permanent or reversible. The construction effects including the construction compound, machinery, ground modifications, materials and cranes.

5.4.34 It is proposed that the operational life of the Proposed Development will be 40 years. The turbines, including associated transformers and hardstands, Site access tracks and control building, substation compound, BESS and borrow pits (dependent on availability of stone within the Site) would be apparent during this time, and these effects are assessed as if permanent although they would also be largely reversible if required.

5.4.35 Other infrastructure and operations such as the construction processes and plant (including tall cranes for turbine erection) and construction and storage compounds would be apparent only during the (approximately 23 months) initial construction period of the Proposed Development and are considered to be short-term effects. The tall cranes would be apparent intermittently and over a shorter duration. Borrow pit excavation would also be short-term as borrow pits would be restored at the end of the construction process, although a permanently altered ground profile may remain evident.

5.4.36 The reversibility of effects is variable. The most apparent effects on the landscape and visual resource, which arise from the presence and movement of the turbines, are reversible as the turbines would be removed on decommissioning. The effects of the tall cranes and heavy machinery used during the construction and decommissioning periods are also reversible.

5.4.37 It is anticipated that access tracks would remain at decommissioning. Turbine foundations and underground cabling would be left in-situ below ground with no residual landscape and visual effects.

5.4.38 In order to avoid repetition, the duration and reversibility of effects are not reiterated throughout the assessment.

Graphic Production

5.4.39 The written LVIA is accompanied by a set of graphics contained in **EIA Report Volume 2b-c**. Reference is made throughout the written text to these graphics, as they are an integral part of the overall assessment and of importance in illustrating specific matters. They should be viewed in accompaniment to the written text.

5.4.40 The graphics can be divided into two categories; maps and visualisations. The majority of the maps are based on the 35km Study Area around the Proposed Development and present data of relevance to the assessment, such as the location and extent of landscape designations and Wild Land Areas. ZTV maps are also included. These digitally calculate the extent and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development across a given area, using Ordnance Survey Terrain 5 mapping as the basis for the calculations. As this terrain model is based only on the 'bare earth', it does not take account of potential screening by vegetation or buildings, and this is why it is referred to as theoretical and not actual visibility.

5.4.41 Additionally, lighting intensity ZTV maps show the reduction in lighting intensity that may be achieved through mitigation (e.g. design of the light fitting) and the degree of negative vertical angle of view from the light in relation to landform (further details are provided in **Technical Appendix 5.1**). For the purposes of the night-time assessment, it has been assumed that the Proposed Development would be fitted with a light similar to that manufactured by CEL (model: CEL MI-ACWGAM), which has been tested in a calibration chamber to illustrate precisely how much the beam reduces in brilliance at any specified elevation angle. These lights are already fitted in a number of locations around the UK.

5.4.42 The visualisations are based on the 25 viewpoints which are representative of the visual amenity of visual receptors in the area surrounding the Proposed Development. These viewpoints have been agreed with NatureScot. For each viewpoint, apart from Viewpoint 25 (Meall Fuar Mhonaidh), there is baseline photography, and wirelines of the Proposed Development and the 'bare earth' landform for the same extent as shown in the photography. In accordance with NatureScot and THC visualisation guidance, the viewpoints also have accompanying photomontages. These use the baseline photography and add onto this a computer-generated model of the Proposed Development. Where aviation lighting is illustrated, the position of visible aviation lighting on each turbine is indicated on the wirelines for each viewpoint by way of a black dot shown on the turbine nacelle. No photography has been captured for Viewpoint 25 and consequently the Proposed Development is illustrated using wirelines. More detailed information on graphic production is included in the Assessment Methodology in **Technical Appendix 5.1**.

Night-time Assessment

5.4.43 The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) requires that 'en-route obstacles' at or above 150 m above ground level are lit with visible lighting to assist their detection by aircraft. As the turbines in the Proposed Development are more than 150m to tip height there is a requirement for the turbines to display medium intensity ‘steady’ red aviation lights at night. These would ordinarily be fitted to all Proposed Development turbines, but the Applicant has agreed a reduced aviation lighting scheme with the CAA, where lights will be displayed at agreed positions on a reduced number of turbines (see **Chapter 12: Aviation and Other Issues**. Further information relating to the specification of the ‘Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme’ is provided later in this section.

5.4.44 The actual effect/perception of visible aviation lights at the Proposed Development would be dependent on a range of factors, including the distance of the viewer from the Proposed Development, the model and intensity of lights used, the clarity of atmospheric visibility and the degree of negative vertical angle of view from the light to the receptor. For this visual assessment, a worst-case approach is applied which considers the effects of both 2,000 candela (cd) lights and 200 cd lights during periods of clear visibility. It should be noted however, that as the required medium intensity lights need only be used to their optimum output or intensity during periods of poor visibility, that 2,000 cd lighting represents a worst-case position, as it is unlikely to be experienced at that maximum illumination level. It is assumed that sensors would be installed on the proposed wind turbines so that they would dim accordingly when visibility is greater than 5km. Similarly, 200 cd is unlikely to be experienced by observers at locations lower than the turbine nacelle heights due to the reduction in light intensity at negative elevation angles that can be achieved through selection of specific lights with embedded mitigation.

5.4.45 The visual assessment of turbine lighting is intended to determine the likely worst case effects that the Proposed Development would have on the visual resource e.g. it is an assessment of the effects of visible aviation lighting on views experienced by people at night. The assessment of visible lighting is a visual, or perceptual, effect because the lighting would not be activated at times when there is a clear appreciation of landscape character, during daylight hours, and would not affect the physical pattern of elements that constitutes landscape character. The assessment of effects of visible aviation lighting therefore focusses on viewpoints and visual receptors and does not apply to landscape character assessment. **Technical Appendix 5.1** describes the detailed methodology used to assess night-time effects.

5.4.46 In summary, the following assumptions have been made in relation to the assessment of effects of visible lighting:

- the CAA requires that all obstacles at or above 150 m above ground level are fitted with visible lighting and in the case of wind turbines, the lights should be located on the nacelle;
- the 2,000 cd medium intensity lights may be dimmed to 10% of their minimum operational output, or 200 cd, if visibility is greater than 5km, i.e., in moderate to excellent or ‘clear’ visibility;
- in accordance with CAA requirements the lights would be switched on 30 minutes after official sunset and switched off again 30 minutes before sunrise;
- the CAA requires that a secondary light is fitted for use only when the primary light fails, and these would not be lit concurrently;
- the steady red medium intensity lighting fixed to the top of the nacelles may appear to flicker on and off with blade rotation when the turbine blades pass between the lights and the observer, dependent on wind direction and the position of the observer.
- the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme for night-time effects includes the following parameters:
  - only T2, T5, T8, T10, T12, T15, T18, T19, T24 and T26 would have medium intensity visible red lights mounted on the nacelle (see **Figure 12.1**);
  - no mid-tower low intensity lights are required; and
  - 2,000 cd and 200 cd intensity lights representing two worst-case situations: 2,000 cd represents the maximum intensity possible; 200 cd represents the maximum intensity that would be used when visibility exceeds 5km.

Assessment Limitations

5.4.47 Photographs and other graphic material such as wirelines and photomontages used in the assessment are for illustrative purposes only and, whilst useful tools in the assessment, are not considered to be completely representative of what will be apparent to the human eye. The assessment itself is carried out from observations in the field and therefore may include elements that are not visible in the photographs.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

5.4.48 There are limitations in the theoretical production of ZTVs, and these should be borne in mind in their consideration and use:

- A Digital Terrain Model (DTM) based on Ordnance Survey (OS) Terrain 5 has been used to generate the ZTVs within the Study Area. The analysis is based on

visibility at points on a 5m grid and does not take into account local, small-scale landform changes in analysing theoretical visibility;

- The ZTVs illustrate the 'bare ground' situation, and do not take into account the screening effects of vegetation, buildings, or other local features that may prevent or reduce visibility;
- The ZTVs do not indicate the reduction in visibility that occurs with increased distance from the Proposed Development. The nature of what is visible from 3km away will differ markedly from what is visible from 10km away, although both are indicated on the ZTVs as having the same level of visibility; and
- It is important to remember that there is a wide range of variation within the visibility shown on the ZTV. For example, an area shown on the blade tip ZTV as having visibility of all of the turbines may gain views of the smallest extremity of blade tips, or of full turbines. This can make a considerable difference in the effects of the Proposed Development on that area.

5.4.49 These limitations mean that while the ZTVs are used as a starting point in the assessment, providing an indication of where the Proposed Development will theoretically be visible and where there would be no visibility, the information drawn from the ZTVs is not completely relied upon to accurately represent visibility of the Proposed Development.

Visualisations

5.4.50 Limitations associated with the visualisations are set out in full in **Technical Appendix 5.1** and summarised here.

5.4.51 The visualisations are based on theoretical visibility from 1.5 m above ground level (agl). There are limitations in these theoretical productions, and these should be borne in mind in the consideration and use of the wireline images. Firstly, the wireline illustrates the 'bare ground' situation, not taking into account the screening effects of vegetation, buildings, or other local features that may prevent or reduce visibility. Secondly, the wireline is based on OS Terrain 5 DTM, so there may be local, small-scale landform variations that are not reflected in the wireline but may alter the actual visibility of the Proposed Development, either by screening theoretical visibility or revealing parts of the Proposed Development that are not theoretically visible. Thirdly, planning conditions are likely to allow the locations of the turbines to be horizontally micro-sited to a small degree and the levels of the turbine bases have not yet been established in detail as this will be determined through site investigations and detailed engineering design. Both of these factors may alter the base and therefore the tip heights of the turbines above ground level from those that are assumed in the assessment and shown in **Figures 5.17-5.41**. Such variation may also affect ZTVs.

5.4.52 Where descriptions within the assessment identify the numbers of turbines visible this refers to the theoretical illustrations generated and therefore the reality may differ to a degree from these impressions. These factors are unlikely to make a material difference to the outcome of the assessment.

5.4.53 Not all areas of the Study Area are publicly accessible, and this has limited the specific assessment of views from residential and other properties, for example. Notwithstanding these limitations, the assessors consider that there is sufficient information available, from publicly accessible viewpoints, to form a competent assessment of the likely landscape and visual amenity effects.

Embedded Mitigation

5.4.54 Embedded mitigation, relevant to the LVIA, relates to site selection and the iterative design of the layout. Further details in relation to the iterative design process are provided in **Chapter 2 'Site Selection & Design Evolution'**.

5.4.55 There is very limited opportunity to mitigate landscape and visual effects outwith standard mitigation measures undertaken in the iterative design process. There is, therefore, no additional mitigation to be considered in the LVIA.

5.4.56 Residual effects are those effects which remain after mitigation. The residual effects that the Proposed Development will have on landscape and visual receptors are assessed in **Sections 5.7** to **5.9**. These are categorised into physical effects, effects on landscape character, effects on landscape designations, effects on viewpoints, effects on principal visual receptors, and cumulative effects. These are considered at the three main stages of the project, namely, construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning.

5.5 Baseline

5.5.1 The baseline section of the LVIA records the existing conditions of the Study Area . Establishing a baseline helps to gain an understanding of what makes the landscape distinctive and what its important components or characteristics are. The baseline is instrumental in the identification of the landscape character receptors, visual receptors and viewpoints that are included in the assessment. This section is presented under the following headings:

- Site Context;
- Landscape Character;
- Landscape Planning Designations;
- Wild Land Areas;
- Principal Visual Receptors;

- Viewpoints; and
- Cumulative Wind Farm Developments.

Site Context

5.5.2 The Site is situated to the south of Strathdearn, across some elevated hill ground that forms part of the north-eastern Monadhliath Mountains (see **Figure 5.2**). While slightly lower in elevation than the massif to the south-west, the elevation of the Site varies between approximately 450-650m, and encompasses three notable hilltops: Carn Bad an Daimh (648m AOD), Carn Ruighe Shamhraich (573m AOD), and Carn Coire na Caorach (636m AOD). While the more prominent summit of Carn Dubh (750m AOD) lies to the south of the Site.

5.5.3 The hill ground of the Site is limited in extent by the straths associated with the River Findhorn to the west and north and the River Dulnain to the east and south, with the hill ground to the south-west extending further (over 30km) into the Monadhliath Mountain range. The slight depression in the landscape to the north that accommodates the A9 road corridor is also an important landscape element. These straths are generally sparsely settled, apart from where the villages of Tomatin (~6km) and Carrbridge (~8km) provide more residential housing and services for the local area.

5.5.4 Beyond the local area, the upland landscape of the Monadhliath Mountains stretches further to the south, west and north, with Strathspey, separating these mountains from the even larger Cairngorm Mountain range to the south-east of the Site. This broader landscape is also largely unsettled with the exception of parts of Strathspey and some other smaller straths, where the larger settlements of Aviemore (~10km), Kingussie (~18km) and Grantown on Spey (~21km) are located.

5.5.5 There are a number of existing and consented wind farms scattered across the Monadhliath Mountains, the closest of which are Farr and Glen Kyllachy, located at distances of over 6km to the north-west of the Site. Conversely, there are no wind farms located to the south and east of the Study Area, due to the protection afforded to the Cairngorms National Park (CNP) by national planning policies in recent years.

Landscape Character

5.5.6 Landscape character information produced by or prepared on behalf of NatureScot forms the basis of the characterisation of the Study Area. In early 2019, NatureScot published an update to the characterisation of Scotland's landscape as a digital resource ('the NatureScot LCA'). The information builds on the characterisation studies published in the 1990's. NatureScot describe the recent publication as now superseding the 1990s landscape character descriptions and mapping. In summary, landscape character information has been drawn from the following source:

- NatureScot. (2019) 'National Landscape Character Assessment Map and Descriptions'; and
- Turnbull Jeffrey Partnership. (1996) Cairngorms landscape assessment. Scottish Natural Heritage Review. No.75.

5.5.7 In relation to the NatureScot LCA, NatureScot state that "*Where there are topic-specific landscape capacity or sensitivity studies, they would take precedence for informing that development type, e.g. wind farms*" (NatureScot, 2023).

5.5.8 THC have published Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (2016), including an Addendum (2017), which includes landscape sensitivity appraisals for areas of the Highlands. These appraisals do not cover the Site or parts of the Study Area in the CNP.

5.5.9 More recently, THC have published a landscape sensitivity appraisal which provides analysis in relation to the ability of the host landscape to accommodate wind energy development:

- Carol Anderson Landscape Associates (2021). 'Dava Moor, Nairn And Monadhliath Area Wind Energy Landscape Sensitivity Pilot Study. Final Report.' ('the LSPS')

5.5.10 This LSPS covers the Site and much of the surrounding area (see **Figure 5.3c**), but also omits the CNP, and has not yet been adopted as part of the Council's Supplementary Guidance.

5.5.11 While each of the above documents has been considered to inform the LVIA, in order to ensure a consistent approach to the assessment of landscape effects, the NatureScot LCA forms the basis for this assessment.

5.5.12 The NatureScot LCA divides the landscape into areas of distinctive character which are generally referred to as landscape character types (LCTs). The LCTs referred to in the NatureScot LCA that cover the Study Area are shown in **Figure 5.3a** to a 35km radius and are shown in relation to the blade tip ZTV in **Figure 5.9a-b**. Many of these LCTs are extensive, sometimes covering several areas that are geographically separate, and the effects of the Proposed Development can vary widely across a single LCT.

Landscape Character of the Site

5.5.13 The Site is located within a unit of 'Rolling Uplands - Inverness' LCT (221), as identified in the NatureScot LCA GIS dataset and as shown in **Figure 5.3a**. This host

landscape unit forms a large area of rolling hills to the east of Loch Ness and the south of Inverness, encompassing large parts of the Monadhliath Mountains between Glen Tarff in the south-west and the confluence between the Fintack Burn and Findhorn River in the north-east.

5.5.14 The NatureScot LCA describes the broader characteristics of the 'Rolling Uplands - Inverness' LCT as follows:

- *"A series of large scale, smooth, rounded hills with summits of similar height forming broad, undulating upland plateaux containing occasional steep-sided straths.*
- *Open heather moorland dominates, the uniform colour and texture accentuating the landform.*
- *Straths floors contain inbye pastures, trees and small patches of woodland.*
- *Conifer forests limited to the lower edges of uplands and strath sides.*
- *Settlement limited to a few isolated farms in remote straths.*
- *A few mainly single track roads, integrated within the landform.*
- *Uninhabited interior, largely inaccessible to vehicles.*
- *Archaeological evidence of settlement and farming from prehistoric times to the 19th century.*
- *Striking colour and textural contrast between strath floors and moorland vegetation above.*
- *Expansive views from the hill tops and plateaux create a strong sense of openness and exposure.*
- *Scale and distance difficult to judge.*
- *Few signs of active management in the interiors, creating a strong perception of remoteness, although this is affected by a number of large wind farm developments.*

5.5.15 The LSPS divides the NatureScot LCT unit further LCT units with the Site again located in an area of 'Rolling Uplands' (see **Figure 5.3b**), but the neighbouring straths, including Strathdearn, are defined as areas of 'Strath in Rolling Uplands'. This landscape variety that is clearly present within the NatureScot LCA's Rolling Uplands – Inverness LCT is reflected in the assessment of landscape effects in the LVIA.

5.5.16 The LSPS (para 17.3) describes the sensitivity of the Rolling Uplands LCT to wind turbine development:

"*While the extensiveness and simplicity of landform and landcover of much of this AU* [Assessment Units] *reduces susceptibility to larger wind turbines, there are constraints relating to the Monadhliath WLA which covers part of this landscape and the close proximity of the Cairngorms National Park and the Braeroy, Glenshirra and Creag Meagaidh WLA. In addition, the north-western edge of these uplands is of increased sensitivity because of the presence of pronounced smaller scale craggy hills and dramatic glens, the proximity of the Upper Farmed Strath AU and the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA and long views from vantage points above Loch Ness.*"

5.5.17 The Proposed Development's proximity to the CNP and Monadhliath WLA have been important considerations in the wind farm's design and they remain important considerations in the LVIA.

5.5.18 The Assessment of Effects on Landscape Character in **Section 5.7** considers the direct and indirect effect of the Proposed Development on the 'Rolling Uplands - Inverness' LCT. Indirect effects on other LCT units are addressed in further detail in the following section.

Preliminary Assessment of LCTs

5.5.19 The landscape assessment considers the effect of the Proposed Development on the LCTs within the Site and the surrounding area. The LCTs found in the Study Area are mapped and labelled in **Figure 5.3a-c**, and shown together with the ZTV in **Figures 5.9a-b**. For the purposes of this assessment, the LCT boundaries identified in the NatureScot LCA are used to define the different landscape receptors.

5.5.20 In order to enable a detailed assessment to be undertaken that focuses on identifying significant effects, some LCTs in the Study Area are split by the assessor into a number of Landscape Character Units (LCUs). LCTs and specific LCUs that are predicted to experience theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development are described in **Table 5.3**, along with an initial assessment as to whether they are likely to incur significant effects and, therefore whether they require to be included in the detailed assessment in **Section 5.7**.

Table 5.3 Preliminary Assessment of NatureScot LCA LCTs within the Study Area

LCT No.	Landscape Character Type	Subject to Theoretical Visibility	Needs Detailed Assessment within LVIA?
221	Rolling Uplands - Inverness	Yes, extensive theoretical visibility is predicted across central and northern areas of the LCT.	Yes, due to the location of the Proposed Development within the LCT and the extensive areas of theoretical visibility predicted, it is likely that significant effects may arise.
125	Rolling Uplands - Cairngorms	Yes, theoretical visibility predicted across the northern reaches of the LCT to the north of Carn Sleamhuinn, but extremely limited theoretical predicted across areas of the LCT to the south of this hill.	Yes, due to the relatively short distance of the potentially affected parts of the LCT from the Proposed Development there is potential for significant effects to arise.

128	Forested Upland Fringe	Yes, theoretical visibility is predicted across large parts of the three units of this LCT in the Study Area.	Yes, due to the extent of theoretical visibility predicted across the Abernethy Forest and Slochd units. The Rothiemurchus unit of this LCT is discounted from further detailed assessment due to the limited extent of blade tip theoretical visibility predicted.
127	Upland Strath	Yes, theoretical visibility predicted across the northern reaches of the LCT between Carrbridge and Dulnain Bridge.	Yes, due to the relatively short distance of the potentially affected parts of the LCT from the Proposed Development there is potential for significant effects to arise.
291	Open Rolling Upland	Yes, some limited theoretical visibility predicted across scattered parts of the LCT.	No, due a combination of factors: the distance of potentially affected areas from the Proposed Development, their limited extent, and the presence of wind farm development in the immediate surroundings of these areas.
227	Farmed Strath - Inverness	No	No, due to absence of theoretical visibility across this LCT and its distance from the Proposed Development.
224	Farmed and Wooded Foothills	Yes, but very limited in extent.	No, due to general absence of theoretical visibility across this LCT and its distance from the Proposed Development.
294	Upland Valleys - Moray & Nairn	Yes, but very limited in extent.	No, due to general absence of theoretical visibility across this LCT and its distance from the Proposed Development.
126	Upland Glen - Cairngorms	Yes, but limited to one of the LCT units.	Yes, due to the extent of theoretical visibility predicted, there is potential for significant effects to arise across the Glen More unit of this LCT.
223	Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland	Yes, but very limited in extent.	No, due to general absence of theoretical visibility across this LCT and its distance from the Proposed Development.
122	Mountain Massif - Cairngorms	Yes, there is theoretical visibility predicted across some of the hills situated in the north-west of the LCT.	Yes, due to the extent of theoretical visibility predicted across this LCT and orientation of the open hill ground towards the Proposed Development, there is potential for significant effects to arise.
132	Undulating Wooded Farmland - Cairngorms	Yes, but very limited in extent.	No, due to general absence of theoretical visibility across this LCT and its distance from the Proposed Development.
228	Rolling Farmland and Woodland	Yes, but very limited in extent.	No, due to general absence of theoretical visibility across this LCT and its distance from the Proposed Development.
225	Broad Steep-Sided Glen	Yes, but very limited in extent.	No, due to general absence of theoretical visibility across this LCT and its distance from the Proposed Development.
286	Narrow Wooded Valley - Moray & Nairn	No	No, due to absence of theoretical visibility across this LCT and its distance from the Proposed Development.
124	Summits and Plateaux - Cairngorms	Yes, theoretical visibility predicted across hill summits above Glen Feshie and Glen Tromie.	No, significant effects would not arise due to a combination of factors: the distance of potentially affected areas from the Proposed Development, the presence of visible wind farm development at similar distances across the Monadhliath Mountains, and the more settled nature of the intervening landscape along Strath Spey.
290	Upland Moorland and Forestry	No	No, due to absence of theoretical visibility across this LCT and its distance from the Proposed Development.
131	Upland Basin - Cairngorms	Yes, theoretical visibility predicted across small areas of the LCT to the north of Lynemore.	No, significant effects would not arise due to a combination of factors: the distance of potentially affected areas from the Proposed Development (>22km), the presence of visible wind farm development at similar distances above the containing ridges of the CNP (e.g. Paul's Hill), and the more settled nature of the intervening landscape along Strath Spey.
123	Smooth Rounded Hills - Cairngorms	Yes, theoretical visibility predicted across western parts of the LCT including the Hills of Cromdale and Braes of Abernethy.	No, significant effects would not arise due to a combination of factors: the distance of potentially affected areas from the Proposed Development (>23km), the presence of visible wind farm development at similar distances above the containing ridges of the CNP (e.g. Paul's Hill), and the more settled nature of the intervening landscape along Strath Spey.
284	Coastal Farmlands - Moray & Nairn	No	No, due to absence of theoretical visibility across this LCT and its distance from the Proposed Development.
285	Rolling Farmland and Forests - Moray & Nairn	No	No, due to absence of theoretical visibility across this LCT and its

			distance from the Proposed Development.
222	Rocky Moorland Plateau - Inverness	Yes, but very limited in extent.	No, due to widespread absence of theoretical visibility across this LCT and its distance from the Proposed Development, and distance of potentially affected areas from the Proposed Development.
133	Farmed Straths and Glens	Yes, theoretical visibility predicted across a relatively small area of hills east of Cromdale.	No, due to the distance of potentially affected areas from the Proposed Development and the enclosure provided by large areas of forestry across the LCT.
345	Farmed and Forested Slopes - Ross & Cromarty	Yes, but very limited in extent.	No, due to general absence of theoretical visibility across this LCT and its distance from the Proposed Development.
226	Wooded Glen - Inverness	No	No, due to absence of theoretical visibility across this LCT and its distance from the Proposed Development.
343	Coastal Shelf	No	No, due to absence of theoretical visibility across this LCT and its distance from the Proposed Development.
229	Enclosed Farmland	No	No, due to absence of theoretical visibility across this LCT and its distance from the Proposed Development.
342	Farmed River Plains	No	No, due to absence of theoretical visibility across this LCT and its distance from the Proposed Development.
348	Cliffs and Rocky Coasts - Ross & Cromarty	No	No, due to absence of theoretical visibility across this LCT and its distance from the Proposed Development.
287	Broad Farmed Valley	Yes, theoretical visibility predicted across a relatively small area of hills south of Advie.	No, due to the distance of potentially affected areas from the Proposed Development and the enclosure provided by the Woods of Knockfrink.
292	Open Upland	Yes, theoretical visibility predicted across an area of hills south of Advie.	No, due to the distance of potentially affected areas from the Proposed Development.
281	Beaches, Dunes and Links - Moray & Nairn	No	No, due to absence of theoretical visibility across this LCT and its distance from the Proposed Development.
346	Open Farmed Slopes	No	No, due to absence of theoretical visibility across this LCT and its distance from the Proposed Development.

5.5.21 **Table 5.3** indicates that the following LCTs have potential to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development:

- 221 Rolling Uplands – Inverness;
- 125 Rolling Uplands – Cairngorms;
- 128 Forested Upland Fringe (Abernethy Forest and Slochd units);
- 127 Upland Strath;
- 126 Upland Glen – Cairngorms (Glenmore unit); and
- 122 Mountain Massif – Cairngorms.

Landscape Planning Designations

5.5.22 There are three ways in which landscape planning designations are relevant to the LVIA:

- The presence of a designation can give an indication of a recognised value that may increase the sensitivity of a landscape character receptor, viewpoint or visual receptor, and may therefore affect the significance of the effect on that receptor;
- The presence of a designation can lead to the selection of a representative viewpoint within the designated area, as the viewpoint will provide a representative outlook from that area; and
- Designated areas may be included as landscape character receptors so that the effects of the Proposed Development on these features of the landscape that have been accorded particular value can be specifically assessed.

5.5.23 Through the EIA Scoping process and subsequent engagement, it was agreed with NatureScot that the effects on a number of landscape planning designations could be discounted from the LVIA assessment as it is considered unlikely that the effects would be significant. A review of the current Proposed Development has also been undertaken to ensure that the impacts will not increase from those considered at the Scoping stage.

5.5.24 The Site itself is not subject to any national or local landscape designations intended to protect landscape quality or scenery, but it is located relatively close to some designated areas. Various designated areas are found elsewhere in the Study Area and these have been considered in the assessment. These designations are shown in **Figure 5.4** an and National Scenic Areas

5.5.25 The Site itself is not located in any National Parks (NPs) or National Scenic Areas (NSAs). Policy 11(b) of National Planning Framework 4 , which relates to developments “in” NPs and NSAs, is not therefore engaged. NPs and NSAs are areas of land considered to be important on a national level and are designated by NatureScot. In accordance with Policy 11 (Energy) (d), development proposals that

impact on national designations will be assessed in relation to Policy 4 of NPF4 (Scottish Government, 2023). Policy 4(c) of NPF4 states that:

"Development proposals that will affect a National Park, National Scenic Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest or a National Nature Reserve will only be supported where:

i. The objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the areas will not be compromised; or

ii. Any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance."

5.5.26 NatureScot (2018) suggests that 'the objectives' of the designation is "*the safeguard, conservation and enhancement of the interests for which the area is designated (for NSAs this is their special qualities and character; for National Parks this is a broader range of natural and cultural heritage interests).*"

5.5.27 The CNP (~0.9km) is the only NP in the Study Area. Through the request for a Scoping Opinion, it was agreed that a detailed assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development on the CNP is required due to its distance from the Proposed Development and the extent of visibility predicted (shown in **Figure 5.10a**). A detailed assessment of effects on the SLQs of the CNP is provided in **Section 5.8**. A preliminary assessment highlighting those SLQs that have potential to experience significant effects as a result of the Proposed Development is provided in **Table 5.4**.

Table 5.4 Preliminary Assessment of Potential Effects on CNP SLQs

Potential Impacts of the Proposed Development on Key Characteristics of CNP SLQs (Asterix denotes SLQs that are included in the detailed assessment)
GENERAL QUALITIES
SLQ1: Magnificent mountains towering over moorland, forest and strath "The dramatic, glacial topography of mountain, corrie and glen, the swathes of open heather moorland, the great forests of pine and birch, and the broad straths of farmland and settlement stretching back into prehistory, together create a landscape which has held firm in the public imagination since the days of Queen Victoria. It is a landscape of great variety, with distinctive landforms, wildlife, colours and textures, and, equally important, containing less tangible qualities such as the evocation of wilderness, naturalness, remoteness, cultural continuity and recreational exploration. Its appeal is undiminished by familiarity through books, calendars, postcards and shortbread tins because the underlying force and grand scale of nature dominates and bestows a distinct, aesthetic beauty; and because the infinite variations in colour, atmosphere and weather mean the landscape rarely looks the same, even on consecutive days."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the Cairngorm National Park (CNP). Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development on the 'magnificent mountains' would be moderated to a large degree by the separation of the wind farm from the Cairngorms massif (>15km) due to the intervening Spey Valley. The Proposed Development would therefore be a peripheral feature within the wider setting of these mountains, which would sometimes also be visible in combination with existing wind farm development outwith the Park. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ2: Vastness of space, scale and height* "Humans feel small in such a vast landscape of wide panoramas. Six out of seven of Scotland's highest peaks are found here, and the mountain core stands sentinel over the whole area. The corries and glens are large and dramatic, and the wide, high plateaux are more expansive than any others in Britain. Open, rolling heather moorland covers great tracts of land, woodlands are extensive and the straths are on a grand scale, hosting majestic rivers."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development are unlikely to be significant in relation to the Cairngorms mountains and plateaux due to the separation (>15km) and limited association of the Proposed Development's Site with this part of the Park. However, the Proposed Development would be visible within some of the less sensitive, broader panoramas available towards the northern edge of the Park, and it therefore has the potential to affect the perceived scale of this part of the Park. This SLQ will be assessed in greater detail in the LVIA.
SLQ3: Strong juxtaposition of contrasting landscapes* "A journey through the Park reveals many strong contrasts in an ever-changing array of surprise and visual delight. These include the sight of intimate, village gardens against a backdrop of snow-clad peaks; high, exposed mountains glimpsed through sheltered trees, or seen rising above fertile farmland; green pastures adjacent to heather moorland; heather intimately mixed with beautiful, ancient pines, or cladding the open hills in large swathes; rolling hills a short distance from enclosed glens; steep slopes ending suddenly at flat glen floors; a smooth, undulating plateaux abruptly falling away to dramatic cliffs; high, mountain corries a short walk from a road; a designed, ordered landscape set amongst wild hills."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development may occur where the Proposed Development is viewed in its relatively simple upland setting, beyond more diverse lowland landscapes, such as Strathspey. This SLQ will be assessed in greater detail in the LVIA.
SLQ4: A landscape of layers, from inhabited strath to remote, uninhabited upland* "The landscape tends to be horizontally stratified, ascending to the summits in a series of layers: from a meandering river, through a strath of settlement and farmland, through rough pasture, wood pasture, wood and forestry, to moorland with its patchwork of muirburn, and eventually to the high, corrie-fringed mountains. Within the landscape there are also layers of time-depth, with traces of past land use stretching from present day back into prehistory."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development may occur in conjunction with the hills to the south of the Site, which contribute to one of the many layers of the CNP, albeit associated with its fringe landscapes. There is therefore some limited potential for significant effects to arise on this SLQ across a relatively small area of the Park. This SLQ will be assessed in greater detail in the LVIA.
SLQ5: The harmony of complicated curves "This is a landscape of curves. The hills and peaks are rounded with long, undulating, smooth ridges, and the plateaux are gently convex. The moorland is rolling. Corries and glens, scooped out by past glaciers, are concave. At lower levels glacial moraines create hummocky, rounded landforms. The straths are gently profiled, and the rivers along the floors are wide, meandering and sinuous. The curves of the National Park present a contrast to the more angular landscapes found in the western Highlands."

Potential Impacts of the Proposed Development on Key Characteristics of CNP SLQs (Asterix denotes SLQs that are included in the detailed assessment)
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, ensuring that the "*complicated curves*" of the CNP topography (e.g. "*long, undulating, smooth ridges; convex…plateaux; rolling…moorland; concave…corries and glens; hummocky, rounded landforms; wide, meandering and sinuous…rivers*" will not be affected by the Proposed Development. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development would not materially alter the way in which the "*complicated curves*" of the Park landscape are perceived. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ6: Landscapes both cultural and natural*
"At the lower altitudes the land has been long-inhabited, with patterns of land use, settlement and transport derived from the primary industries of farming, forestry and field sports. In contrast, the highest ground comprises uninhabited wild land of moor and mountain, with the greatest extent of natural vegetation and landform in the British Isles. Hence within this large area can be found both cultural landscapes, with a rich history of human occupation, and natural, wild landscapes under the dominion of nature."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development may occur on the natural characteristics of the '*uninhabited wild land of moor*' along the northern edge of the CNP, and therefore there is some potential for significant effects to arise on this SLQ across a relatively small area of the Park.
THE MOUNTAINS AND PLATEAUX
SLQ7: The unifying presence of the central mountains
"The high ground of the Cairngorms is a unifying presence for the whole area. It is both the geographical and the visual centre, being the origin of most rivers and glens and forming the backdrop to the lives of those who live and work in the straths and glens."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development on the central mountains would be moderated to a large degree by the separation of the wind farm from the mountains (>15km) due to the intervening Spey Valley. The Proposed Development would therefore be a peripheral feature within the wider setting of these mountains, which would sometimes also be visible in combination with existing wind farm development outwith the Park. The Proposed Development would not alter the status of the mountains as the "*geographical and the visual centre"* of CNP. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ8: An imposing massif of strong dramatic character
"The high, rounded peaks and plateaux, the corries, glens and foothills, and the long, gently undulating ridges have a massive, looming and domineering presence. However, it is the mountain massif as a whole that is the key feature, with individual mountains often hard to distinguish or identify. A trained eye can pick out the more distinctive features such as the trough of the Lairig Ghru, the cliffs of Lochnagar, the Northern Corries, or Ben Avon with its tors, but these are the exception rather than the rule."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development on the Cairngorms massif would be moderated to a large degree by the separation of the wind farm from the mountains and plateaux (>15km) due to the intervening Spey Valley. The Proposed Development would therefore be a peripheral feature within the wider setting of these mountains, which would sometimes also be visible in combination with existing wind farm development outwith the Park. The Proposed Development would not affect the "*massive, looming and domineering presence"* of the massif. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ9: The unique plateaux of vast scale, distinctive landforms and exposed, boulder-strewn high ground
"The plateaux are best described by W H Murray (1961): 'The wastes of shattered stone on the summit plateaux form the biggest area of high ground in Britain. Their appeal is not an obvious one. In the act of exploring them the immense scale on which the scene is set is gradually revealed and with this the vast corries, massive slopes, long passes, wide skies, and the very barrenness of the ground, where the elements work with a power not known at lower altitudes, gives to these plateaux their distinctive quality – a majesty great enough to cast a spell on man's mind.' They typify the wildness and uncompromising exposure sought by many people. The 'top of the world' feeling of freedom is one of the great attractions of the area, and the absence of signs of civilisation is a major draw. However, the plateaux are both fierce and fragile places. Severe gales and blizzards can be experienced at any time of the year, yet fragility is shown by their habitats being highly susceptible to human pressure and erosion."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP. The physical landscape of the plateaux ("*distinctive landforms and exposed, boulder-strewn high ground")* will not be affected, and indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development on the plateaux would be moderated to a large degree by the separation of the wind farm from the mountains and plateaux (>15km) due to the intervening Spey Valley. The Proposed Development would therefore be a peripheral feature within the wider setting of these mountains, which would sometimes also be visible in combination with existing wind farm development outwith the Park. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ10: The surrounding hills*
"Within a landscape of hills and plateaux, the central massif merely represents the extreme end of a range. The 'lesser hills' within the Park have their own ridges, summits and plateaux and would be impressive in any other location. They tend to be heather-covered, smooth and rounded, albeit with sudden unexpected crags, screes, gullies and glens. They contribute significantly to the wild, untamed appearance of the area, and many are easily accessible from the main roads."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development in conjunction with the northern hills of the CNP has the potential to result in perceived effects on views of these 'surrounding hills', and as a result this SLQ will be assessed in greater detail in the LVIA.
SLQ11: The drama of deep corries
"Vast corries, with vertical headwalls and narrow gullies, provide a strong contrast to the generally undulating and rounded hills and plateaux. The hidden lochans at the bottom of many are dark and windswept places, adding to the sense of drama for those who reach them. The northern corries of Cairn Gorm and Braeriach are particularly notable. With their cliffs visible over a wide area, and holding their snows well into the summer, they bring mountain scenery into the heart of Strathspey. Likewise, the dark headwalls of Lochnagar's corries have long caught the imagination. Other areas boast impressive corries, with, for example, Lochs Brandy and Wharral showing the corrie in its classic form."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP. This SLQ is concerned with physical characteristics of the landscape, and the landform of the corries and their setting will not be affected by the Proposed Development. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development from the corries would be moderated to a large degree by the separation of the wind farm from the mountains and plateaux (>15km) due to the intervening Spey Valley, while the noted corries of Cairn Gorm and Braeriach are over 23km distant. The Proposed Development would therefore be a peripheral feature within the wider setting of these landscape features, and as a result we do not consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ12: Exceptional glacial landforms
"The Park contains distinctive, clearly visible and very varied landforms arising from the power of ice and water during glaciated periods. These are exceptional in western Europe and, in addition to corries, include U-shaped valleys, screes, moraines, and kettle holes."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP. This SLQ is concerned with physical characteristics of the landscape, and the

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glacial landforms will not be affected by the Proposed Development. As a result, we do not consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ13: Snowscapes
"Snow is present for much of the year on the high tops, whether as a winter covering or as individual snow beds standing out from afar. Its presence adds to the impressiveness and grandeur of the mountains, emphasising their harsh climate and the dominance of nature."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the Cairngorm National Park (CNP). This SLQ is concerned with the physical characteristic of snow in the landscape, and its presence will not be affected by the Proposed Development. As a result, we do not consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
MOORLANDS
SLQ14: Extensive moorland, linking the farmland, woodland and the high tops
"Vast stretches of moorland characterise the Park, and it is probably the best place in the world to experience the distinctive browns and purples of swathes of heather. In late summer, the heather in full bloom is symbolic of the Scottish Highlands. It dominates the middle range hills, ascends the higher slopes and in places descends to the floor of the straths. The matrix of heather unifies the landscape elements of the whole Park, occurring throughout and linking the farmland, woodlands and the high tops. The expansive, open moors engender the exhilaration of wide open spaces and distant views, tinged at the same time with a sense of exposure to the elements."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, which ensures **that** moorland will not be affected. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development would also not materially alter the way in which this characteristic of the Park is experienced. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ15: A patchwork of muirburn
"Much of the heather moorland is burnt on a cyclical basis to ensure that both young heather and old heather is present on the hillsides. This muirburn that takes place on sporting estates is designed to benefit red grouse, providing young heather for food and old for shelter. The result is a distinctive patchwork of diverse colours: the black of newly burnt ground, the grey of older fires, the green of young heather, blaeberry and grass, and the browns and purples of mature heather."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, which ensures that the appearance and textures of muirburn will not be affected. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development would also not materially alter the way in which this characteristic of the Park is experienced. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ16: Steep glens and high passes
"Long glens are frequent within the National Park, each emerging from the high mountains. They are steep-sided, with their slopes ending abruptly on a flat valley floor. Many are linked by spectacular upland passes, the most famous being Drumochter, The Lecht, Glenshee and the Lairig Ghru. Some glens contain remnants of Caledonian pinewood, and some are remote and uninhabited. In the latter case, the remains of long abandoned settlements, farms or shooting lodges are sometimes visible. Other glens, such as the Angus Glens, have been long-settled along their lower reaches. Here the valley floor is farmed, containing fields and livestock, the slopes often clothed with forestry plantations."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, which ensures that the landform, vegetation and settlement of the glens will not be affected by the Proposed Development. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development from the steep glens and high passes would be moderated to a large degree by the generally enclosed nature of these landforms, which ensures very limited visibility of the Proposed Development, and by the separation of the wind farm from the mountains and plateaux (>15km) due to the intervening Spey Valley. The Proposed Development would therefore be a peripheral feature within the wider setting of , which would sometimes also be visible in combination with existing wind farm development outwith the Park. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ17: Broad, farmed straths
"The main arteries of the Park are the wide straths. Forming natural transport corridors, they have provided access through the area from historic times until the present day. They possess large rivers which meander across the flat valley floor and the straths have been the centre of farming and settlement since prehistoric times. With their fields, crofts, farms and villages, they provide a sense of continuity and security amongst a landscape of hills and mountains. Their slopes contain pockets of native woodland, rough grazing, heather moor and plantation forest. Each strath is distinctive in its own way: wide Strathspey with its mountain backdrop, the narrower and more sinuous Strath Avon and Strathdon amongst gentler hills; and Royal Deeside with its characteristic pine forests and estates. The farm buildings often retain their stone-built, 19th century vernacular architecture, and are generally situated above the flood plains. Additionally, Victorian, granite shooting lodges are often associated with these glens and straths."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, which ensures that the variety of characterising landscape features within the straths will not be affected. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development from Strathspey would be moderated by the very limited visibility of the Proposed Development from this strath, and due to the wind farm's peripheral location relative to the backdrop of the Cairngorms massif. From many areas there would also be considerable enclosure from the extensive pinewoods. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ18: Renowned rivers
"The Cairngorms National Park is home to some of the best known Scottish rivers, such as the Spey, Don and Dee. These emerge as small, tumbling burns in the high mountains and evolve into large, meandering rivers. They command the centre of the glens and straths, with wide channels, sinuous curves, shingle banks, riffles, pools and level flood plains. The journey upstream from strath to river source, through highland glen and upland burn to the snows of the corrie or plateau, encapsulates the diverse landscape qualities of the Park."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP. This SLQ is concerned with the physical characteristics of the rivers, and their various features and progression through CNP will not be affected by the Proposed Development. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ19: Beautiful lochs
"Lochs and lochans are not common in the Park, compared to their abundance further west, but where they occur they provide a sparkling contrast or a calm reflectivity. There are high corrie lochs, the highest water bodies in Britain, and linear lochs within glacially-sculpted glens. There are lochs nestling like jewels within dense forests of pine, and there are glistening lochs surrounded by lighter woods of birch."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, ensuring that the varieties of lochs will not be affected by the Proposed Development. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development from lochs would be limited in magnitude due to the limited extent of theoretical visibility predicted, for example at Loch Morlich (>17km distant), or as a result of the separation between the proposed Development and the high corrie

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lochs within the Cairngorms massif. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
TREES, WOODS AND FORESTS
SLQ20: Dark and venerable pine forest
"There are large tracts of ancient Scots pine, long renowned for their beauty, conservation value and their timber. They occur both as pure stands and in mosaic with plantation. Where the woodland is open, the individual trees with their dark foliage and orange bark, rise with a stately grace above the heather. Each has a distinctive sculptural shape, often with a dominance of horizontals. Where the woodland is closed, verticals dominate, with tall trunks and a dark green canopy above an understorey of blaeberry, heather and mosses. Under this canopy, the pervading stillness is reminiscent of a hushed cathedral with its tall pillars and vaulted roof.
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, ensuring that the pine forest will not be affected by the Proposed Development. Any indirect effects on the perception of the forest arising from visibility of the Proposed Development would be greatly limited due to the inherent enclosure provided in the pinewoods by its canopy. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ21: Light and airy birch woods
"In many areas birch woods provide a lighter and more open contrast to the darker pines. Some of these form dense stands on hill slopes and river banks, others comprise airy wood pasture, with copses and individual trees and an understorey of grass. These latter are often found on drumlins and hummocky moraines and create distinctive and attractive variations in the landscape. Bushes of juniper are a common element in many woods of both birch and pine, a mid-storey of contrasting form and colour. Woods of birch tend to allow intermittent views to a landscape beyond, through clearings and lightly-spaced trees, or during the leafless winter months."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, ensuring that the birch woods will not be affected by the Proposed Development. Any indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development would be limited due to the inherent enclosure provided in the birch woods. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ22: Parkland and policy woodlands
"Policy woodlands and designed landscapes with their tall, exotic conifers, planted groups of trees, avenues, field boundary trees and shelter belts, provide an ordered contrast to the native woodlands, commercial plantations and surrounding hills and moorland. These are found particularly in the Blair Atholl and Deeside areas."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, ensuring that the parkland and policy woodlands, and their contrast with the surrounding landscape, will not be affected by the Proposed Development. Any indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development would be limited due to the inherent enclosure provided in the policy woodlands and also by woodland surrounding areas of parkland. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ23: Long association with forestry
"For centuries the great pine forests of Speyside and Deeside have been important for timber, often with the logs floated down the rivers to the sea. Further south, the Atholl Estate is an example of an early pioneer of both commercial forestry and the creation of designed landscapes. Hence there is a long legacy of managed forests, logging and forest industries which continues to this day. This legacy includes remnants of log dams, iron furnaces, saw mills and tramways, as well as numerous modern plantations. It also includes the continuing tradition of timber cladding, wooden porches and wooden outbuildings."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, and also no Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development that might affect this SLQ. We therefore do not consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.

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WILDLIFE AND NATURE
SLQ24: Dominance of natural landforms*
"The burns and rivers follow their natural courses, being largely unmodified by human activity. The lochs and lochans tend to be similarly unmodified, holding their natural water levels, and one of the largest natural wetlands in Britain is found at the Insh Marshes. Additionally, the extent and scale of the hills and mountains are such that natural landforms tend to dominate the scene, with any human modification being of a small-scale and incidental to the wider, outer landscape."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development have the potential to alter the perception of the scale of the hills This SLQ will be assessed in greater detail in the LVIA.
SLQ25: Extensive tracts of natural vegetation
"Away from the straths and lower hillsides, most of the Park is clothed with swathes of relatively natural vegetation, harmoniously blended and integrating disparate elements of the park into a visual whole. Such vegetation includes native woodland of pine and birch, moorland of heath and bog, wetland of marsh and loch, and upland of moss heath and boulder field. The national and international importance of these habitats is recognised both by the numerous nature conservation designations within the national park, and by the nature reserves that are a draw to many visitors."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, ensuring that the natural vegetation will not be affected by the Proposed Development. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development would also not materially alter the way in which this characteristic of the Park is experienced. We therefore do not consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ26 Association with iconic animals
"Through experience, literature and marketing, the landscape is associated in many people's minds with iconic Highland wildlife such as golden eagle, osprey, red grouse, capercaillie, ptarmigan, wildcat, red squirrel, pine marten, red deer and salmon. Large areas are specifically protected and managed for wildlife, and these places can be popular attractions for visitors. Some animals are managed for sport with, for example, the Rivers Spey and Dee renowned for their salmon. Red grouse and red deer have brought sportsmen to the area since Victorian times."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development would also not materially alter the way in which this characteristic of the Park is experienced. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ27: Wild land
"The mountain core contains some of the wildest and remotest areas of Britain, where the vegetation is natural, artefacts are rare, nature is in charge, and the long walk-in is the only means of getting there. On the high plateaux, there are many miles of land above 3000ft (914m), exposed to the changeable and sometimes extreme Cairngorms' climate. There are few other places in Britain where one can walk for so many miles away from roads, tracks and other human structures."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, ensuring that no additional human structures or artefacts will be located within the landscape. Any indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development on the 'mountain core' and 'high plateaux' would be moderated to a large degree by the separation of the wind farm (>15km) due to the intervening Spey Valley. The Proposed Development would therefore be a peripheral feature within the wider setting of these areas, which would sometimes also be visible in combination with existing wind farm development outwith the Park. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ28: Wildness*

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"Other areas of the Park are less remote, but the preponderance of near natural vegetation, together with distinctive wildlife and the general lack of development, can still give a perception of the dominance of nature. This includes the managed grouse moors, and the ancient, managed woods and plantations."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, ensuring that no additional development will be located within the landscape. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development may have the potential to alter the perception of the wildness of the landscape surrounding the Site. This SLQ will be assessed in greater detail in the LVIA.
VISUAL AND SENSORY QUALITIES
SLQ29: Layers of receding ridge lines*
"It is a landscape of receding and interlocking layers, comprising a series of gently undulating and ascending ridge lines visible when looking across to distant horizons. In hazy light these appear as hues of decreasing intensity, giving great depth to the landscape. Where ridges are not broken by human structures, the receding horizons reinforce the impression of natural landforms dominating. This quality is reflected in the logo of the Cairngorm National Park Authority."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development may occur in conjunction with the hills to the south of the Site, which contribute to one of the many layers of the CNP, albeit associated with its fringe landscapes. There is therefore some limited potential for significant effects to arise on this SLQ across a relatively small area of the Park. This SLQ will be assessed in greater detail in the LVIA.
SLQ30: Grand panoramas and framed views*
"Vast and distant panoramic views are frequent throughout the Park, made possible by open landscapes and elevated viewpoints, and visibility and colours always highly susceptible to changing weather and season. Views range from broad pastoral straths of green, improved pasture; middle-distance open, rolling hills of brown heather moor, with woodland at lower levels; and far distant, exposed, wild mountain terrain. The assemblage of landscape features is aesthetically pleasing, with views often framed by vegetation and landform, and the eye led to an inviting arrangement of hill slopes and glens."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development may occur where the Site is perceived in the setting of panoramic views of the Park and as a result there is potential for significant effects to arise on this SLQ. This SLQ will be assessed in greater detail in the LVIA.
SLQ31: A landscape of many colours
"All Scottish landscapes are visually reflective of seasonal and weather-related changes. Fresh, luminous spring growth and rich autumn hues are a universal and life-enriching feature of rural Scotland. The Park however possesses characteristics which make its colours distinctive and recognisable. These derive from its combination of bedrock, natural vegetation, lochs and rivers, land management and microclimate, and include the distinctive dark green canopy and orange bark of Scots pine; the hillside patchworks of muirburn with its various subtle hues; the brilliant white snow fields and snow patches; the lochs nestled in woodland brightly reflecting the sky; the pink granite sparkling in a sharp winter sun; and the cloak of purple heather in late summer."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, ensuring that the colours of the landscape will not be affected by the Proposed Development. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development would also not materially alter the way in which this characteristic of the Park is experienced. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ32: Dark skies*
"At night, even the complete absence of colour, a pitch black sky bespeckled only with the light of the stars, is a distinctive feature as dark skies become increasingly rare in Britain."

Potential Impacts of the Proposed Development on Key Characteristics of CNP SLQs (Asterix denotes SLQs that are included in the detailed assessment)
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, ensuring that physical lighting will not be introduced within CNP. Indirect effects arising from external visibility of the Proposed Development's aviation lighting may occur where the Site is contained within the setting of panoramic views of the Park and as a result there is potential for significant effects to arise on this SLQ. This SLQ will be assessed in greater detail in the LVIA.
SLQ33: Attractive and contrasting textures
"As with colour, the landscape displays a myriad of attractive and contrasting textures specific to the area. This occurs at both the small scale, for example the rough, platy bark of pine with a soft heap of wood ant nest beneath; and at the large scale, such as the rolling hills of soft heather. In between, there are gritty plateaux; sheer, hard crags; rock outcrops in soft moorland; smooth pastoral grasslands; rough rivers churning over rounded pebbles; and serene, shiny loch surfaces."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, ensuring that the textures of the landscape will not be affected by the Proposed Development. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development would also not materially alter the way in which this characteristic of the Park is experienced. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ34: The dominance of natural sounds
"The hushed ancient pine woods can evoke a cathedral-like silence, the murmur of the wind in the canopy contrasting with the stillness below. In the mountains the wind howling as it sweeps up the corries, the crash of a snow avalanche, or the peacefulness of a rare, perfectly still day can all be experienced. There is the rushing water of the linns, the wind rustling across the moors, and the bellowing of the stags during the rut. The bird calls are distinctive, whether the ptarmigan of the mountains, the red grouse of the moors, the peewits, curlews and oystercatchers of the farmland, or, in the woods, the black grouse and the capercaillie with its clicking beak. It is easy to escape man-made noise and become immersed instead in the sounds of nature."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development would also not materially alter the way in which this characteristic of the Park is experienced. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
CULTURE AND HISTORY
SLQ35: Distinctive planned towns
"The pink and grey-tinged granite buildings and slated roofs of designed villages and small towns, dating mainly from the late 18th and early 19th centuries, are an integral part of the landscape. Nestled unobtrusively in the glens and straths, usually well-sheltered with trees, they provide a reassuring solidity. They are rural in character having no high-rise buildings or city traffic and are a reminder of historical and social context. Although each planned settlement has its own character and layout, they all have a main central street, often with geometric streets running perpendicular. Typically, there is a treelined square, surrounded by large, public, stone buildings."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, ensuring that the townscape within CNP will not be affected by the Proposed Development. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development would also not materially alter the way in which this characteristic of the Park is experienced. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ36: Vernacular stone buildings
"Within the park are found numerous traditional stone buildings, mostly dating from the 18th and 19th centuries and reflecting the geology of the area. These fit well into the landscape, with the granite buildings of town, village or isolated houses being particularly notable. Porches supported by hewn tree trunks are a particularly distinctive feature."

Potential Impacts of the Proposed Development on Key Characteristics of CNP SLQs (Asterix denotes SLQs that are included in the detailed assessment)
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, ensuring that the vernacular architecture within CNP will not be affected by the Proposed Development. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development would also not materially alter the way in which this characteristic of the Park is experienced. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ37: Dramatic, historical routes "The Grampians have always been a barrier to travel between the Central Lowlands and the north, with routes limited to the straths, glens and passes which cut through the mountains. The main roads still follow old routes through the dramatic, wild scenery of the high passes of Glenshee, The Lecht and Drumochter, following the line of the 18th century military roads. These passes provide a sense of anticipation during the ascent and during the descent the splendid Cairngorms' landscape comes into view, giving a sense of arrival once traversed, and also a sense of security on reaching habitation. Other traditional routes such as the Lairig Ghru, Glen Feshie, Glen Tilt, Glen Dee, Jock's Road and the Gaick Pass are now the domain of the hillwalker."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, ensuring that routes through CNP will not be affected by the Proposed Development. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development on these routes would be moderated to a large degree by the separation of the wind farm from their locations within the Cairngorms massif due to the intervening Spey Valley. The Proposed Development would therefore be a peripheral feature within the wider setting of any available views from these routes, which would sometimes also be visible in combination with existing wind farm development outwith the Park. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ38: The wistfulness of abandoned settlements "The glens and straths of the Cairngorms are littered with the ruins of past settlement. These range from the forts and round-houses of the prehistoric past to the townships and shieling huts used for summer grazing of more recent times. These settlements have contributed to the development of the landscape that we see today, forming part of its character and often providing points of reference for the visitor. Additionally, throughout the area there is a rich legacy of Gaelic place-names, a reminder of the Gaelic heritage that still permeates the landscape."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, ensuring that abandoned settlements within CNP will not be affected by the Proposed Development. Gaelic place names will also remain unaffected. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development would also not materially alter the way in which this characteristic of the Park is experienced. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ39: Focal cultural landmarks of castles, distilleries and bridges "The straths and glens have always been important strategically and defensive fortifications from duns to castles go far back in history. Many, such as Corgarff Castle, Blair Castle and the Ruthven Barracks, form prominent landmarks, marking periods of conflict and 'restlessness' (Woodburn, 1975). Numerous stone bridges remain, many dating back to the 18th century military roads. Found both on and off-road, these make attractive incidental features and are an interesting reminder of past transport links and military campaigns, forming an important tangible expression of the history of the landscape. A distinctive feature of several settlements is the traditionally-built whisky distillery with its associated bonded warehouses."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, ensuring that the *"Focal cultural landmarks of castles, distilleries and bridges"* will not be affected by the Proposed Development. Indirect significant effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development are not predicted to arise due to the predicted zone of theoretical visibility, and there would be no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from Corgarff Castle, Blair Castle and the Ruthven Barracks. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.

Potential Impacts of the Proposed Development on Key Characteristics of CNP SLQs (Asterix denotes SLQs that are included in the detailed assessment)
SLQ40: The Royal connection "The Highlands generally and the Cairngorms in particular were popularised by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert after their purchase of the Balmoral estate in 1848. Deeside often reminded Prince Albert of parts of the German hills with its broad strath, coniferous wooded hillsides and rocky outcrops. Since then, the Royal connection has been maintained, attracting visitors to the area and used in promotion by local businesses."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP and its lack of effect on the royal connection. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development are not predicted. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ41: A landscape of opportunities "Since Victorian times, the outstanding scenery of the area has been a draw to visitors. The diverse landscapes lend themselves to a wide range of pursuits and it is one of the foremost localities for outdoor recreation in Britain. Whilst some visitors seek out the physical challenge of an extreme environment in extreme conditions, others choose physical endeavour in a more organised and safer setting. The high mountains are both alluring and forbidding, attracting climbers, walkers and winter sports enthusiasts. However, the rounded summits and gentle slopes can turn treacherous in sudden changes of weather, and being at the mercy of the elements can be an added attraction and source of exhilaration. But it is not just the highest mountains that attract people to the outdoors. Active pursuits on the lower ground include water sports, cycling and horse-riding, together with the traditional sporting pursuits of deer-stalking, grouse shooting and fishing. There are also many who are content to enjoy gentler and less challenging pursuits, whether low level walking, bird-watching, exploring the past, or simply enjoying the scenery. However, all derive pleasure directly from what the landscape has to offer.
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP, ensuring that activities and opportunities within CNP will not be affected by the Proposed Development. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development would also not materially affect the ability to take advantage of these opportunities to undertake recreational activities across the Park. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.
SLQ42: Spirituality "For those seeking peace and escape from modern intrusions, solitude in this vast landscape can be readily found. Whether it is sought on the highest exposed peaks, the still calm of a pine forest or far into the heather-clad hills, the beauty of the landscape and dominance of nature prevails."
Preliminary assessment: There will be no direct effect on this SLQ due to the location of the Proposed Development outwith the CNP. While indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development would ensure that characteristics of peace, absence of modern intrusions, and solitude would still be readily found in the CNP. We do not therefore consider that there is potential for significant effects to arise on the key characteristics of this SLQ.

5.5.28 The findings of the preliminary assessment are that 10 of the 42 SLQs have the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development:

- SLQ2: Vastness of space, scale and height:
- SLQ3: Strong juxtaposition of contrasting landscapes
- SLQ4: A landscape of layers, from inhabited strath to remote, uninhabited upland;
- SLQ6: Landscapes both cultural and natural;
- SLQ10: The surrounding hills;
- SLQ24: Dominance of natural landforms;

- SLQ28: Wildness;
- SLQ29: Layers of receding ridge lines;
- SLQ30: Grand panoramas and framed views; and
- SLQ32: Dark skies.

5.5.29 The list of potentially affected SLQs was agreed with NatureScot at the pre-application stage. It is therefore proposed that an assessment of effects on these 10 SLQs is provided in the LVIA for the Proposed Development.

5.5.30 There are also two NSAs in the 35km Study Area (The Cairngorm Mountains NSA (~10.7km) and the Deeside and Lochnagar NSA (~34.2km)), which are shown in **Figure 5.4** with the extent of theoretical visibility across these designated areas shown in **Figure 5.10a**. Through the request for a Scoping Opinion, it was agreed that a detailed assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development on these NSAs would not be required. This is as a consequence of the low level of visibility predicted and the large separation distance between the Proposed Development and the Deeside and Lochnagar NSA. Due to the location of The Cairngorm Mountains NSA within the CNP, NatureScot considered that the NSA SLQs are subsumed within the CNP SLQs, and they should therefore be assessed as part of the detailed assessment of effects on the SLQs of the CNP. NSAs are therefore discounted from further assessment in the LVIA.

Gardens and Designed Landscapes

5.5.31 Historic Environment Scotland (HES) is responsible for designating Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDLs). These are contained in an Inventory which can be accessed at https://www.historicenvironment.scot/. The descriptions contained in the Inventory identify each GDL's qualifying features which are of national importance.

5.5.32 The protection which historic assets, including GDLs, are afforded is described in Policy 7(i) of NPF4:

"Development proposals affecting nationally important Gardens and Designed Landscapes will be supported where they protect, preserve or enhance their cultural significance, character and integrity and where proposals will not significantly impact on important views to, from and within the site, or its setting."

5.5.33 There are 14 GDLs in the 35km Study Area as shown in **Figure 5.4**. Through the request for a Scoping Opinion, it was agreed that a detailed assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development in the LVIA would be limited to Aultmore GDL only (~19.5km). It was agreed that the other GDLs would be discounted owing to a combination of limited visibility and separation distances from the Site.

5.5.34 On further review, it is considered that significant effects are unlikely to arise on the Aultmore GDL, due to its distance and its wooded setting, and it is therefore not included as a landscape receptor in the assessment. An assessment of the Aultmore GDL was also not requested by Historic Environment Scotland at the Scoping stage. The designation is, however, considered in the evaluation of sensitivity of both the landscape character types that they cover and the viewpoints that lie within them.

Local/ Special Landscape Areas

5.5.35 A Local Landscape Area (LLA)/ Special Landscape Area (SLA) is an area of landscape considered to be important on a local level and which are designated by Councils. Policy 4(d) of NPF4 (Scottish Government, 2023) states that:

- *"Development proposals that affect a site designated as a local nature conservation site or landscape area in the LDP will only be supported where:*
- *i. Development will not have significant adverse effects on the integrity of the area or the qualities for which it has been identified; or*
- *ii. Any significant adverse effects on the integrity of the area are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of at least local importance."*

5.5.36 Local landscape designations within or partially within the Study Area are shown in **Figure 5.4**. The ZTVs in **Figure 5.10a** and **5.10b** show the limited extent of theoretical visibility across many of these designated areas. Through the request for a Scoping Opinion, it was agreed that the detailed assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development in the LVIA would be limited to the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA (~5.2km). All other local landscape designations located within the Study Area were discounted from the detailed assessment in the LVIA due to a combination of absence or limited theoretical visibility and their distance from the Proposed Development.

5.5.37 The Special Qualities of the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA have been derived from the following document:

- The Highland Council (2011). 'Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas'

Wild Land

5.5.38 Wild Land Areas (WLA) mapped by NatureScot encompass Scotland's most extensive areas of high wilderness. Policy 4(g) of NPF4 (Scottish Government, 2023) outlines criteria that needs to be satisfied by development proposals in WLAs:

"Development proposals in areas identified as wild land in the Nature Scot Wild Land Areas map will only be supported where the proposal:

i. will support meeting renewable energy targets; or,

ii. is for small scale development directly linked to a rural business or croft, or is required to support a fragile community in a rural area.

All such proposals must be accompanied by a wild land impact assessment which sets out how design, siting, or other mitigation measures have been and will be used to minimise significant impacts on the qualities of the wild land, as well as any management and monitoring arrangements where appropriate. Buffer zones around wild land will not be applied, and effects of development outwith wild land areas will not be a significant consideration."

5.5.39 There are two WLAs located within the Study Area, which are shown in **Figure 5.4**. The closest WLA is the 20. Monadhliath WLA at a distance of 0.1km from the proposed wind turbines. Through the request for a Scoping Opinion, it was agreed with NatureScot that a Wild Land Assessment is not required to be undertaken for either of the WLAs.

Principal Visual Receptors

5.5.40 A number of visual receptors such as people in settlements and users of travel routes are considered in the assessment as views from them may be affected by the Proposed Development. It is not possible to consider every potential visual receptor in the Study Area due to the extent of ground that it covers, and the assessment therefore concentrates on the key visual receptors that may gain visibility of the Proposed Development, such as from settlements and routes. Principal visual receptors (ie the locations where people are most likely to be) are shown in **Figure 5.5** and in conjunction with the blade tip ZTV in **Figures 5.11a** and **5.11b**.

Settlements and Residents

5.5.41 The settlements and residents most likely to be affected by the Proposed Development are those that are shown on the ZTVs to gain higher levels of visibility and generally lie in relatively close proximity. The closest residents that are subject to theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development are a limited number of scattered dwellings to the north-west in Strathdearn and to the east at Insharn and Inverlaidnan. Residential properties situated within 2km of the proposed wind turbines are included in the Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) in **Technical Appendix 5.2**.

5.5.42 The settlements of Tomatin, Carrbridge, and Nethy Bridge are also predicted to experience theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development at distances of between 6-20km, and consequently they have been included in the detailed assessment in the LVIA. There is also some very limited theoretical visibility predicted from parts of Boat of Garten of a small number of blade tips, but at distances of over 12km, it is not considered that significant effects would arise at this settlement.

5.5.43 Aside from those scoped into the assessment above, all other settlements have been discounted from the LVIA because they are not considered to have potential to receive significant visual effects due to various combinations of distance, absence of or limited theoretical visibility, and screening by woodland and other elements in the landscape.

Roads (inc. Scenic Routes)

5.5.44 It is not possible, or necessary, to assess the potential effects of the Proposed Development on every road. However, some of the key roads require consideration in the assessment. Four principal criteria have been used in determining the inclusion of roads in the assessment:

- the extent to which the road traverses the Study Area or extends across a notable part of it;
- the importance of the road in terms of recognition, signage, traffic volume and usage;
- the extent of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from the road; and
- the potential for cumulative effects along the road.

5.5.45 The location and extent of roads in the Study Area reflects the settlement pattern, with the majority of roads found along straths/glens or close to the coastline. There are a number of tourist routes in Study Area, such as the North Coast 500 and the Highland Tourist Route, that are particularly susceptible to the effects of wind farm development, but these routes are situated at relatively large distances from the Proposed Development and are expected to receive minimal theoretical visibility. Of most relevance to this LVIA are the C1121, A9 and A938 roads to the north and east of the Proposed Development (see **Figure 5.11a**), which have sections within 3km, 4km and 7km of the proposed wind turbines respectively that are predicted to receive theoretical visibility. The effects of the Proposed Development on each of these roads is considered in detail later in this assessment in **Section 5.9**.

Railways

5.5.46 There is theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from the Perth to Inverness railway line as shown on ZTVs (**Figure 5.11a** and **5.11b**), and no theoretical visibility predicted from the Aberdeen to Inverness railway line. The

potentially affected sections of the Perth to Inverness railway line between Carrbridge and Moy, are located at distances of 4-11km from the Proposed Development. Consequently, there is potential for significant effects to arise along this section of the route in summary, a short section of the Perth to Inverness railway line is assessed further in detail in **Section 5.9**.

Cycling Routes

5.5.47 There is one cycle route of relevance to the Proposed Development in the Study Area: National Cycle Route 7. The closest sections of this route to the Proposed Development are located between Carrbridge and Moy at distances of between 4-11km from the Proposed Development, while there is some slightly more distant visibility from around Boat of Garten. There is potential for significant effects to arise along the closest sections of the route between Carrbridge and Moy and consequently this part of the route is assessed in detail in **Section 5.9**.

Walking Routes

5.5.48 There are seven recognised long-distance walking routes in the 35km Study Area; the Affric Kintail Way, the Dava Way, the East Highland Way, the Great Glen Way, the Scottish National Trail, South Loch Ness Trail, and the Speyside Way. There is no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development predicted to sections of these routes within 20km of the Proposed Development, with the exception of the Speyside Way, and where theoretical visibility is predicted at greater distances it is predicted to occur over very short sections of the routes.

5.5.49 In relation to the Speyside Way, theoretical visibility is predicted at distances of between 12-22km, but visibility of the Proposed Development across the closest sections within Abernethy Forest would generally be screened by trees and significant effects are therefore unlikely to arise along these parts of the route. At greater distances, there is some theoretical visibility of a small number of blade tips along sections closer to the River Spey, but from site work undertaken it appears that this visibility would be screened by intervening forestry and woodland.

5.5.50 Consequently, all of these long-distance walking routes are not considered further in the LVIA due to the aforementioned reasons.

5.5.51 There are a number of popular hills, including munros, in the Study Area, such as Cairn Gorm, Ben Macdui and Braeriach, located in north-western areas of the CNP. An assessment of the visual effects that are likely to be experienced by hill walkers from the summits of a few of these hills are provided in the viewpoint assessment: Viewpoint 17a (Meall a' Bhauchaille), Viewpoint 22 (Cairn Gorm Mountain Railway Cafe), and Viewpoint 23 (Braeriach Summit).

5.5.52 Views experienced by walkers from slightly less prominent hills on the edge of the CNP are illustrated by Viewpoint 8 (Carn Sleamhuinn), Viewpoint 10 (Track near Geal Charn Mor), and Viewpoint 16 (Carn an Fhreiceadain Summit).

5.5.53 Representative views that would be experienced by walkers from hills located across other parts of the Study Area are illustrated by Viewpoint 11 (Carn a' Choire Mhoir Summit), Viewpoint 15 (Carn na h-Easgainn Summit), Viewpoint 19 (Carn na Saobhaidhe Summit), and Viewpoint 24 (Creagan a Chaise).

5.5.54 It is considered that these hills provide a reasonable impression of the likely effects that would be experienced across various points of the compass across the Study Area. An assessment of the visual effects predicted at each of these viewpoints is provided in **Section 5.9**.

5.5.55 There are a number of Core Paths in the Study Area (shown in conjunction with the ZTV on **Figure 5.11b**), as designated by local authorities. These are not all individually considered in the assessment due to the number of routes and the limited relevance of the majority of these to the Proposed Development. However, where there is potential for significant effects on views to arise, Core Paths that are located within 10km of the Proposed Development are considered in the detailed assessment. A preliminary assessment of these Core Paths is provided in **Table 5.5** below.

Table 5.5 Preliminary Assessment of Core Paths

ID	Name	Comments
IN27.03	Allt Neacrath loop	Some visibility of the Proposed Development is predicted to occur at the start of the route at the junction between Juniper Drive and the minor road through Tomatin, but visibility is generally screened by a mixture of buildings, landform and forestry along the whole route. Overall, it is considered that there is no potential for significant effects to arise along the length of this Core Path.
IN27.01	National Cycle Route 7 by A9	No theoretical visibility predicted from this short section of NCR7. A detailed assessment of effects upon this Core Path is therefore not provided.
IN27.02	Distillery Wood	Theoretical visibility is predicted along part of this Core Path, but significant effects are unlikely due to the enclosure provide by the woodland. A detailed assessment of effects upon this Core Path is therefore not provided.
LBS53	Sustrans Route 7	Theoretical visibility is predicted along part of this Core Path, but significant effects are unlikely due to the enclosure provide by the forestry. Where there are small sections of the route around Docharn that are unaffected by forestry screening, theoretical visibility is limited to a small number of blade tips at a distance of

		over 10km. Overall, it is considered that there is no potential for significant effects to arise along the length of this Core Path.
LBS56	Ellan Wood Path	Theoretical visibility is predicted along the entirety of this Core Path, but significant effects are unlikely due to the enclosure provide by the woodland. A detailed assessment of effects upon this Core Path is therefore not provided.
LBS57	Glencarnoch Path	Theoretical visibility is predicted along the entirety of this Core Path, but significant effects are unlikely due to the enclosure provide by the woodland. A detailed assessment of effects upon this Core Path is therefore not provided.
LBS58	Cemetery Path	Theoretical visibility is predicted along the entirety of this Core Path, but significant effects are unlikely due to the enclosure provide by the woodland. A detailed assessment of effects upon this Core Path is therefore not provided.
LBS59	Village Hall Woodland Walk	Theoretical visibility is predicted along the entirety of this Core Path, but significant effects are unlikely due to the enclosure provide by the woodland. A detailed assessment of effects upon this Core Path is therefore not provided.
LBS61	River Dulnain Path	Theoretical visibility is predicted along the entirety of this Core Path, but significant effects are unlikely due to the enclosure provide by riparian woodland and intervening forestry. A detailed assessment of effects upon this Core Path is therefore not provided.
LBS62	Lochanhully Link	Theoretical visibility is predicted along long sections of this Core Path, but significant effects are unlikely due to intervening trees and forestry (see Viewpoint 14). A detailed assessment of effects upon this Core Path is therefore not provided.
LBS114	Sustrans Route 7	Theoretical visibility is predicted along the majority of the length of this Core Path. While there is some enclosure provided by forestry, there are open views from some of the closest sections of the path (see Viewpoint 3). A detailed assessment of this Core Path is provided in **Section 5.9**.
LBS122	Carr Plantation Path	Theoretical visibility is predicted along the entirety of this Core Path, but significant effects are unlikely due to the enclosure provide by woodland and intervening forestry. A detailed assessment of effects upon this Core Path is therefore not provided.
LBS123	Carr-Bridge Golf Course Path	Theoretical visibility is predicted along long sections of this Core Path, but significant effects are unlikely due to intervening forestry (see Viewpoint 14). A detailed assessment of effects upon this Core Path is therefore not provided.

Viewpoints

5.5.56 The assessment of landscape and visual effects is informed by a series of 25 viewpoints, which are selected to represent visibility from landscape character types, landscape planning designations and principal visual receptors around the Study Area. These include points of specific importance such as recognised viewpoints, designated landscapes, settled areas, important routes and attractions. A variety of landscape character types and locations from different directions and distances have also been represented. It should be noted that while the majority of the viewpoints were chosen to represent receptors that have potential to undergo a significant effect this is not always the case, and some viewpoints that are included demonstrate a lower level of visibility from certain locations. Viewpoints for the landscape and visual assessment have been discussed and agreed in consultation with THC and NatureScot.

5.5.57 The viewpoints included in the assessment are set out in **Table 5.6**, and detailed assessment for each of these is presented in **Section 5.8**. The viewpoint locations are shown in conjunction with the blade tip ZTV in **Figures 5.6a-d** and the hub height ZTV on **Figures 5.7a-d**.

Table 5.6 Representative Viewpoints

No.	Viewpoint	Easting	Northing	Receptor
1	C1121 Road (near Glenkyllachy Lodge)	275314	823776	Rod users and residents
2	U1116 Road (near Garbole)	275537	824484	Road users
3	Core Path LBS114 (by Insharn)	284499	822193	Recreational cyclists and walkers, and residents
4	C1121 Road (near Kyllachy House)	278115	825138	Road users and residents
5	A9 (Slochd)	285237	823873	Road users
6	U1116 Road (near Carn Eitidh)	273827	825494	Road users
7	Tomatin	280344	828186	Residents and road users
8	Carn Sleamhuinn	285385	816079	Hill walkers
9	A9 (River Findhorn Crossing)	280836	829002	Road users
10	Track near Geal Charn Mor	283626	812320	Hill walkers
11	Carn a' Choire Mhoir Summit	284269	829054	Hill walkers
12	A9 (near Carrbridge)	289664	822541	Road users
13	A9 (north of Tomatin)	279497	831215	Road users
14	Carrbridge	290712	823006	Residents
15	Carn na h-Easgainn Summit	274404	832069	Hill walkers
16	Carn an Fhreiceadain Summit	272567	807138	Hill walkers
17a	Meall a Bhauchaille	299080	811539	Hill walkers
17b	Craiggowrie	296285	813497	Hill walkers
18	Achnahannet	297805	826861	Road users
19	Carn na Saobhaide Summit	260032	814505	Hill walkers
20	Braes of Balnagowan, Nethy Bridge	300347	820709	Residents
21	A95 (near Dulnain Bridge)	300459	825003	Road users
22	Cairn Gorm Mountain Railway Cafe	300479	804902	Hill walkers
23	Braeriach Summit	295323	799901	Hill walkers
24	Creagan a Chaise	310420	824173	Hill walkers
25	Meall Fuar Mhonaidh	245705	822209	Hill walkers

5.5.58 *The night-time visual assessment has been informed by dusk photomontages for the following four viewpoint locations, which have been selected from the LVIA viewpoints and agreed with NatureScot and THC. These viewpoints have been

selected for night-time assessment on the basis that they are locations where people may be present at dawn/ dusk, and where baseline conditions are likely to be relatively dark.

- Viewpoint 1: C1121 Road (near Glenkyllachy Lodge)
- Viewpoint 7: Tomatin;
- Viewpoint 12: A9 (near Carrbridge); and
- Viewpoint 17b: Craiggowrie.

Preliminary Viewpoint Assessment

5.5.59 **Table 5.7** identifies which viewpoints require more detailed assessment in the LVIA because they have the potential to undergo significant effects (including cumulative effects), and which viewpoints do not require further detailed assessment.

Table 5.7 Preliminary Assessment of Viewpoints

No.	Viewpoint	Comments
1	C1121 Road (near Glenkyllachy Lodge)	Included in the detailed assessment due to proximity and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
2	U1116 Road (near Garbole)	Included in the detailed assessment due to proximity and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
3	Core Path LBS114 (by Insharn)	Included in the detailed assessment due to proximity and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
4	C1121 Road (near Kyllachy House)	Included in the detailed assessment due to proximity and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
5	A9 (Slochd)	Included in the detailed assessment due to proximity and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
6	U1116 Road (near Carn Eitidh)	Included in the detailed assessment due to proximity and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
7	Tomatin	Included in the detailed assessment due to proximity and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
8	Carn Sleamhuinn	Included in the detailed assessment due to open views and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
9	A9 (River Findhorn Crossing)	Included in the detailed assessment due to open views and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
10	Track near Geal Charn Mor	Included in the detailed assessment due to open views and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
11	Carn a' Choire Mhoir Summit	Included in the detailed assessment due to open views and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
12	A9 (near Carrbridge)	Included in the detailed assessment due to proximity and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
13	A9 (north of Tomatin)	Limited visibility predicted to occur due to roadside trees over a very short duration with vehicles travelling at between 50-60mph. Consequently, it is considered that there isn't potential for significant effects to arise along this stretch of road, and the viewpoint is discounted from detailed assessment.
14	Carrbridge	Included in the detailed assessment due to the high sensitivity of the receptor and the absence of wind energy in current views from this location.
15	Carn na h-Easgainn Summit	Included in the detailed assessment due to open views and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
16	Carn an Fhreiceadain Summit	Included in the detailed assessment due to open views and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
17	Meall a Bhauchaille	Included in the detailed assessment due to open views and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
17b	Craiggowrie	Included in the detailed assessment due to open views and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
18	Achnahannet	Included in the detailed assessment due to open views and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
19	Carn na Saobhaide Summit	Included in the detailed assessment due to open views and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
20	Braes of Balnagowan, Nethy Bridge	Included in the detailed assessment due to open views and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
21	A95 (near Dulnain Bridge)	No visibility of the Proposed Development due to screening from intervening forestry, so the viewpoint is discounted from detailed assessment.
22	Cairn Gorm Mountain Railway Cafe	Included in the detailed assessment due to open views and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
23	Braeriach Summit	Included in the detailed assessment due to open views and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
24	Creagan a Chaise	Included in the detailed assessment due to open views and level of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development.
25	Meall Fuar Mhonaidh	Extremely limited theoretical visibility of a small number of blade tips from over 31km distance. There is no potential for significant effects to arise at this location, so the viewpoint is discounted from detailed assessment.

5.5.60 **Table 5.7** indicates that receptors at 22 of the 25 viewpoints have potential to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development and are taken forward for further detailed assessment.

Cumulative Wind Farm Developments

5.5.61 Both NatureScot (2021) and GLVIA3 advise in their guidance that the assessment of the cumulative impacts associated with a development proposal should encompass the effects of the proposal in conjunction with existing, under construction, consented and application stage wind farms awaiting determination. Schemes that are at the pre-planning or scoping stage are generally not considered in the assessment of cumulative effects because firm information on which to base the assessment is not available. The list of proposals presented in NatureScot guidance (NatureScot, 2021) is as follows:

- *"existing development, either built or under construction;*
- *approved development, awaiting implementation; and*

- *proposals awaiting determination within the planning process with design information in the public domain. Proposals and design information may be deemed to be in the public domain once an application has been lodged, and the decision-making authority has formally registered the application."*

5.5.62 The cumulative situation changes frequently as applications are made or withdrawn, and the layouts of submitted application wind farms are changed. It is therefore necessary to agree on a cut-off date when the sites and layouts to be included are fixed. This was set at the 21 June 2024. Any changes in the cumulative situation after this date were not incorporated in the assessment.

5.5.63 In relation to whether or not wind farms are included in the cumulative assessment, NatureScot advises in its guidance (2021, p5) that:

"The key principle for all impact assessments is to focus on the likely significant impacts and those which are likely to influence the outcome of the consenting process."

5.5.64 Consequently, sites that lie outwith a 35km radius of the Proposed Development have been discounted due to the local topography of the surrounding landscape and their distance from the Proposed Development. The greatest influence as part of the cumulative context will arise in relation to development closest to the Proposed Development.

5.5.65 The scale of wind farm and other development is also of relevance to the cumulative assessment. Generally, the larger the development the higher the likelihood of a significant cumulative effect. Single turbines and those below 50m tip height are not included in the detailed assessment in line with NatureScot guidance (NatureScot, 2021), which states that "*due to the very large number of small scale (three or fewer wind turbines) proposals in the planning system in some areas of Scotland it may not be practical to include all of these in the search area base plan*".

5.5.66 Wind farm sites and single turbines that are over 50m to tip height that lie within a 35km radius of the Proposed Development are shown on **Figure 5.12** and listed in **Table 5.8**.

Table 5.8 Cumulative wind energy development within a 35km radius

Name / Status	Distance to Nearest Proposed Turbine	Number of turbines	Blade tip height
Operational/ Under Construction			
Glen Kyllachy	4.7	20	110
Farr	6.4	40	102
Aberarder	11.0	12	130
Dunmaglass Estate	11.4	33	120
Tom nan Clach	13.4	13	125
Moy	13.7	20	126.5
Corriegarth	19.7	23	120
Stronelairg	26.8	66	135
Berry Burn	33.9	29	100
Hill of Glaschyle	34.3	12	99.91
Consented			
Corriegarth 2	19.2	16	149.9
Cairn Duhie Redesign	26.2	16	149.9
Cloich	26.4	36	149.9
Dell	29.8	14	130.5
Belladrum	30.6	1	60.7
Berry Burn II	36.2	9	149.9
Application			
Tom nan Clach Extension	13.2	7	149.9
Lethen	16.8	17	185
Easter Aberchalder	20.3	1	68
Ourack	29.3	18	180
Dell Redesign	29.9	9	200
Scoping			
Kyllachy	4.2	11	200
Highland	5.6	19	230
Balnespick	9.5	9	200
Lynemore	10.4	14	200
Balmore	23.4	8	220

5.5.67 All operational and under construction sites are included in the baseline assessment as they form a part of the baseline situation. Their presence has the potential to influence the assessment of effects on landscape character and the assessment of effects on views. The cumulative assessment of the operational and under construction sites, as well as the consented and application sites, is presented afterwards in the cumulative assessment for each landscape and visual receptor.

5.5.68 In this instance, there is inadequate design information to include certain schemes that are at the scoping stage in the cumulative assessment, and as a result, with the exception of Highland Wind Farm, they are not considered further in the detailed assessment of the LVIA. However, scoping stage sites are included on the GIS Figures accompanying the LVIA for broader context.

Summary of Baseline Conditions and Preliminary Assessment

5.5.69 This section has described the baseline of the Study Area, including a review of landscape character, landscape-related planning designations, principal visual

receptors (including settlements and routes), viewpoints and cumulative wind farms. It also includes a preliminary assessment of the effect that the Proposed Development will have on these various landscape and visual receptors, and the findings of this preliminary assessment are summarised below.

5.5.70 The following aspects of the landscape and visual resource have potential to undergo significant effects (including cumulative effects) as a result of the Proposed Development and require detailed assessment subsequently in this chapter:

- Landscape elements:
  - Rough Grassland/ Moorland.
- Landscape character receptors (LCTs):
  - 221 Rolling Uplands – Inverness;
  - 125 Rolling Uplands – Cairngorms;
  - 128 Forested Upland Fringe (Abernethy Forest and Slochd units);
  - 127 Upland Strath;
  - 126 Upland Glen – Cairngorms (Glenmore unit); and
  - 122 Mountain Massif – Cairngorms.
- Landscape designations:
  - CNP; and
  - Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA.
- Principal visual receptors:
  - Settlements – Tomatin and Carrbridge;
  - Roads – C1121, A9 and A938;
  - Cycling Routes – NCR7;
  - Popular mountains across the Study Area; and
  - Core Paths – LBS114 (Sustrans Route 7).
- Viewpoints:
  - Viewpoint 1: C1121 Road (near Glenkyllachy Lodge);
  - Viewpoint 2: U1116 Road (near Garbole);
  - Viewpoint 3: Core Path LBS114 (by Insharn);
  - Viewpoint 4: C1121 Road (near Kyllachy House);
  - Viewpoint 5: A9 (Slochd);
  - Viewpoint 6: U1116 Road (near Carn Eitidh);
  - Viewpoint 7: Tomatin;
  - Viewpoint 8: Carn Sleamhuinn;
  - Viewpoint 9: A9 (River Findhorn Crossing);
  - Viewpoint 10: Track near Geal Charn Mor;
  - Viewpoint 11: Carn a' Choire Mhoir Summit;
  - Viewpoint 12: A9 (near Carrbridge);
  - Viewpoint 14: Carrbridge;
  - Viewpoint 15: Carn na h-Easgainn Summit;
  - Viewpoint 16: Carn an Fhreiceadain Summit;
  - Viewpoint 17a: Meall a Bhauchaille;
  - Viewpoint 17b: Craiggowrie;
  - Viewpoint 18: Achnahannet;
  - Viewpoint 19: Carn na Saobhaide Summit;
  - Viewpoint 20: Braes of Balnagowan, Nethy Bridge;
  - Viewpoint 22: Cairn Gorm Mountain Railway Café;
  - Viewpoint 23: Braeriach Summit; and
  - Viewpoint 24: Creagan a Chaise.

5.6 Potential Effects and Mitigation

5.6.1 Potential effects are those which could result from the construction, operation and decommissioning of a wind farm, according to the project, site and receptor characteristics and their interactions. **Table 5.9** describes typical landscape and visual effects that can occur from a wind farm, their inclusion does not imply that they will occur, or be significant, in the case of the Proposed Development. A variety of landscape and visual mitigation measures have been incorporated through the iterative design of the Proposed Development in order to prevent, reduce or offset potential landscape and visual effects. These are described in the section on mitigation below. The residual effects of the Proposed Development – those effects remaining after mitigation that will materialise when the Proposed Development is under construction, operation or decommissioning - are assessed in the 'Assessment of effects on landscape character' and 'Assessment of effects on views' in **Sections 5.7** and **5.8**.

Table 5.9 Potential effects of construction, operation and decommissioning

Activity	Specific Element	Potential Effects	Potential Sensitive Receptors
Construction	Construction plant, borrow pit excavation, temporary construction facilities, construction cranes	Temporary physical effects on landscape fabric Temporary effects on landscape character Temporary effects on views Temporary cumulative effects	Physical landscape features e.g. trees and ground cover Landscape character receptors – landscape character types, wild land areas and designated landscapes

Activity	Specific Element	Potential Effects	Potential Sensitive Receptors
Operation	Turbines, access tracks, restored borrow pits, substation compound, BESS, and transformers	Long term effects on landscape character Long term effects on views Long term cumulative effects with other wind farms	Views – experienced by different receptors e.g. residents, road users, walkers
Decommissioning	Construction plant, cranes	Temporary physical effects on landscape fabric Temporary effects on landscape character Temporary effects on views	

5.6.2 The effects of the Proposed Development on the landscape and visual resource will arise principally from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the turbines, control building, substation compound and BESS, access tracks, hard standings and borrow pits. The temporary construction facilities, such as cranes, construction vehicles, construction compounds, laydown areas and delivery vehicles required during the construction phase will also have effects on the landscape and visual resource. It is anticipated that construction of the Proposed Development will take approximately 23 months; the construction effects identified are therefore predicted to occur during this period and end at the start of the operational stage. While the majority of the effects during the construction phase would relate to the tall cranes, it is anticipated that nine months would be the maximum period during which the cranes would be active on the Site, making this an especially short-term effect. A Construction Management Statement will be prepared that will further detail the mitigation measures to be implemented during the construction phase. It is anticipated that the Proposed Development will be in operation for 40 years. On completion of its operational life the Site may be re-commissioned following further consent and/or approvals or will be decommissioned.

Mitigation

5.6.3 The nature of landscape and visual effects means that landscape and visual mitigation is embedded into the design of the Proposed Development. The Site selection rationale and the iterative design process is described in **Chapter 2: Site Description & Design Evolution** and in the Design Statement for the Proposed Development.

5.7 Assessment of Physical Effects

Introduction

5.7.1 The first category of effects covered in the assessment is physical effects, which are direct effects on the fabric of the Site, such as the removal of ground cover vegetation. Physical effects are found only on the Site, where existing landscape elements may be removed or altered by the Proposed Development (illustrated in **Figure 1.3** of the EIA Report). This category of effects is made up of landscape elements and, in this case, there is one element involved: rough grass moorland.

5.7.2 The methodology for the assessment of physical effects is described in full in **Technical Appendix 5.1**.

Rough Grassland/Moorland

Baseline

5.7.3 The rough grassland/moorland that covers the Site is typical of the upland area within which the Proposed Development lies, which is described in the NatureScot LCA:

"The nature of the groundcover is similar throughout much of this landscape type. Deer-grazed heather moorland dominates: its uniform colour and texture accentuating the smooth, rounded landforms and the simplicity of the landscape."

Sensitivity

5.7.4 Rough grassland/moorland contributes to smooth texture of the LCT. The rough grasslands across the Site are not covered by a designated area of landscape value or nature conservation, which would otherwise imply a greater level of protection of the landscape. While it is a relatively abundant landscape element that is not rare or recognised for its value, within the diversity at the detailed scale there are landscape elements which are of greater value owing to the importance of the flora and fauna. The value of rough grassland/ moorland is medium.

5.7.5 The susceptibility to change of this landscape element is medium-low due to the potential for reinstatement and restoration of the ground cover following construction and at the end of the lifetime of the Proposed Development.

5.7.6 The combination of a medium value and medium-low susceptibility to change of the landscape element results in a **medium** sensitivity for rough grassland/moorland ground cover.

Magnitude of Change

5.7.7 Changes to the rough grassland/ moorland landscape element will result from the removal of the soil and vegetation from the routes of the access tracks and electricity and communication cables, from the areas where the turbines and transformers, BESS and substation compound are constructed, from the temporary

construction, gatehouse and batching plant compounds, and borrow pits. The magnitude of change on the rough grassland/moorland element will be **low** as the Proposed Development will result in the removal of a relatively small area and small proportion of this extensive landscape element. The location of the turbines and transformers, BESS and substation compound, temporary construction, gatehouse and batching plant compounds, and borrow pits have been carefully located so as to avoid the more sensitive habitats within this landscape element.

Significance of Effect

5.7.8 The physical effect of the Proposed Development on the rough grassland/moorland will be **minor** and **not significant**. This is primarily due to the medium sensitivity of the landscape element, the limited proportion of the landscape element that would be affected, and the high potential for the visual mitigation of any direct effects through reinstatement of the rough grassland/moorland ground cover.

5.8 Assessment of Effects on Landscape Character

Introduction

5.8.1 Landscape character is the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape, and the way that this pattern is perceived. Effects on landscape character are manifested both on the Site, where the pattern of elements that characterises the landscape will be directly altered by the addition of the Proposed Development to the landscape; and off-site, around the Study Area, where visibility of the Proposed Development may alter the way in which this pattern of elements is perceived.

5.8.2 Landscape character receptors fall into two groups:

- LCTs/LCUs; and
- Designated areas.

5.8.3 The assessment of effects on these receptors is described in the following sections of this chapter. The detailed methodology for the assessment of effects on landscape character is described in **Technical Appendix 5.1**.

5.8.4 It should be noted that levels of magnitude of change on landscape character receptors are generally found to be lower than the magnitude of change on viewpoints that lie within these receptors. This means, for example, that if a viewpoint is assessed to undergo a medium-high magnitude of change it does not necessarily follow that the landscape character receptor within which it lies would also undergo a medium-high magnitude of change but may undergo a medium magnitude of change instead. This is because the effects on viewpoints are assessed within the context of a specific outlook towards the Site and are usually specifically selected to gain a direct view over the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development is therefore the principal consideration in the viewpoint assessment, and influences that lie in other areas of the view are of lesser relevance to the assessment. The landscape character of a receptor is not, however, determined so specifically by the outlook over the Proposed Development, and there are many other considerations, both visual and perceptual, that combine to give an area its landscape character. This means that the degree of influence of the Proposed Development on landscape character may be lower than its influence on a specific view.

5.8.5 Viewpoints are referred to in this assessment as they do give a useful indication of the appearance of the Proposed Development from the landscape receptors, but, as noted previously, the level of magnitude of change may vary between the viewpoint assessment and the landscape character assessment. This is particularly true of areas that lie slightly further away from the Site. In the immediate vicinity of the Site, typically up to around 2km to 3km away – the magnitude of change on viewpoints and landscape character is likely to be similar, but beyond this, the magnitude of change on landscape character is found to often diminish more rapidly as the influence of the turbines is subsumed in the many other influences on landscape character. In relation to operational and under-construction wind farms that may be perceived to influence landscape receptors, **Figure 5.3a** provides an overview of their locations relative to landscape character types, and areas that are subject to cumulative theoretical visibility of these wind farms are illustrated in **Figures 5.13a-j**.

Assessment of Effects on LCTs

5.8.6 The LCTs that cover the Study Area are mapped in **Figure 5.3b** and shown in conjunction with the ZTV in **Figures 5.9a-b. Section 5.4** presents a review of LCTs within the Study Area. This has found that the following LCTs have the potential to undergo significant effects and therefore require a detailed assessment in the LVIA:

- 221 Rolling Uplands – Inverness;
- 125 Rolling Uplands – Cairngorms;
- 128 Forested Upland Fringe (Abernethy Forest and Slochd units);
- 127 Upland Strath;
- 126 Upland Glen – Cairngorms (Glenmore unit); and
- 122 Mountain Massif – Cairngorms.

5.8.7 The effect on each of these LCTs is assessed below. The LCTs that cover the remainder of the Study Area were found through the review process to not have the potential to be significantly affected and have therefore not been assessed in any further detail.

Rolling Uplands – Inverness LCT (221)

Baseline

5.8.8 A description of the characteristics of the host LCT is provided in **Section 5.5**. The central and eastern parts of the LCT contains a large area of the Monadhliath WLA.

5.8.9 The characteristics of the LCT are also illustrated in the visualisations for Viewpoints 1 (C1121 Road (near Glenkyllachy Lodge), 2 (U1116 Road (near Garbole), 4 (C1121 Road (near Kyllachy House), 6 (U1116 Road (near Carn Eitidh), 7 (Tomatin), 8 (Carn Sleamhuinn), 9 (A9 (River Findhorn Crossing), 10 (Track near Gael Charn Mor), 11 (Carn a' Choire Mhoir Summit), 13 (A9 (north of Tomatin), 15 (Carn na h-Easgainn Summit), 16 (Carn an Fhreiceadain Summit), and 19 (Carn na Saobhaidhe Summit), which are located either in this LCT or close to its boundary.

5.8.10 There are a large number of operational wind farms located across this LCT, including Glen Kyllachy, Farr, Moy, Dunmaglass, Corriegarth, and Stronelairg. Aberarder is under construction as extension to Dumnaglass Estate wind farm.

Sensitivity

5.8.11 The Rolling Uplands – Inverness LCT has a medium value. Some small areas situated in the north-east of the LCT are covered by the Drynachan, Lochindorb, and Dava Moors SLA, but the majority of the LCT is not designated for its scenic value. The LCT is moderately scenic though and some areas are used for recreational activities, such as hill walking, and this contributes to its medium value.

5.8.12 The Rolling Uplands – Inverness LCT generally has a medium-high susceptibility to the Proposed Development, although it varies slightly across its extents. The landscape generally has a large-scale, simple and open character, and while it hosts some development within the more settled glens and some large scale wind farms across some of the more elevated hills, it hosts little built development across south-eastern parts. The less developed parts of the LCT are defined by WLA20 (Monadhliath). The large scale of the hills moderates its susceptibility, while the smaller scale of some of the glens contained in the LCT increase its susceptibility.

5.8.13 The combination of the value of the landscape and its susceptibility to the Proposed Development leads to an overall **medium-high** rating for sensitivity.

Magnitude of Change

5.8.14 The Proposed Development lies close to the north-eastern edge of this very large LCT unit, and as a result extensive theoretical visibility (**Figure 5.9a**) of varying numbers of turbines is predicted across its immediate elevated surroundings in all directions within 10km of the Proposed Development. Relatively widespread theoretical visibility also extends further to the north of the Proposed Development to distances of around 18km and more intermittently further to the south-west to distances of around 25km. Theoretical visibility is more constrained by landform to the north-west of the Proposed Development where landform contains it within a 10km radius. While theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development also extends variably to the east, this would affect neighbouring LCTs, rather than the Rolling Uplands – Inverness LCT.

5.8.15 Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- The relatively widespread theoretical visibility that is predicted to arise across the LCT within 10km of the Proposed Development, and the more intermittent theoretical visibility (of fewer turbines) that is predicted beyond this at distances up to 35km distant;
- The absence of forestry across the hills (illustrated by Viewpoints 8, 10, and 16);
- The proximity of the Proposed Development to some of the smaller scale glens within the LCT associated with the River Findhorn (illustrated by Viewpoints 1, 2, 4, and 6);
- The proximity of the Proposed Development to areas within the LCT to the south and south-west of the Proposed Development that exhibit relatively strong wildness characteristics;
- The increase in the concentration of wind farms within the LCT;
- The introduction of wind farm development to the south of Strathdearn; and
- The larger scale of the proposed wind turbines relative to some of the operational wind farms within the LCT.

5.8.16 Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The Proposed Development would be situated in a large-scale, simple, and open landscape that is well suited to hosting wind farm development (illustrated by Viewpoints 8, 10, and 16);
- The difficulty of judging scale and distance from elevated areas within such a large scale, simple and open landscape;
- The location of the wind turbines beneath the more elevated band of hills situated to the south of the Proposed Development, comprising Carn Bad an Daimh, Carn Dubh 'Ic an Deoir, and Carn Coire na Caorach, reduces the perceived scale of the turbines from south-western parts of the LCT; and

- The Proposed Development is not an entirely new characteristic influence across affected parts of this LCT unit.

5.8.17 Taking these factors into account, the magnitude of change for this LCT across areas with theoretical visibility within approximately 6km of the Proposed Development would generally be **high**, due to the strong influence of the wide horizontal extent of the wind farm and the large scale of the turbines. The magnitude of change would generally reduce to **medium-high** across areas with theoretical visibility between 6-10km from the Proposed Development due to the diminishing scale of the wind farm relative to the wider landscape, with the exception of those parts of the LCT close to the Farr and Glen Kyllachy Wind Farms and also those areas to the south-west of the Proposed Development where the wind farms and containing hills respectively moderate effects slightly and the magnitude of change would be **medium**, but also the valley associated with the Findhorn River where the magnitude of change would be **high** as a result of the apparent juxtaposition between the Proposed Development and the smaller scale strath.

5.8.18 At distances between approximately 10-15km from the Proposed Development where theoretical visibility is predicted, the magnitude of change would generally begin to subside to between **medium** and **medium-low** due to distance, but this reduction would be less apparent in areas to the north-east of the Proposed Development where the wind farm would be situated within the context of the smaller scale Strathdearn and Findhorn valleys.

5.8.19 At distances greater than 15km from the Proposed Development where theoretical visibility is predicted, the magnitude of change would generally reduce to a **low** or **negligible** level dependent on the extent of landform and forestry screening and the influence of operational wind farms.

Significance of Effect

5.8.20 The effect of the Proposed Development on the landscape character of the Rolling Uplands – Inverness LCT where theoretical visibility is predicted at distances of up to 15km would vary between **moderate** and **not significant (**where a medium-low magnitude of change is predicted) and **significant (**where a medium magnitude of change is predicted to occur) and **major-moderate** and **significant**. Effects would reduce to **not significant** beyond a distance of 15km from the Proposed Development, and where no theoretical visibility is predicted there would be **no change**.

Cumulative Assessment

5.8.21 Visibility of any notable operational and under-construction wind farms is described in the assessment above.

5.8.22 Under the operational and under-construction cumulative scenario, a large proportion of the areas predicted to experience theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development would also be subject to a cumulative influence from the operational Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Moy, Tom nan Clach, Berry Burn, Dunmaglass, Aberarder, Corriegarth, and Stronelairg wind farms (see **Figures 5.13a-g**). These wind farms are interspersed along the length of the Rolling Uplands – Inverness and Open Rolling Upland LCTs and would be visible in the context of the Proposed Development across large parts of its elevated summits and ridgelines. The Proposed Development would extend the influence of wind farm development closer to the eastern boundary and to the southern side of Strathdearn in northern areas of the LCT. This is likely to increase the influence of wind farm development on the wildness attributes of parts of the LCT to the south of the Proposed Development, where the Proposed Development is apparent at closer range than Tom nan Clach Wind Farm, as well as some parts of the straths situated between the Proposed Development and Glen Kyllachy, Farr, Moy and Tom nan Clach Wind Farms. The Proposed Development would generally maintain a consistent spacing between these other wind farms, but it would provide an additional influence on a different part of the setting of these parts of the LCT. A **medium-low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted to occur across the majority of the LCT in this scenario, with a **medium** cumulative magnitude of change predicted to arise to the south of Strathdearn where the Proposed Development would provide the prevailing cumulative influence.

5.8.23 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in an operational and under-construction scenario would therefore range between **moderate** and **not significant** and **major-moderate** and **significant** across parts of the LCT unit, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across large parts of the LCT unit. The moderate effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst medium-low cumulative magnitude of change and the medium-high sensitivity of the LCT unit.

5.8.24 In the consented scenario, the cumulative magnitude of change would be similar due to the limited additional influence of Corriegarth 2, Dell, Cloiche, and Tom nan Clach Extension (see **Figures 5.13e-h**), as a consequence of their close associations with existing wind farms in the LCT and their separation from the Proposed Development. As a result, the cumulative magnitude of change is predicted range between **medium-low** and **medium** in the consented scenario.

5.8.25 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in the consented scenario would therefore range between **moderate** and **not significant** and **major-moderate** and **significant** across parts of the LCT unit, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across large parts of the LCT unit. The major-moderate effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst medium-low cumulative magnitude of change and the medium-high sensitivity of the LCT unit.

5.8.26 In the application scenario, the Lethen, Ourack, and Dell Redesign Wind Farms would maintain a similar pattern of development influence across the LCT, situated between 15km and 35km from the Proposed Development. The addition of the Proposed Development with these wind farms would slightly intensify the influence of wind farm development on the setting of the LCT (see **Figure 5.13i**), but the cumulative magnitude of change would remain **medium-low** to **medium**. This is due to the limited association between these wind farms and the Proposed Development, and the presence of existing wind farm development within similar parts of the LCT.

5.8.27 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in the application scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** and **major-moderate** and **significant** across parts of the LCT, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across large parts of the LCT. The major-moderate effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst medium-low cumulative magnitude of change and the medium-high sensitivity of the LCT.

5.8.28 The addition of the Proposed Development to a scoping scenario including Highland Wind Farm would further intensify the influence of wind farm development close to the eastern boundary in northern areas of the LCT, in particular across the hills to the south-east of Dalmigavie, situated between the two proposals (see **Figure 5.13j**). These hills currently exhibit relatively strong wildness attributes and a **high** cumulative magnitude of change would arise across those parts of the LCT within 4-5km to the south of the Proposed Development. This is due to the short distance of the Proposed Development and Highland Wind Farm from these parts of the LCT, the increase in the influence of wind farm development from the north-east, and the existing influence of other operational wind farm developments upon this part of the LCT. Across parts of the LCT to the west of Dalmigavie at distances of between 4-7km, the addition of the Proposed Development would result in a **medium-high** cumulative magnitude of change, due to the increase in the influence of wind farm development to the east of the LCT in combination with Highland. At distances greater than 7km, where cumulative visibility is predicted, the cumulative magnitude of change across the LCT would reduce to **low**, due to the weaker influence of the Proposed Development.

5.8.29 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in the scoping scenario would therefore be at worst **major** and **significant** across some of the closest parts of the LCT, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across large parts of the LCT, where, for the avoidance of doubt, effects would be **not significant**. The major cumulative effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst high cumulative magnitude of change and the medium-high sensitivity of the LCT.

Rolling Uplands – Cairngorms LCT (125)

Baseline

5.8.30 The Rolling Uplands – Cairngorms LCT encompasses a belt of hills along the edge of the CNP, situated to the south of Rolling Uplands – Inverness LCT. Similar to the neighbouring LCT to the north, the hills form part of the Monadhliath Mountains, and they therefore possess a lot of similar characteristics, although their closer proximity to Strath Spey provides a slightly different influence upon their wider setting. The most relevant parts of the LCT are situated to the east of the Proposed Development, in between Slochd and Aviemore, where widespread theoretical visibility is predicted along a 10km stretch of the uplands, as well as some scattered hills situated across the most northerly reaches of the LCT. There are also some scattered smaller patches of theoretical visibility across some of the elevated hill summits north-west of Kingussie. The LCT contains parts of the Monadhliath WLA.

5.8.31 The following 'Key Characteristics' of this LCT have been extracted from the NatureScot LCA:

- *"A series of massive, broad, smooth, rounded summits: over 800 metres to the south, with the overall height tapering northwards to around 600 metres at the Strathdearn Hills.*
- *North-east/south-west alignment, running parallel to the Highland Boundary Fault.*
- *Lower slopes made up of small-scale hummocks and hollows.*
- *Heather and upland grassland on higher ground often extending to lower slopes.*
- *Number of relatively isolated glens.*
- *Improved pastures and woodland in larger glens.*
- *Sparse, scattered settlement of isolated traditional farmsteads and estate buildings on lower foothills and flat glen floors.*
- *Perception of relative remoteness."*

5.8.32 The characteristics of the LCT are also illustrated in the visualisations for Viewpoints 3 (Core Path LBS114 (by Insharn)), Viewpoint 5 (A9, Slochd), 8 (Carn Sleamhuinn), 10

(Track near Gael Charn Mor), and 16 (Carn an Fhreiceadain Summit), which are located either in this LCT or close to its boundary.

5.8.33 There are no wind farms located within this LCT, and there is currently only a weak influence from some distant wind farm development across a few elevated locations as illustrated by cumulative ZTV **Figures 5.13a-g**.

Sensitivity

5.8.34 The Rolling Uplands – Cairngorms LCT has a high value. The receptor lies within the CNP and while it doesn't necessarily possess the same landscape quality as other areas of the CNP, it is strongly influenced by these more dramatic landscapes to the south, and its character has generally remained intact. The undeveloped character of southern parts of the LCT are also recognised by WLA20 (Monadhliath). The recreational use of the landscape, particularly for hill walking, also contributes to its value.

5.8.35 The Rolling Uplands – Cairngorms LCT generally has a medium-high susceptibility to the Proposed Development, although it varies slightly across its extents. The landscape has a large scale, and while it hosts little built development, such as wind farms, there is some theoretical visibility of operational wind farms from parts of the LCT. The LCT would therefore be relatively susceptible to the introduction of the Proposed Development, particularly if it is located at closer distances than existing wind farm development in the surrounding LCTs.

5.8.36 The combination of the value of the landscape and its susceptibility to the Proposed Development leads to an overall **high** rating for sensitivity.

Magnitude of Change

5.8.37 The Proposed Development is located outwith the LCT and there would therefore be no direct effects upon its character. Effects of the Proposed Development would therefore be indirect and associated with its influence on its surrounding landscape.

5.8.38 Theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is limited across the LCT, with potentially affected areas generally contained to northern parts, primarily situated to the east of the Proposed Development, in between Slochd and Aviemore, where theoretical visibility is predicted between Carn Bad nan Luibhean, Carn na Guaille, Inverlaidnan Hill and Beananach Wood, at distances of between 1-8km from the Proposed Development. There are also patches of theoretical visibility located to the north and north-east of this larger area of visibility, which encompass a number of larger hills: most notably Carn a' Chuaille, Creag a' Bhiannen, Carn nan Eagan, and Creag na h-lolaire at distances of between 6-23km. Overall, the potentially affected areas comprise a relatively small proportion of the LCT unit.

5.8.39 Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- The short distance of the potentially affected parts of the LCT from the Proposed Development;
- The absence of forestry across the more elevated hills;
- The limited or no influence from operational wind farm development upon many of the potentially affected parts of the LCT;
- The closer distance of the Proposed Development in comparison to other operational wind farms where they are visible; and
- The smaller scale of the less elevated areas of the LCT immediately to the east of the Proposed Development (illustrated by Viewpoint 3).

5.8.40 Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The Proposed Development would be situated upon hills possessing a large-scale and simple character;
- The relatively compact form of the wind farm where visible across the closest parts of the LCT;
- The containment provided by intervening hills reduces the number of turbines that would be visible across much of the LCT (illustrated by Viewpoint 3);
- The enclosure provided by forestry across large areas of the closest affected parts of the LCT at Beananach Wood and Inverlaidnan Hill (illustrated by Viewpoint 5); and
- The Proposed Development is not an entirely new characteristic influence across some affected parts of this LCT unit.

5.8.41 Taking these factors into account, the magnitude of change for this LCT across the closest parts of the LCT between Slochd and Aviemore would vary between **no change** and **high**, dependent on the level of theoretical visibility, the enclosure provided by forestry and distance. From the elevated hills situated across the most northernmost areas of the LCT, the magnitude of change would decrease from **high** across the closest hills, such as Carn nam Bain-tighearna, to **low** across the distant slopes of Gorton Hill.

Significance of Effect

5.8.42 The effect of the Proposed Development on the landscape character of the Rolling Uplands – Cairngorms LCT would be at worst **major** and **significant** across localised areas closest to the Proposed Development, but across the majority of the LCT unit

where no visibility is predicted there would be **no change**, where, for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects would be **not significant**.

Cumulative Assessment

5.8.43 Visibility of any notable operational and under-construction wind farms is described in the assessment above.

5.8.44 Under the operational and under-construction cumulative scenario, only a very small proportion of areas predicted to experience theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development would also be subject to a cumulative influence from operational wind farms. These areas of cumulative visibility are primarily found around Carn Sleamhuinn, Carn Dearg and Beinn Ghuilhin, where the Proposed Development would be visible in addition to the more distant operational Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Dunmaglass, Aberarder, Moy, Tom nan Clach, Berry Burn, and Hill of Glaschyle Wind Farms. The Proposed Development would introduce a closer influence with larger scale turbines at distances of between 5-8km, and as a result there would be a notable alteration to the setting of these areas. As a consequence, the Proposed Development would result in a **medium** cumulative magnitude of change upon these small areas of the LCT in this scenario, but there would be **no** or **negligible change** across the majority of the LCT.

5.8.45 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in an operational and under-construction scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across small areas of the LCT unit, and there would be **no** or **negligible change** to the cumulative scenario across the vast majority of the LCT, where, for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects would be **not significant**. The moderate effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst medium-low cumulative magnitude of change and the high sensitivity of the LCT.

5.8.46 In the consented scenario, the cumulative magnitude of change would be similar due to the limited additional influence of the Clash Gour, Cairn Duhie Redesign, Corriegarth 2 and Tom nan Clach Extension, due to their close associations with existing wind farms and separation from the Proposed Development. As a result, a **medium-low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted to occur in the consented scenario.

5.8.47 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in a consented scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across small areas of the LCT unit, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across the vast majority of the LCT, where, for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects would be **not significant**. The moderate effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst medium-low cumulative magnitude of change and the high sensitivity of the LCT.

5.8.48 In the application scenario, the Lethen and Ourack Wind Farms would have a relatively weak association with the Proposed Development due to their separation. The addition of the Proposed Development with these wind farms would therefore slightly intensify the influence of wind farm development on the setting of the LCT, but the cumulative magnitude of change would remain **medium**.

5.8.49 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in an application scenario would therefore be **major-moderate** and **not significant** across small areas of the LCT unit, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across the vast majority of the LCT, where, for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects would be **not significant**. The major-moderate effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst **medium-low** cumulative magnitude of change and the **medium-high** sensitivity of the LCT.

5.8.50 The addition of the Proposed Development to a scoping scenario including Highland Wind Farm would further intensify the influence of wind farm development close to the western boundary in northern areas of the LCT. The Proposed Development would introduce wind farm development at a closer distance than would be the case for Highland, and this would therefore increase the cumulative magnitude of change. The two wind farms would appear within a similar context, possessing similar design characteristics, but from some locations to the east of the Proposed Development, such as parts of Carn Sleamhuinn and Beinn Ghuilbin, they would be slightly separated, and while the increased height of the Highland turbines would help to provide a more consistent visual relationship between the two wind farms, it is likely that the cumulative magnitude of change would be slightly higher from these parts of the LCT. Overall, an at worst **medium** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted to arise across northern parts of the LCT where cumulative visibility is predicted.

5.8.51 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in a scoping scenario would therefore be an at worst **major-moderate** and **significant** across some northern areas of the LCT, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across the vast majority of the LCT, where, for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects would be **not significant**. The major-moderate effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst medium cumulative magnitude of change and the high sensitivity of the LCT.

Forested Upland Fringe LCT (128)

Baseline

5.8.52 There are two relevant units of the Forested Upland Fringe LCT: the closest encompassing a small area to the north-east of the Proposed Development ('the Slochd unit'), east of Slochd, and the other covering Abernethy Forest and some of the hills to the east and south of Nethy Bridge ('the Abernethy Forest unit'). Widespread theoretical visibility is predicted across the Slochd unit and visibility is more interspersed across the Abernethy Forest unit. These areas are heavily forested and they are situated between the more elevated uplands and strath that border the LCT units.

5.8.53 The following 'Key Characteristics' of this LCT have been extracted from the NatureScot LCA:

- *"Located on fringes below and partially contained by upland areas.*
- *Bowls or platform landscapes above river valleys which are largely flat, with locally complex landforms.*
- *Small rounded lochs providing picturesque and recreational focus.*
- *Crossed by watercourses descending from encircling hills and mountains: some in deeply incised gorges, others meandering across floodplains.*
- *Extensive tracts of forest, comprising native Scots Pine as well as conifers. Heather moorland with regenerating pine and birch scrub bordering the mountainous backdrop, and in spaces within the forests.*
- *Dispersed farms with small fields of pasture contained by the forest, creating a sequence of open spaces on well-drained areas and low ridges.*
- *Some busy main roads, as well as minor roads following river valleys, with estate tracks on higher ground.*
- *Popular recreation and tourist destinations.*
- *Impressively extensive forests, particularly when viewed from surrounding elevated viewpoints.*
- *Can feel secluded, despite being quite busy.*
- *Diverse experience of light and shade.*
- *Forested backdrop to river valleys and straths.".*

5.8.54 The characteristics of the Abernethy Forest unit of this LCT are also illustrated in the visualisations for Viewpoint 17a (Meall a' Bhauchaille) and Viewpoint 20 (Braes of Balnagowan, Nethy Bridge), which are located in this LCT.

5.8.55 There are no wind farms located within this LCT, and there is currently only a weak influence from some distant wind farm development.

Sensitivity

5.8.56 The Forested Upland Fringe LCT has a high value. The receptor lies within the CNP, and although the Abernethy Forest unit is slightly detached from the Cairngorms massif, it has a strong association with these highly scenic hills to the south as well as the strath to the north. The Slochd unit is separated from more scenic parts of the CNP and the inclusion of the A9/railway line corridor slightly reduces its overall quality. The recreational use of the landscape, particularly for hill walking, contributes to the value of these LCT units.

5.8.57 The Forested Upland Fringe LCT has a varying susceptibility to the Proposed Development that is influenced primarily by the enclosure provided by parts that contain extensive forestry. Where extensive forestry is present, the enclosure it provides makes it less susceptible to development in neighbouring LCTs, particularly at greater distances. Across some of the more elevated, larger scale parts of the Abernethy Forest LCT, such as the slopes to the north of Meall a' Bhauchaille and Craiggowrie, the absence of enclosure heightens their susceptibility but visibility of distant wind farms also slightly moderates it. Some of the more settled, and smaller scale lowland areas around Lettoch and Dorbach also possess less enclosure from forestry and this heightens their susceptibility. The Forested Upland Fringe LCT has a low to high susceptibility.

5.8.58 The combination of the value of the landscape and its susceptibility to the Proposed Development leads to a **medium** sensitivity across areas with extensive forestry cover, including the Slochd unit and parts of the Abernethy Forest unit, to **high** across open, elevated parts of the Abernethy Forest unit.

Magnitude of Change

5.8.59 The Proposed Development is located outwith the LCT and there would therefore be no direct effects upon its character. Effects of the Proposed Development would therefore be indirect and associated with its influence on its surrounding landscape.

5.8.60 Theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is relatively widespread across the two units of this LCT situated surrounding Slochd and the Abernethy Forest. Across the Slochd unit, theoretical visibility is predicted of varying numbers of turbines at distances of between 5-10km, but there would be no theoretical visibility across some of the less elevated valley areas (containing the railway lines). Across the Abernethy Forest unit, theoretical visibility is more intermittent across the southern half of the LCT unit with theoretical visibility of the majority of the turbines to hub and blade tip height across the majority of the northern half, at distances of between 14-27km.

5.8.61 Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- The short distance of the potentially affected parts of the Slochd LCT unit from the Proposed Development;
- The absence of forestry across the more elevated hills;
- The limited or no influence from operational wind farm development upon many of the potentially affected parts of the LCT; and
- The smaller scale of the less elevated areas of the LCT immediately to the east of the Proposed Development (illustrated by Viewpoint 3).

5.8.62 Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The Proposed Development would be situated upon hills possessing a large-scale and simple character;
- The distance of the Proposed Development from the Abernethy Forest LCT unit;
- The relatively compact form of the wind farm where visible across the closest parts of the Slochd LCT unit;
- The intervening hills reduce the number of turbines that would be visible across much of the two LCT units (illustrated by Viewpoint 20); and
- The enclosure provided by forestry across large areas of both LCTs.

5.8.63 Taking these factors into account, the magnitude of change for this LCT across the closest parts of the LCT between Slochd and Aviemore would vary between **no change** and **high**, dependent on the level of theoretical visibility and the enclosure provided by forestry on the slopes of Tom Mor. From the Abernethy Forest LCT unit, the magnitude of change for this LCT would generally be **low** due to the limited influence of the Proposed Development due to the factors outlined above, and there would be **no change** where enclosure is provided by forestry across large parts or no theoretical visibility is predicted.

Significance of Effect

5.8.64 The effect of the Proposed Development on the landscape character of the Forested Upland Fringe LCT where theoretical visibility is predicted across the open areas of the Slochd unit would be at worst **major** and **significant**, and across the open areas of the Abernethy Forest unit would be at worst **moderate** and **not significant**. Across large parts of both LCT units where forestry provides enclosure, there would be likely to be **no change** to the character of the LCT.

Cumulative Assessment

5.8.65 Under the operational and under-construction cumulative scenario, there would be no cumulative visibility of operational wind farms in the Slochd unit of this LCT. Across the Abernethy Forest unit, cumulative theoretical visibility is predicted to arise with the distant operational Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Dunmaglass, Berry Burn and Tom nan Clach wind farms. These wind farms would be relatively indiscernible appearing as distant blade tips above the containing ridgeline of the CNP, while Clune would appear as a more discernible feature on the skyline (see Viewpoint 20). However, given the limited influence of all other operational wind farms, the cumulative relationship between these wind farms would be relatively weak, and a **low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted across affected parts of this LCT under this scenario.

5.8.66 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in an operational and under-construction scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across potentially affected parts of the Abernethy unit of this LCT, and there would be no change into the cumulative scenario across the majority of the LCT unit. The moderate effect due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst low cumulative magnitude of change and the high sensitivity of the LCT.

5.8.67 Under the consented cumulative scenario, there would be no cumulative visibility of consented wind farms in the Slochd unit of this LCT. The addition of the consented Clash Gour development in the consented scenario across parts of the Abernethy Forest unit of the LCT would also be relatively indiscernible upon the containing ridgelines of the CNP, due to its distance from the LCT and the extent of the wind farm that would be visible. As such, the cumulative magnitude of change under the consented scenario would remain **low**.

5.8.68 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in the consented scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across potentially affected parts of the Abernethy unit of this LCT, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across the majority of the LCT. The moderate effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst **low** cumulative magnitude of change and the high sensitivity of the LCT.

5.8.69 The addition of the application Ourack and Lethen developments in the application scenario would introduce cumulative visibility across parts of the Slochd and Abernethy Forest units of the LCT. Given the distance of these application developments from the LCT units, they would also impart a relatively weak influence upon the broader setting of the LCT units due also in part to the limited proportion of the development that would be theoretically visible. As such, the cumulative magnitude of change under the application scenario would remain **low**.

5.8.70 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in the application scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across potentially affected parts of the Slochd and Abernethy units of this LCT, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across the majority of the LCT. The moderate effect is due to a

combination of the factors that lead to the at worst low cumulative magnitude of change and the high sensitivity of the LCT unit.

5.8.71 The addition of the Proposed Development to a scoping scenario including Highland Wind Farm would intensify the influence of wind farm development across the majority of the Slochd unit, with the exception of parts of the lower valley floor. The Proposed Development would introduce wind farm development at a closer distance than would be the case for Highland, and this would therefore increase the cumulative magnitude of change. However, the two wind farms would appear within a similar context , possessing similar design characteristics, due to the taller height of the more distant Highland turbines, and the cumulative magnitude of change would be **medium** from the affected parts of the Slochd unit of the LCT. In relation to the Abernethy Forest unit of the LCT, from the limited areas unaffected by forestry enclosure, such as the summits of Craiggowrie and Meall a' Bhauchaille, the Proposed Development would be more discernible than Highland due to the larger proportion of the turbines that would be visible. However, the influence of Highland would be moderated due to the intervening distance between the development and the LCT, and as such its association with the Proposed Development would also be moderated. A **low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted to arise across affected parts of the Abernethy Forest LCT unit.

5.8.72 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in the scoping scenario would therefore be **major-moderate** and **significant** across potentially affected parts of the Slochd unit and **moderate** and **not significant** across potentially affected parts of the Abernethy Forest unit, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across large parts of the LCT, where, for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects would be **not significant**.

Upland Strath LCT (127)

Baseline

5.8.73 The Upland Strath LCT encompasses the length of Strath Spey between Laggan in the south-west to Spey Bridge in the north-east. There is a general absence of theoretical visibility across the majority of this large LCT apart from the northern reaches of the strath around Carrbridge and Nethy Bridge. The assessment of this LCT relates primarily to this smaller area in the north of the LCT.

5.8.74 The following 'Key Characteristics' of this LCT have been extracted from the NatureScot LCA:

- *"Large, broad, flat bottomed strath, with some narrower pinch-point sections.*
- *Valley floor with the meandering River Spey and frequent lochs and marshes.*
- *Meadows and wetlands prone to flooding on the valley floor.*
- *Mixed pastures and broadleaved woodland in more undulating areas.*
- *Wetlands flanked by mixed woodland and conifer forests.*
- *Main communication corridor housing A9 trunk road and railway.*
- *Estate houses and policy landscapes in many parts of the strath.*
- *A well-settled area with a series of settlements occurs along the northern side of the strath at bridging points over the River Spey. They are popular tourist destinations serving the Cairngorms National Park. Elsewhere farms and houses are frequent along main and minor roads.*
- *Views to the Cairngorm mountains.*
- *Noise and activity from busy A9.".*

5.8.75 The characteristics of the LCT are also illustrated in the visualisations for Viewpoint 12 (A9 (near Carrbridge), 14 (Carrbridge), 18 (Achnahannet), and 21 (A95, near Dulnain Bridge), which are located in this LCT.

5.8.76 There are no wind farms located within this LCT, but there are some existing weak influences on its wider setting from wind farms situated to the north and north-west of the CNP.

Sensitivity

5.8.77 The Upland Strath LCT has a high value. The receptor lies within the CNP, and while it is subject to some development associated with route corridors, pylon mounted transmission lines and settlements, it forms an important element in the broader landscape. The smaller scale of the strath often forms a juxtaposition with the larger scale Cairngorms massif to the south, which is of high scenic quality. The recreational use of the landscape, particularly for walking and cycling, contributes to the value of this LCT.

5.8.78 The Upland Strath LCT has a varying susceptibility to the Proposed Development that is influenced primarily by the enclosure provided by parts that contain extensive forestry. Where extensive forestry is present, for example, across large tracts of the landscape between Boat of Garten and Carrbridge, the enclosure and/or screening it provides makes it less susceptible to development in neighbouring LCTs, particularly at greater distances. Across some of the more elevated, open, strath slopes the absence of enclosure heightens their susceptibility, but the increased scale moderates this slightly. The Upland Strath LCT has a low to high susceptibility.

5.8.79 The combination of the value of the landscape and its susceptibility to the Proposed Development leads to a **medium** rating of sensitivity across areas with extensive

forestry cover and a **high** rating of sensitivity across the more open, fertile areas of the strath where there is greater exposure to surrounding influences.

Magnitude of Change

5.8.80 The Proposed Development is located outwith the LCT unit and there would therefore be no direct effects upon its character. Effects of the Proposed Development would therefore be indirect and associated with its influence on its surrounding landscape.

5.8.81 Theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is limited across the LCT, with the potentially affected areas generally contained entirely to its northern reaches, stretching from the settlement of Carrbridge in the west to Dulnain Bridge in the east, while also extending northwards along the west facing slopes of Beinn Mhor and to the summit of Cam Sgriob. There is also a band of theoretical visibility situated across the southern slopes of the strath between Boat of Garten and Speybridge. Overall, the potentially affected areas comprise a relatively small proportion of the LCT unit.

5.8.82 Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- The medium range of the closest potentially affected parts of the LCT from the Proposed Development;
- The absence of forestry across the more elevated hills close to the northern boundary of the LCT and more open parts of the Dulnain strath;
- The limited or no influence from operational wind farm development upon many of the potentially affected parts of the LCT; and
- The closer distance of the Proposed Development in comparison to other operational wind farms across the west of the Study Area where they are visible.

5.8.83 Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The Proposed Development would be situated upon hills possessing a large-scale and simple character;
- The containment provided by intervening hills reduces the number of turbines that would be visible across much of the LCT (illustrated by Viewpoint 12);
- The enclosure and screening provided by forestry across large areas of the LCT (illustrated by Viewpoint 14);
- The settled and more developed character of less elevated parts of the LCT, which host roads, including the A9, and settlements, including Carrbridge and Nethy Bridge;
- The managed landcover of some of the elevated slopes due to crofting and farming practices; and
- The Proposed Development is not an entirely new characteristic influence across some affected parts of this LCT unit.

5.8.84 Taking these factors into account, the magnitude of change for this LCT across the closest western areas near Carrbridge Station where theoretical visibility is predicted would be **medium** where forestry doesn't affect the landscape's exposure to external influences. At greater distances, beyond Carrbridge, across affected north-eastern parts of the LCT along the River Dulnain strath, the influence of the Proposed Development would weaken to **medium-low** to **low** levels where enclosure from forestry isn't present. However, from extensive areas of the LCT, forestry would either provide enclosure or screen visibility of the Proposed Development, such that the magnitude of change would be **no change** due to the enclosure it provides at a local level.

Significance of Effect

5.8.85 The effect of the Proposed Development on the landscape character of the majority of the Upland Strath LCT would be **no change** where visibility of the wind farm is influenced by the enclosure or screening provided by forestry. Where theoretical visibility is predicted and forestry does not provide a moderating influence across parts of the LCT between Carrbridge and Dulnain Bridge, an at worst **major-moderate** and **significant** localised effect would arise across a very small part of the LCT. From across the rest of the LCT, effects would vary between **moderate** and **no change** and **not significant**.

Cumulative Assessment

5.8.86 Under the operational and under-construction cumulative scenario, there would be very limited cumulative visibility of the operational Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Dunmaglass, Berry Burn, and Tom nan Clach wind farm from a few elevated areas in the LCT, including hills to the north of Dulnain Bridge, and to the north and south of Carrbridge. However, given the limited, distant influence of these operational wind farms, the cumulative relationship between these wind farms and the Proposed Development would be relatively weak, and a **low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted across affected parts of this LCT under this scenario.

5.8.87 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in an operational and under-construction scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across potentially affected parts of the LCT, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across the majority of the LCT unit. The moderate effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst low cumulative magnitude of change and the medium to high sensitivity of the LCT.

5.8.88 Under the consented cumulative scenario, there would also be very limited cumulative visibility of the consented Clash Gour, Cairn Duhie, Berry Burn 2, and Tom nan Clach Extension wind farms from a few elevated areas in the LCT, including hills to the north of Dulnain Bridge, and to the north and south of Carrbridge. However, given the limited, distant influence of these operational wind farms, the cumulative relationship between these wind farms and the Proposed Development would be relatively weak, and a **low** cumulative magnitude of change is also predicted across affected parts of this LCT under this scenario.

5.8.89 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in a consented scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across potentially affected parts of the LCT, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across the majority of the LCT unit. The moderate effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst low cumulative magnitude of change and the medium to high sensitivity of the LCT.

5.8.90 The addition of the application Ourack and Lethen developments in the application scenario would introduce some additional areas of cumulative visibility across parts of the LCT, particularly between Carrbridge and Grantown on Spey. Given the distance of these application developments from these parts of the LCT, they would also be relatively indiscernible in the broader setting of the LCT due also in part to the limited proportion of the development that would be theoretically visible. As such, the cumulative magnitude of change under the application scenario would remain **low**.

5.8.91 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in an application scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across potentially affected parts of the LCT, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across the majority of the LCT unit. The moderate effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst low cumulative magnitude of change and the medium to high sensitivity of the LCT.

5.8.92 The addition of the Proposed Development to a scoping scenario including Highland Wind Farm would intensify the influence of wind farm development across north-eastern parts of the LCT along the River Dulnain strath, the hill slopes north-west of Dulnain Bridge, and areas between Nethy Bridge and Speybridge. The Proposed Development would introduce wind farm development at a closer distance than would be the case for Highland, and this would therefore increase the cumulative magnitude of change. The two wind farms would be situated within a similar upland context, possessing similar design characteristics, due to the taller height of the more distant Highland turbines, and it is therefore likely that the cumulative magnitude of change would be **medium-low** from these parts of the LCT.

5.8.93 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in a scoping scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across potentially affected parts of the LCT along the River Dulnain strath, the hill slopes north-west of Dulnain Bridge, and areas between Nethy Bridge and Speybridge, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across the majority of the LCT unit, where, for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects would be **not significant**. The moderate effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst medium cumulative magnitude of change and the medium to high sensitivity of the LCT.

Upland Glen – Cairngorms LCT (126)

Baseline

5.8.94 There is only one relevant unit of the Upland Glen – Cairngorms LCT, which encompasses Glenmore and the area around Loch Morlich. The small unit includes the floor of the glen, including Loch Morlich, the lower forested glen slopes, and the more open, upper southern slopes of Craiggowrie, Creagan Gorm, and Meall a' Bhauchaille.

5.8.95 The following 'Key Characteristics' of this LCT have been extracted from the NatureScot LCA:

- *"Strong evidence of glacial processes, including steepened sides and level floors,*
- *shattered rock faces on higher slopes, hummocks of resistant rock on some glen*
- *floors and terraces of glacial deposits at the edges of glen floors.*
- *Often form arrival points into the Cairngorms National Park.*
- *Size varies from large e open passes to narrower, more secluded glens.*
- *Enclosed predominantly by steep slopes.*
- *Frequently differing land-use on one side of the glen to the other - linked to aspect.*
- *Improved, grazed fields on glen floors and floodplains.*
- *Mostly settled, some only sparsely, but often extensive evidence of past settlement, including prehistoric hut circles and associated field systems, pre-improvement townships, and seasonal shielings.*
- *Some landmark historic buildings.*
- *Access varies from narrow roads, estate and forestry tracks to main routes, but most have some form of road running through them.*
- *Varied experience when passing through glens from open and expansive to*
- *sheltered and secluded.*

- *Views to adjacent uplands; from which parts of the glens are visible and provide contrast."*

5.8.96 Some of the characteristics of elevated parts of the LCT are also illustrated in the visualisations for Viewpoints 17a (Meall a' Bhauchaille) and 17b (Craiggowrie), which are located on the edge of the LCT.

5.8.97 There are no wind farms located within this LCT, but there are some existing weak influences on its wider setting across some elevated areas from wind farms situated to the north of the CNP.

Sensitivity

5.8.1 The Upland Glen – Cairngorms LCT has a high value. The receptor lies within the CNP, and it generally possesses a high level of scenic quality. The LCT possesses limited development, apart from the campsite and visitor centre at Glenmore Forest Park. The recreational use of the landscape, particularly for hill walking, cycling and water sports, contributes to the value of this LCT.

5.8.2 The Upland Glen – Cairngorms LCT has a varying susceptibility to the Proposed Development that is influenced by the enclosure provided by forestry across lower parts of the glen and the exposure of the upper glen slopes. Where extensive forestry is present, the enclosure and/or screening it provides makes it less susceptible to development in neighbouring LCTs, particularly at greater distances. Across some of the more elevated, open, glen slopes the absence of enclosure heightens their susceptibility, but the increased scale moderates this slightly. The Upland Glen – Cairngorms LCT has a low to high susceptibility.

5.8.3 The combination of the value of the landscape and its susceptibility to the Proposed Development leads to an overall **medium** to **high** rating for sensitivity.

Magnitude of Change

5.8.4 The Proposed Development is located outwith the LCT unit and there would therefore be no direct effects upon its character. Effects of the Proposed Development would therefore be indirect and associated with its influence on its surrounding landscape.

5.8.5 Theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development extends across approximately half of the small Glenmore unit of this LCT. The majority of this visibility around Loch Morlich would be limited to blade tips and due to the extensive forestry around the loch it is likely to be screened in reality. Theoretical visibility of the wind turbines to hub height is contained to the higher glen slopes to the west and south-west of Craiggowrie, Creagan Gorm and Meall a' Bhauchaille (Viewpoint 17a) (see Figure 5.33a-h), and to the north of An t-Aonach.

5.8.6 Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- The exposure of the more elevated glen slopes;
- The absence of forestry across the more elevated glen slopes;
- The limited influence from operational wind farm development upon the LCT; and
- The closer distance of the Proposed Development to the LCT relative to other nearby operational wind farms.

5.8.7 Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The distance of the Proposed Development from the Glenmore LCT unit;
- The strong inherent character of the Upland Glen due to its wider context;
- The relatively compact form of the wind farm where visible across the LCT unit;
- The relatively limited coverage of areas subject to visibility that are not affected by forestry;
- The position of Clune within a similar part of the surrounding landscape to the Glen Kyllachy and Farr Wind Farms, which are also visible from parts of the LCT unit;
- The enclosure provided by forestry across large areas of the LCT across the glen floor.

5.8.8 Taking these factors into account, across the forested areas on the glen floor there would be **no change** to their landscape character. While across the more exposed upper glen slopes, the magnitude of change would be **medium-low**.

Significance of Effect

5.8.9 The effect of the Proposed Development on the landscape character of the Upland Glen – Cairngorms LCT where theoretical visibility is predicted would be at worst **moderate** and **not significant**, and across the majority of the LCT unit where there is either no theoretical visibility or forestry cover, it is predicted there would be no change.

Cumulative Assessment

5.8.10 Under the operational and under-construction cumulative scenario, there would be cumulative visibility of the majority of operational wind farms in the Study Area from the elevated hill summits above Glen More (see **Viewpoints 17a and 17b**). Each of these operational wind farms would be visible at distances of over 20km from the LCT and would have a weak influence upon the character of the LCT. The addition of the Proposed Development would by virtue of its closer distance and larger scale slightly increase the influence of wind farm development upon the LCT,

and as a result a **low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted across affected parts of this LCT under this scenario.

5.8.11 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in an operational and under-construction scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across potentially affected parts of the LCT, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across the majority of the LCT unit. The moderate effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst low cumulative magnitude of change and the medium to high sensitivity of the LCT.

5.8.12 Under the consented scenario, there would be some slightly additional cumulative visibility from the elevated hill summits above Glen More, including potential distant influences from the distant Corriegarth, Tom nan Clach Extension, Cairn Duhie Redesign, Berry Burn 2 and Clash Gour developments. These wind farms are all also situated over 20km from the Proposed Development which moderates their influence. The addition of the Proposed Development would by virtue of its closer distance and larger scale would slightly increase the influence of wind farm development upon the LCT, and as a result a **low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted across affected parts of this LCT under this scenario.

5.8.13 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in a consented scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across potentially affected parts of the LCT, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across the majority of the LCT unit, where, for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects would be **not significant**. The moderate effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst low cumulative magnitude of change and the medium to high sensitivity of the LCT.

5.8.14 The addition of the application Ourack and Lethen developments in the application scenario would further intensify the influence of distant wind farm development on some elevated parts of the LCT, but only to a limited extent. As such, the cumulative magnitude of change under the application scenario would remain **low** as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development.

5.8.15 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in an application scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across potentially affected parts of the LCT, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across the majority of the LCT unit, where, for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects would be **not significant**. The moderate effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst low cumulative magnitude of change and the medium to high sensitivity of the LCT.

5.8.16 The addition of the Proposed Development to a scoping scenario including Highland Wind Farm would intensify the influence of wind farm development upon the setting of the LCT. The Proposed Development together with Highland wind farm would introduce wind farm development at a closer distance than other operational and consented wind farm, and this would therefore increase the cumulative magnitude of change. The two wind farms would be situated within a similar upland context and would appear to be slightly separated, extending across a relatively narrow sector of the surrounding landscape. However, at distances of over 20km from the LCT, it is likely that the cumulative magnitude of change would remain **medium-low** from affected parts of the LCT.

5.8.17 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in a scoping scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across potentially affected parts of the LCT, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across the majority of the LCT unit, where, for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects would be **not significant**. The moderate effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst medium cumulative magnitude of change and the medium to high sensitivity of the LCT.

Mountain Massif – Cairngorms LCT (122)

Baseline

5.8.18 The Mountain Massif – Cairngorms LCT covers a large area across the south-east of the Study Area, and it contains some of the highest mountains in Scotland, such as Ben Macdui at 1,309m, followed by Braeriach at 1,296m, and Cairn Toul at 1,291m. The most relevant parts of the LCT are generally contained across the west of the LCT, where the munros of Cairn Gorm, Braeriach and Ben Macdui would be subject to theoretical visibility, but some scattered theoretical visibility is also predicted further east close to the edge of the Study Area, including munros, such as Stob an t-Sluichd. The LCT contains parts of The Cairngorms Mountains NSA and the Cairngorms WLA.

5.8.19 The following 'Key Characteristics' of this LCT have been extracted from the NatureScot LCA:

- *"A massive scale landscape.*
- *Extensive, high-level sweeping plateaux, with smooth domes and corries among the rounded landforms.*
- *Distinctive tors on some summits, and occasional rocky cliffs.*
- *Trough-like glens, some with ribbon lakes.*

- *Open, exposed, boulder-strewn summits rising above deep scooped corries, some with elevated lochans.*
- *Arctic-alpine environment of low-growing vegetation including rare plant*
- *communities.*
- *Absence of trees, except along burns, scattered along glen sides and around outer fringes.*
- *Lack of settlement, just one or two steadings and the recreational infrastructure of ski centre, and tracks and footpaths.*
- *Exposed, remote and wild character.".*

5.8.20 The characteristics of the LCT are also illustrated in the visualisations for Viewpoint 22 (Cairn Gorm Mountain Railway Café) and 23 (Braeriach Summit), which are located in this LCT.

5.8.21 There are no wind farms located within this LCT, but there are some existing weak influences on its wider setting across some elevated northern areas from wind farms situated to the north of the CNP.

Sensitivity

5.8.22 The Mountain Massif – Cairngorms LCT has a high value. The receptor lies within the CNP, and it possesses a high level of scenic quality. The LCT possesses very limited development, apart from infrastructure relating to mountain sports, such as the Cairngorm Funicular Railway, and this affects only a small part of the LCT. The recreational use of the landscape, particularly for hill walking and snowsports, contributes to the value of this LCT.

5.8.23 The susceptibility of the Mountain Massif – Cairngorms LCT would be high despite the large scale of the landscape, due to the relatively wild and remote character of the majority of the LCT, and the absence of development across much of the LCT. While the strength of these characteristics within the interior of the LCT are less susceptible to the introduction of development in neighbouring LCTs, the north-western areas of the LCT would be more susceptible due to the reduced landform screening and the orientation of the outer slopes.

5.8.24 The combination of the value of the landscape and its susceptibility to the Proposed Development leads to an overall **high** rating for sensitivity.

Magnitude of Change

5.8.25 The Proposed Development is located outwith the LCT unit and there would therefore be no direct effects upon its character. Effects of the Proposed Development would therefore be indirect and associated with its influence on its surrounding landscape.

5.8.26 As outlined earlier, theoretical visibility is predicted across the north-western slopes of the more prominent hills of Cairn Gorm, Braeriach and Ben Macdui at distances of over 20km from the Proposed Development, but also from a number of other munros, such as Carn Ban Mor, Sgor Gaoith, Sgoran Dubh Mor to the south-west of the LCT, and Bynack More to the north of the LCT, as well as the western entrance of the Lairig Ghru. These mountains are generally contained to within 10km of the north-western edge of the LCT, with theoretical visibility relatively scarce across the interior of the LCT, with the exception of the occasional mountain summit, such as Stob an t-Sluichd and Beinn Bhrotain.

5.8.27 Factors that increase the magnitude of change are:

- The large number and proportion of the wind turbines that are theoretically visible from the potentially affected areas;
- The strong wildness attributes possessed by much of the LCT;
- The open, exposed character of the LCT; and
- The closer distance and larger turbines of the Proposed Development than many of the other operational wind farm developments that are visible from parts of the LCT.

5.8.28 Factors that decrease the magnitude of change are:

- The relatively large distance of the Proposed Development from affected parts of the LCT (>16km);
- The strong inherent character of the Upland Glen due to its wider context;
- The Proposed Development would be situated upon distant hills possessing a large-scale and simple character, beyond Strath Spey, which demarks the edge of the Cairngorm mountain range;
- The presence of higher levels of development within intervening Strath Spey;
- Existing visibility of other distant operational wind farms in the Monadhliath Mountains across parts of the LCT;
- The relatively compact form of the wind farm where visible from the LCT; and
- The presence of some localised development within the LCT associated with the Cairngorm Funicular Railway and ski lifts.

5.8.29 Taking these factors into account, the magnitude of change across those north-western parts of the LCT associated with the elevated mountain slopes and summits at distances of between 16-27km would be **low**, while it would reduce to **negligible** across affected parts of the LCT situated at greater distances.

Significance of Effect

5.8.30 The effect of the Proposed Development on the landscape character of the Mountain Massif – Cairngorms LCT where theoretical visibility is predicted would be at worst

moderate-minor and **not significant**, and across the majority of the LCT unit where no visibility is predicted there would be **no change**.

Cumulative Assessment

5.8.31 Visibility of any notable operational and under-construction wind farms is described in the assessment above.

5.8.32 Under the operational and under-construction cumulative scenario, there would be cumulative visibility of the majority of operational wind farms in the Study Area from the elevated hill summits of the massif (see **Viewpoints 22 and 23**). Each of these operational wind farms would be visible at distances of over 25km from the LCT and would have a weak influence upon the character of the LCT. The addition of the Proposed Development would by virtue of its closer distance and larger scale slightly increase the influence of wind farm development upon the LCT, but it would also often be apparent within the context of the operational Farr and Glen Kyllachy Wind Farms. As a result, a **low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted across affected parts of this LCT under this scenario.

5.8.33 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in an operational and under-construction scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across potentially affected parts of the LCT, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across the majority of the LCT unit, where, for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects would be **not significant**. The moderate effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst low cumulative magnitude of change and the medium to high sensitivity of the LCT.

5.8.34 Under the consented scenario, there would be some slightly additional cumulative visibility from the elevated hill summits of the massif, including potential distant influences from the distant Corriegarth, Cloiche, Tom nan Clach Extension, Cairn Duhie Redesign, Berry Burn 2 and Clash Gour developments. These wind farms are all also situated over 25km from the Proposed Development which moderates their influence. The addition of the Proposed Development would by virtue of its closer distance and larger scale slightly increase the influence of wind farm development upon the LCT, and as a result a **low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted across affected parts of this LCT under this scenario.

5.8.35 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in a consented scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across potentially affected parts of the LCT, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across the majority of the LCT unit, where, for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects would be **not significant**. The moderate effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst low cumulative magnitude of change and the medium to high sensitivity of the LCT.

5.8.36 The addition of the application Ourack and Lethen developments in the application scenario would further intensify the influence of distant wind farm development on some elevated north-western parts of the LCT, but only to a limited extent. As such, the cumulative magnitude of change under the application scenario would remain **low** as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development.

5.8.37 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in an application scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across potentially affected parts of the LCT, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across the majority of the LCT unit, where, for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects would be **not significant**. The moderate effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst low cumulative magnitude of change and the medium to high sensitivity of the LCT.

5.8.38 The addition of the Proposed Development to a scoping scenario including Highland Wind Farm would intensify the influence of slightly closer wind farm development upon the setting of the LCT. The Proposed Development would form a relatively close association with Highland with both wind farms situated close by within a similar part of the Monadhliath Mountains, and this would therefore increase the cumulative magnitude of change. However, at distances of over 15km from the LCT, it is likely that the cumulative magnitude of change would be **medium-low** from affected parts of the LCT.

5.8.39 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in a scoping scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across potentially affected parts of the LCT, and there would be **no change** to the cumulative scenario across the majority of the LCT unit, where, for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects would be **not significant**. The moderate effect is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst medium cumulative magnitude of change and the medium to high sensitivity of the LCT.

Assessment of Effects on Landscape Designations

5.8.40 The assessment of effects on landscape designations is based on the effect that the Proposed Development may have on their ‘special qualities’ (or ‘Special Landscape Qualities’). This is a separate assessment from that of the likely effects on landscape character. The effects on the LCTs that cover the designations can be referred to in **Table 5.3** and previous parts of this section of the LVIA.

5.8.41 The scoping process has identified the CNP and Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA as the only landscape planning designations which have potential to be significantly affected as a result of the Proposed Development. The effect on these landscape planning designations is assessed below. The other designated areas that cover the Study Area were found through the scoping process and subsequent field and desk studies to not have the potential to be significantly affected and have therefore not been assessed in any further detail.

Cairngorms National Park

Introduction

5.8.42 The assessment of effects on Cairngorms National Park (CNP) is based on the effects that the Proposed Development will have on the Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) of CNP. The SLQs of CNP are set out in NatureScot/CNP documentation[1], in which the overarching SLQs of the CNP are presented as Overview Qualities, with further headings for The Mountains and Plateaux, Moorlands, Glens and Straths, Trees, Woods and Forests, Wildlife and Nature, Visual and Sensory Qualities, Culture and History, and Recreation.

5.8.43 The assessment of effects on SLQs follows draft technical guidance set out by NatureScot and both of Scotland's National Park Authorities[2] aimed at landscape professionals to inform siting and design of development and land use change that is sensitive to the SLQs of NSAs or NPs. In relation to development management, the Guidance sets out an approach to gather evidence to inform an assessment against national policy.

5.8.44 The draft guidance sets out a four-step approach, presented in a supporting pro forma, under the following four headings:

"Step 1: The Proposal – Gain as full an understanding of the proposal as possible;

Step 2: Definition of the Study Area and Scope of the Assessment - identifying the area likely to be affected;

Step 3: The Analysis of Impacts and Effects on SLQs; and

Step 4: Summary of Impacts on the SLQs, implications for the NSA/NP and possible future effects on SLQs and recommendations for mitigation."

5.8.45 There are no operational, under construction or consented wind farms within the CNP. Of the wind farms that are included in the detailed cumulative assessment for the Proposed Development, there are a number of operational and under construction sites within 20km of the boundary of CNP (see **Table 5.8**). The Proposed Development would be located at just under 1km distance, with the closest operational development in the Study Area, Stronelairg, located 3.1km from the CNP boundary. While operational developments at Tom nan Clach, Clash Gour, Berry Burn, Farr, Glen Kyllachy, and Farr are all located within 10km of the CNP boundary at distances of 5.4km, 5.5km, 6.6km, 7.1km, and 8.7km. Theoretical visibility of these sites is relatively widespread across some of the closest parts of the Cairngorms Massif, and they would often be visible in combination with the Proposed Development.

5.8.46 The following viewpoints are located within or on the edge of CNP: Viewpoint 3 (Sustrans Route 7 (Core Path LBS114)), Viewpoint 5 (A9 (Slochd)), Viewpoint 8 (Carn Sleamhuinn), Viewpoint 10 (Track near Geal Charn Mor), Viewpoint 12 (A9 (near Carrbridge)), Viewpoint 14 (Carrbridge), Viewpoint 16 (Carn an Fhreiceadain), Viewpoint 17a (Meall a Bhuachaille), Viewpoint 18 (Achnahannet), Viewpoint 20 (Braes of Balnagowan, Nethy Bridge), Viewpoint 21 (A95 (near Dulnain Bridge)), Viewpoint 22 (Cairn Gorm Mountain Railway Cafe), Viewpoint 23 (Braeriach Summit) and Viewpoint 24 (Creagan a Chaise).

Sensitivity

5.8.47 Prior to the assessment of effects in the subsequent steps, it is necessary to establish the sensitivity of the CNP. The CNP has inherently high value due to its nationally important designation, which reflects the combination(s) of SLQs. The landscape is of high quality with a strong sense of place and notable scenic qualities which have remained largely intact. The susceptibility of the CNP to the Proposed Development is also generally high, due to the nature of the SLQs and the relationship between the SLQs and the Proposed Development. The combination of the high susceptibility to change of the CNP and its high value results in a **high** sensitivity.

5.8.48 The following sections assess the effects of the Proposed Development on the SLQs using the four steps described in NatureScot guidance.

Step 1: The Proposal

5.8.49 The aim of Step 1 is to "*gain as full an understanding of the proposal as possible*" by setting out the key aspects of the Proposed Development that have potential to affect the SLQs. A detailed description of the Proposed Development is provided in Chapter 3. The key part of the Proposed Development that is relevant in the assessment of effects on SLQs is the 26 proposed turbines (with a maximum blade tip

[1] Scottish Natural Heritage and Cairngorms National Park Authority (2010). The special landscape qualities of the Cairngorms National Park. Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report, No.375 (iBids and Project no 648).

[2] Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities (SNH, November 2018)

height of 200m), although the infrastructure and visible aviation lighting may contribute to effects. During construction and commissioning there will also be temporary works and plant including borrow pit extraction, a construction compound, and tall cranes.

5.8.50 The Proposed Development is located entirely outwith the CNP, with the nearest turbine lying just under 1km from the north-western boundary. Any effects on SLQs will therefore be indirect in nature, arising as a result of visibility of the Proposed Development and the way it affects the perception of SLQs as experienced from within the CNP boundary.

Step 2: Definition of The Study Area and Scope of the Assessment

5.8.51 Step 2 covers two aspects, "*firstly to identify the extent of the study area which will relate to the location and form of the proposal, and secondly the relationship of this study area to the wider NSA/NP*". The guidance goes on to note that "*the study area may include a part of the designated area, the whole of the designated area, or in some cases the study area may extend beyond the boundary of the designated area*" (paragraph 18).

5.8.52 The study area considered in the assessment is dependent to a large degree on the visibility of the Proposed Development and its relationship to the relevant SLQs. **Figures 5.10a and b** show the blade tip ZTV for the Proposed Development in relation to the part of the CNP that lies within the 35km radius Study Area. These Figures show that theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is found primarily in the northern and north-western part of the CNP while other areas are shown to have no or negligible theoretical visibility. The great majority of the CNP will gain no visibility of the Proposed Development, and where there is theoretical visibility, this is generally contained to the north-western parts of the Park, and at lower elevations often limited in terms of the number of visible turbines.

5.8.53 The assessment of effects on viewpoints and landscape character types – including those that lie within CNP - indicates that significant landscape and visual effects will be contained within approximately 20km of the Proposed Development. These findings, combined with site visits and the preliminary assessment of effects on the SLQs of the CNP, indicate that significant effects on the SLQs of the CNP will also be contained within a similar radius from the Proposed Development and a study area radius of 35km has therefore been considered in this assessment. The relevant part of the CNP to be considered for the assessment is shown on **Figure 5.10a**, which shows the CNP boundary in conjunction with the blade tip ZTV out to a radius of 35km.

5.8.54 Within this 20km radius, extensive parts of CNP are shown to gain no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development and the study area can therefore be further refined.

5.8.55 Theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from CNP relates closely to landform and, in turn, landscape character, and it is therefore relevant to review the study area in relation to the landscape character areas (LCAs) that are defined in the Cairngorms National Park Landscape Character Assessment (December 2009) (CNPLCA) (see **Figure 5.3b**).

5.8.56 The CNPLCA identifies two categories of LCAs; lowland and upland. There are 78 lowland LCAs in total, grouped into nine regions, and 12 upland LCAs, which are not grouped. The great majority of theoretical visibility within a 35km radius arises in the following LCAs/regions.

5.8.57 Lowland: northern part of Badenoch and Strathspey region

- Abernethy Forest (LCA 22);
- Glen More (LCA 17);
- Strathspey: Boat of Garten to Craggan (LCA 20);
- the Slochd (LCA 24); and
- Strathspey: Dulnain Strath (LCA 23).

5.8.58 Upland

- Cairngorms Central Massif (LCA 90);
- the Monadhliath: North Monadhliath (LCA 81); and
- Strathdearn Hills (LCA 82).

5.8.59 The study area that is evaluated in the detailed assessment in Steps 3 and 4 covers these relevant LCAs, which are shown in **Figure 5.3b**. In this assessment, several of the LCAs are grouped together due to their similarities, and the LCAs/groups assessed are as follows:

- Abernethy Forest (LCA 22) and Glen More (LCA 17);
- Strathspey: Boat of Garten to Craggan (LCA 20) and Dulnain Strath (LCA 23)
- the Slochd (LCA 24);
- Cairngorms Central Massif (LCA 90);
- the Monadhliath: North Monadhliath (LCA 81); and
- Strathdearn Hills (LCA 82).

5.8.60 The assessment of effects on SLQs is carried out in relation to these areas as they are considered to each have distinctive characteristics and manifestation of SLQs that will relate specifically to the Proposed Development.

5.8.61 Where parts of the LCAs lie outwith the 35km radius study area, the assessment considers the relevant part of the LCAs.

5.8.62 As noted in the CNPLCA, there are areas of overlap between upland and lowland LCAs. This is explained as follows (paragraph 1.4.3):

"…the maps for each of these assessments – one for lowlands, and one for uplands –illustrate that there is an area of the landscape which contributes to both. This 'transitional' area of landscape, generally the hill slopes, provides the visual containment, the open grazing land, the visual backdrop, and sometimes even the extent of the water catchment, for the lowland areas. But it is also the 'periphery' of the upland areas, and it acts as both 'threshold' and 'buffer zone' for the more remote hinterlands.

This area of overlap contributes to both the uplands and the lowlands, and decisions about its future management will affect both the upland, mountain areas and the lowland straths and glens. It therefore seems appropriate for it to be included, as an area of overlap, on the maps for both the upland and lowland character areas, and in its dual role subsequently explained in the text which accompanies the character area descriptions."

Step 3: The Analysis of Impacts and Effects on SLQs

5.8.63 Step 3 sets out the assessment of effects that may arise on the study area as a result of the Proposed Development. There are four key components to this assessment:

- identify those SLQs that have potential to be affected by the Proposed Development;
- establish the key landscape characteristics that underpin the relevant SLQs;
- assess the effects of the Proposed Development on the relevant SLQs; and
- consider the potential for mitigation and determine the level of effect.

5.8.64 The first stage of Step 3 is to identify those SLQs that have potential to be affected by the Proposed Development.

5.8.65 The relevant SLQs have been agreed with NatureScot and CNPA and are listed below. It should be noted that for ease of reference the SLQs have been numbered in the order in which they appear in guidance (NatureScot/CNPA, 2010).

5.8.66 General Qualities

- SLQ2: Vastness of space, scale and height;
- SLQ3: Strong juxtaposition of contrasting landscapes;
- SLQ4: A landscape of layers, from inhabited strath to remote, uninhabited upland; and
- SLQ6: Landscapes both cultural and natural.

5.8.67 The Mountains and Plateaux

- SLQ10: The surrounding hills

5.8.68 Wildlife and Nature

- SLQ24: Dominance of natural landforms; and
- SLQ28: Wildness.

5.8.69 Visual and Sensory Qualities

- SLQ29: Layers of receding ridge lines;
- SLQ30: Grand panoramas and framed views; and
- SLQ32: Dark skies.

5.8.70 The assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development on these SLQs is described in **Table 5.10**, in accordance with the second, third and fourth stages of Step 3 as set out in NatureScot guidance (SNH, 2018). The headings in this table are set out to follow the examples provided by NatureScot in its guidance (SNH, 2018). However, the NatureScot example column titled 'Proposed mitigation and timescales' has not been included in **Table 5.10** as all mitigation is embedded in the final layout of the Proposed Development, and timescales can be assumed to be the lifetime of the Proposed Development.

5.8.71 The second column of the table describes 'Underpinning Landscape Characteristics' of the relevant LCAs, and the information given here is a summary of the relevant characteristics as described in CNPLCA. The Proposed Development is located outwith CNP and the relevant landscape characteristic are therefore those that could be perceptibly affected by visibility of the Proposed Development, which are largely those that come under the 'Landscape Experience' heading. Characteristics that relate directly to landform, ground cover, land use and other landscape elements are not noted here as these will not be altered by the way that landscape is perceived through visibility and external influence of the Proposed Development. The full set of landscape characteristics for each of the LCAs can be read in CNPLCA.

5.8.72 The NatureScot guidance notes that *"SLQs can be considered individually or grouped. Where the SLQs interact with each other (contributing to the experience in the study area) they are best presented and considered together as a group"*.

5.8.73 In this case, the relevant SLQs have been considered as a group as they are considered to interact with each other to contribute to the experience of the LCAs that form the study area. It should be noted, however, that the ten SLQs are not all relevant to each of the LCAs due to their specific nature. Where this is the case, it is noted in the table.

Table 5.10: Assessment of the Effects of the Proposed Development on the SLQs of CNP

Relevant SLQs	Detailed SLQ Description	Impacts of the Proposed Development on Key Characteristics and Effects on SLQs	Risk of Damage/ Loss to SLQ
GENERAL QUALITIES			
This assessment considers the effect that the Proposed Development will have on the relevant General Qualities of CNP throughout the 20km study area. These are assessed in relation to the whole study area because they are General Qualities and relate to multiple parts of CNP, so should be considered in relation to the wider area rather than specific areas or LCAs. • Visibility of the Proposed Development The Proposed Development lies to the north-west of CNP, a minimum of just under 1km away from the boundary. Theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is gained primarily from the north-western part of CNP, with very limited and very intermittent theoretical visibility shown elsewhere. The location of the Proposed Development in relation to CNP ensures that only a very small part of the Cairngorms central massif lies within the 20km study area, and that theoretical visibility from this area is very limited and intermittent, and gained from a minimum of approximately 16.5km away. The closest LCA within CNP to the Proposed Development is The Monadhliath: North Monadhliath, which is shown on the ZTV (**Figure 5.9d**) to gain limited and intermittent theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development. The Spey valley passes along the north-western edge of CNP and has negligible theoretical visibility between Garva Bridge, where it enters CNP, and Boat of Garten, where the strath landform opens out to run eastwards and there is some theoretical visibility from the two Strathspey LCAs that are included in this assessment. There is considerable baseline wind farm development to the north, west and north-west of CNP. To the north-west, in the same aspect of the setting to CNP as the Proposed Development, are operational and under construction sites at Tom nan Clach, Farr, Moy, Glen Kyllachy, Dunmaglass, Corriegarth and Aberarder.			
SLQ2: Vastness of space, scale and height	Humans feel small in such a vast landscape of wide panoramas. Six out of seven of Scotland's highest peaks are found here, and the mountain core stands sentinel over the whole area. The corries and glens are large and dramatic, and the wide, high plateaux are more expansive than any others in Britain. Open, rolling heather moorland covers great tracts of land, woodlands are extensive and the straths are on a grand scale, hosting majestic rivers.	The Proposed Development will not affect the physical aspects of this SLQ; the height of the mountains, the scale of the corries and glens, the expanse of the plateaux, the tracts of land covered by heather moorland, the extensive woodlands (see **Figure 5.9c**), or the grand scale of the straths and majestic rivers. It could affect the perception of "*space, scale and height*" due to the introduction of the turbines at relatively close proximity, where they will be seen in the "*wide panoramas*". However, this effect will be limited by the following factors. • The Proposed Development will have a very limited influence on the Cairngorms central massif, which is the key part of CNP in terms of "*vastness of space, scale and height*", due to limited theoretical visibility and distance. • The Cairngorms central massif provides a backdrop/ setting that is characterised by "*vastness of space, scale and height*" to the lower-lying north-western parts of CNP which are within the study area. This dramatic backdrop will not be affected by the Proposed Development as, when seen from these north-western areas, it is seen to the south-east, in the opposite direction to the Proposed Development, which is to the north-west. Views towards the central massif from within CNP will therefore not be affected by the Proposed Development. • Effects on the perception of "*vastness of space, scale and height*" will be restricted by the very intermittent and limited **theoretical** visibility**, and therefore influence,** of the Proposed Development **on CNP as a whole.** • Where it is seen in "*wide panoramas*", the Proposed Development will appear in an aspect of the view that is already affected by wind energy development, albeit slightly further away, and it will not introduce a new influence on the perception of the "*vastness of space, scale and height*" of the landscape.	**Low**: the Proposed Development will not affect the physical aspects of this SLQ. It may have some effect on the perception of CNP as having a "*vastness of space, scale and height*" but this will be limited to a low level by the factors described.
SLQ3: Strong juxtaposition of contrasting landscapes	A journey through the Park reveals many strong contrasts in an ever-changing array of surprise and visual delight. These include the sight of intimate, village gardens against a backdrop of snow-clad peaks; high, exposed mountains glimpsed through sheltered trees, or seen rising above fertile farmland; green pastures adjacent to heather moorland; heather intimately mixed with beautiful, ancient pines, or cladding the open hills in large swathes; rolling hills a short distance from enclosed glens; steep slopes ending suddenly at flat glen floors; a smooth, undulating plateaux abruptly falling away to dramatic cliffs; high, mountain corries a short walk from a road; a designed, ordered landscape set amongst wild hills.	The Proposed Development will not affect the physical aspects of the contrasting landscapes that constitute this SLQ or the way that they are juxtaposed e.g. the intimate village gardens and their backdrop of snow-clad peaks; the high, exposed mountains and the trees that they are seen through; the heather and the pines; the plateau that falls away to dramatic cliffs. However, it could affect the way that the "*juxtaposition of contrasting landscapes*" is perceived, as the turbines could be perceived from several of these "*contrasting landscapes*" and could therefore provide an influence that reduces the contrast between them. This effect will be limited by the following factors. • As it lies outwith CNP, the Proposed Development will not appear in any views between the "*contrasting landscapes*" within CNP and will therefore not affect the views that are key in this SLQ e.g. "*the sight of intimate, village gardens against a backdrop of snow-clad peaks; high, exposed mountains glimpsed through sheltered trees, or seen rising above fertile farmland…*" • Effects on the perception of "*strong juxtaposition of contrasting landscapes*" will be restricted by the very intermittent and limited	**Low**: the Proposed Development will not affect the physical aspects of this SLQ. It may have some effect on the way that the "*Strong juxtaposition of contrasting landscapes*" is perceived, but this will be limited to a low level by the factors described.

Relevant SLQs	Detailed SLQ Description	Impacts of the Proposed Development on Key Characteristics and Effects on SLQs	Risk of Damage/ Loss to SLQ
		theoretical visibility, and therefore influence, of the Proposed Development on CNP as a whole, as this ensures that there are few parts of CNP where it will be consistently visible from, and influential on, different LCAs or landscapes. • Where it is seen from a series of the "*contrasting landscapes*", the Proposed Development will appear in an aspect of the view that is already affected by wind energy development, albeit slightly further away, and it will not introduce a new influence on the way that the juxtaposed "*contrasting landscapes*" are perceived.	
SLQ4: A landscape of layers, from inhabited strath to remote, uninhabited upland	The landscape tends to be horizontally stratified, ascending to the summits in a series of layers: from a meandering river, through a strath of settlement and farmland, through rough pasture, wood pasture, wood and forestry, to moorland with its patchwork of muirburn, and eventually to the high, corrie-fringed mountains. Within the landscape there are also layers of time-depth, with traces of past land use stretching from present day back into prehistory.	The Proposed Development will not affect the physical aspects of the layers of the landscape that constitute this SLQ e.g. the landscape characteristics from the strath to the high mountains will not be altered. It will also not affect the "*layers of time*" within the landscape. It could, however, affect the way that the "*landscape of layers*" is perceived, particularly in relation to the "*horizontally stratified*" nature of the landscape, through the introduction of vertical features that might be seen from the layers of the landscape. This effect will be limited by the following factors. • As it lies outwith CNP, the Proposed Development will not appear in any views between the "*landscape of layers*" within CNP and will therefore not introduce vertical elements into views across the "*horizontally stratified*" landscape within CNP. • The key "*landscape of layers*" is, as described in the SLQ, "*ascending to the summits in a series of layers*". As the summits lie at the core of CNP, views across these layers will not be affected by the Proposed Development as it lies outwith CNP and behind the outermost layers of the CNP landscape. • Where it is seen in relation to a "*landscape of layers*", the Proposed Development will appear in an aspect of the view that is already affected by wind energy development, albeit slightly further away, and it will not introduce a new influence on the way that the layers are perceived.	**Low**: the Proposed Development will not affect the physical aspects of this SLQ. It may have some effect on the way that the "*landscape of layers*" is perceived, but this will be limited to a low level by the factors described.
SLQ6: Landscapes both cultural and natural	At the lower altitudes the land has been long-inhabited, with patterns of land use, settlement and transport derived from the primary industries of farming, forestry and field sports. In contrast, the highest ground comprises uninhabited wild land of moor and mountain, with the greatest extent of natural vegetation and landform in the British Isles. Hence within this large area can be found both cultural landscapes, with a rich history of human occupation, and natural, wild landscapes under the dominion of nature.	The Proposed Development will not affect the physical aspects of the "cultural and natural" landscapes that constitute this SLQ e.g. patterns of land use, settlement and transport; the primary industries of farming, forestry and field sports; the contrasting uninhabited wild land of moor and mountain. However, it could affect the perception of the way that the "*Landscapes both cultural and natural*" are perceived, as the turbines could be seen from the lower-altitude "*inhabited*" landscapes and the "*uninhabited wild land of moor and mountain*", thus altering the perception of and contrast between these landscapes through the introduction of the external influence of large scale, moving development. This effect will be limited by the following factors. • As it lies outwith CNP, the Proposed Development will not physically introduce development into the "*inhabited*" landscapes or "*uninhabited wild land of moor and mountain*", but the external influence of contrasting development. • The Proposed Development will have a very limited influence on the "*uninhabited wild land of moor and mountain*" within CNP due to limited theoretical visibility and distance. • Where it is seen from the "*inhabited*" landscapes and the "*uninhabited wild land of moor and mountain*", the Proposed Development will appear in an aspect of the view that is already affected by wind energy development, albeit slightly further away, and it will not introduce a new influence on the way that these landscapes are perceived.	**Medium-low**: the Proposed Development will not affect the physical aspects of this SLQ. It may have some effect on the way that the "*Landscapes both cultural and natural*" are perceived, but this will be limited to a medium-low level by the factors described.

WESTERN PART OF ABERNETHY FOREST (LCA 22) AND GLEN MORE (LCA 17) LCAS

This assessment considers the part of Abernethy Forest and Glen More LCAs that lie within the 20km radius study area.

- Viewpoint 17a. Meall a Bhauchaille
- Viewpoint 22. Cairn Gorm Mountain Railway Café NB this viewpoint is outwith the 20km radius study area

How the area is used by people

Relevant SLQs	Detailed SLQ Description	Impacts of the Proposed Development on Key Characteristics and Effects on SLQs	Risk of Damage/ Loss to SLQ
These LCAs are widely used for outdoor recreation and there are many facilities, including accommodation, focussed around Glenmore and Nethy Bridge. There are a number of core paths and cycle trails. Cairn Gorm Mountain resort (NB this is outwith the 20km study area but a number of facilities are found on the access road) and a number of associated attractions and facilities are in the Glen More LCA. Loch Garten (Abernethy Forest LCA) and Loch Morlich (Glen More LCA) are also important attractions with facilities.			
Underpinning Landscape Characteristics Abernethy Forest • this LCA lies above the Spey valley and comprises a north-west facing basin contained by an arc of hills which rise to the high Cairngorms Massif • hills and high mountains ring this basin, providing a striking backdrop to views from open farmland/ moorland around Dorback Burn • the vast scale of the basin is appreciated from elevated viewpoints (e.g. the A939) • the high mass of the mountains is appreciated from the open farmland and moorland • the diverse composition of Abernethy Forest feels very natural and can also feel secluded, despite the presence of popular recreational facilities and dispersed settlement • extensive forest cover limits intervisibility with adjacent LCAs Glen More • the upper part of a bowl-shaped landform, extending east from the Rothiemurchus character area, contained by the Cairngorms massif to the south and the Kincardine Hills to the north-east • forms a transition between the managed, settled Aviemore/ Strathspey area and the mountainous core of CNP • the huge scale and bold form of corries, deeply cut valleys deeply cut valleys and ridges of the Cairngorms create a dramatic skyline • difficult to experience a strong sense of seclusion within this LCA due to recreational foci • the ski road reduces the experience of remoteness but allows spectacular views into the mountains • the Cairngorm massif forms a dramatic backdrop seen from Loch Morlich • contained by woodland, and views of adjacent LCAs are gained only from the open upper slopes of the Cairngorms and Kincardine Hills		
Visibility of the Proposed Development The western parts of Abernethy Forest and Glen More LCAs will gain intermittent/very intermittent and often limited theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from between approximately 14km and 20km away (see **Figure 5.9d**). Visibility continues beyond the 20km study area radius.			
SLQs 2, 3, 4 and 6	The effect of the Proposed Development on these 'General Qualities' is assessed above in relation to the study area as a whole.		
SLQ10: The surrounding hills	Not relevant, these are lowland LCAs rather than '*surrounding hills*'.		
SLQ24: Dominance of natural landforms	Not relevant, the Proposed Development will not affect landform or watercourses/ waterbodies. These are relatively developed LCAs where natural landforms do not tend to dominate the scene, and there is human modification.		
SLQ28: Wildness:	Not relevant, human modification and development in these LCAs precludes notable wildness characteristics.		
SLQ29: Layers of receding ridge lines:	Not relevant; as stated in CNPLCA, these LCAs are contained by forest/ woodland cover and have little intervisibility with adjacent LCAs, ensuring that long views across layers of receding ridge lines will not be widely gained.		
SLQ30: Grand panoramas and framed views:	Not relevant, as above, grand panoramas and framed views will not generally be gained due to woodland/forest cover		
SLQ32: Dark skies:	Not relevant, the level of development in these LCAs ensures that the skies are not especially dark.		
STRATHSPEY: BOAT OF GARTEN TO CRAGGAN (LCA 20) AND STRATHSPEY: DULNAIN STRATH (LCA 23) LCAS			
• Viewpoint 12. A9 near Carrbridge • Viewpoint 18. Achnahannet • Viewpoint 21. A9 (near Dulnain Bridge)			
How the area is used by people This part of Strathspey is widely used for outdoor recreation and there are a number of facilities, including accommodation, focussed around and between the popular villages of Boat of Garten, Dulnain Bridge, and Nethy Bridge. Core paths and cycle trails are mainly found in the Strathspey: Boat of Garten to Craggan LCA. These LCAs will be experienced by people travelling on the A95 (Strathspey: Boat of Garten to Craggan LCA), A938 (Strathspey: Dulnain Strath LCA), B970 (Strathspey: Boat of Garten to Craggan LCA), and railway lines (Strathspey: Boat of Garten to Craggan LCA).			
Underpinning Landscape Characteristics Strathspey: Dulnain Strath • this area is contained by the steep slopes of the rugged Strathdearn Hills to the north and the low ridgeline of rounded hills associated with Creag an Fhithich to the south • extensive farmland and areas of wetland maintain the open feel of the strath • the backdrop of wooded/ rugged hills to the north provides containment and contrasts with the strath floor • elevated views to Carrbridge and the western strath are a feature from the A95/railway • largely self-contained with views of adjacent LCAs limited by hills, although the Monadhliaths provide a western setting • the openness of the consistent and widespread regular field shapes of farmland on the strath floor contrasts with the enclosure of the forest on surrounding hills and wooded settings of settlements Strathspey: Boat of Garten to Craggan • broad, open strath with an extensive floodplain, low terraces and shallow sloped sides, loosely contained by low wooded ridges to the north and south • the wide River Spey forms a key focus within the open, farmed strath floor • commercial pine woodlands cover the gently rounded hills containing this area to the north-west while the extensive Abernethy Forest lies to the south-east in a less visible gently sloping basin • the farmed landscape/wetland maintain openness, allowing views to the backdrop of the Cairngorm massif • largely self-contained although the Cairngorm massif forms a backdrop to the wide, open views from the A95		
Visibility of the Proposed Development Strathspey: Boat of Garten to Craggan and Strathspey: Dulnain Strath LCAs will gain intermittent/very intermittent and often limited theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from between approximately 7.5km and 20km away (see **Figure 5.9d**). Visibility continues slightly beyond the 20km study			

Relevant SLQs	Detailed SLQ Description	Impacts of the Proposed Development on Key Characteristics and Effects on SLQs	Risk of Damage/ Loss to SLQ
area radius. Visibility from the straths is dictated by landform. Both of these straths have a broad east-west orientation, with valley sides that face broadly north and south. The landform of Strathspey: Boat of Garten to Craggan LCA is angled slightly away from the Proposed Development and theoretical visibility is gained only from the north-facing southern side of the strath from a minimum of approximately 13.5km away. The landform of Strathspey: Dulnain Strath is less regular but more aligned towards the Proposed Development and theoretical visibility is gained largely from the north-facing southern side of the strath, but also intermittently from the northern part of the strath from a minimum distance of approximately 7.5km.			
SLQs 2, 3, 4 and 6	The effect of the Proposed Development on these 'General Qualities' is assessed above in relation to the study area as a whole.		
SLQ10: The surrounding hills	**N**ot relevant, these are lowland LCAs rather than '*surrounding hills'*.		
SLQ24: Dominance of natural landforms	**N**ot relevant, the Proposed Development will not affect the natural courses of the rivers or other waterbodies. These are relatively developed LCAs where natural landforms do not tend to dominate the scene, and there is human modification.		
SLQ28: Wildness:	**N**ot relevant, human modification and development in these LCAs precludes notable wildness characteristics.		
SLQ29: Layers of receding ridge lines:	It is a landscape of receding and interlocking layers, comprising a series of gently undulating and ascending ridge lines visible when looking across to distant horizons. In hazy light these appear as hues of decreasing intensity, giving great depth to the landscape. Where ridges are not broken by human structures, the receding horizons reinforce the impression of natural landforms dominating. This quality is reflected in the logo of the Cairngorm National Park Authority.	The Proposed Development will not affect physical aspects of the ridgelines. It will, however, be seen on the skyline/ridgeline to the west of Dulnain Strath, as seen at Viewpoints 12 (**Figure 5.28a-e**) and 18 (**Figure 5.34a-e**). The Proposed Development will not be seen in the context of heavily layered ridgelines but nonetheless there is depth in the horizon, with natural landforms dominating, and the turbines will introduce human structures that "break" the horizontal ridgeline. The description for Dulnain Strath notes that "*this area is largely self-contained with views of adjacent character areas being limited by intervening hills, although the Monadhliath hills provide a setting to the strath to the west";* it is in this setting that the Proposed Development will be seen. This effect will be found more in the Dulnain Strath LCA than Boat of Garten to Craggan LCA, where the Cairngorm massif will remain unaffected as "*a backdrop to the wide, open views from the A95*", as noted in CNPLCA.	**Medium**: the appearance of the Proposed Development on the ridgeline that encloses the western end of these straths (primarily Dulnain Strath) will lead to a readily apparent effect on this SLQ.
SLQ30: Grand panoramas and framed views	Vast and distant panoramic views are frequent throughout the Park, made possible by open landscapes and elevated viewpoints, and visibility and colours always highly susceptible to changing weather and season. Views range from broad pastoral straths of green, improved pasture; middle-distance open, rolling hills of brown heather moor, with woodland at lower levels; and far distant, exposed, wild mountain terrain. The assemblage of landscape features is aesthetically pleasing, with views often framed by vegetation and landform, and the eye led to an inviting arrangement of hill slopes and glens.	The relevant question is 'will the appearance of the Proposed Development affect the "Grand panoramas and framed views" gained from within the Strathspey: Boat of Garten to Craggan and Strathspey: Dulnain Strath LCAs?' Panoramic views are not gained from these LCAs due to their enclosed nature, which prevents 360º views. However, the views along the straths are framed by landform and vegetation, and the Proposed Development will introduce a new influence into these views, as seen at Viewpoints 12 and 18. This effect will be found more in the Dulnain Strath LCA than Boat of Garten to Craggan LCA, where the Cairngorm massif will remain unaffected as "*a backdrop to the wide, open views from the A95*", as noted in CNPLCA.	**Medium**: the appearance of the Proposed Development on the landform that encloses the western end of these straths (primarily Dulnain Strath), partly framed by landform and vegetation, will lead to a readily apparent effect on this SLQ.
SLQ32: Dark skies:	**N**ot relevant, the level of development in these LCAs ensures that the skies are not especially dark.		
THE SLOCHD (LCA 24)			
• Viewpoint 5. A9 (Slochd) <u>How the area is used by people</u> Recreational use is relatively limited in this LCA, and the majority of people will experience the landscape from the A9 or Inverness railway, for whom this LCA creates the northern 'gateway' to CNP. NCR7 passes through the LCA. There is some limited settlement. <u>Underpinning Landscape Characteristics</u> • this elevated basin, contained to the west, north and more tentatively to the east by surrounding low hills, slopes southwards to the steep sided valley of the Dulnain River • the northern edge of the basin is formed by a pronounced escarpment that rises to the undulating plateau which marks the edge of CNP • this plateau represents a northern extension of the Monadhliath tableland • a deep, steep sided gorge where a large melt water channel has cut through this escarpment creates a dramatic pass which has been widened to accommodate the A9 and railway • travelling southwards through the Pass and onto the open moor with open views to the south creates a sense of arrival • the gorge is a threshold when travelling in either direction • the elevation of the basin offers panoramic views south • widespread views to the Monadhliath and Cairngorm mountains, across northern Strathspey <u>Visibility of the Proposed Development</u> The Slochd LCA will gain intermittent and limited theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from a minimum of approximately 2.8km away (see **Figure 5.9d**). Theoretical visibility is strongly dictated by the extreme landform of this LCA, and visibility from the A9 and railway is very limited due to landform enclosure. Woodland and forestry also precludes or reduces visibility from some areas, as seen at Viewpoint 5.		
SLQs 2, 3, 4 and 6	The effect of the Proposed Development on these 'General Qualities' is assessed above in relation to the study area as a whole.		
SLQ10: The surrounding hills	Not relevant, this is a lowland LCA rather than 'surrounding hills'.		

Relevant SLQs	Detailed SLQ Description	Impacts of the Proposed Development on Key Characteristics and Effects on SLQs	Risk of Damage/ Loss to SLQ
SLQ24: Dominance of natural landforms	The burns and rivers follow their natural courses, being largely unmodified by human activity. The lochs and lochans tend to be similarly unmodified, holding their natural water levels, and one of the largest natural wetlands in Britain is found at the Insh Marshes. Additionally, the extent and scale of the hills and mountains are such that natural landforms tend to dominate the scene, with any human modification being of a small-scale and incidental to the wider, outer landscape.	The relevant question is 'will the appearance of the Proposed Development affect the "Dominance of natural landforms" within the Slochd LCA?' The Proposed Development will not affect the natural form of waterbodies in this LCA, including the important feature of the Dulnain River. However, where they are visible, the scale of the turbines, seen at close proximity, can create scale comparisons with the natural landforms that characterise this LCA, introducing human modification of a larger scale than that seen already. This is effect will be limited by the use of the LCA; the majority of people will experience the LCA from the A9 or the railway, which gain very little visibility of the Proposed Development due to landform and/or vegetation screening. The human modification in this LCA is of larger scale than that seen in much of CNP, and this will also temper the effect.	**Medium-low**: the appearance of the Proposed Development in relation to the natural landforms within this LCA will lead to a perceived effect on this SLQ, although there will be no physical effects.
SLQ28: Wildness	Not relevant, human modification and development in this LCA precludes notable wildness characteristics.		
SLQ29: Layers of receding ridge lines SLQ30: Grand panoramas and framed views	Not relevant; as stated in CNPLCA, the key views from this LCA are "*panoramic views south*" and "*to the Monadhliath and Cairngorm mountains, across northern Strathspey*" rather than to the west, where the Proposed Development lies. The very limited visibility from the main transport routes also reduces the relevance of this SLQ in this LCA.		
SLQ32: Dark skies	Not relevant, the level of development in this LCA ensures that the skies are not especially dark.		
CAIRNGORMS CENTRAL MASSIF (LCA 90)			
The north-western corner of this LCA lies within the 20km study area, and the assessment therefore focusses on this area. • Viewpoint 22. Cairn Gorm Mountain Railway Café • Viewpoint 23. Braeriach Summit • (NB these viewpoints are outwith the 20km radius study area)			
How the area is used by people This area has few facilities for recreation and there are no core paths. There are, however, several well-made tracks and the hills are likely to attract hillwalkers.			
Underpinning Landscape Characteristics • a diverse and spectacular landscape that is recognised as being of international importance for its landform • a landscape of great scale which is only truly experienced when within the mountain area • the constant revelation of features creates a landscape of considerable natural diversity • a sense that human intervention is easily overcome by natural forces • from the summits and plateau are extensive often panoramic views south-east and south-west across the massif • from the north-western edge are elevated views of Glenmore, Strathspey and the Monadhliath • the mountain interior is remote and relatively inaccessible as well as the 'mass' of the mountains reinforcing a sense of isolation		
Visibility of the Proposed Development The Cairngorms Central Massif LCA will gain very intermittent and very limited theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from a minimum of approximately 16.3km away (see **Figure 5.9d**). Visibility extends beyond the 20km study area radius.			
SLQs 2, 3, 4 and 6	The effect of the Proposed Development on these 'General Qualities' is assessed above in relation to the study area as a whole.		
SLQ10: The surrounding hills	Not relevant, this LCA is the Cairngorms Cantral Massif rather than 'surrounding hills'.		
SLQ24: Dominance of natural landforms	The burns and rivers follow their natural courses, being largely unmodified by human activity. The lochs and lochans tend to be similarly unmodified, holding their natural water levels, and one of the largest natural wetlands in Britain is found at the Insh Marshes. Additionally, the extent and scale of the hills and mountains are such that natural landforms tend to dominate the scene, with any human modification being of a small-scale and incidental to the wider, outer landscape.	The relevant question is 'will the appearance of the Proposed Development affect the "Dominance of natural landforms" within this LCA?' The Proposed Development will not affect the natural courses of rivers or other waterbodies. Natural landform does dominate this LCA, and while the Proposed Development will have some effect on this due to the addition of further human modification, the distance of the Proposed Development from the LCA will ensure that the effect is very limited and that human modification remains incidental. Moreover, the Proposed Development will be seen in the context of baseline wind farm development, ensuring that it will not introduce a new type of modification.	**Low**: the appearance of the Proposed Development in relation to the natural landforms within this LCA will lead to a minor perceived effect on this SLQ.
SLQ28: Wildness	Other areas of the Park are less remote, but the preponderance of near natural vegetation, together with distinctive wildlife and the general lack of development, can still give a perception of the dominance of nature. This includes the managed grouse moors, and the ancient, managed woods and plantations.	The relevant question is 'will the appearance of the Proposed Development affect the "wildness" within this LCA?' The Proposed Development will not affect the vegetation or wildlife within this LCA. The LCA does have wildness characteristics but the Proposed Development will have a very limited effect on the "*dominance of nature*" due to its distance from the LCA, its very limited visibility from and influence on the LCA, and its appearance in conjunction with baseline wind energy development.	**Low**: the appearance of the Proposed Development in the setting of this LCA will lead to a minor perceived effect on this SLQ.
SLQ29: Layers of receding ridge lines and	It is a landscape of receding and interlocking layers, comprising a series of gently	The Proposed Development will not affect physical aspects of ridgelines or the various CNP landscapes that are seen in	**Low**: the appearance of the

Relevant SLQs	Detailed SLQ Description	Impacts of the Proposed Development on Key Characteristics and Effects on SLQs	Risk of Damage/ Loss to SLQ
SLQ30: Grand panoramas and framed views	undulating and ascending ridge lines visible when looking across to distant horizons. In hazy light these appear as hues of decreasing intensity, giving great depth to the landscape. Where ridges are not broken by human structures, the receding horizons reinforce the impression of natural landforms dominating. This quality is reflected in the logo of the Cairngorm National Park Authority. Vast and distant panoramic views are frequent throughout the Park, made possible by open landscapes and elevated viewpoints, and visibility and colours always highly susceptible to changing weather and season. Views range from broad pastoral straths of green, improved pasture; middle-distance open, rolling hills of brown heather moor, with woodland at lower levels; and far distant, exposed, wild mountain terrain. The assemblage of landscape features is aesthetically pleasing, with views often framed by vegetation and landform, and the eye led to an inviting arrangement of hill slopes and glens.	"grand panoramas and framed views". In more elevated views (e.g. Viewpoints 22 (**Figure 5.38a-h**) and 23 (**Figure 5.39a-h**)), the turbines will be backclothed by landform and will not affect the skyline/ridgeline. In views from the less elevated north-western fringes of the LCA it will, however, sometimes be seen on the skyline/ridgeline in the long, open views to the north-west of this LCA and here the turbines will introduce human structures that "break" the horizontal ridgeline and are seen in "grand panoramas and framed views". The description for this LCA notes that "from the north-western edge are elevated views of Glenmore, Strathspey and the Monadhliath", and it is in this setting that the Proposed Development will be seen. This effect will be very limited due to the distance of the Proposed Development from the LCA, its very limited visibility from and influence on the LCA, and its appearance in conjunction with baseline wind energy development.	Proposed Development in the setting of this LCA will lead to a minor perceived effect on these SLQs.
SLQ32: Dark skies	At night, even the complete absence of colour, a pitch black sky bespeckled only with the light of the stars, is a distinctive feature as dark skies become increasingly rare in Britain.	The visible aviation lighting on the Proposed Development turbines might introduce some additional light into the setting of this LCA. However, this effect will be limited by distance and the appearance of the Proposed Development beyond the more settled landscapes of Strathspey, which have baseline lighting. Viewpoint 17b is assessed to have a significant effect from visible aviation lighting.	**Medium**: the appearance of visible aviation lighting at the Proposed Development in the setting of this LCA will lead to a moderate effect on this SLQ.
THE MONADHLIATH: NORTH MONADHLIATH (LCA 81)			

Relevant SLQs	Detailed SLQ Description	Impacts of the Proposed Development on Key Characteristics and Effects on SLQs	Risk of Damage/ Loss to SLQ
The Proposed Development will primarily affect only the northern part of this LCA, north of Aviemore, with other areas of theoretical visibility being gained only from the western extremities, and the assessment therefore focusses on this area. • Viewpoint 3. Sustrans Route 7 (Core Path LBS114) • Viewpoint 8. Carn Sleamhuinn • Viewpoint 10. Track near Geal Charn Mor (NB this viewpoint lies outwith the northern part of the LCA) How the area is used by people There is a core path in this area, and NCR7 also passes through it. CNPLCA notes that "Tracks, suitable for off road vehicles, extend along the lower glen floors, leading to more minor access routes on higher ridges". Underpinning Landscape Characteristics • these south-easterly orientated glens and slopes of the rounded hills and long ridges of the Monadhliath form the north-western boundary to the park • this part of the Monadhliath is generally more subdued than the more rugged southern Monadhliath, and has lower and more rounded terrain especially on the south-east flanks overlooking strathspey • the lower hills limit the sense of enclosure and the north/south elongated ridges form large scale, undulating terrain • the simple topography of low relief and smooth slopes creates a relatively open, expansive landscape on the upper slopes, although forestry can be a contrasting enclosing element • this area is secluded but not especially remote, with the forest and associated activities limiting the sense of remoteness • this part of the Monadhliath forms a visual backdrop and a more secluded hinterland to the LCAs within Strathspey. These hills are also visible from the Rothiemurchus, Inshriach and the Cairngorm massif Visibility of the Proposed Development The northern part of the Monadhliath: North Monadhliath LCA will gain intermittent and limited theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from a minimum of just under 1km away (see **Figure 5.9d**). Woodland and forestry precludes or reduces visibility from some areas (see **Figure 5.9c**).			
SLQs 2, 3, 4 and 6	The effect of the Proposed Development on these 'General Qualities' is assessed above in relation to the study area as a whole.		
SLQ10: The surrounding hills	Within a landscape of hills and plateaux, the central massif merely represents the extreme end of a range. The 'lesser hills' within the Park have their own ridges, summits and plateaux and would be impressive in any other location. They tend to be heather-covered, smooth and rounded, albeit with sudden unexpected crags, screes, gullies and glens. They contribute significantly to the wild, untamed appearance of the area, and many are easily accessible from the main roads.	This LCA is considered to be part of the "*surrounding hills*". The Proposed Development will not affect physical aspects of the hills such as landform, topography, vegetation, and accessibility, but will, where visible, affect the perception of the "*wild, untamed appearance of the area*" that the "*surrounding hills*" contribute to. This can be seen to some degree in Viewpoint 3. This perceived effect will be limited due to the baseline characteristics of the LCA, which is described as "secluded but not especially remote, with the forest and associated activities limiting the sense of remoteness".	**Medium-low**: the appearance of the Proposed Development in relation to these "surrounding hills" will lead to an apparent perceived effect on this SLQ, although there will be no physical effects.
SLQ24: Dominance of	The burns and rivers follow their natural courses, being	The Proposed Development will not affect the natural courses of rivers or other	**Medium-low**: the

Relevant SLQs	Detailed SLQ Description	Impacts of the Proposed Development on Key Characteristics and Effects on SLQs	Risk of Damage/ Loss to SLQ
natural landforms	largely unmodified by human activity. The lochs and lochans tend to be similarly unmodified, holding their natural water levels, and one of the largest natural wetlands in Britain is found at the Insh Marshes. Additionally, the extent and scale of the hills and mountains are such that natural landforms tend to dominate the scene, with any human modification being of a small-scale and incidental to the wider, outer landscape.	waterbodies. Natural landform is important in this LCA, and the Proposed Development will have a perceived effect on this due to the addition of further human modification seen at a scale that might be more than incidental. The Proposed Development will sometimes be seen in the context of more distant baseline wind energy development, ensuring that it will not introduce a new type of modification. Elsewhere, the forestry that characterises this LCA will also moderate the influence of the wind farm.	appearance of the Proposed Development in relation to the natural landforms within this LCA will lead to an apparent perceived effect on this SLQ.
SLQ28: Wildness	Not relevant, human modification and development in and around this LCA precludes notable wildness characteristics.		
SLQ29: Layers of receding ridge lines	Not relevant; as stated in CNPLCA, "this part of the Monadhliath forms a visual backdrop and a more secluded hinterland to the LCAs within Strathspey…these hills are also visible from the Rothiemurchus, Inshriach and the Cairngorm massif" but views from this LCA itself are not characterised by "layers of receding ridgelines" that would be affected by the Proposed Development. The position of the LCA on the edge of CNP also ensures that the Proposed Development will always lie behind views of the "Layers of receding ridge lines" within CNP.		
SLQ30: Grand panoramas and framed views	Not relevant; as stated in CNPLCA, "this part of the Monadhliath forms a visual backdrop and a more secluded hinterland to the LCAs within Strathspey…these hills are also visible from the Rothiemurchus, Inshriach and the Cairngorm massif" but views from this LCA itself are not the "grand panoramas and framed views" that would be affected by the Proposed Development.		
SLQ32: Dark skies	At night, even the complete absence of colour, a pitch black sky bespeckled only with the light of the stars, is a distinctive feature as dark skies become increasingly rare in Britain.	The visible aviation lighting on the Proposed Development turbines might introduce some additional light into the setting of this LCA. Viewpoint 17b is assessed to have a significant effect from visible aviation lighting.	**Medium**: the appearance of visible aviation lighting at the Proposed Development in the setting of this LCA will lead to a moderate effect on this SLQ.
STRATHDEARN HILLS (LCA 82)			
The western area of this LCA lies within the 20km study area, and the assessment therefore focusses on this area.			
How the area is used by people			
There are no core paths or recreational facilities in this area, and it is likely to be experience primarily by people who live and work in the area and people using the B9007. The CNPLCA notes that "Settlement is sparse, limited to dispersed elevated late 18th and 19th century farms which occupy the more accessible glens at the very lower margins of these hills, or are tucked against rising ground on the plateau north of the Park".			
Underpinning Landscape Characteristics			
• wide bowls and shallow ridges create relatively open topography, often barely contained by the low relief • views from elevated glens and ridges and from roads are often channelled southwards to the Cairngorms Massif • views north extend across the undulating plateau and the open expanse of Dava Moor • the less well-known glens are relatively secluded, and the plateau becomes more remote outwith CNP to the north • this LCA is the backdrop to Dulnain Strath, although low relief limits the sense of enclosure. • elevated public roads offer the opportunity for extensive views southwards when approaching from the north			
Visibility of the Proposed Development			
The Strathdearn Hills LCA will gain intermittent and limited theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from a minimum of approximately 4.5km away (see **Figure 5.9d**).			
SLQs 2, 3, 4 and 6	The effect of the Proposed Development on these 'General Qualities' is assessed above in relation to the study area as a whole.		
SLQ10: The surrounding hills	Within a landscape of hills and plateaux, the central massif merely represents the extreme end of a range. The 'lesser hills' within the Park have their own ridges, summits and plateaux and would be impressive in any other location. They tend to be heather-covered, smooth and rounded, albeit with sudden unexpected crags, screes, gullies and glens. They contribute significantly to the wild, untamed appearance of the area, and many are easily accessible from the main roads.	This LCA is considered to be part of the "*surrounding hills*". The Proposed Development will not affect physical aspects of the hills such as landform, topography, vegetation, and accessibility, but will, where visible, affect the perception of the "*wild, untamed appearance of the area*" that the "*surrounding hills*" contribute to. This perceived effect will be limited due to the baseline characteristics of the LCA, which is not particularly remote or untamed in character.	**Low**: the appearance of the Proposed Development in relation to these "surrounding hills" will lead to a minor perceived effect on this SLQ.
SLQ24: Dominance of natural landforms	The burns and rivers follow their natural courses, being largely unmodified by human activity. The lochs and lochans tend to be similarly unmodified, holding their natural water levels, and one of the largest natural wetlands in Britain is found at the Insh Marshes. Additionally, the extent and scale of the hills and mountains are such that natural landforms tend to dominate the scene, with any human modification being of a small-scale and	The Proposed Development will not affect the natural courses of rivers or other waterbodies. Natural landform is apparent in this LCA, and the Proposed Development will have a perceived effect on this due to the addition of human modification seen at a scale that might be more than incidental. The Proposed Development will sometimes be seen in the context of baseline wind energy development, ensuring that it will not introduce a new type of modification. Moreover, the landform is of a large, open and simple scale, and while the Proposed Development will be seen in the context of this landform, it will not lead to readily apparent scale comparisons.	**Low**: the appearance of the Proposed Development in relation to the natural landforms within this LCA will lead to a minor perceived effect on this SLQ.

Relevant SLQs	Detailed SLQ Description	Impacts of the Proposed Development on Key Characteristics and Effects on SLQs	Risk of Damage/ Loss to SLQ
	incidental to the wider, outer landscape.		
SLQ28: Wildness	Not relevant, human modification and development in and around this LCA precludes notable wildness characteristics.		
SLQ29: Layers of receding ridge lines	Not relevant; as stated in CNPLCA "views from elevated glens and ridges and from roads are often channelled southwards to the Cairngorms Massif…views north extend across the undulating plateau and the open expanse of Dava Moor". Views to the north and south are the key outlooks from this LCA and neither will be affected by the Proposed Development, which lies to the south-west. The position of the LCA close to the edge of CNP also ensures that the Proposed Development will s lie behind views of the "Layers of receding ridge lines" within CNP.		
SLQ30: Grand panoramas and framed views	Not relevant; as stated in CNPLCA "views from elevated glens and ridges and from roads are often channelled southwards to the Cairngorms Massif…views north extend across the undulating plateau and the open expanse of Dava Moor". Views to the north and south are the key outlooks from this LCA and neither will be affected by the Proposed Development, which lies to the south-west. The position of the LCA close to the edge of CNP also ensures that the Proposed Development will lie behind the "Grand panoramas and framed views of CNP.		
SLQ32: Dark skies	Not relevant, development within and around this LCA ensures that the skies are not especially dark.		

Step 4 Consider the Potential for Mitigation and Determine the Level of Effect

5.8.74 This assessment has indicated that of the 42 SLQs of CNP, 32 do not have potential to be affected by the Proposed Development. Of the ten that do have potential to be affected by the Proposed Development, the findings are as follows:

- *SLQ2: Vastness of space, scale and height*: **low** risk of damage/loss to SLQ in the study area;
- *SLQ3: Strong juxtaposition of contrasting landscapes*: **low** risk of damage/loss to SLQ in the study area;
- *SLQ4: A landscape of layers, from inhabited strath to remote, uninhabited upland*: **low** risk of damage/loss to SLQ in the study area;
- *SLQ6: Landscapes both cultural and natural*: **medium-low** risk of damage/loss to SLQ in the study area;
- *SLQ10: The surrounding hills*: **medium-low** risk of damage/loss to SLQ in The Monadhliath: North Monadhliath LCA and **low** risk of damage/loss to SLQ in the Strathdearn Hills LCA; not relevant to other parts of the study area;
- *SLQ24: Dominance of natural landforms*: **medium-low** risk of damage/loss to SLQ in The Slochd LCA and The Monadhliath: North Monadhliath LCA; **low** risk of damage/loss to SLQ in the Cairngorms Central Massif LCA and the Strathdearn Hills LCA; not relevant to other parts of the study area;
- *SLQ28: Wildness*: **low** risk of damage/loss to SLQ in the Cairngorms Central Massif LCA; not relevant to other parts of the study area;
- *SLQ29: Layers of receding ridge lines*: **medium** risk of damage/loss to SLQ in Strathspey: Boat of Garten to Craggan and Strathspey: Dulnain Strath LCAs; low risk of damage/loss to SLQ in the Cairngorms Central Massif LCA; not relevant to other parts of the study area;
- *SLQ30: Grand panoramas and framed views*: **medium** risk of damage/loss to SLQ in Strathspey: Boat of Garten to Craggan and Strathspey: Dulnain Strath LCAs; low risk of damage/loss to SLQ in the Cairngorms Central Massif LCA; not relevant to other parts of the study area; and
- *SLQ32: Dark skies*: **medium** risk of damage/loss to SLQ in the Cairngorms Central Massif LCA and the Monadhliath: North Monadhliath LCA; not relevant to other parts of the study area.

5.8.75 Of these, the SLQs with medium or medium-low effects are of greatest relevance in the determination of the level of effect, as the negligible and low effects will not lead to a significant effect. The six relevant SLQs are:

- SLQ6: Landscapes both cultural and natural;
- SLQ10: The surrounding hills;
- SLQ24: Dominance of natural landforms;
- SLQ29: Layers of receding ridge lines;
- SLQ30: Grand panoramas and framed views; and
- SLQ32: Dark skies.

5.8.76 The assessment of effects on these SLQs is described below. The 'risk of damage/loss to SLQ' equates to the magnitude of change as assessed in other parts of the LVIA.

5.8.77 *SLQ6: Landscapes both cultural and natural*: this SLQ has a medium-low risk of damage/loss in the study area. Combined with the high sensitivity of CNP, this leads to a moderate effect. A **moderate** effect can be either significant or not significant, and in this case the effect is considered to be **not significant** due to the factors that lead to the medium-low magnitude of change on this SLQ, as described in the table above.

5.8.78 *SLQ10: The surrounding hills*: this SLQ has a medium-low risk of damage/loss in one LCA and a low risk of damage/loss in another. Combined with the high sensitivity of CNP, this leads to a **moderate** and **moderate-minor** effect. In this case the effect is considered to be **not significant** due to the very small part of the study area that will be affected by the moderate level of change, and the lack of any direct effects on the SLQ.

5.8.79 *SLQ24: Dominance of natural landforms*: this SLQ has a medium-low risk of damage/loss in two LCAs and a low risk of damage/loss in a further two. Combined

with the high sensitivity of CNP, this leads to a **moderate** and **moderate-minor** effect. In this case the effect is considered to be **not significant** due to the lack of any direct effects on the SLQ and the small part of the study area that will be affected by the moderate level of change.

5.8.80 *SLQ29: Layers of receding ridge lines*: this SLQ has a medium risk of damage/loss in two LCAs that are combined into a single area in the assessment and a low risk of damage/loss in a further LCA. Combined with the high sensitivity of CNP, this leads to a major-moderate and moderate effect. The effect on this SLQ will be **significant** due to the **major-moderate** effect on one part of the study area (comprising two LCAs).

5.8.81 *SLQ30: Grand panoramas and framed views*: this SLQ has a medium risk of damage/loss in two LCAs that are combined into a single area in the assessment and a low risk of damage/loss in a further LCA. Combined with the high sensitivity of CNP, this leads to a major-moderate and moderate effect. The effect on this SLQ will be **significant** due to the **major-moderate** effect on one part of the study area (comprising two LCAs).

5.8.1 SLQ32: Dark skies: this SLQ has a medium risk of damage/loss in two LCAs. Combined with the high sensitivity of CNP, this leads to a major-moderate effect. The effect on this SLQ will be **significant** due to the **major-moderate** effect on two parts of the study area.

5.8.2 The Proposed Development would therefore have a significant effect on three of the SLQs of CNP. This does not, however, imply a significant effect on the overall 'integrity' of CNP.

5.8.3 'Integrity' is referred to in NPF4 (Policy 4), which notes that:

"c) Development proposals that will affect a National Park, National Scenic Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest or a National Nature Reserve will only be supported where:

i. The objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the areas will not be compromised; or

ii. Any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance."

5.8.4 In these terms, in relation to CNP, it is considered that the "objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the areas will not be compromised" by the Proposed Development, for the reasons described below:

- The Proposed Development lies outwith the CNP and will have no direct effects on its physical attributes, so that all effects would be perceived. This ensures that SLQs that are dependent upon physical attributes of CNP– of which there are a number - will not be affected by the Proposed Development.
- The Proposed Development will be seen in a part of the setting to CNP that is already affected by a number of baseline wind farms, ensuring that the Proposed Development will not introduce a new characteristic external influence on CNP.
- The ZTV indicates that theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from CNP is restricted to very limited, and generally peripheral areas, with the majority of CNP having no visibility of the Proposed Development. This ensures that effects will be contained and, as a result, very extensive areas will remain unaffected.
- The assessment of effects has indicated that significant effects will arise on three SLQs, with all other SLQs having a not significant effect. In relative terms, this represents a very limited effect.

Cumulative Assessment

5.8.5 Under the operational and under-construction cumulative scenario, cumulative visibility of the majority of operational wind farms situated in the Monadhliath Mountains and the Moray hills contained in the Study Area would be largely contained across large areas of the elevated hill summits and slopes of LCA 81 The Monadhliath: North Monadhliath, LCA 89 The Southern Hills: The Southern Glens and LCA 90 Cairngorms Central Massif (see **Viewpoints 8 (Figure 5.24a-h), 22 (Figure 5.38a-h) and 23 (Figure 5.39a-h**) at distances of between 3-34km, and cumulative visibility of operational wind farms situated in the Moray hills as well as Glen Kyllachy and Farr across parts of LCA 22 Abernethy Forest at distances of 14km to 27km. The Proposed Development would introduce another distant influence upon the potentially affected parts of these four LCAs, which would result in a **medium-low** (across parts of LCA 81 The Monadhliath: North Monadhliath) to **low** (across other potentially affected LCAs) cumulative effect upon the relevant SLQs (as assessed above) across these areas for the following reasons:

- Operational wind farms currently have a relatively weak cumulative influence upon the setting of the CNP due to their distance and the interspersed pattern of development;
- The Proposed Development would often be perceived to be situated in a broader wind farm cluster with Glen Kyllachy and Farr Wind Farms;
- The Proposed Development would be responsible for increasing the cumulative magnitude of change relating to the Glen Kyllachy/Farr cluster due to its closer distance to the CNP and the larger scale of the wind turbines; and

- The Proposed Development would be more apparent than other operational wind farms from some parts of the CNP, such as the River Dulnain strath.

5.8.6 Cumulative visibility across other LCAs in the CNP is generally intermittent with more limited coverage.

5.8.7 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development on the relevant CNP SLQ's in an operational and under-construction scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across potentially affected parts of the CNP, and there would remain large areas of the CNP that would be subject to no cumulative visibility. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst medium-low cumulative magnitude of change and the high sensitivity of the CNP.

5.8.8 Under the consented scenario, there would be some slightly additional cumulative visibility from similar parts of the CNP across elevated hill summits, including potential distant influences from the distant Corriegarth Extension, Cloiche, Tom nan Clach Extension, Cairn Duhie Redesign, Berry Burn 2 and Clash Gour developments. These wind farms are all also situated over 25km from the Proposed Development which moderates their cumulative association from within the CNP. The addition of the Proposed Development from some parts of the CNP would by virtue of its closer distance and larger scale slightly increase the influence of wind farm development, and as a result a **medium-low** to **low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted across affected parts of this CNP under this scenario.

5.8.9 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development on the relevant CNP SLQ's in a consented scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across potentially affected parts of the CNP, and there would remain large areas of the CNP that would be subject to no cumulative visibility. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst medium-low cumulative magnitude of change and the high sensitivity of the CNP.

5.8.10 The addition of the application Ourack and Lethen developments in the application scenario would further intensify the influence of distant wind farm development on some elevated hill ground in the CNP, but only to a limited extent. As such, the cumulative magnitude of change under the application scenario would remain **medium-low** to **low** as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development.

5.8.11 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development on the relevant CNP SLQ's in an application scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across potentially affected parts of the CNP, and there would remain large areas of the CNP that would be subject to no cumulative visibility. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst medium-low cumulative magnitude of change and the high sensitivity of the CNP.

5.8.12 The addition of the Proposed Development to a scoping scenario including Highland Wind Farm would intensify the influence of slightly closer wind farm development upon the setting of the LCT. The Proposed Development would form a relatively close association with Highland with both wind farms situated close by within a similar part of the Monadhliath Mountains, and this would therefore increase the cumulative magnitude of change. It is likely that the cumulative magnitude of change would increase to **medium-low** across a wider area including the closest parts of LCA 90 Cairngorms Central Massif, and reducing to **low** at distances beyond approximately 20km from the Proposed Development.

5.8.13 The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development on the relevant CNP SLQ's in a consented scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant** across potentially affected parts of the CNP, and there would remain large areas of the CNP that would be subject to no cumulative visibility. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the at worst medium-low cumulative magnitude of change and the high sensitivity of the CNP.

Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA

Baseline

5.8.14 The Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA is located approximately 5.3km to the north-east of the Proposed Development. The SLA encompasses a narrow area of hill ground to the north-east of Slochd and extends approximately 15km to the north-west to the hills surrounding Drynachan Lodge, and 29km to the north-east across Lochindorb and Dava Moor.

5.8.15 The 'Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas' (2011) provides the following overview in relation to the SLA:

5.8.16 *"This landscape comprises high rolling moorland, which has a consistency of character derived from gentle gradients, limited relief, and management of much of the area as grouse moor. Although this moorland is not as extensive as other moorlands further north, it is valuable for being located mid-way between a number of settlements and for being easily accessible via several roads which pass through the area. High tableland of this extent, which can be traversed by and appreciated from public roads, is relatively rare in Highland region. Key characteristics are the homogeneity of this area, its sense of spaciousness, wide views, and sparse human presence.*

5.8.17 *Elements of human intervention are evident within this landscape, most obviously in the form of tracks, fences, muirburn patterns and fencing. However, it retains a*

strong sense of tranquillity as well as some wildness qualities, which are emphasised by an almost complete absence of built structures."

5.8.18 The 'Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas' also includes a description of the six 'special qualities' of the LLA. **Table 5.11** lists these special qualities and separately considers whether or not the Proposed Development could potentially have a significant effect upon them.

Table 5.11: Special Qualities of the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA

Special Quality	Potential for the Proposed Development to significantly affect the Special Quality
"Expansive views and broad panoramas across open, rolling moorland and vast skies instil a boundless sense of scale and space, enhanced by the consistency of moorland cover and landform character."	Yes, while the Proposed Development would not affect the consistency of moorland cover and landform character within the SLA, it would be visible in some of the expansive views and broad panoramas.
"A narrow, deep section of the Findhorn river valley at Streens offers enclosed and intimate relief in contrast to the elevated and exposed moorland. Elsewhere, valleys frame views to Lochindorb."	There is no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from within the enclosed and intimate sections of the Findhorn River valley at Streens, and consequently there is no potential for the Proposed Development to affect this part of the Special Quality. The Proposed Development would also not be visible from within the valleys surrounding Lochindorb, which contribute to its wider setting. Overall, there is no potential for the Proposed Development to significantly affect this Special Quality.
"Land management practices create distinctive abstract muirburn patterns, accentuated by ever-changing weather and light patterns."	No, the Proposed Development would be located outwith the SLA and consequently it does not have potential to significantly adversely affect ground cover patterns in the SLA. Overall, there is no potential for the Proposed Development to significantly affect this Special Quality.
"The limited extent of tree cover and human habitation creates a simple yet powerful moorland image of tranquillity, simplicity and isolation which is emphasized by Lochindorb and its ruined castle."	No, the Proposed Development would be located outwith the SLA at a distance of over 20km from Lochindorb, and while theoretically visible from some scattered areas, its introduction would not have the potential to significantly affect the perceptual responses of tranquillity, simplicity and isolation, nor would it introduce complexity into the landscape contained within the SLA to such a degree that this Special Quality would be significantly affected. This is primarily due to the Proposed Development's distance, but also its situation in the opposite direction to the views where this quality is best expressed.
"Where buildings exist, these are of a distinctive estate character. Also building remains from pre clearance farmsteads, with enclosures, head dykes and associated field systems and improved land form one of the few built and 'managed' elements within the landscape. These engender a strong atmosphere which can arouse contemplative emotions of past human endeavour and hardship."	No, the Proposed Development would be located outwith the SLA and would have no direct effects on the distinctive character of settlement within the SLA.
"The long, fairly straight routes through this landscape allow an easy appreciation of the openness and simplicity of the landscape. These are typically lined with permanent snow poles which serve to reinforce the impression that this is a landscape exposed to adverse weather."	No, the Proposed Development would not be theoretically visible from the relevant sections of the B9007 and A940 within the SLA, nor would it be visible from other minor roads that are situated at low elevations within the SLA, such as those that run alongside the River Findhorn.

5.8.19 This preliminary assessment indicates that the Proposed Development will have no or very limited effects on five of the special qualities of this SLA, but one of the special qualities has potential to be significantly affected. The effect of the Proposed Development on this special quality is assessed in the following sections.

5.8.20 While there is no mention of wind farm development in the 'Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas', it is noteworthy that the operational Moy and Tom nan Clach wind farms are situated on the western edge of the SLA, while the Berry Burn and Paul's Hill wind farm exert an influence on the east of the SLA from outside of its boundary.

Sensitivity

5.8.21 The Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA has a medium-high value. This value is attributed to its local level designation in Highland and its relatively high scenic quality despite the influence of some wind farm development.

5.8.22 The Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA has a medium susceptibility to the Proposed Development, due to the combination of its overall simplicity and the limited extent of development, but also its large scale.

5.8.23 The combination of the SLA's medium-high value and its medium susceptibility to change results in a medium-high sensitivity for the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA.

Magnitude of Change

5.8.24 The special quality that has potential to be affected by the Proposed Development relates to the SLA's:

"Expansive views and broad panoramas across open, rolling moorland and vast skies instil a boundless sense of scale and space, enhanced by the consistency of moorland cover and landform character."

5.8.25 This special quality is most strongly expressed across central parts of the SLA where vast areas of rolling moorland are present within the interior, which rise to the containing hills (such as Carn Glas-choire and Carn na Tri-yighearnan) to the south and west of the SLA. These broad interior areas, which lie primarily to the east and

west of Dava, would be unaffected by theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development so the *'expansive views and broad panoramas'* that can be experienced would be unaffected. It is considered that the magnitude of change from these interior areas would be **no change**.

5.8.26 From more elevated western areas of the SLA where the Proposed Development is theoretically visible, the edges of the rolling moorland are more apparent due to the visible change in landcover and landform, for example, when viewing south-west and west out of the SLA along and/or across the Findhorn valley from the aforementioned containing hills. From these areas, the extent of the Monadliath and Cairngorms Mountains is still vast in views from these elevated locations within the SLA, but the landscape is more rugged and undulating, and notably of a different character to the gentler moorland of the SLA that lies to the east of the River Findhorn valley. It is considered that the magnitude of change on this Special Quality from these elevated western areas would be **low**.

5.8.27 From more elevated eastern areas of the SLA where the Proposed Development is theoretically visible, the Proposed Development would be apparent beyond the vast expanses of moorland within the interior of the SLA, but at distances of 20-34km, its influence would be relatively subdued, within a sector of the view that also contains the closer wind turbines associated with the operational Tom nan Clach Wind Farm (and its consented Extension). The Proposed Development would therefore introduce some additional, distant features beyond the simple landscape of the interior of the SLA, which while discernible would not signify an abrupt boundary that would significantly impact upon the sense of scale and space from these parts of the SLA. It is considered that the magnitude of change from these elevated western areas would be **negligible** to **low**.

Significance of effect

5.8.28 This assessment indicates that there are likely to be effects of various levels on a single special quality of the SLA. The magnitude of change SLA would vary between no change across the majority of the interior of the SLA to negligible to low across its edges, which when combined with the medium-high sensitivity of the SLA would result in an at worst **moderate-minor** and **not significant** effects on a single special quality. Furthermore, there would be no significant effects upon the other five special qualities of the SLA.

5.8.29 It is relevant to conclude as to the effect of the Proposed Development in relation to NPF4 (Policy 4), which states:

"Development proposals that affect a site designated as a local nature conservation site or landscape area in the LDP will only be supported where:

i. Development will not have significant adverse effects on the integrity of the area or the qualities for which it has been identified; or

ii. Any significant adverse effects on the integrity of the area are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of at least local importance."

5.8.30 In these terms, it is considered that the Proposed Development would not have *'…significant adverse effects on the integrity of the area or the qualities for which it [the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA] has been identified'*.

Cumulative Assessment

5.8.31 Given the limited influence of the Proposed Development upon the relevant SLQs of the SLA, its contribution to the various cumulative scenarios is limited. As such, it is considered that there would be only a **negligible** or at worst **low** cumulative magnitude of change upon the relevant SLQs of the SLA as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development. These affected areas of cumulative visibility would occur around the western, southern, and eastern fringes of the SLA, and there would be extremely limited cumulative visibility across the interior of the SLA. As a result, cumulative effects in the operational and under-construction, consented, application, and scoping scenarios on the SLQs of the SLA would be **not significant**.

5.9 Assessment of Visual Effects

5.9.1 Effects on views are the changes to views that result from the introduction of the Proposed Development. The assessment of effects on views includes the 25 viewpoints which represent visibility of the Proposed Development, and effects on principal visual receptors such as settlements and routes. Cumulative effects and night-time effects of visible aviation lighting are considered in the assessment.

5.9.2 The viewpoint locations are shown in conjunction with the blade tip and hub height ZTVs in **Figures 5.6a-d** and **5.7a-d** respectively. The viewpoints are illustrated in **Figures 5.17** to **5.41** where a photograph of each view (apart from Viewpoint 25 Meall Fuar Mhonaidh, as per agreement with THC) is accompanied by a computer-generated wireline and a photomontage. The NatureScot format photographs and cumulative wirelines have a 90-degree field of view, whereas photomontages are presented with a 53.5-degree field of view. A separate set of visualisations that accord with the Highland Council 'Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments (2016) is also provided in **Volume 2c** of the EIA Report. In the wirelines, the Proposed Development turbines are shown in red, operational wind farms are shown in black, under construction wind farms are shown in purple,

consented wind farms are shown in green, and application wind farms are shown in blue. Night-time photomontages that illustrate the theoretical visibility of 200 cd and 2,000 cd light fittings on the turbine nacelles have also been included for four of the viewpoints: Viewpoint 1: C1121 Road (near Glenkyllachy Lodge); Viewpoint 7: Tomatin; Viewpoint 12: A9, near Carrbridge; and Viewpoint 17b: Craiggowrie.

5.9.3 The assessment of night-time visual effects is based on clear night-time conditions, and on the use of 2,000 cd and 200 cd lights, as shown in the visualisations. In reality, and assuming the use of automatic dimming function permitted by the CAA, it is unlikely that 2,000 cd would only be experienced at its full intensity during periods of less than optimum visibility, as dimming to 200 cd would apply when visibility is greater than 5km around the Proposed Development. In poor conditions, the lights would appear less intense due to the poor visibility around the Proposed Development. It is also important to remember that for the majority of visual receptors, the effect arising from aviation lighting is likely to be gained over a relatively short period. Views from within properties are likely to be restricted by the use of window coverings, particularly in winter, and properties within settlements are likely to be affected by baseline lighting of streetlights. As a result, people who experience views at night are frequently those using the road network, whose adaptation to darkness is compromised by dashboard and car headlights such that this group of receptors will not perceive the turbine lighting at its highest intensity. Remote rural locations, hilltops and footpaths are generally visited infrequently at night and the number of people affected would be low.

Assessment of Effects on Viewpoints

Viewpoint 1: C1121 Road (near Glenkyllachy Lodge)

Baseline

5.9.4 The viewpoint is located just south of Glenkyllachy Lodge along the minor road which provides access along Strathdearn running west of the River Findhorn. Aligned along the western break of slope between glen and strath, the minor road entails that the view from the locale is framed along the strath (both north and south), and eastwards across the strath, to the enclosing hills. Views westwards are restricted by the immediate hillsides and scattered native pine and birch woodland. Due to the foreshortening of views across the flat strath, the form of the River Findhorn does not feature strongly.

5.9.5 The view is representative of local residents and visitors travelling north and south along the minor road, and from the infrequent scattered residences which are located on the western side of the strath, of which in the vicinity of this viewpoint there are a very limited number. The Proposed Development would sit in the oblique views (travelling along the road) eastwards across the strath, beyond and partially visible above the immediate skyline of hills. Distance to the nearest turbine is approximately 2.5km.

5.9.6 Strathdearn as a whole is orientated south-west to north-east through the centre of the much wider Rolling Hills – Inverness LCT (LCT221), within the uplands of which the Proposed Development Site also sits. Whilst the majority of this character type is defined by the larger scale rounded hills and upland moorland plateau of the Monadhliath Mountains, the view from this locale strongly reflects views to these enclosing hills, but in particular captures the key characteristics of narrow strath floor which hosts inbye pastures, small patches of native woodland and scrub, and small blocks of coniferous woodland intermittent on the hillsides. The relatively intact drystone wall reinforces the meanders of the minor road and rural character of the area.

5.9.7 Only the cluster of buildings to Dalmigavie Lodge, across the strath are visible (with Glenkyllachy Lodge screened by the immediate landform and woodland. Wooden poles to grid distributor lines in the views north and deer fencing running along the strath are visible, but recessive features. This largely uninhabited stretch of the narrow Strath, coupled with the rougher textures of the inbye grazing, and scattered native woodland backed by undeveloped moorland hills, imparts a smaller scale intimate rural character. The experience is one of remoteness and isolation enhanced by the winding minor road which leads to a dead end. Dark sky character prevails along this stretch of the Strath, with only ambient light potentially visible from buildings at Dalmigavie at low level within the strath and infrequent temporal vehicle lights.

Sensitivity

5.9.8 Strathdearn as a whole is not located in a landscape protected at national or local policy level, which moderates the value. However informally the strath has tangible scenic qualities which stem from its smaller scale and more intimate character, with framed views of the River Findhorn and the enclosing undeveloped and larger scale simplicity of the hill sides. Signs of development are limited with only a scattering of residences and the existing, narrow, minor road - the alignment of which is sympathetic to the meanders of the strath. The clear expression of rural character is heightened by the relative remoteness experienced driving on a narrow single-track road that leads to a dead end. Value is considered to be medium.

5.9.9 Typically, users of this minor road will be local residents, and visitors (including walkers and cyclists) accessing the scenic strath and surrounding Monadhliath. For travellers, whilst the view is transient and oblique from the direction of travel, the narrow minor road requires a considerable reduction in speed, and views from residences would be static looking across the strath. Generally, the visual amenity of this stretch of Strathdearn is higher as the scale is smaller and more intimate, the native woodland adds variety and texture, the river features in the view and the larger scale enclosing hills are largely undeveloped. Susceptibility is considered to be high.

5.9.10 Overall sensitivity from this locale is assessed as **medium-high**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.11 Blade tip visibility indicates that a limited part of the Proposed Development would introduce turbines into this view at a minimum of 2.6km distance and over a 37 degree horizontal extent in the view. The wireline in **Figure 5.17c** predicts that of the nine turbines visible, the hubs of four turbines would be visible on or just above the upland horizon in an irregular array. No other ancillary development or infrastructure associated with the turbines would be visible.

5.9.12 Rather than appearing as a clustered wind farm array, the proximity and limited number of widely spaced turbines results in the focus being on individual turbines or overlapping of turbines (as for T23 and T24), which reduces the perception of cohesion and unity of composition.

5.9.13 The close proximity of the turbines, the vertical height and their elevation with respect to the lower lying strath, entail that they would form prominent features introduced on the simple skyline, principally in partially oblique views travelling north. The uplands and skyline are a key element and backdrop in the main focus and direction of views along and across the strath. The vertical scale of the turbines is such that it would diminish the scale of the confining hills, the man-made features and rotating blades uncharacteristic in views along the strath, contrasting with and detracting from the experience of relative remoteness and seclusion and the appreciation of rural character. Juxtaposed in the same view, scale comparisons against domestic scale features including scrub woodland and farm buildings, would increase the perceived vertical scale of the turbines.

5.9.14 Increased visibility to a greater number of turbines would be gained from the mid and upper east facing slopes of the strath along access tracks. Visibility on lower slopes and the eastern side of the strath is limited.

5.9.15 Taking all these factors into account, the magnitude of change during the operational phase will be **high**. The magnitude of change during the construction phase will also be **high** as the presence and activity of the tall cranes and the emergence of the wind turbines as they are constructed will also form a notable feature.

Significance of effect

5.9.16 The effect of the Proposed Development on road users and local residents would be **major**, and the effects would be **significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the high magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.17 There would be no theoretical visibility of any operational and under construction, consented, application, or scoping stage wind farms from this viewpoint. There would therefore be **no change** to the various cumulative scenarios as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development, and for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects on receptors at this viewpoint would be **not significant**.

Night-time Assessment

5.9.18 The sensitivity of this viewpoint remains medium-high for local residents and road users.

5.9.19 The baseline night-time view towards the Proposed Development is characterised by the dark rural strath and the relatively simple skyline of its containing hills. There is very limited influence from artificial lighting across the landscape immediately surrounding the viewpoint.

5.9.20 With the drop in light levels from day to night, as VP1 is facing south, all the turbines visible on the skyline during the day, would appear silhouetted for a period as the light level drops, from twilight to full darkness. Facing south, there will be less variation in the change of colour in the background sky, and as such by contrast the light intensity would appear relatively constant as the natural light levels drop.

5.9.21 The vertical angle between this viewpoint and the closest nacelle is -5.3° and the intensity of the nacelle lights in the 2,000 cd scenario is therefore <170 cd (see **Figure 5.16**), while the 200 cd scenario is <17 cd. In relation to the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme with 2,000 cd lighting, the night-time magnitude of change on this view would be **medium-high**, while in the scenario with 200 cd, the magnitude of change would reduce to a **medium** level due to the reduced light source.

5.9.22 As a result, and when combined with the viewpoint's sensitivity (medium-high), the effect of the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme with 2000 cd on road users

and local residents is considered to be **major-moderate** and **significant**. The effect of the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme with 200 cd on local residents and road users is also considered to be **major-moderate** and **significant**.

Viewpoint 2: U1116 Road (near Garbole)

Baseline

5.9.23 The viewpoint is located approximately 500m off Strathdearn on a minor road which runs between Strathdearn and Strathnairn, aligned along the lower extent of Glen Kyllachy and the river Allt a' Mharcacidh (tributary of the River Findhorn). This immediate stretch of road is orientated north-west to south-east reflecting the underlying glen, and as such views are directed along the glen in either direction framed by the enclosing landform. To the north-west and north-east views are restricted by the immediate glen side, the containment reinforced by the uniform dark green bands of plantation forestry. Views south-east include a stone bridge where the fenced road crosses the watercourse and extend beyond the confines of the immediate glen across the pasture of Strathdearn to the backdrop of the Monadhliath plateau, beyond the immediate horizon of which, the Proposed Development is located at approximately 2.9km.

5.9.24 The view is representative of those experienced by local residents and visitors travelling along the Glen Kyllachy road travelling south with direct views to the Site.

5.9.25 Located within the Rolling Upland LCT (LCT221) the view is comprised of many of the defined key characteristics, including narrow strath floor and tributary spurs, which hosts inbye pastures and rough grazing, small patches of native woodland and scrub. Local to this area along Strathdearn (and the hills to the immediate north around Glen Kyllachy, are relatively large blocks of commercial forestry, the uniform dark green colour and texture and geometry of which, contrasts markedly with the rougher character of the strath pastures and the heather moorland on the hills to the east. Much of this coniferous forestry is behind the immediate viewpoint, with the view south being largely open and unwooded with the exception of a mature conifer shelterbelt containing and further reinforcing the direction of view from the Glen to the south-east.

5.9.26 This stretch of Glen Kyllachy is uninhabited, the scattered settlement located along Strathdearn screened from the immediate viewpoint. In views north from the Strathdearn road, a small number of the 275kv grid transmission pylons sit on the afforested skyline. The reduced extent of coniferous forestry in the views south-east coupled with the rougher textures of the inbye grazing and scrub up to the undeveloped moorland hills, imparts a strong rural character. Human influence over the hill land is notable due to the geometric forms of the heather moor burn and the earthworks associated with a hill track. The experience is one of relative remoteness and isolation enhanced by the winding minor road.

Sensitivity

5.9.27 The viewpoint and its surrounds are not located in a landscape designated at national or local level which moderates the value. However informally the strath has tangible scenic qualities which stem from its smaller scale and more intimate character, with framed views of the River Findhorn and the enclosing undeveloped hill sides. Away from Strathdearn in the locale of the viewpoint, whilst the smaller glen has a more intimate character, the landcover is simpler primarily comprising unimproved grassland and larger blocks of commercial forestry to the west of view. The conifer shelter belt is of a similar uniform age structure so adds limited scenic qualities to the view. The framed view focuses down to and across Strathdearn, with the contrast between the pastures of the flat strath, and the gently undulating hills as a backdrop has some tangible value. Signs of development are limited and the existing minor road is very narrow, bound by fences. The geometric blocks of forestry behind the viewer, partially detracts from the prevailing rural character experienced elsewhere along the strath. The viewpoint is considered to be of medium value.

5.9.28 Typically, users of this minor road will be local residents, and visitors (including walkers and cyclists) accessing the scenic strath (and moving between Strathdearn and Strathnairn) and the surrounding Monadhliath. For travellers the view would be maintained along approximately 2km of very narrow minor road running southwards down from the enclosing slopes (and confining coniferous woodland) and into Strathdearn. Views are available across the scenic strath and up to the undeveloped enclosing hills. The higher susceptibility of the people using the route coupled with the tangible remote and undeveloped character are judged to be of medium susceptibility.

5.9.29 Overall, the sensitivity is considered to be **medium**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.30 The wireline (**Figure 5.18c**) indicates that 21 turbines would be theoretically visible on the immediate upland skyline direct in the line of sight when travelling south along the minor road.

5.9.31 Of the predicted 21 turbines theoretically visible at this location, the hubs of nine turbines would be visible on or elevated above the horizon. The remaining turbines

would be visible as sections of blades. At this distance, blade rotation would be clearly visible. Visibility to associated infrastructure of the Proposed Development is not predicted, and as such impacts are attributed to visibility of the turbines only.

5.9.32 The turbines would appear direct in the framed line of sight and introduces a key new focus, the array extending across a 37° horizontal field of view, and extending along a large part of the immediate skyline in the view.

5.9.33 The wind farm appears as irregular clusters of turbines on the skyline, and as illustrated in **Figure 5.18e** the main impacts will be from the introduction of the greater elevation of turbines that appear as three groupings with spaces between them and one single outlier to the right in the view. Against the simple undifferentiated skyline, the wind farm presents an unbalanced composition, with towers, hubs and blades visible at different elevations and spacings. Where a greater extent of the turbines apparent on the skyline, their scale is commensurate with the scale of landform on which they skyline, and so diminishes the perceived height of the surrounding hills. Whilst at this locale the key characteristics are less well expressed, there is still a prevailing rurality and intimacy of scale. The wind turbines will significantly contrast with these underpinning key characteristics, providing a defining influence on views of the Strath.

5.9.34 Taking all these factors into account, the magnitude of change during the operational phase will be **high**. The magnitude of change during the construction phase will also be **high** as the presence and activity of the tall cranes and the emergence of the wind turbines as they are constructed will also form a notable feature.

Significance of Effect

5.9.35 The effect of the Proposed Development on road users would be **major-moderate** and the effects would be **significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the high magnitude of change on the view and the medium sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.1 There would be no theoretical visibility of any operational and under construction, consented, application, or scoping stage wind farms from this viewpoint. There would therefore be **no change** to the various cumulative scenarios as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development, and for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects on receptors at this viewpoint would be **not significant**.

Viewpoint 3: Core Path LBS114 (by Insharn)

Baseline

5.9.2 The viewpoint is located on a slightly elevated section of Core Path LBS114, approximately 1.6km south of Mhor Lodge and 190m east of the dwelling at Insharn. It is located on the edge of an extensive area of coniferous forestry that extends across Inverlaidnan Hill to the east and also further north to Slochd. While sections of the Core Path to the north and east are enclosed within these areas of forestry, this section allows walkers and cyclists to appreciate the open views to the west and south, as well as the pinewoods to the north. Historically, the Core Path has also served as an alternative section of NCR7, which avoids the busier road sections to the west of Carrbridge. While the area surrounding the viewpoint is relatively remote from the local road network, the presence of the residential property at Insharn, the grounds of which you are required to pass through when travelling along the Core Path, as well as the pronounced track cutting across the lower hill slopes reduces the perception of remoteness.

5.9.3 The view encompasses the gradual transition from the Rolling Uplands – Cairngorms LCT to the Rolling Uplands – Inverness LCT, with dense pinewoods gently integrating into more widespread moorland, which covers the more elevated hills to the south-west and west. Land management by heather moor burn is a noticeable human influence. The Scot's Pine that feathers the denser pinewoods to the north and east interrupt views towards the Site and more open, far-reaching views deeper into the CNP to the south.

5.9.4 The view is currently relatively unspoilt although there are some signs of land management in the form of tracks, deer fencing, and the property at Insharn, which is hidden beyond a mixture of landform and trees in the foreground of the view, and there is a ruined, traditional cottage situated on the edge of the pinewoods on the more elevated slopes of the surrounding hills. Beyond these relatively typical features of the local landscape, there is no visibility of wind farm development within the surrounding landscape.

Sensitivity

5.9.5 The value of the view is high. While the location of the viewpoint in the CNP raises the value of the viewpoint, it is not of the highest value as it is not representative of an NSA which has the highest scenic value. Nevertheless, viewpoints located in the CNP are afforded are a high value.

5.9.6 The susceptibility of walkers and the residents of Insharn to the Proposed Development will be high. The expectation of walkers and cyclists will be to enjoy views that are typical of the CNP, so they are likely to be susceptible to changes to the rural landscape, while the residents would be able to experience the views for long durations.

5.9.7 The combination of the high value of the view and the high susceptibility of walkers leads to an overall sensitivity of **high**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.8 Six of the 26 proposed wind turbines would be theoretically visible beyond the hills that enclose the valley associated with the Allt an Aonaich river at distances of over 3.3km. The majority of three of the turbine towers (T1, T2, and T5) would be screened by landform, and the entirety of the towers of the other three turbines (T6, T11 and T15) would be screened entirely. Visibility of T6, T11, and T15 is therefore limited to just blades, and in the case of T15 only a very short blade tip is visible above the skyline.

5.9.9 As a consequence of the smooth skyline associated with the hills, the extent of visibility of the six turbines in reality would be similar to the visibility illustrated in the wireline (**Figure 5.19c**). The turbines would be split into two separate groupings by the rounded form of the upper slopes of Carn an Ailean (547m AOD), situated above the skyline that is characterised by the gently, rolling moorland hills. This element of separation in combination with the rotating blades will add some complexity and movement to the view, with the wind turbines extending across a horizontal field of view of 29°. Visibility of the wind farm infrastructure, including the BESS, would be screened by landform, and so effects would relate solely to the wind turbine structures.

5.9.10 The vertical scale of the wind turbines would be greatly reduced by the screening to the majority of the towers, but while they will be situated upon relatively large scale hills, they will also be viewed within the context of the smaller scale valley in the foreground of the view.

5.9.11 Taking all these factors into account, the magnitude of change during the operational phase will be **medium-high**. The magnitude of change during the construction phase will also be **medium-high** as the presence and activity of the tall cranes and the emergence of the wind turbines as they are constructed will also form a notable feature.

Significance of Effect

5.9.12 The effect of the Proposed Development on recreational walkers and cyclists and residents would be **major**, and in all cases the effects would be **significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium-high magnitude of change on the view and the high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.1 There would be no theoretical visibility of any operational and under construction, consented, application, or scoping stage wind farms from this viewpoint. There would therefore be **no change** to the various cumulative scenarios as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development, and for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects on receptors at this viewpoint would be **not significant**.

Viewpoint 4: C1121 Road (near Kyllachy House)

Baseline

5.9.2 This viewpoint is located within Strathdearn approximately 950m south-west of Kyllachy House on the minor road which is orientated along the western edge of the strath. North of this location, views from the minor road and Kyllachy House and adjacent properties are obscured by the proximity and/or density of roadside screening. Southwards along the minor road past Corrievorrie the roadside mature scrub birch affords some screening in the view, however in winter months the visibility will increase with the loss of vegetation. Views to the hills of the Site are oblique and primarily gained when travelling south-west along Strathdearn, at approximately 2.5km distance. Westwards along the immediate and wider stretch of the road, views are interrupted by the proximity and density of the roadside native mature woodland including Birch and Scot's Pine, by turn directing views eastwards across and along the Strath.

5.9.3 Travellers along the minor road including local residents and visitors are represented by this viewpoint as are the scattering of properties along the open western side of the strath, including those at Woodend and Mid Morile.

5.9.4 Starthdearn as a whole is orientated south-west to north-east through the centre of the much wider Rolling Hills – Inverness LCT (LCT221), within the uplands of which the Proposed Development also sits. Whilst the majority of this much more extensive character type is defined by the larger scale rounded hills and upland moorland plateau of the Monadhliath, the view from this locale captures the key characteristics of the narrow strath floor which runs through the hills and hosts inbye pastures, small patches of native woodland and scrub, and small blocks of coniferous woodland intermittent on the hillsides where there is some subdivision and evidence of moor burn management practices. The contrast between the brighter green of the enclosed and rough pasture is pronounced against the rougher textures and browns of the enclosing slopes.

5.9.5 Clusters of buildings sit within small pockets of scrub woodland and conifers are set back from the immediate floodplains to the River Findhorn, the meanders of which are just visible. This largely uninhabited stretch of the narrow Strath, coupled with

the rougher textures of the inbye grazing, and scattered native woodland backed by undeveloped moorland hills, imparts a smaller scale rural character. There is a tangible experience is one of relative remoteness and isolation enhanced by the winding minor road which leads to a dead end and the undulating and undeveloped enclosing hills.

Sensitivity

5.9.6 Strathdearn as a whole is not located in a landscape designated at national or local level, which moderates the value. However informally the strath has clearly tangible scenic qualities which stem from its smaller scale and more intimate character, with framed views of the River Findhorn and the enclosing undeveloped hill sides. Signs of development are limited with only a scattering of residences and the existing narrow minor road aligned sympathetic to the meanders of the strath. The pylon line is a notable feature northward in the view, but the viewing distance means they appear recessive. Value is considered to be medium.

5.9.7 Typically, users of this minor road will be local residents, and visitors (including walkers and cyclists) accessing the scenic strath and surrounding Monadhliath. For travellers whilst the view is transient and oblique from the direction of travel, the narrow minor road requires a considerable reduction in speed. Generally, the visual amenity of this stretch of Strathdearn is higher as the scale is smaller and more intimate, the native woodland adds variety and texture, but screening to the north means views are focussed southwards across the strath and up to the upland skyline. Susceptibility is considered to be medium.

5.9.8 Overall sensitivity from this locale is judged to be **medium**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.9 The Proposed Development introduces large scale turbines in an irregular array in the oblique views when travelling south along the minor road. **Figure 5.20f-g** predict that 15 turbines are theoretically visible on the immediate upland skyline. Of this number of turbines, the majority will appear as sections of blades, from tips only to a fuller blade length. Five turbines will be visible with varying extents of towers in greater proportion, with hubs and blades, sitting on or elevated above the horizon. No other ancillary infrastructure of the Proposed Development would be visible, so the predicted changes in the view are from the introduction of the turbines only. Blade rotation of the turbines would be clearly visible.

5.9.10 The predicted horizontal extent of 59° is generated from the ZTV modelling (see **Figure 5.8**) and illustrated in the wirelines. In reality, the likely perceived horizontal extent of the turbines is likely to be less, given the more limited proportion of turbines visible (partial blades and tips) in the left of the grouping, in particular those turbines appearing either side of the rounded form of An Socach.

5.9.11 The turbines introduce prominent, uncharacteristic, man-made structures which contrast with the prevailing rural character presented in the view. They introduce a marked new focus, which detracts from the appreciation of the scenic views along the strath and existing foci such as the river meanders and hill forms. The large scale of the turbines diminishes the perceived elevation of the hills, and contrasts with the smaller scale and intimacy of the strath, such as mature trees and farm buildings, heightening the level of change experienced. In this angle of view, the upland hills are more defined (when looking along the strath rather than across to it) as overlapping hill summits and slopes, the turbines collectively appearing unevenly spaced upon the undulating skyline over which they appear.

5.9.12 Taking all these factors into account, the magnitude of change during the operational phase will be **high**. The magnitude of change during the construction phase will also be **high** as the presence and activity of the tall cranes and the emergence of the wind turbines as they are constructed will also form a notable feature.

Significance of Effect

5.9.13 The effect of the Proposed Development on road users and local residents would be **major-moderate** and the effects would be **significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the high magnitude of change on the view and the medium sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.14 There would be no theoretical visibility of any operational and under construction, consented, and application wind farms from this viewpoint. There would therefore be **no change** to the various cumulative scenarios as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development, and for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects on receptors at this viewpoint would be **not significant**.

Viewpoint 5: A9 (Slochd)

Baseline

5.9.15 This viewpoint is located within the CNP on the A9 where it ascends the Monadhliath via the Slochd pass, the narrowing elevated glen serving as the watershed between the River Findhorn to the north and River Dulnain to the south. This stretch of the A9 sits to the south of the pass, elevated in gradient to ascend the upland topography (crossing over the Perth to Inverness Railway line, and the original Slochd road, now designated National Cycle Route 7). These routes are visible as

part of the glimpsed view to towards the Proposed Development along with views of a telecommunications mast located in the valley. Beyond the confines of the narrow enclosing landform, framed views east and west from the viewpoint to the wider landscape are possible when travelling along the A9.

5.9.16 The viewpoint is located approximately 4.7km east of the site and is representative of north bound road users and captures direct framed views along the road westwards up to the enclosing hills of the Site. Rail travellers and users of the minor road situated at grade along the narrow pass close by, are screened from these views by the intervening landform and tree cover.

5.9.17 The viewpoint sits on the transition of Cairngorm landscape character types, the Rolling Uplands (LCT 125) and Forested Upland Fringe (LCT128) and as such key characteristics of both these types are experienced. Elements of the sloping and rolling landform character enclose the viewer, both wooded and with open moorland. The uniform colour and texture, and dark straight edges of the commercial plantation and some hill tracks contribute to the experience of a more managed landscape, which includes glimpses of the railway line, narrow road and telecom lattice mast situated within the glen.

5.9.18 Given the immediate context of the trunk road, the view is to an extent defined by the uncharacteristically straight alignment of the carriageway. Along this particular stretch of the A9 due to the constraining landform and line of the railway, the running width is single carriageway with pavements (but no hard verge) and as such relatively narrow. The sections of solid and railed safety barriers and the steep embankments and rock cuttings reinforce the linearity of the A9 and its development characteristics as it traverses the landscape. In wider views beyond the immediate road corridor, the landscape reflects more the key characteristics identified for this area, including the incised intimate glen and the native scrub and pine woodland which extends up the side slopes. Whilst the landscape is uninhabited, the experience is one marked by the influence of infrastructure and commercial forestry practices.

Sensitivity

5.9.19 The viewpoint is located within the western extent of the CNP, so affords a higher value. Tempering this higher value is the location of the view on the A9, where its more conventional design contrasts with the more natural key landscape characteristics of the wider area, which reduces its scenic qualities. Nevertheless, it is considered that the value of the view is high.

5.9.20 Whilst not designated as a national tourist route, the A9 trunk road, by virtue of its alignment running from lowland to highland Scotland, does attract high numbers of visitors and tourists, as well as the more widespread use as a key route for workers and freight. There is only a short section of the A9 which will have this view, with views to the surrounding CNP very limited to the foreground incised glen and native woodland, (which contains a lattice mast) backed by undeveloped hills. Viewers therefore using the route range from those with higher susceptibility towards the Proposed Development (in particular visitors travelling through Scotland and to the CNP) and lower susceptibility with workers and hauliers. This would suggest a medium-high assessment of susceptibility.

5.9.21 For these reasons the sensitivity is considered to be **medium-high**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.22 The changes in the view are solely from the introduction of wind turbines in views westwards at a distance of just under 5km. No ancillary infrastructure of the Proposed Development is visible. Bare ground visibility (wireline **Figure 5.21c**) indicates that 16 turbines are theoretically visible from this location within a horizontal extent of 16°, of which potentially 7 hubs may be visible. The wind farm composition is uneven, with turbines to the south-east of the array showing a greater elevation of structure, including hubs and blades, and some overlapping. These appear collectively as a smaller grouping since turbines located to the north of the array at a greater distance from the viewpoint potentially appear as partial blades only, with several turbines fully screened by the intervening landform and may be missed.

5.9.23 In reality, taking account of localised screening from mature Scot's Pine trees on the slopes to the foreground, the majority of the turbines will be partially to entirely screened by woodland (the coniferous woodland screening both in winter and summer months) and landform. Uninterrupted views remain to the few blades on the skyline centrally in the view. The ZTV indicates that this limited extent of visibility is consistent along this stretch of the A9, and field work indicates that when closer to the Proposed Development, travelling south, the screening to the Proposed Development remains, with the proximity to the wooded roadside cutting screening views to the blades on the skyline.

5.9.24 At the viewpoint, where visible, the turbines will be apparent on the skyline and the rotation of blades noticeable. Whilst turbines are an uncharacteristic element in this view, the context comprises existing infrastructure, engineered landform and afforestation practices, such that the contrast in character between the existing

landscape and the Proposed Development is reduced. The horizontal extent of the development is well screened by landform and vegetation, and where turbines are visible, this is obtained from a short stretch of road when travelling north.

5.9.25 Taking all these factors into account, the magnitude of change during the operational phase will be **low**. The magnitude of change during the construction phase will also be **low** as there would be limited visibility of the tall cranes and the emergence of the wind turbines as they are constructed.

Significance of Effect

5.9.26 The effect of the Proposed Development on road users would be **moderate-minor** and the effects would be **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low magnitude of change on the view and the medium sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.27 There would be no theoretical visibility of any operational and under construction, consented, and application wind farms from this viewpoint. There would therefore be no change to these cumulative scenarios as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development, and for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects on receptors at this viewpoint would be not significant.

5.9.28 In relation to the scoping scenario, there would be theoretical visibility of three blade tips associated with the Highland proposal on the horizon in amongst the Clune wind turbines. In reality, extensive native woodland and conifer plantation forestry between the viewpoint and the wind turbines would screen visibility of these blades (and the neighbouring Clune turbines), and as a result the cumulative magnitude of change from this viewpoint would be subject to **no change**.

Viewpoint 6: U1116 Road (near Carn Eitidh)

Baseline

5.9.29 Located on the minor road which spans over the north-western Monadhliath between Strathdearn and Strathnairn, this viewpoint sits on the upper south-east facing slopes. From this relatively elevated position, there are wide views looking north-east and south-west along the Monadhliath, and south-east down and across Strathdearn to the eastern Monadhliath and the Site at 4.8km. A glimpse of the distant Cairngorm Mountains is visible in the distance beyond the Monadhliath. Views north along the route are limited by the rising landform.

5.9.30 The viewpoint represents people travelling south along the minor road and walkers within the western Monadhliath in the vicinity of this location. The gently sloping rounded hills that define the view form an undifferentiated plateau characteristic of the Rolling Upland LCT (LCT221). Open heather moorland is also typical of the landscape character; the low-lying growth of which accentuates the smooth rolling topography. In the view south-east and along the Monadhliath, blocks of commercial forestry, local to this area of Strathdearn, extend in horizontal bands, the dark uniform green and straight edges contrasting with the more natural undulating form and textures of the surroundings. Areas of deforestation on the slopes around Strathdearn draw the eye, with the geometry of felling coupes and the remaining ground disturbance detracting from the perceived rural upland character of the area. Infrequent, isolated, small clusters and individual Scot's Pine are interspersed on the upper slopes, the dark green irregular crowns situated in low-lying heather moorland adding features of interest. Small pockets of bright green pasture and more native woodland are glimpsed in the mid-ground of the view, denoting Strathdearn.

5.9.31 The area is uninhabited, and the characteristics of openness and exposure are strongly represented at this elevation, reinforced by the undeveloped skyline of hills in views south. The experience of remoteness and naturalness is reduced in oblique views northwards to the proximal line of pylons (supporting the Knocknagael-Tomatin 275kv transmission). Located within 500 metres and running parallel to the minor road, the pylons and connectors are a consistently prominent repetition of features in the view along much of the road length. Beyond the pylon line, at a minimum distance of 1.8km, the turbines of the Glen Kyllachy and Farr Wind Farms appear between the spans of the pylons, partially backclothed and partially skylining. From this location, only part of the existing developments are visible comprising turbines in a loose array however they appear prominent given their proximity. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of pylon lines and turbines in the same angle of view with different heights and at different distances to the viewer, create a more complex visual image, affecting the perceived scale of structures relative to each other and the undulating landform within which they sit.

Sensitivity

5.9.32 The viewpoint is not located within any landscape designated for its scenic character at the local or national level and as such has a reduced value when compared to other parts of the Study Area. Some of the underpinning landscape characteristics are well expressed in the view from the elevated plateau; the larger scale, openness, exposure and views of undifferentiated rolling heather moorland all combining to give scenic merit. Southwards, this upland plateau extends uninterrupted into the mountain massif of the CNP. To the fore and midground, the geometry and uniformity of commercial forestry erodes the more natural upland

perceived character of the Monadhliath. In the view northwards, a pylon line and wind turbines are prominent given their close proximity (within 5km) which detract from the more natural and scenic characteristics. The value is assessed as medium.

5.9.33 Local residents and visitors (by vehicle and cycle) to this area are considered to be higher in susceptibility as are walkers in the surrounding Monadhliath who have similar views and the expectation to enjoy the scenic qualities of the area and is assessed as medium susceptibility.

5.9.34 This viewpoint is assessed as having **medium** sensitivity.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.35 The full extent of the wind farm will be visible on the immediate upland skyline to the east at 4.8km and introduces turbines direct in the line of sight when travelling south along the minor road. The orientation of the view with respect to the wind farm layout gives rise to views along the long axis of the wind farm, thereby reducing the horizontal extent of turbines visible in the array to an angle of 23°. As such the wind farm would appear relatively contained on the wider upland plateau, with a greater density of overlapping turbines visible in the centre of the array, reducing to individual turbines with limited overlapping on the extremities of the array. The exception to this is T26 which from this location sits as a slight outlier to the main group. See **Figure 5.22e**.

5.9.36 All the turbines are visible as partial/full towers, with hubs and blades sitting close to or elevated above the skyline. At this distance and elevation, some of the associated infrastructure may also be visible, including construction disturbance and access tracks to the west of the Proposed Development (and closer to the viewer), and the groundworks for and buildings of, the substation compound and BESS. Whilst potentially not visible from this precise location, different viewing angles from views from adjacent upper slopes and summits may possess open views to these elements in addition to the turbines.

5.9.37 The wind farm introduces a new focus in the view, the prominence of which is heightened within the wider panorama due to the overlapping cluster of towers and rotating blades increasing visual density. Views south to the Cairngorm Mountains would be obscured by the turbines of the Proposed Development. The relatively even elevation of turbines within the array reflects the simple undifferentiated plateau of the Site. However, the large vertical heights of the wind turbines have the potential to diminish the perceived scale of the upland hills.

5.9.38 Grid transmission infrastructure and wind turbines are prominent features in the immediate context of the view northwards. Whilst the Proposed Development has a relatively smaller angle of horizontal extent, it introduces large scale wind energy development into a different part of the view and cumulatively with the Glen Kyllachy and Farr Wind Farms, which increases the extent to which turbines are experienced in the wider landscape. The greater visual density of the Proposed Development and larger turbine heights, contrasts with the lower number and markedly looser array of turbines at Glen Kyllachy.

5.9.39 Taking all these factors into account, the magnitude of change during the operational phase will be **high**. The magnitude of change during the construction phase will also be **high** as the presence and activity of the tall cranes and the emergence of the wind turbines as they are constructed will also form a notable feature.

Significance of Effect

5.9.40 The effect of the Proposed Development on road users would be **major-moderate** and **significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the high magnitude of change on the view and the medium sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.41 Visibility of any notable operational and under-construction wind farms is described in the baseline description above.

5.9.42 Under the operational and under-construction cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **medium** cumulative magnitude of change. The Proposed Development would appear in a distinctively separate sector of the view to the operational Glen Kyllachy and Farr Wind Farms, and as a result it would extend the influence of wind farm development across the wider views from this location. However, there would be sufficient separation between the Proposed Development and Glen Kyllachy to ensure that the perception of the landscape in the view is one of a ‘landscape with wind farms’, rather than a ‘wind farm landscape’.

5.9.43 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in an operational and consented scenario would therefore be **major-moderate** and **significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.44 There are no consented or application developments within the wider views, and as a result **no change** is predicted to the consented or application cumulative scenarios.

5.9.45 Under the scoping cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **medium** cumulative magnitude of change. There would be some limited theoretical visibility of the scoping Highland proposal from this location, with 10 blades apparent upon the ridgeline to the west of the Proposed Development at distances of over 8km. The Proposed Development would therefore increase the influence of wind farm development within this broad sector of the view, but given the limited visibility of Highland, the association between the two wind farms would be relatively weak. The perception of the landscape in the view would therefore remain as one of a 'landscape with wind farms', rather than a 'wind farm landscape'.

5.9.46 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in the scoping scenario would therefore be **major-moderate** and **significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Viewpoint 7: Tomatin

Baseline

5.9.47 This viewpoint is located on the southern fringes of the village of Tomatin, on the roadside which runs along the strath to the River Findhorn. The immediate stretch of the strath (from Tomatin southwards to the Dell of Morile) runs north to south and the road is aligned parallel to this on the western break of slope. The viewpoint is representative of local residents living on the southern fringes of Tomatin, situated both within the strath and more elevated positions on the immediate slopes, and from the farmsteads scattered along the strath. Visitors to the area and residents travelling south along the minor road will also experience similar views, as will cyclists travelling south on NCR7. Views will be southwards and direct in the line of travel to the Site at the approximate distance of 5.7km from the Proposed Development.

5.9.48 Situated within the Rolling Upland LCT (LCT 221) the view comprises key characteristics identified for the straths which run through the largely upland rolling landform of the wider Monadhliath plateau. The relatively narrow width of the strath imparts a more intimate smaller scale, which stems from the modest size of enclosed pastures interspersed with farm buildings, scrub native woodland, isolated mature roadside trees and small blocks of conifers. To the south in framed views along the strath, the elevated landform of the rolling upland, creating a simpler, darker moorland backdrop to views that is large in scale.

5.9.49 Located on the fringes of Tomatin, the defining experience is one of rural character, existing development and infrastructure being small scale, and well contained within the strath, and recessive within the view. Most existing houses are set with mature vegetation and are typically unobtrusive in immediate and wider views, the exception being a limited number of larger and more recent house building (with more immature vegetative surrounds). Farm sheds and the fenced route of the road are more prominent features within the valley. Wood poles of overhead local distribution lines run along the strath, their presence typically recessive in views due to backclothing by landform and vegetation. The access road has soft verges and signage is minimal.

Sensitivity

5.9.50 The viewpoint is not located within any landscape designated at the local or national level and as such has a reduced value compared to other parts of the Study Area. The underpinning landscape characteristics are well expressed with a smaller more intimate scale of landscape framed in the views directly south to the hills of the Site, which has marked scenic value. The Monadhliath form the backdrop in views down the strath, and feature prominently as part of the wider upland setting to Tomatin. More recent scattered housing development beyond the confines of Tomatin are more obvious in the landscape, but the rural character is still well expressed. The value is considered to be medium.

5.9.51 The view represents local residents of Tomatin and the wider scattering of houses within the narrow strath. In addition, the viewpoint also represents cyclists on the NCR7 who would be moving at slower speeds and there to enjoy the scenic qualities of the rural landscape. Susceptibility is judged to be high.

5.9.52 The sensitivity is judged to be **high**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.53 **Figures 6.23a-e** predict that 24 turbines would be theoretically visible on the immediate upland skyline directly within the framed view south along the strath to the River Findhorn. The angle of view with respect to the orientation of the wind farm footprint, means that views are across the narrower axis of the wind farm and the 37° horizontal angle of view and spread of turbines reflects this. Ancillary infrastructure to the wind farm would not be visible, and as such the impacts are from the introduction of turbines only into the view. Whilst some screening to part of the array is afforded by the mature trees in the foreground of the photomontage, in the field views further north and south along the road remain unobstructed.

5.9.54 Of the 24 turbines visible, 17 turbines would be experienced as partial/full towers with hubs on or elevated above the skyline with blade rotation clearly visible. The full blade of T5 appearing as an outlier to the east of the main group. There is some evenness of turbine spacing and a similar elevation of turbine hubs across the array,

which to an extent reflects the underlying gently rolling undifferentiated plateau of the hills and enables some level of cohesiveness across the composition.

5.9.55 At 5.7km distant, the turbines would introduce a substantial new focus into the view, the large-scale vertical manmade elements contrasting with the rural character of the landscape. The prominence of the turbines is emphasised by the visual containment afforded by the surrounding slopes such that views are channelled along and direct towards the Proposed Development. The scale and extent of the wind farm array would diminish the scale of the hills, this effect heightened by comparison with the smaller, more intimate scale of the strath and domestic scale features of buildings and matures trees within the strath.

5.9.56 Taking all these factors into account, the magnitude of change during the operational phase will be **high**. The magnitude of change during the construction phase will also be **high** as the presence and activity of the tall cranes and the emergence of the wind turbines as they are constructed will also form a notable feature.

Significance of Effect

5.9.57 The effect of the Proposed Development on road users and residents would be **major**, and in both cases the effects would be **significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the high magnitude of change on the view and the high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.58 There would be no theoretical visibility of any operational and under construction, consented, and application wind farms from this viewpoint. There would therefore be **no change** to the various cumulative scenarios as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development, and for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects in these scenarios on receptors at this viewpoint would be **not significant**.

5.9.59 In the scoping scenario, there is theoretical visibility of an extremely small section of blade tip associated with the Highland proposal. In reality, visibility of this blade tip would be indiscernible and there would therefore also be **no change** upon this cumulative scenario.

Night-time Assessment

5.9.60 The sensitivity of this viewpoint remains high for residents.

5.9.61 The viewpoint location for the night-time light visualisation (at distance of 5.85km from the Proposed Development) is not in the exact same position as the daytime viewpoint position (at 5.7km distance) (see **Figures 5.23f-h**) and therefore direct comparisons cannot be made between the two montages. However, there is relatively limited differences between the two locations, with the night-time photomontage located further north on the same road (close to the Tomatin Free Presbyterian Church), illustrating a similar view but with more surrounding housing in the immediate locale.

5.9.62 The numbers and position of lights are similar between the day and night viewpoint locations, with T5, T12, T15, T18, T19, T24 introducing lighting into both night-time vistas. The exception being that whilst there is more screening by foreground trees in the night-time viewpoint location, the slightly greater distance to the Proposed Development means that the light on T10 could potentially also be visible on the skyline, partially screened by a mature deciduous tree. As such, given the limited differences illustrated between the two viewpoint locations, the night-time montage has been used to inform this assessment of effects.

5.9.63 Notwithstanding the above, the other difference between the viewpoint locations, is the clearer view along the strath to the uplands and Site from the daytime location, where there would be a greater number of turbines visible in silhouette in the twilight period between sunset and full darkness than illustrated on the lighting photomontage. The differences in the distances of the two viewpoint locations would have relatively limited implications in terms of the light intensity experienced, apart from a marginally lower vertical angle of view to the lights in the daytime location.

5.9.64 The vertical angle between this viewpoint and the closest nacelle is -2.9° and the intensity of the nacelle lights in the 2,000 cd scenario is therefore between 420 and 220 cd (see **Figure 5.16**), while the 200 cd scenario is between 42 and 22 cd. In relation to the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme with 2,000 cd lighting, the night-time magnitude of change on this view would be **high**, while in the scenario with 200 cd, the magnitude of change would reduce to a **medium** level due to the reduced light source.

5.9.65 As a result, and when combined with the viewpoint's sensitivity (high), the effect of the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme with 2000 cd on road users and residents is considered to be **major** and **significant**. The effect of the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme with 200 cd on residents is considered to be **major-moderate** and **significant**.

Viewpoint 8: Carn Sleamhuinn

Baseline

5.9.66 This viewpoint is located at the summit of Carn Sleamhuinn (677m AOD) and is representative of the views of hill walkers in this area. There is a network of access tracks and paths that make this hilltop accessible from the north-east, south-east and south. The view from the hilltop is expansive in all directions. The Proposed Development will be located to the north-west of the viewpoint at a minimum distance of 5.5km. The viewpoint is located on the northern edge of the CNP boundary but outwith the Cairngorm Mountains NSA which lies further to the south and south-east.

5.9.67 Carn Sleamhuinn forms part of the hill range that is broadly aligned south-west to north-east owing to its location between the River Spey to the south-east and the River Dulnain to the north-west. The hill range comprises medium sized rounded hills which collectively form long and gently undulating ridgelines. This landscape character also occurs between the River Dulnain and the River Findhorn to the north, where the Proposed Development is located in a similar hill range. The hills are covered in low growing heathers and grasses, and this creates an open and exposed landscape. The principal land uses are hill sheep farming and grouse shooting on the hills and commercial forestry on the lower slopes. The network of associated access tracks, the pattern of managed heather moor burn and occasional fence lines denote a human influence across these hills and, along with views into surrounding settled and cultivated valleys, reduce the sense of remoteness.

5.9.68 In the wider landscape, there is evidence of wind farm development, with operational Glen Kyllachy and Farr readily visible in the same north-west sector of the view as the Proposed Development, seen at minimum distances of 14.6km and 16.5km respectively. To the west, Dumnaglass Estate is visible along the skyline at a minimum of 20.1km and to the north-east Tom nan Clach and Moy are partly visible on the skyline at a minimum of 18.1km and 21.2km. While wind farms form an established feature of the baseline view, from this viewpoint the developments all appear relatively distant and small-scale.

Sensitivity

5.9.69 The value of the view is medium-high. While the location of the viewpoint on the northern edge of the CNP raises the value of the view, it is not rated as high as it is not representative of an NSA which has the highest scenic value, and the view towards the Proposed Development generally contains an area that is out with the CNP. The viewpoint is also not representative of an SLA, which would otherwise denote a regional scenic value.

5.9.70 The susceptibility of walkers will be medium-high. The expectation of walkers will be to enjoy a panoramic view of the surrounding landscape. While the hills are open and largely undeveloped, the presence of close-range access tracks and medium-range operational wind farms reduces susceptibility by making these types of development established features in the view. Furthermore, the hills within which the viewpoint and the Proposed Development are located, lack the character and scale of the more scenic landscapes which lie to the south and south-east.

5.9.71 The combination of the medium-high value of the view and the medium-high susceptibility of walkers leads to an overall sensitivity of **medium-high**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.72 The wireline in **Figure 5.24f** shows the Proposed Development set along the hill ridge between Carn Coire na Caorach (636m AOD) and Carn Phris Mhoir (618m AOD) with the closest proposed turbine seen at a minimum of 5.5km. All 26 of the proposed turbines will be visible, all seen with hubs despite some screening of towers from the intervening landform and some stacking occurring between turbines. The horizontal angle ZTV on **Figure 5.6a** shows that the Proposed Development will occupy between 10 and 20 degrees of the full 360-degree view.

5.9.73 The Proposed Development will make a notable change to the view from Carn Sleamhuinn, despite the existing presence and influence of operational wind farms. The proximity of the proposed turbines to the viewpoint combined with their comparatively large scale means they will form a prominent feature in the view. All of the proposed turbines will be visible, and the movement of their blades will make them a dynamic feature that will contribute further to their prominence. Additionally, the more distant location of Glen Kyllachy (minimum of 14.6km) and Farr (minimum of 16.5km) means that the larger scale of the proposed turbines will be accentuated.

5.9.74 The magnitude of change will be moderated through a combination of the following factors. Firstly, the presence of Glen Kyllachy and Farr operational wind farms in the same sector of the view prevents the Proposed Development from appearing as a new or unfamiliar feature and furthermore, wind farm development is evident across the wider upland landscape. Secondly, the network of access tracks that extend across this upland area denote the human influence and detract from the sense of remoteness. And thirdly, although all 26 proposed turbines will be readily visible, they form a relatively contained group in this sector of the view and occupy only 10 to 20 degrees of the wider view, with the more attractive views of the Cairngorm Mountains to the south remaining unaffected.

5.9.75 Taking all these factors into account, the magnitude of change during the operational phase will be **medium-high**. The magnitude of change during the construction phase will also be **medium-high** as the presence and activity of the tall

cranes and the emergence of the wind turbines as they are constructed will also form a notable feature.

Significance of Effect

5.9.76 The effect of the Proposed Development on hill walkers would be **major-moderate** and **significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium-high magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.77 Visibility of any notable operational and under-construction wind farms is described in the baseline description above.

5.9.78 Under the operational and under-construction cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **medium-low** cumulative magnitude of change. Operational and under-construction wind farms, including Dunmaglass, Aberarder, Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Moy, Tom nan Clach, Hill of Glaschyle, and Berry Burn, are currently all visible interspersed within the surrounding hills at distances of 15-35km from the viewpoint. The addition of the Proposed Development would introduce wind farm development at a closer distance to the viewpoint (5.5km), within a sector of the view that contains the more distant Farr and Glen Kyllachy Wind Farms. It would therefore not be a new characteristic element in wider views, and it would maintain a similar pattern of well-spaced wind farms that are visible within the Monadliath Mountains. Views towards the CNP would remain unaffected by wind farm development.

5.9.79 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in an operational and under-construction cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium-low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.80 Consented and application wind farms would tend to consolidate clusters of wind farm development that are interspersed across the Monadhliath Mountains at distances of between 15-35km from the viewpoint. Cumulative effects under these scenarios relating to the addition of the Proposed Development would therefore be similar in nature when compared to those with operational and under-construction wind farms, and consequently **a medium-low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted under the consented and application cumulative scenarios.

5.9.81 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in a consented and application cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium-low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.82 Under the scoping cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **medium-low** cumulative magnitude of change. The Highland proposal would introduce wind farm development within the Monadhliath Mountains closer to the viewpoint than other operational and consented wind farms, with distances from the turbines of over 8km. The Proposed Development would be located closer to the viewpoint than Highland within a different sector of the view, and as a result, it would extend the visibility of closer range wind farms within views from Carn Sleamhuinn. Highland and the Proposed Development would therefore impart a similar influence on views, but the wider pattern of development would generally remain consistent, with views towards the CNP also unaffected by wind farm development.

5.9.83 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in a scoping cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium-low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Viewpoint 9: A9 (River Findhorn Crossing)

Baseline

5.9.84 The viewpoint is located at elevation on the A9 trunk road bridge where it crosses the River Findhorn, approximately 1km east of Tomatin. The road bridge is aligned in a south-east to north-west direction and affords views obliquely to the north and south along the strath. The view is representative of both travellers along the A9 road and potentially also rail travellers along the Inverness – Perth line which crosses the river, running parallel to the road, 200m upstream. From the alignment of the road with respect to the strath, the view would be gained principally when travelling south, the direction of view south-westwards at approximately 6.6km to the Proposed Development.

5.9.85 The viewpoint is located within the Rolling Upland LCT (LCT21) with views along the strath and the adjacent hills, all part of the same landscape character type. North and south beyond the bridge, the A9 passes through wooded road embankments, which confine views to the road corridor. It is only once crossing the bridge that the view along the strath towards the Site is revealed. Notwithstanding the immediate experience of the A9 in the view, which is considerable comprising dualled

carriageways with central and side safety barriers, the surrounding landscape beyond is strongly reflective of the LCT key characteristics.

5.9.86 The flat form of the strath winding through the rolling upland plateau is well defined, the contrast between settled and managed strath with a variety of colours and textures emphasise the simplicity of the upland hills which are largely devoid of development, with the exception of one turbine associated with the operational Glen Kyllachy Wind Farm visible upon the skyline. Travelling at elevation on the bridge, the experience is one of looking across and along the river corridor (as opposed to being enclosed within it). In views both generally north and south, the river is a clear feature running through a flat plain of enclosed and unenclosed pasture, interspersed with copses of deciduous and coniferous woodland. Larger blocks of coniferous woodland extend from the strath edges up side slopes. Scattered housing sits at the break of slope up from the floodplain and on the immediate slopes set within woodland. The experience is of a rural well managed landscape, albeit with two large linear infrastructure elements crossing through.

5.9.87 In views south to the Site, the view is dominated by the Findhorn Viaduct, a category B listed structure, which spans across the strath. Built at the turn of the 19th century, the lattice girder spans are held up by slim tapering stone rubble pillars and the viaduct as a whole is a pronounced cultural and landscape feature extending across the view. The immediate enclosing hillsides and the lattice girder of the viaduct frames the view of the river and strath running beneath it. The commensurate elevation of both bridges, (as illustrated in **Figure 5.25b**) means that for the majority of people crossing the bridge, the lattice running course obscures the view of the distance skyline of the Site, and as such a proportion of the skyline in the view is the upper rail barriers of the Findhorn Viaduct. The contrast of the geometry of the viaduct with the curving strath and meander of the river enhances the feature of the Viaduct, such that it is the key focus in the views south.

5.9.88 Views from the train carriages would have uninterrupted oblique views along the strath to the enclosing hills of the Site.

Sensitivity

5.9.89 The viewpoint is not located in any landscape that is designated at the national or local level, which reduces the value, and it is located on a dualled section of the A9 trunk road with conifer roadside planting to the north and south, which further detracts from its value. However, the main focus of the glimpsed views from these bridged routes is oblique to this trunk road, and as such the scenic qualities present in the view are well expressed, in particular the key characteristics of the strath landscape and River Findhorn contained by distant hills and the cultural feature of the Findhorn Viaduct. Value is assessed as medium.

5.9.90 Whilst not designated as a national tourist route, the A9 trunk road by virtue of its alignment running from lowland to highland Scotland does attract high numbers of visitors and tourists, as well as the more widespread use as a key route for workers and freight. Viewers therefore using the route range from those with higher susceptibility (in particular visitors travelling through Scotland and to the CNP) and lower susceptibility with workers and hauliers. This would suggest a medium-high assessment of susceptibility.

5.9.91 Taking into account the assessment of value and susceptibility, the sensitivity is judged to be **medium-high**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.92 **Figures 6.25 a-e** predict that all turbines would be visible on the upland skyline in framed oblique views south-westwards along the strath of the River Findhorn. The angle of view with respect to the orientation of the Proposed Development footprint, means that views are across the short axis of the wind farm, extending across a 34° horizontal field of view. Ancillary infrastructure would not be visible, with the impacts of the Proposed Development stemming only from the introduction of the turbines into the view.

5.9.93 The turbines introduce further large scale structures into the view, the prominence of which is heightened by the extent to which they contrast with the prevailing rural character.

5.9.94 From the A9 route, the upland skyline (illustrated in wireline **Figure 5.25d**) is obscured by the lattice girders of the Findhorn Viaduct. The majority of the turbines would appear in juxtaposition with the southern half of the viaduct (the turbines in the far south of the view screened by mature conifer woodland situated between the Viaduct and the Proposed Development). The lower extent of the turbines would be screened by the lattice girders, and some of the upper towers, hubs and blades would therefore appear skylining above the Viaduct. Whilst partially screened, the irregular array, uneven heights and spacing, and rotating blades of the turbines would appear incongruous, viewed on the unambiguous horizontal form and geometric repetition of lattice work on the Viaduct. As a result, the new focus of the turbines would directly impact on the appreciation of the historic Viaduct as a key feature.

5.9.95 Taking all these factors into account, the magnitude of change during the operational phase will be **medium**. The magnitude of change during the construction phase will also be **medium** as the presence and activity of the tall cranes and the

emergence of the wind turbines as they are constructed will also form a notable feature.

Significance of Effect

5.9.96 The effect of the Proposed Development on road users would be **major-moderate**, and in both cases the effects would be **significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.97 Visibility of any notable operational and under-construction wind farms is described in the baseline description above.

5.9.98 Under the operational and under-construction cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **low** cumulative magnitude of change. There is theoretical cumulative visibility of the operational Glen Kyllachy and Farr Wind Farms to the west of the viewpoint, but in reality, only a single turbine is visible, with a large proportion of the tower screened by landform. As a consequence, there is a relatively weak association between the wind turbine and the Proposed Development, which would reduce the cumulative magnitude of change to a **low** level.

5.9.99 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in an operational and consented scenario would therefore be **moderate-minor** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.100 There are no consented or application developments within the wider views, and as a result **no change** is predicted to the consented or application cumulative scenarios.

5.9.101 In the scoping cumulative scenario, there is theoretical visibility of three blades associated with the Highland proposal at a distance of over 12km from the viewpoint. The blades would be situated within the context of the Proposed Development. In reality, visibility of these blade tips would be relatively indiscernible, particularly when travelling by car or train, and there would therefore be a **negligible** cumulative magnitude of change upon this cumulative scenario.

5.9.102 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in the scoping scenario would therefore be **minor** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the negligible cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Viewpoint 10: Track near Geal Charn Mor

Baseline

5.9.103 This viewpoint is located at the summit of Geal Charn Mor (824m AOD) and is representative of the views of hill walkers in this area. It is accessed via a vehicular track that extends north-west from Lynwilg, adjacent to the A9 in the Spey Valley, up to the shoulder of the hill, from where a further track extends west towards the summit. The view from the hilltop is expansive in all directions. The Proposed Development will be located to the north-north-west of the viewpoint at a minimum distance of 7.8km. The viewpoint is located on the northern edge of the CNP boundary but outwith the Cairngorm Mountains NSA which lies to the south and south-east.

5.9.104 The main attraction of the wider view is south and south-east towards the Cairngorm Mountains made distinct by their scale, mass and elevated ridgelines. The attraction of the mountain scenery is accentuated by the contrast with the low-lying extent of Spey Valley which features in the midground of the view to the south-east. While large scale development is not a feature in the Cairngorms, the marks on the landscape from the ski runs at the Mountain Resort are evident from this viewpoint in good visibility.

5.9.105 The Monadhliath Hills, which occupy the south-west sector of the view, are characterised by hills with lower and more level profiles, collectively forming what appears as an upland plateau of open moorland. Here, there are no distinct summits or ridgeline profiles, only a simple and expansive range of hills. Dumnaglass Estate Wind Farm is visible on the skyline of the Monadhliath Hills at a distance of 19.4km.

5.9.106 The view to the north, where the Proposed Development will be located, is also less dramatic than the Cairngorm Mountains, with the hills appearing smaller in scale and their profiles more gently rounded. From the northern edge of the Monadhliath Hills the land falls away into the Slochd pass and the valleys which extend from it on either side. From the valleys, the land rises up to form the Strathdearn Hills, creating an upland backdrop to this northern sector. Collectively the hills interlock to form what appears as a continuous upland ridge, without any distinct summits or ridgeline profiles. Operational wind farms, Glen Kyllachy and Farr are visible to the north at minimum distances of 16.7km and 18.4km respectively, while Tom nan Clach and Moy are visible to the north-east at minimum distances of 22.0km and 24.4km respectively.

Sensitivity

5.9.107 The value of the view is medium-high. While the location of the viewpoint on the edge of the CNP raises the value of the viewpoint, it is not rated as high as it is not representative of an NSA which has the highest scenic value, and the view towards the Proposed Development generally contains an area that is out with the CNP. The viewpoint is also not representative of an SLA, which would otherwise denote a regional scenic value.

5.9.108 The susceptibility of walkers will be medium-high. The expectation of walkers will be to enjoy a panoramic view of the landscape. The presence of operational wind farms across the northern sector reduces susceptibility by making this type of development an established feature of the view. Furthermore, the hills within which the viewpoint and the Proposed Development are located, lack the character and scale of the more scenic landscapes which lie to the south and south-east.

5.9.109 The combination of the medium-high value of the view and the medium-high susceptibility of walkers leads to an overall sensitivity of **medium-high**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.110 The wireline in **Figure 2.26f** shows the Proposed Development set beyond the hill ridge of Carn Coire na Caorach (636m AOD) with the closest proposed turbine seen at a minimum of 7.8km. All 26 of the proposed turbines will be visible, almost all seen with hubs and only one seen as a blade, despite some screening from the intervening landform. The horizontal angle ZTV on **Figure 5.6a** shows that the Proposed Development will occupy between 20 and 30 degrees of the full 360-degree view.

5.9.111 The Proposed Development will make a notable change to the view from Geal Charn Mor, despite the existing presence and influence of operational wind farms. The proximity of the proposed turbines to the viewpoint combined with their comparatively large scale means they will form a prominent feature in the view. All of the proposed turbines will be visible, and the movement of their blades will make them a dynamic feature that will contribute further to their prominence. Additionally, the more distant location of Glen Kyllachy (minimum of 16.7km) and Farr (minimum of 18.4km) means that the larger scale of the proposed turbines will be accentuated.

5.9.112 The magnitude of change will be moderated through a combination of the following factors. Firstly, the presence of Glen Kyllachy and Farr operational wind farms in the same sector of the view prevents the Proposed Development from appearing as a new or unfamiliar feature and furthermore, wind farm development is evident across the wider upland landscape. Secondly, the network of access tracks that extend across this upland area denote the human influence and detract from the sense of remoteness. And thirdly, although all 26 proposed turbines will be readily visible, they form a relatively contained group in this sector of the view and occupy only 20 to 30 degrees of the wider view, with the more attractive views of the Cairngorm Mountains to the south remaining unaffected.

5.9.113 Taking all these factors into account, the magnitude of change during the operational phase will be **medium-high**. From this viewpoint, the Proposed Development will form a notable addition to the existing extent of operational wind farms. The magnitude of change during the construction phase will also be **medium-high** as the presence and activity of the tall cranes and the emergence of the wind turbines as they are constructed will also form a notable feature.

Significance of Effect

5.9.114 The effect of the Proposed Development will be **significant** at a **major-moderate** level. The medium-high sensitivity relating to the value of the CNP designation and the susceptibility of walkers, combined with the medium-high magnitude of change relating to the proximity and scale of the proposed turbines means that the Proposed Development will redefine the character of the view.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.115 Visibility of any notable operational and under-construction wind farms is described in the baseline description above.

5.9.116 Under the operational and under-construction cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **medium-low** cumulative magnitude of change. Operational and under-construction wind farms, including Stronelairg, Corriegarth, Dunmaglass, Aberarder, Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Moy, Tom nan Clach, Hill of Glaschyle, and Berry Burn, are currently all visible interspersed within the surrounding hills at distances of 15-40km from the viewpoint. The addition of the Proposed Development would introduce wind farm development at a closer distance to the viewpoint (7.8km), within a sector of the view that contains the more distant Farr, Glen Kyllachy and Moy Wind Farms. It would therefore not be a new characteristic element in wider views, and it would maintain a similar pattern of well-spaced wind farms that are visible within the Monadliath Mountains. It would however be situated between these wind farms and as a result it would fill a gap that provides some separation between them. Views towards the CNP would remain unaffected by wind farm development. Separation between this new cluster of developments and Dunmaglass and Tom nan Clach would be retained.

5.9.117 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in an operational and under-construction cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium-low

cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.118 Consented and application wind farms would tend to consolidate clusters of wind farm development or be relatively indiscernible due to their distance and landform screening, also interspersed across the Monadhliath Mountains at distances of between 15-35km from the viewpoint. Cumulative effects under these scenarios relating to the addition of the Proposed Development would therefore be similar in nature when compared to those with operational and under-construction wind farms, and consequently a **medium-low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted under the consented and application cumulative scenarios.

5.9.119 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in a consented and application cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium-low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.120 Under the scoping cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **medium-low** cumulative magnitude of change. The Highland proposal would introduce wind farm development within the Monadhliath Mountains closer to the viewpoint than other operational and consented wind farms, with distances from the turbines of over 7km. The Proposed Development would be located a similar distance from the viewpoint within a different sector of the view, and as a result, it would extend the visibility of closer range wind farms within views. Highland and the Proposed Development would therefore impart a similar influence on the view, but the wider pattern of development would generally remain consistent, with views towards the CNP also unaffected by wind farm development.

5.9.121 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in a scoping cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium-low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Viewpoint 11: Carn a' Choire Mhoir Summit

Baseline

5.9.122 This viewpoint is located at the summit of Carn a Choire Mhoir (824m AOD) and is representative of the views of hill walkers in this area. It is accessed via a vehicular track that extends south-east to the summit from Balvraid, a small cluster of properties approximately 4km to the north-east of Tomatin and the A9. The view from the hilltop is expansive in all directions. The Proposed Development will be located to the north-north-west of the viewpoint at a minimum distance of 8.2km. The viewpoint is located beyond the northern edge of the CNP boundary and the Cairngorm Mountains NSA but on the edge of the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moord Special Landscape Area.

5.9.123 The view is characterised by the rolling uplands which surround this viewpoint and extend out in all directions. They are characterised by medium sized hills, covered in heather moorland and with rounded profiles that collectively form gently undulating ridgelines. In contrast, the River Findhorn Valley, visible to the south-west and west, presents a settled and cultivated landscape in which farm fields are mixed with forestry blocks and small-scale settlement. This human influence extends into the upland landscape in the form of a network of access tracks and this reduces the sense of remoteness in the upland landscape around the viewpoint.

5.9.124 There is also an influence from wind farm development across the wider landscape with operational Glen Kyllachy and Farr visible to the west as a broad horizontal extent at minimum distances of 8.8km and 9.4km respectively. To the west, Dumnagalss Estate is visible along the skyline at a minimum of 21.0km and to the north-east Moy is visible below the skyline at a minimum of 8.8km. While wind farms form an established feature of the baseline view, from this viewpoint the operational turbines all appear relatively small-scale.

Sensitivity

5.9.125 The value of the view is medium-high. The viewpoint is on the southern edge of the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors Special Landscape Area, which denotes the regional scenic value of the landscape to the north but is outwith the CNP and the National Scenic Area, which occur further to the south-east.

5.9.126 The susceptibility of walkers will be medium-high. The expectation of walkers will be to enjoy a panoramic view of the landscape. The presence of close-range access tracks and medium-range operational wind farms reduces susceptibility by making this type of development an established feature of the view.

5.9.127 The combination of the medium-high value of the view and the medium-high susceptibility of walkers leads to an overall sensitivity of **medium-high**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.128 The wireline in **Figure 5.27f** shows the Proposed Development set across the rolling uplands that lie to the south-west of the A9, with the closest proposed turbine seen at a minimum of 8.2km. All 26 of the proposed turbines will be visible, with all seen with hubs and many seen to practically their full extents. The horizontal angle ZTV

on **Figure 5.8** shows that the Proposed Development will occupy between 20 and 30 degrees of the full 360-degree view.

5.9.129 The Proposed Development will make a notable change to the view from Carn a Choire Mhoir, despite the existing presence and influence of operational wind farms the Proposed Development will extend the wind farm influence into a part of the wider view that is not currently affected by such development. The proximity of the proposed turbines to the viewpoint combined with their comparatively large scale means they will form a prominent feature in the view. All of the proposed turbines will be visible, and the movement of their blades will make them a dynamic feature that will contribute further to their prominence. Despite the comparable separation distance of Glen Kyllachy (minimum of 8.8km), Farr (minimum of 9.4km) and Moy (minimum of 8.8km) from the viewpoint, the smaller scale of these operational turbines will accentuate the larger scale of the proposed turbines.

5.9.130 The magnitude of change will be moderated through a combination of the presence of operational wind farms in the same upland area and across the wider upland landscape, the network of access tracks that extend across this upland area denoting further human influence and also the relatively contained extent of the group which will be contained in only 20 to 30 degrees of the wider view, with the more attractive views of the Cairngorm Mountains to the south remaining unaffected.

5.9.131 Taking all these factors into account, the magnitude of change during the operational phase will be **medium-high**. From this viewpoint, the Proposed Development will form a notable addition to the existing extent of operational wind farms. The magnitude of change during the construction phase will also be **medium-high** as the presence and activity of the tall cranes and the emergence of the wind turbines as they are constructed will also form a notable feature.

Significance of Effect

5.9.132 The effect of the Proposed Development will be **significant** at a **major-moderate** level. The medium-high sensitivity relating to the value of the SLA designation and the susceptibility of walkers, combined with the **medium-high** magnitude of change relating to the proximity and scale of the proposed turbines means that the Proposed Development will redefine the character of the view. The nature of the effect will be adverse.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.133 Visibility of any notable operational and under-construction wind farms is described in the baseline description above.

5.9.134 Under the operational and under-construction cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **medium-low** cumulative magnitude of change. Operational and under-construction wind farms, including Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Moy, and Tom nan Clach, are currently all visible within the surrounding hills at distances of less than 10km from the viewpoint. The addition of the Proposed Development would introduce wind farm development at a similar distance to these other wind farms, but it would extend wind farm development into more southern areas of the Monadhliath Mountains, closer to the undeveloped hills of the CNP, and this would increase the cumulative magnitude of change. However, views towards the CNP would remain unaffected by wind farm development.

5.9.135 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in an operational and under-construction cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium-low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.136 Consented and application wind farms would tend to consolidate clusters of wind farm development or be relatively indiscernible due to their distance and landform screening, also interspersed across the Monadhliath Mountains at distances of between 5-37km from the viewpoint. Cumulative effects under these scenarios relating to the addition of the Proposed Development would therefore be similar in nature when compared to those with operational and under-construction wind farms, and consequently a **medium-low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted under the consented and application cumulative scenarios.

5.9.137 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in a consented and application cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium-low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.138 Under the scoping cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **medium-low** cumulative magnitude of change. The Highland proposal would introduce wind farm development within the same sector of the view as the Proposed Development at a distance of over 14km. The Proposed Development would be added to the fore of the Highland proposal. The clustering of these two wind farms would moderate the cumulative magnitude of change, with the Proposed Development contributing most towards these effects, while views towards the CNP would remain unaffected by wind farm development.

5.9.139 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in a scoping cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a

combination of the factors that lead to the medium-low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Viewpoint 12: A9 (near Carrbridge)

Baseline

5.9.140 The viewpoint is located within the CNP on the A9 trunk road as it crosses the River Dulnain, approximately 1km west of Carrbridge. The viewing location is elevated on the bridge which carries the A9 across the river. Running parallel to the A9 corridor, the Perth-Inverness rail line is located immediately east, such that similar views westwards to the Site may be possible from the train carriages (albeit with the A9 road bridge, vehicles and safety barriers to the foreground, which may partially obscure views).

5.9.141 North and south of the bridge, the A9 sits within wider mature coniferous plantation, which contains views along these stretches of road. It is only where the road sits at elevation crossing the strath, that wider views to the landscape are possible. In views eastwards, the steep embankments and stone masonry abutments of the railway line sit in the foreground, the green painted lattice bridge sitting centrally and prominently in the view with the waters of River Dulnain flowing beneath. Beyond to the east and south, buildings denoting the settlement of Ellan are clearly visible, a number of dwellings are set in amongst a backdrop of native woodland, and mature crowns of Scot's Pine break the skyline.

5.9.142 Westwards (and north-westwards) the view is wider and more open, across a landscape whose character strongly reflects the assessed characteristics of the Upland Strath LCT within which the viewpoint is located. Looking across a foreground comprising a broad swathe of flat enclosed pasture, the floodplain is contained by a distinct curve of the River Dulnain. The flatter landform of the strath enables distant and partially focussed, views along its length (interspersed with native riparian woodland following the river) to the more distant Monadhliath uplands associated with the Site, and which form an undeveloped skyline and backdrop.

5.9.143 The Site is located approximately 8.3km from the viewpoint in oblique views experienced by people travelling along the A9, in both directions, but primarily when travelling north given the alignment of the route relative to the Site location. Similar views may be possible from some of the residences on the western edge of Carrbridge and from the lower strath, dependant on the extent to which intervening woodland may screen views from the lower vantage point.

5.9.144 The wide vista west and north-west imparts a larger scale to the strath landscape, the experience of which is enhanced by the elevated viewing location on a long straight stretch of the A9. Notwithstanding the roadside location, the view westwards is one containing landscape characteristics strongly representative of the rural Upland Strath LCT, the broad, partially settled, strath floor contained by well wooded side slopes of primarily managed coniferous forestry that are largely uninhabited.

Sensitivity

5.9.145 The viewpoint is located in the CNP and therefore much of the surrounding landscape is afforded protection at the national level indicating a higher value. Located on the A9 trunk road, this section of road is not dualled and therefore has a narrower running width, which is less defining in the view than dualled sections. Views to the Site along the River Dulnain are oblique to the main direction of travel. The strath landscape character of the CNP is expressed in the fore to mid ground, with few detractors and a strong rural character with some scenic quality. The distant skyline comprises hills of the Monadhliath (and the Site) situated beyond the CNP boundary. The value of the view is considered to be high.

5.9.146 Whilst not designated as a national tourist route, the A9 trunk road by virtue of its alignment running from lowland to highland Scotland does attract high numbers of visitors and tourists, as well as a key route for workers and hauliers. Viewers therefore using the route range from those with higher susceptibility (in particular visitors travelling through Scotland and to the CNP) and lower susceptibility with workers and hauliers. This would suggest a potentially high rating of susceptibility.

5.9.147 Overall, sensitivity is considered to be **high**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.148 The primary magnitude of change will be from the introduction of 200m high wind turbines on the upland skyline in views west, the nearest turbine at 8.3km. Whilst views up and into the Proposed Development are possible along the glen of the An Leth-allt (a tributary of the River Dulnain draining the immediate hills), no borrow pits or substation compound will be visible. The wind farm access tracks are designed as dead-end spurs extending from the main access track, westwards along the hill ridges. For T4, T7, T8 and T9 there may be some localised, temporary scarring of landcover and benching-in visible in the shorter term, to facilitate construction.

5.9.149 The wireline identifies that there will be 18 turbines theoretically visible, extending across a horizontal angle of view of 17° and arranged in an irregular grouping with some overlapping although it appears within a contained part of the simple landform. Of the 18 turbines visible just over half (T1-T9) will sit at higher elevations and with a greater proportion of the turbines visible (partial tower, hub and rotating blades) with the remaining turbines appearing as blades of varying lengths viewed on the skyline. Whilst there is visibility to the pylon mounted transmission line, the significantly smaller scale and lattice structures appear more recessive in the view. The turbines introduce uncharacteristic features on the hills in the background of the view, their prominence heightened by the framed views focussing attention along the strath of the River Dulnain. The man-made structures contrast with the well-expressed key characteristics in the view westwards.

5.9.150 Visible from a relatively short section of the A9, the oblique view can be gained when travelling both north and south and is one of a sequence of views from the A9 where the wider landscape is 'revealed' due to breaks in woodland cover at river crossings. At this viewpoint, after leaving the confines of roadside planting and road embankments, the experience of reveal draws the focus and attention of the viewer, for a short duration. Similar views will be gained for a short section of the Perth to Inverness train line (albeit with the A9 bridge spanning across the foreground).

5.9.151 Taking all these factors into account, the magnitude of change during the operational phase will be **medium**. The magnitude of change during the construction phase will also be **medium** as the presence and activity of the tall cranes and the emergence of the wind turbines as they are constructed will also form a notable feature.

Significance of Effect

5.9.152 The effect of the Proposed Development on road users would be **major-moderate** and the effects would be **significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium magnitude of change on the view and the high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.153 There would be no theoretical visibility of any operational and under construction, consented, and application wind farms from this viewpoint. There would therefore be **no change** to these cumulative scenarios as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development, and for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects in these scenarios on receptors at this viewpoint would be **not significant**.

5.9.154 In relation to the scoping scenario, there would be theoretical visibility of the Highland wind turbines at distances of over 14km to the west of the Clune wind turbines. The Highland turbines would appear to be situated on the southern edge of the Monadhliath Mountains, similar to Clune, but in reality, a large number of the Highland turbines would be screened by intervening woodland, such that only 10 would be visible. The Proposed Development would be situated further east than the Highland proposal and as such there would be a degree of separation between the two wind farms, which would increase the cumulative magnitude of change. It would spread wind farm development across a further part of the open hill skyline that is the focal, backdrop of the view in this direction. The cumulative magnitude of change would also be moderated considerably due to the reduced association between the two wind farms as a result of the screening to the large number of Highland turbines. Overall, the Proposed Development would introduce an additional, separate wind farm into the view at a closer distance to the viewpoint, which would result in a **medium-low** cumulative magnitude of change.

5.9.155 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in the scoping scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium-low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Night-time Assessment

5.9.156 The sensitivity of this viewpoint remains high for road users.

5.9.157 The baseline night-time view towards the Proposed Development is characterised by the dark rural strath and the relatively simple skyline of its containing hills. The reflection of light off the River Dulnain and farm buildings occasionally punctuates the darkness, but on the whole it is dark landscape with very few sources of artificial lighting. The viewpoint is influenced by lighting sources at closer distances in other directions though associated with the vehicles on the A9 and the settlement of Carrbridge to the east.

5.9.158 In lower light levels, from the angle of view, the turbines would be seen silhouetted on the skyline against a lighter evening sky as a result of the sun setting beyond. This means that the turbine features will appear in sharper relief from the greater contrast between dark turbines in shadow, and the lighter sky. In this context, by turn the visibility of the lights at twilight will be less apparent, as the contrast between lights and a lighter sky will be less, until such time as the influence of the sun reduces and the background sky darkens.

5.9.159 The vertical angle between this viewpoint and the closest nacelle is -2.7° and the intensity of the nacelle lights in the 2,000 cd scenario is therefore between 420 and

220 cd (see **Figure 6.16**), while the 200 cd scenario is between 42 and 22 cd. In relation to the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme with 2,000 cd lighting, the night-time magnitude of change on this view would be **medium**, while in the scenario with 200 cd, the magnitude of change would reduce to a **low** level due to the reduced light source.

5.9.160 As a result, and when combined with the viewpoint's sensitivity (high), the effect of the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme with 2000 cd on road users is considered to be **major-moderate** and **significant**. The effect of the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme with 200 cd on road users is considered to be **moderate** and **significant**.

Viewpoint 14: Carrbridge

Baseline

5.9.161 Located within the CNP this viewpoint is located on the western edge of Carrbridge, within the strath to the River Dulnain at the junction of the A938 and B9153, which forms part of NCR7. Facing westwards to the Site, the view is representative of local residents and visitors to the area, as well as those travelling west along the A938. The nearest turbine in the view would be at 9.5km distance.

5.9.162 The viewpoint sits within the Upland Strath LCT (Cairngorms LCT 127) and the immediate landscape character reflects both key characteristics of the LCT and buildings on the edge of settlement. Road infrastructure, buildings of various sizes, designs and orientations and road infrastructure (including street lighting), characterise the settlement of Carrbridge. Northwards and beyond the settlement edge, the landscape character is more representative of the Upland Strath LCT comprising the largely horizontal landform of the strath (the foreground manicured grass forming part of golf fairways), bands of mature deciduous woodland, backed by predominantly wooded hills.

5.9.163 From the immediate location, views south are obscured by the two storey Carrbridge Hotel (the late Edwardian building with turret, featuring a more recent large extension); to the north views are across the maintained fairways of Carrbridge Golf Course (with the tin red roof of the small Clubhouse) interspersed with a scattering of mature trees backdropped by the afforested slopes of the adjacent hills.

5.9.164 With the exception of the original hotel building, the foreground of the view is one defined by the road junction and associated lighting and signage, garage units and bungalows, with overhead local distributor electricity lines and poles. Streetlighting prevails along the A938 within the village curtilage and road junction, and there would be ambient lighting from the buildings and traffic. Views of the hills are obscured by intervening coniferous woodland.

Sensitivity

5.9.165 The viewpoint is located within the CNP and it is therefore afforded a higher value. Located on the edge of Carrbridge (rather than from the historic core) there is less expression of the prevailing landscape character and cultural heritage of the settlement, and scenic qualities are reduced by the plethora of more urban elements, in particular the expanse of road surface and signage associated with the junction to the foreground. Nevertheless, it is considered that the value of the view is high.

5.9.166

5.9.167 The susceptibility of the viewer is higher reflecting views that could be experienced over long durations by local residents and visitors to Carrbridge and the CNP, including those views from the upper windows of the Hotel. The relatively lower visual amenity experienced in the locale reduces the susceptibility, given the more urbane features and character prevailing on the settlement edge. The susceptibility is judged to be medium-high.

5.9.168 Overall, sensitivity is judged to be **high**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.169 The primary magnitude of change will be from the introduction of 200m high wind turbines on the upland skyline in views west, the nearest turbine at 9.5km. Whilst views towards parts of the Site are possible along the glen of the An Leth-allt (a tributary of the River Dulnain draining the immediate hills), no borrow pits or substation compound will be visible, and the tracks have been designed to access the turbines as spurs extending from the west along the hill ridges avoiding crossing the glen.

5.9.170 The bare ground wireline **Figure 5.30c** predicts that without screening the Proposed Development would introduce visibility of 22 turbines on the distant upland skyline in the view. Of these turbines, the hubs (and partial or full towers) of 12 turbines would be theoretically visible on or elevated above the skyline. Blade rotation would be clearly visible at this distance. The horizontal extent of turbines theoretically visible (as illustrated in the wirelines) is 15°.

5.9.171 The reality of the view is one where intervening mature conifers and deciduous woodland screen views to the majority of the turbine array (illustrated in the photomontage **Figure 5.30e**). Only a limited number of partial turbines are visible in

the gap between the woodland and adjacent housing. For these limited number of turbines visible, in addition to the foreground screening, woodland on the slopes in front of the Proposed Development partially screen the lower proportion of the turbines.

5.9.172 The split level of the Hotel spans the change in elevation in the locale, with two storeys on the upper level (adjacent to the A938) and 3 storeys on the lower level, such that the roofline is uniform across the whole building. Views from the upper windows facing towards the Proposed Development, may not be screened with views to a wider part of the turbine array seen over a developed fore and middle ground.

5.9.173 Much of the historic core and adjacent housing of Carrbridge is situated at a lower level extending southwards from the A938 spanning the River Dulnain, views to the wider landscape (and the Site) screened by local landform and the well wooded slopes and as such are unlikely to incur any changes to their views from the introduction of the Proposed Development.

5.9.174 Taking all these factors into account, the magnitude of change during the operational phase will be **low**. The magnitude of change during the construction phase will also be **low** as the presence and activity of the tall cranes and the emergence of the wind turbines as they are constructed will also form a notable feature.

Significance of Effect

5.9.175 The effect of the Proposed Development on residents and visitors would be **moderate** and the effects would be **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low magnitude of change on the view and the high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.176 There would be no theoretical visibility of any operational and under construction, consented, and application wind farms from this viewpoint. There would therefore be **no change** to these cumulative scenarios as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development, and for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects in these scenarios on receptors at this viewpoint would be **not significant**.

5.9.177 In relation to the scoping scenario, there would be theoretical visibility of the Highland wind turbines at distances of over 15km to the west of the Clune wind turbines. The Highland turbines would appear to be situated on the southern edge of the Monadhliath Mountains, similar to Clune, but in reality, all of the Highland turbines would be screened by intervening woodland. There would therefore be **no change** to the cumulative magnitude of change under the scoping cumulative scenario.

Viewpoint 15: Carn na h-Easgainn Summit

Baseline

5.9.178 This viewpoint is located on the summit of Carn na h'Easgainn (616m AOD) and is representative of the views of hill walkers in this area. It is accessed via a vehicular track that extends south-west to the summit from Lynemore, a small settlement on the southern side of the A9 and the settlement of Moy. The view from the hilltop is expansive in all directions. The Proposed Development will be located to the south-south-east of the viewpoint at a minimum distance of 10.2km. The viewpoint is not covered by any national or regional landscape designations and is not included within the CNP boundary, although the view does include the CNP to the south-west.

5.9.179 Carn na h'Easgainn sits within a group of hills that are bounded by the A9 to the north and north-east, the River Findhorn Valley to the south-east and the River Nairn Valley to the north-west, with the wider upland area extending further to the south-west and beyond the enclosing roads and valleys. Carn na h'Easgainn and the surrounding hills are low and rounded with a blanket covering of heather moorland that preserves an open and exposed landscape. Human influences in this landscape comprise wind farm developments, access tracks and fence lines.

5.9.180 The south-eastern view from the viewpoint looks directly onto operational Farr at a minimum of 2.4km and operational Glen Kyllachy at a minimum of 4.2km. Farr Wind Farm is seen set across the north facing hill slopes to the south of the viewpoint, such that visibility is relatively close-range and full. Glen Kyllachy is located to the immediate south, such that it appears like an extension to Farr and is partly screened by the intervening landform. Together, these wind farms present the defining feature in the baseline view, while other readily visible wind farms include Moy at 5.7km to the north-east, Tom nan Clach at 11.5km to the east and Dumnaglass Estate at 15.3km to the south-east.

Sensitivity

5.9.181 The value of the view is medium. The viewpoint not covered by any national or regional landscape designations which would otherwise denote a special scenic value.

5.9.182 The susceptibility of walkers will be medium. The expectation of walkers will be to enjoy a panoramic view of the landscape. The presence of close-range access tracks and close-range operational wind farms reduces susceptibility by making these types

of development an established feature of the view, consequently reducing the visual amenity of the view.

5.9.183 The combination of the medium value of the view and the medium susceptibility of walkers leads to an overall sensitivity of **medium**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.184 The wireline in **Figure 5.31f** shows the Proposed Development set across the rolling uplands that lie to the south-east of the River Findhorn Valley, with the closest proposed turbine seen at a minimum of 10.2km. All 26 of the proposed turbines will be visible, with all seen with hubs and many seen to practically their full extents. The horizontal angle ZTV on **Figure 5.6a** shows that the Proposed Development will occupy between 10 and 20 degrees of the full 360-degree view.

5.9.185 At a minimum distance of 10.2km and with all 26 of the proposed turbines readily visible across the upland landscape, the Proposed Development will form a notable addition to the influence of wind farm development on walkers at this viewpoint. The magnitude of change will, however, be moderated by the existing presence and influence from closer range Farr and Glen Kyllachy wind farms at a minimum of 2.4km and 4.2km respectively. Both these operational wind farms are seen in the same sector of the view and to the immediate right of where the Proposed Development would be located. This means that not only will the Proposed Development not appear as a new or unfamiliar feature, but it also means that the closer range operational turbines will make the more distant proposed turbines appear comparatively smaller, albeit owing to their greater separation distance.

5.9.186 The magnitude of change on walkers at this viewpoint will be **medium**. This takes into account the notable addition that the Proposed Development will make in the view, whilst also considering the moderating effect that the closer range wind farms will have on the view. While the location of the Proposed Development close to the alignment of the closest operational wind farms will help to concentrate these close to medium range developments within one sector of the view, it will also increase the horizontal extent and the influence of development in this upland area.

5.9.187 The magnitude of change during the construction phase will also be **medium** as the presence and activity of the tall cranes, the emergence of the wind turbines and the construction of the closer range access tracks, crane pads and foundations will form readily visible features that will appear at variance with the underlying rural character.

Significance of Effect

5.9.188 The effect of the Proposed Development will be **significant** at a **moderate** level. The medium sensitivity relating to the absence of any national or regional landscape designations covering this area and the moderated susceptibility of walkers relating to the baseline presence of operational wind farms, combined with the medium magnitude of change relating to the additional influence of the Proposed Development in an already developed context will give rise to a notable effect. The nature of the effect will be adverse.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.189 Visibility of any notable operational and under-construction wind farms is described in the baseline description above.

5.9.190 Operational wind farms form a notable characteristic of the surrounding landscape in views from the summit of Carn na h-Easgainn. There are a number of wind farms located within 12km of the viewpoint, including Farr (2.4km), Glen Kyllachy (4.2km), Moy (5.7km), and Tom nan Clach (11.5km). These wind farms are all contained with the surrounding uplands and therefore they are all clearly discernible within different sectors of the view, with Farr appearing particularly prominent due its closer distance. The addition of the Proposed Development to the operational and under-construction baseline would further extend the influence of wind farm development within these uplands, and as such it would not form a new characteristic feature located at a distance of just over 10km from the viewpoint, However, it does extend wind farm development across a further part of the currently undeveloped landscape that form part of the view towards CNP. A **low** cumulative magnitude of change would arise as a result of the addition of the Proposed Development.

5.9.191 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in an operational and under-construction cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate-minor** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.192 Consented and application wind farms would tend to consolidate clusters of wind farm development or be relatively indiscernible due to their distance and landform screening. Cumulative effects under these scenarios relating to the addition of the Proposed Development would therefore be similar in nature when compared to those with operational and under-construction wind farms, and consequently a **low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted under the consented and application cumulative scenarios.

5.9.193 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in a consented and application cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate-minor** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.194 Under the scoping cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would also result in a **low** cumulative magnitude of change. The Highland proposal would intensify wind farm development within the same sector of the view as the operational Farr and Glen Kyllachy Wind Farms at a distance of over 15km, but it would appear beyond these existing turbines. While the intensification of turbines in this sector of the view would result in some additional complexity in the view, it is considered that it would not alter the cumulative magnitude beyond a **low** level.

5.9.195 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in a scoping cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate-minor** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Viewpoint 16: Carn an Fhreiceadain Summit

Baseline

5.9.196 This viewpoint is located on the summit of Carn an Fhreiceadain (878m AOD) and is representative of the views of hill walkers in this area. It is accessed from Kingussie, firstly following the road along the eastern side of Gynack Burn as far as Pitmain Lodge and then following the vehicular track that extends north-west across the open hillside to the summit. The view from the hilltop is expansive in all directions. The Proposed Development will be located to the north-north-east of the viewpoint at a minimum distance of 15.0km. The viewpoint is not covered by any national or regional landscape designations but does lie on the northern edge of the CNP boundary.

5.9.197 Carn an Fhreiceadain sits within the broad extent of the Monadhliath Mountains that are bounded by Strath Spey to the south-east and Loch Ness to the north-west. The hill tops along the south-west to north-east ridgeline, which includes Carn an Fhreiceadain, range in height between approximately 700m and 940m. The hills are smooth and rounded and interlock to form gently undulating ridgelines. The land cover comprises mostly heathers and rough grasses and the absence of tree cover creates an open and exposed upland landscape. Across the closer range hills, access tracks are readily visible, extending over the hillsides and onto the summits, eroding any sense of remoteness. In contrast to the upland landscape, the lowland landscape of the Spey Valley is visible to the south, with farm fields, forestry and settlement denoting the human influence in this area.

5.9.198 In terms of large scale development in the upland landscape, wind farms are readily visible to the north, with Farr at a minimum of 20.8km and Glen Kyllachy at a minimum of 19.9km, to the west with Dumnaglass Estate visible set along the skyline at a minimum of 13.8km and Corriegarth at a minimum of 15.1km and to the north-east with Tom nan Clach visible at 30.2km. These operational wind farms all appear relatively distant and small in scale. In contrast, in the views south back across the Spey Valley towards the Cairngorm Mountains, there are no wind farms visible.

Sensitivity

5.9.199 The value of the view is medium-high. While the location of the viewpoint on the edge of the CNP raises the value of the viewpoint, it is not rated as high as it is not representative of an NSA which has the highest scenic value and only part of the landscape within the view towards the Proposed Development lies within the CNP. The viewpoint is also not representative of an SLA, which would otherwise denote a regional scenic value.

5.9.200 The susceptibility of walkers will be medium-high. The expectation of walkers will be to enjoy a panoramic view of the landscape. The presence of close-range access tracks across the hills and medium range operational wind farms across the surrounding upland landscape reduces susceptibility by making these types of development an established feature of the view, consequently reducing the visual amenity of the view.

5.9.201 The combination of the medium-high value of the view and the medium-high susceptibility of walkers leads to an overall sensitivity of **medium-high**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.202 The wireline in **Figure 5.32f** shows the Proposed Development set across the lower hills on the northern side of the River Findhorn Valley and with the closest proposed turbine seen at a minimum of 15.0km. All 26 of the proposed turbines will be visible, albeit to varying degrees with those on the right seen to almost their full extents, those in the middle seen with their towers screened by intervening landform and those to the left more fully screened by the landform of Carn Icean Duibhe (808m) such that only blades, tips and the occasional hub are visible. The horizontal angle ZTV on **Figure 5.6a** shows that the Proposed Development will occupy between 10 and 20 degrees of the full 360-degree view.

5.9.203 The Proposed Development will form a readily visible feature in the view owing to its location in the upland landscape and the visibility of all 26 turbines, despite some

being partially screened by intervening landform. At 15.0km, the Proposed Development will form the closest wind farm in the northern sector, with the turbines appearing larger owing to their closer proximity and larger size, compared to the operational turbines. This comparison also applies in relation to the closer range Dumnaglass and Corriegarth turbines to the west.

5.9.204 The magnitude of change will, however, be moderated through a combination of the following factors. Firstly, the presence of Tom nan Clach to the rear of the Proposed Development and Glen Kyllachy and Farr operational wind farms t the left, prevents the Proposed Development from appearing as a new or unfamiliar feature. Secondly, the network of access tracks that extend across this upland area denote the human influence and detract from the sense of remoteness. And thirdly, although all 26 proposed turbines will be readily visible, they form a relatively contained group in this sector of the view, occupying only 10 to 20 degrees of the wider view, with the more attractive views of the Cairngorm Mountains to the south remaining unaffected.

5.9.205 Taking all these factors into account, the magnitude of change during the operational phase will be **medium-low**. While from this viewpoint, the Proposed Development will form an apparent addition to the existing extent of operational wind farms, the magnitude of change will be moderated by the separation distance and baseline human influences. The magnitude of change during the construction phase will also be **medium-low** as the presence and activity of the tall cranes and the emergence of the wind turbines as they are constructed will also form an apparent feature, albeit also at distance and seen within a context of existing developments.

Significance of Effect

5.9.206 The effect of the Proposed Development will be **not significant** at a **moderate** level. The medium-high sensitivity relating to the value of the CNP designation and the susceptibility of walkers, combined with the medium-low magnitude of change relating to the separation distance between the viewpoint and the proposed turbines and the baseline influences from other developments in the upland landscape, means that the Proposed Development will not redefine the character of the view. The nature of the effect will be adverse.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.207 Visibility of any notable operational and under-construction wind farms is described in the baseline description above.

5.9.208 Under the operational and under-construction cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **low** cumulative magnitude of change. Operational and construction wind farms (see 'Baseline' description) are currently visible interspersed within the surrounding hills at distances of 13-50km from the viewpoint. The addition of the Proposed Development would introduce wind farm development at a distance (15km) similar to Corriegarth and Dunmaglass, but within a sector of the view that contains the more distant Tom nan Clach Wind Farm. It would therefore not be a new characteristic element in wider views, and it would maintain a similar pattern of well-spaced wind farms that are visible within the Monadliath Mountains. The Proposed Development would however be situated closer to the viewpoint than Tom nan Clach, and it would appear to be of a slightly larger scale than the other wind farms that are visible. Views towards the CNP would remain unaffected by wind farm development.

5.9.209 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in an operational and under-construction cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate-minor** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.210 Consented and application wind farms would tend to consolidate clusters of wind farm development or be relatively indiscernible due to their distance and landform screening, also interspersed across the Monadhliath Mountains at distances of between 14-52km from the viewpoint. Cumulative effects under these scenarios relating to the addition of the Proposed Development would therefore be similar in nature when compared to those with operational and under-construction wind farms, and consequently a **low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted under the consented and application cumulative scenarios.

5.9.211 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in a consented and application cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate-minor** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.212 Under the scoping cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **low** cumulative magnitude of change. The Highland proposal would introduce wind farm development within the Monadhliath Mountains closer to the viewpoint than other operational and consented wind farms, with distances from the turbines of over 6km. The Proposed Development would be located beyond Highland within a similar sector of the view, with a few of the turbines slightly increasing the

horizontal extent of the cluster of wind farms, which also includes Tom nan Clach. Views towards the CNP would remain unaffected by wind farm development in this scenario.

5.9.213 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in a scoping cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate-minor** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Viewpoint 17a and b: Meall a Bhuachaille/ Craiggowrie

Baseline

5.9.214 The viewpoint for the daylight hours assessment is located on the summit of Meall a' Bhuachaille (Viewpoint 17a), a popular recreational hilltop 10km to the east of Aviemore and forming part of the enclosing ridgeline to the north-east of Loch Morlich. It is accessed via a well-established and way-marked footpath and the summit provides expansive views in all directions. The Proposed Development is located 19.5km to the north-west and the viewpoint is located in the CNP and the Cairngorm Mountains NSA.

5.9.215 The baseline description and assessment for hours of darkness is provided for an alternative location at the nearby summit of Craiggowrie (Viewpoint 17b) in the Night-time Assessment section. This alternative night-time location was requested by NatureScot at the pre-application stage.

5.9.216 A variety of different landscapes make up this extensive panoramic view, with the Monadhliath Mountains to the west and north-west, the Cairngorm Mountains to the south and south-east, the Cromdale Hills to the north-east and the Strathdearn Hills to the north. The main attraction of this panoramic view is the Cairngorm Mountains range on account of its dramatic scale and mass, as well as its distinctive summits and corries, and varied ridgeline profile. The mountains appear largely undeveloped with the exception of the Cairngorm Mountain Resort, evident in the form of the road leading up to the main cluster of buildings, the funicular railway, the Ptarmigan Lodge visitor centre and the ski tows and ski runs. In contrast, the key feature of the Monadhliath Mountains to the west is the long and level ridgeline, which is devoid of any distinctive landform features, although wind farms do form a distant human-made feature, with operational Glen Kyllachy and Farr visible to the north-west at distances of 28.0km and 29.9km respectively.

5.9.217 The views to the north differ from the views to the south, in that more distant hills are seen set beyond the broad extent of the strath landscapes. These lower-lying areas are characterised by the mosaic of bright greens of improved and semi-improved farmland and the dark green of forestry blocks. Although settlement is typically dispersed there is some evidence of villages occurring at intervals across the strath. The ridge of the Cromdale Hills and the distinctive outline of Ben Rinnes characterise the view to the north-east, while to the north, the Strathdearn Hills form a longer and more level ridgeline which lacks any distinctive summits or other landform features. A cluster of distant wind farm developments occur in the adjoining uplands to the east of the Strathdearn Hills and include Pauls Hill at 30.8km and Berry Burn at 32.0km.

Sensitivity

5.9.218 The value of the view from Meall a' Bhuachaille is high. The hill forms a popular walk, and the summit forms a natural viewpoint, both of which raise the value of the view. Furthermore, the viewpoint is located in the CNP and Cairngorm NSA.

5.9.219 The susceptibility of walkers is high. The main draw of this panoramic view is south and south-east towards the dramatic Cairngorm Mountains. However, the expectation of walkers will be to enjoy a scenic 360 degree panoramic view of the surrounding landscape associated with the CNP, and this heightens susceptibility.

5.9.220 The combination of the high value of the view and the high susceptibility of hill walkers leads to an overall sensitivity of **high**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.221 The wireline in **Figure 5.33f** shows that all 26 of the proposed turbines will be theoretically visible, although with some stacking occurring between the wind turbines. They will be seen as a distinct group, located 19.5km to the north-west of the viewpoint and will occupy between 1 and 5 degrees of the full 360 degree view, as illustrated on the horizontal angle ZTV in **Figure 5.6a**.

5.9.222 Those factors that contribute to the magnitude of change include the fact that the Proposed Development will bring wind farm development closer to the viewpoint than the existing wind farms and that the larger scale of the proposed turbines will be readily apparent through comparison with the Glen Kyllachy and Farr wind turbines, set to the immediate right and despite their more distant location. They will be seen in a context where semi-natural and natural upland landscapes prevail, despite the presence and influence of distant wind farms and will form a readily visible feature in this northern sector of the view.

5.9.223 Those factors that moderate the magnitude of change include the separation distance of 19.5km which will mean that the Proposed Development will appear as a relatively distant and small-scale feature occupying only a small proportion of the wider view. It will also be seen in close alignment with the existing Glen Kyllachy

and Farr wind farms and therefore will not be introducing a new or unfamiliar feature in this sector of the view. Furthermore, the Proposed Development will be associated with a relatively low and level ridgeline which appears comparatively unremarkable in the context of the wider view and will be seen in the northern sector where the cultivated and settled landscapes of the Spey Valley are also readily visible.

5.9.224 The infrastructure will not be visible from this viewpoint. Taking all these factors into account, the magnitude of change as a result of the Proposed Development will be **low**. The plant and processes associated with the construction phase of the Proposed Development will not be visible with the exception of the tall cranes and visible emerging turbines, although their distant means that they will not alter the magnitude of change rating of **low**.

Significance of Effect

5.9.225 The effect of the Proposed Development on the view will be borderline **significant** at a **moderate** level during the construction and operational phases, due primarily to its larger scale and closer distance relative to wind farms that are also visible within a similar sector of the view. The nature of the effect will be adverse.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.226 Under the operational and under-construction cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **low** cumulative magnitude of change. Operational and under-construction wind farms, including Dunmaglass, Aberarder, Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Moy, Tom nan Clach, Hill of Glaschyle, and Berry Burn, are currently all visible interspersed within the surrounding hills at distances of 26-36km from the viewpoint. The addition of the Proposed Development would introduce wind farm development at a closer distance to the viewpoint (19.5km), within a sector of the view that contains the more distant Farr and Glen Kyllachy Wind Farms. It would therefore not be a new characteristic element in wider views, and it would maintain a similar pattern of well-spaced wind farms that are visible within the Monadliath Mountains. It would however be situated to the west of these wind farms and as a result it would increase the horizontal extent of this cluster of developments. However, some separation between this new cluster of developments and Dunmaglass and Moy would be retained.

5.9.227 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in an operational and under-construction cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.228 Consented and application wind farms would tend to consolidate clusters of wind farm development or be relatively indiscernible due to their distance and landform screening, also interspersed across the Monadhliath Mountains at distances of between 25-35km from the viewpoint. Cumulative effects under these scenarios relating to the addition of the Proposed Development would therefore be similar in nature when compared to those with operational and under-construction wind farms, and consequently a **low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted under the consented and application cumulative scenarios.

5.9.229 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in a consented and application cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.230 Under the scoping cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **medium-low** cumulative magnitude of change. The Highland proposal would be located with the Monadhliath Mountains closer to the viewpoint than other operational and consented wind farms, with distances from the turbines of over 22km, in the same sector of the view as Dunmaglass and Aberarder Wind Farms. The Proposed Development would be located slightly closer to the viewpoint within a similar sector of the view, and as a result, it would intensify the level of closer range wind farms within this part of the view. The Proposed Development would reduce the spacing between the Highland cluster of wind farms and the existing cluster of development associated with Farr and Glen Kyllachy, and this slightly increase the cumulative magnitude of change.

5.9.231 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in a scoping cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium-low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Night-time Assessment

5.9.232 The sensitivity of this viewpoint remains high for hill walkers.

5.9.233 The baseline night-time view towards the Proposed Development (see **Figures 8.33i-k**) is characterised by the long smooth ridgeline of the Monadhliath Mountains and distant mountains beyond that form the skyline, which is only occasionally punctuated by vertical structures associated with distant wind farms, while at lower

elevations light is reflected off Loch Pitvoulish and lighting associated with the town of Aviemore is clearly discernible further west. Due to the remote location, there is no influence from artificial light in the immediate landscape surrounding the viewpoint.

5.9.234 The vertical angle between this viewpoint and the closest nacelle is 0.1° and the intensity of the nacelle lights in the 2,000 cd scenario is therefore between 2200 and 980 cd (see **Figure 6.16**), while the 200 cd scenario is between 220 and 98 cd. In relation to the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme with 2,000 cd lighting, the night-time magnitude of change on this view would be **low**, while in the scenario with 200 cd, the magnitude of change would also be **low** due to the reduced light source.

5.9.235 As a result, and when combined with the viewpoint's sensitivity (high), the effect of the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme with 2000 cd on hill walkers is considered to be **moderate** and **significant**. The effect of the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme with 200 cd on hill walkers is considered to be **moderate** and **significant**.

Viewpoint 18: Achnahannet

Baseline

5.9.236 This viewpoint is located within the CNP, south of the small farmstead of Achnahannet, on a minor road which runs perpendicular northwards from the A938 (the latter aligned east to west, along the strath to the River Dulnain). The minor road is located on the lower west facing slopes of Cairn Beinn Mhor with the main aspect from the route directed west and south-west along and across Strath Dulnain to the distant upland plateau of the Monadhliath. Views directly south (to the Cairngorm Mountains) are limited by the adjacent landform and roadside trees and scrub birch, as are views north and east.

5.9.237 Located at approximately 17.4km from the Site, the view west is representative of the limited number of local residents using the access road to the surrounds and Achnahannet along the northern fringes of the National Park. Key characteristics of the Upland Strath LCT (LCT127) are strongly represented in the immediate and wider landscape, the expansive nature of the view takes in the flatter and gently undulating landform along the River Dulnain, with a landcover comprising primarily enclosed pasture and rough grazing interspersed with small conifer blocks and native woodland copses and post and wire, and scrub field boundaries.

5.9.238 Within the wider view, woodland cover is infrequent which reinforces the openness and perceived larger scale to the landscape. Infrequently, the white rendered and slate grey roofs of farm buildings are visible, often associated with scrub woodland. The Monadhliath features as a darker, upland moorland backdrop to the open lowlands, the undifferentiated plateau forming a simple skyline.

Sensitivity

5.9.239 This viewpoint is located within the CNP on a minor road. The key features of the prevailing character type are well expressed in the wide views principally focussed westwards and south-west across the strath to the Monadhliath. There is a strong rural character with tangible characteristics of remoteness, exposure and relatively high scenic quality. The value is judged to be high.

5.9.240 This viewpoint is representative of those experienced by local residents who travel to the nearby farmstead. The susceptibility of these receptors would be medium.

5.9.241 The overall sensitivity of road users is considered to be **medium-high**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.242 The Proposed Development would introduce turbines on the distant upland horizon of the Monadhliath, partially oblique and west of the main focus of view south-west. The nearest turbine would be 17.4km distance and the furthest approximately 22.5km. At this particular location, the ZTV predicts that there would be theoretical visibility of the full 26 wind turbine development (to blade tip height) of which the hubs of 23 turbines would be theoretically visible. Looking across the shorter axis of the Proposed Development, a relatively wide horizontal spread of turbines would be visible (extending across a horizontal angle of view of approximately 11°). Similar number of turbines would be theoretically visible to the immediate north (from the south-west facing slopes of the encircling hills, the summits of which define the boundary of the CNP). Eastwards, from the immediate enclosing slopes, theoretical visibility would be gained of all wind turbines, comprising both hubs and blades.

5.9.243 No associated infrastructure including tracks or substation compound would be visible, such that only the wind turbines of the Proposed Development introduce change in the view. At a minimum of 17.5km the turbines would be clearly visible with the rotation of the blades discernible.

5.9.244 The array of uncharacteristic vertical structures contrasts with the rural character well expressed within the view. The larger perceived scale of the landscape to an extent tempers views of the array over this distance, but the scale of turbines and wider extent situated on the upland creates a new focus drawing the eye.

5.9.245 Taking all these factors into account, the magnitude of change during the operational phase will be **medium-low**. The magnitude of change during the construction phase will also be **medium-low** as the presence and activity of the tall

cranes and the emergence of the wind turbines as they are constructed will also form a notable feature.

Significance of Effect

5.9.246 The effect of the Proposed Development on road users would be **moderate** and borderline **significant** for road users. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium-low magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.247 There would be no theoretical visibility of any operational and under construction, consented, and application wind farms from this viewpoint. There would therefore be **no change** to these cumulative scenarios as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development, and for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects in these scenarios on receptors at this viewpoint would be **not significant**.

5.9.248 In relation to the scoping scenario, there would be theoretical visibility of the Highland wind turbines at distances of over 23km. The Highland turbines would appear to be situated on the southern edge of the Monadhliath Mountains, in a similar location to the Proposed Development, albeit slightly further from the viewlpoint. The Proposed Development would be situated further east than the Highland proposal at a distance of 17km and as such the two wind farms while situated within the same sector of the view, would not overlap. The Proposed Development would therefore increase the extent of wind farm development on the hills, occupying a similar extent of the view to Highland. The turbines associated with the Proposed Development would be slightly larger in scale, but due to the cohesiveness of the two wind farm layouts, it is likely that the difference won't be discernible from this distance. Instead, the two wind farms would be perceived to be one larger wind farm. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in a **medium-low** cumulative magnitude of change.

5.9.249 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in the scoping scenario would therefore be **moderate-minor** for road users and effects on receptors would be **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium-low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium-high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Viewpoint 19: Carn na Saobhaidhe Summit

Baseline

5.9.250 The viewpoint is located on the summit of Carn na Saobhaidhe (811m AOD), which is located in the Monadhliath Mountains, with the Spey Valley to the south-east, Loch Mhor and Loch Ness to the north-west and with the upland landscape extending to the north-east and south-west. Carn na Saobhaidhe is accessed via a vehicular track that extends eastwards from Loch Mhor, providing access to Corriegarth Wind Farm and surrounding hill tops. The Proposed Development is located 18.3km to the north-east and the viewpoint is not covered by any national or regional level landscape designations.

5.9.251 While hill slopes surrounding the wider hill range can be steep in parts, the centre is characterised by a gently undulating upland plateau where elevations range between approximately 600m and 800m. The hilltops appear low and rounded and interlock to form a gently undulating ridgeline without any prominent or distinctive landform features. The landcover comprises heathers and rough grasses and the absence of tree cover and fence lines, create an upland landscape that is open and exposed. In contrast to the dark hues of the landcover, the access tracks that extend across the hillsides are surfaced with light-coloured stone that make them a readily visible feature.

5.9.252 Despite the extent of the surrounding upland landscape, the defining characteristic from this viewpoint is wind farm development with operational Corriegarth at a minimum of 1.4km to the west-south-west and Dumnaglass Estate at a minimum of 4.5km to the north-east. Both these wind farms are readily visible and seen to almost their full extents. While Stronelarig is also visible to the south-west at the minimum distance of 10.7km, there is an absence of wind farm development to the south and south-east where the Spey Valley and more distant Cairngorm Mountains occur.

Sensitivity

5.9.253 The value of the view is medium. The viewpoint not covered by any national or regional landscape designations which would otherwise denote a special scenic value.

5.9.254 The susceptibility of walkers will be medium. The expectation of walkers will be to enjoy a panoramic view of the landscape. The presence of close-range access tracks and close-range operational wind farms reduces susceptibility by making these types of development an established feature of the view and reducing visual amenity.

5.9.255 The combination of the medium value of the view and the medium susceptibility of walkers leads to an overall sensitivity of **medium**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.256 The wireline in **Figure 5.35f** shows the Proposed Development set to the north-east of the Monadhliath Mountains with the closest proposed turbine seen at a minimum of 18.3km. The proposed turbines will be partly screened by the intervening landform, such that of the 26 proposed turbines, only 22 will be visible and of those, only seven will be visible with hubs, with the remaining visible as blades or tips. The horizontal angle ZTV on **Figure 5.6a** shows that the Proposed Development will occupy between 5 and 10 degrees of the full 360-degree view.

5.9.257 The magnitude of change of the Proposed Development will be moderated by the following factors. Firstly, the separation distance of 18.3km means that it will form a relatively distant feature, especially in comparison with the closer range Corriegarth and Dumnaglass Estate wind farms. Secondly, the extent of intervening landform will reduce the prominence of the Proposed Development in this view, as it will be seen at reduced extents. Thirdly, the Proposed Development will be seen in the context of closer range wind farms which establish this type of development as part of the baseline view, and which also establish a scale comparison which diminishes the scale of the Proposed Development. Furthermore, the Proposed Development will be located in the same sector as the existing Dumnaglass Estate Wind Farm and in an upland area that forms a continuation of the hills where the existing wind farms are located.

5.9.258 Although the Proposed Development will not form a notable change in the view, it will be seen to increase the spread of wind farm development in this upland area. Taking all these factors into account, the magnitude of change during the operational phase will be **low**. While from this viewpoint, the Proposed Development will form an apparent addition to the existing extent of operational wind farms, the magnitude of change will be moderated by the separation distance and baseline human influences. The magnitude of change during the construction phase will also be **low** as the presence and activity of the tall cranes and the emergence of the wind turbines as they are constructed will also form an apparent feature, albeit also at distance and seen within a context of existing developments.

Significance of Effect

5.9.259 The effect of the Proposed Development on the view will be **not significant** at a **moderate-minor** level during the construction and operational phases. The moderated sensitivity of the viewpoint and the viewers owing to the existing close-range influence from wind farm development, combined with the limited visual influence of the Proposed Development, means that the Proposed Development will not redefine the character of the view. The nature of the effect will be adverse.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.260 Visibility of any notable operational and under-construction wind farms is described in the baseline description above.

5.9.261 Under the operational and under-construction cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **low** cumulative magnitude of change. There is a strong influence from operational and under-construction wind farms at this viewpoint, primarily as a result of visibility of the nearby Corriegarth (1.5km), Dunmaglass (4.5km), Aberarder (7.2km), which is intensified by the weaker influence of the more distant Stronelairg Wind Farm (10.7km). However, there are currently still large sectors of the view to the north and south-east that are unaffected by wind farm development. The Proposed Development would encroach closer into the unaffected south-eastern sector of the view, and would slightly extend the current influence of wind farms associated with Dunmaglass and Aberarder further south. As a result of the level of landform screening and intervening distance (18.3km), the influence of the Proposed Development would be moderated slightly and overall, a low cumulative magnitude of change would occur under this scenario.

5.9.262 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in an operational and under-construction cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate-minor** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.263 Consented and application wind farms would tend to be relatively indiscernible due to their distance and landform screening, with the exception of Corriegarth 2, which would form a marked addition to the view due to its proximity (1km). Corriegarth 2 would reinforce and intensify the current pattern of development within the surrounding landscape, and as such cumulative effects under these scenarios relating to the addition of the Proposed Development would be similar in nature when compared to those with operational and under-construction wind farms. Consequently, a **low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted under the consented and application cumulative scenarios.

5.9.264 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in a consented and application cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate-minor** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.265 Under the scoping cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **medium-low** cumulative magnitude of change. The Highland proposal (14.5km) would encroach further into the unaffected south-eastern sector of the view, and would extend the current influence of wind farms associated with Dunmaglass and Aberarder further south. The Proposed Development would be situated between Highland and the Dunmaglass cluster, across a further part of the currently undeveloped skyline, and while slightly separated, the wind farms would be seen in combination at varying distances within a simple landscape. This would increase the cumulative magnitude of change to medium-low, with effects also moderated slightly by the intervening distance.

5.9.266 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in a scoping cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate-minor** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium-low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the medium sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Viewpoint 20: Braes of Balnagowan, Nethy Bridge

Baseline

5.9.267 The viewpoint is located on the northern typically wooded fringes of the settlement of Nethy Bridge within the CNP. The exact location is on the Braes of Balnagowan local distributor road, which is elevated on slopes rising up from the River Nethy and settlement core. Backed to the immediate east by housing and a combination of mature native and coniferous woodland, the main aspect and focus of view is west facing across Strathspey towards the Monadhliath, the latter of which form the distant upland backdrop and skyline. The Site is located on the Monadhliath in the west facing view at approximately 18.7km distance.

5.9.268 The viewpoint is primarily representative of local residents of Balnagowan Brae and Nethy Bridge. Visibility from other parts of the settlement are generally influenced to varying degrees by enclosure from woodland, and these areas are assessed in detail later in the LVIA.

5.9.269 Nethy Bridge is largely located within the Forested Upland Fringe LCT (LCT 128) which transitions immediately westwards (within the direction of view) to the Upland Strath LCT (LCT127). The Monadhliath in the distance form part of the Rolling Upland LCT (situated beyond the CNP boundary). Located on the elevated slopes to the east of Strathspey, the immediate context of the view is suburban in character, with a kerbed local distributor road, footpaths, street lighting, pockets of maintained amenity grass and the newer housing of Balnagowan. There are a variety of woodland characters representative of both the Forested Fringe and Upland Strath LCTs from the mature and semi-mature native woodland, the coniferous forestry to the north, the line of poplars to the south all of which contain views in these directions.

5.9.270 Across an open foreground of rough grassland meadow, the three and four story turn of the 19th century Nethy Bridge Hotel sits at a lower elevation, but nevertheless features prominently. The proximity to and horizontal extent of the building (featuring a distinctive 1920's turret breaking the skyline) rendered in a light finish, contrasts markedly with the dark wooded backdrop further emphasising its prominence in the view. A small number of properties either side of the hotel are glimpsed sitting within the backdrop of mature woodland which in turn also screens wider views across Strathspey.

5.9.271 Whilst the context of the viewpoint is suburban, the wider view (with the exception of the hotel) contains an abundance of woodland and the odd property glimpsed within the wider woodland cover. The extent of woodland in the foreground, masks views of the more diverse character of Strathspey typically experienced elsewhere. As such the combination of foreground woodland and the dark upland backdrop of hills creates a relatively simple visual horizontal composition, enhancing the prominence of the hotel in this view.

Sensitivity

5.9.272 The viewpoint is located within the CNP, adjacent to a number of residential properties, and as such this affords a higher value. The elevated view enables a wide, albeit relatively simple west facing panorama across to the Monadhliath. The detail of Strathspey is screened. The value is judged to be high.

5.9.273 The majority of receptors will be local residents and visitors and as such have a higher susceptibility. In addition, visitors staying at the Nethy Bridge Hotel from the first and second floors may have similar views west.

5.9.274 The sensitivity is judged to be **high**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.275 The wind farm would introduce turbines on the distant upland horizon of the Monadhliath direct in the views westwards, the nearest turbine at 18.5km distance. At this particular location, the ZTV predicts that there would be theoretical visibility of up to 23 turbines (to blade tip height) and of this the hubs of up to 16 turbines would be theoretically visible. The proportion of turbines visible is partially reduced by the mature woodland cover against which they are viewed. The ZTV displays a relatively wide extent of visibility in the vicinity of this viewpoint (at higher and

lower elevations), however the bare ground modelling takes no account of the extent of characteristics mature woodland and the screening it affords (illustrated on **Figures 5.36b-c**).

5.9.276 No associated infrastructure including tracks or substation compound would be visible, such that only the turbines of the Proposed Development would introduce any change. At a minimum of 18.7km the turbines would be clearly visible and the rotation of the blades discernible. The direction of view is orientated along the long axis of the wind farm such that the horizontal extent of turbines is smaller extending across a 6.5° horizontal field of view.

5.9.277 The Proposed Development introduces an array of uncharacteristic structures set within a wider upland skyline of undifferentiated plateau, creating a new focus. From this viewpoint the position of the Proposed Development aligns directly in the line of sight to the turret of the Nethy Bridge Hotel, the turbine array extending behind and to either side of the turret. The juxtaposition of the turbines relative to the turret will not always directly align to this extent, however the location of the turbine array would affect the appreciation of this existing feature, whether viewed immediately behind the turret and/or situated adjacent.

5.9.278 Taking all these factors into account, the magnitude of change during the operational phase will be **low**. The magnitude of change during the construction phase will also be **low** as the presence and activity of the tall cranes and the emergence of the wind turbines as they are constructed will also form a notable feature.

Significance of Effect

5.9.279 The effect of the Proposed Development on residents and visitors to the hotel would be **moderate**, and the effects would be **not significant.** This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low magnitude of change on the view and the medium to high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.280 There would be no theoretical visibility of any operational and under construction, and consented, wind farms from this viewpoint, and while there is some very limited theoretical visibility of the Ourack application, there would be no cumulative visibility in reality. There would therefore be **no change** to these cumulative scenarios as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development, and for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects on receptors at this viewpoint would be **not significant**.

5.9.281 In relation to the scoping scenario, there would be theoretical visibility of five blade tips associated with the Highland proposal on the horizon to the west of the Clune wind turbines. In reality, forestry on the ridgeline would screen visibility of these turbine blades, and as a result the cumulative magnitude of change from this viewpoint would be subject to **no change**.

Viewpoint 22: Cairn Gorm Mountain Railway Cafe

Baseline

5.9.282 This viewpoint is located on the viewing platform at the Ptarmigan Lodge visitor centre (~1,080 m) at the top of the Cairngorm Funicular Railway, approximately 165m below the summit of Cairngorm. The open aspect is to the north and the view is experienced by thousands of visitors each year, although the funicular railway is currently closed for maintenance. The viewpoint is located in the CNP and the Cairngorm Mountains National Scenic Area. The view is typical of the views experienced from the northern aspect of the Cairngorm Mountains, albeit with the influence of the infrastructure associated with the snow sports facilities readily evident.

5.9.283 The view extends from the west to the east, with the northern aspect forming the central sector of the full view. Views of Cairngorm to the south are screened by the visitor centre and access onto the hill from the centre is restricted. The view extends out across Rothiemurchus Basin and Spey Valley to the Monadhliath Mountains to the west, the Cromdale Hills to the north-east and the Strathdearn Hills the north-west, where the Proposed Development is located. While these hills are not as dramatic in terms of scale and mass, as the Cairngorm Mountains, they none-the-less make an important contribution to the wider landscape setting. Collectively they form a relatively long and level skyline, without any distinctive summits or features, and form an enclosing backdrop to the view.

5.9.284 The attention of viewers is typically drawn by the visual interest of the foreground and middle-ground. The downward slopes of the foreground are characterised by the extent of fencing, access tracks, ski tows and other infrastructure associated with the recreational use of the mountain for snow sports, with the closer range centre and funicular railway appearing as prominent interventions at variance with the character of the mountain.

5.9.285 The lowland landscape, which occupies the middle-ground of the view, presents a strong contrast with the mountain landscape on account of its distinct low and level landform, as well as greener and more wooded landcover. There is also evidence of a greater level of human intervention with settlements and roads visible, the most

evident being Aviemore, with its light-coloured buildings standing out amidst the surrounding context of dark woodland cover.

5.9.286 In clear conditions, the elevated nature of the viewpoint provides an expansive view across a range of landscapes. Beyond the first tier of hills, further tiers occur giving a complex layering of horizons and a sense of depth to the wider view. In these hills existing wind farm development is evident as distant features, with operational Farr and Glen Kyllachy visible to the north-west at ranges of 35.2km and 33.2 km, respectively and Tom nan Clach visible to the north at 32.5km.

Sensitivity

5.9.287 The value of this view is high. It is a formal viewpoint located on a terrace that has been designed to encourage visitors to view the landscape. Furthermore, its orientation is north towards the location of the Proposed Development. It is also representative of the Cairngorm Mountains NSA and CNP. The value is prevented from being high by the extent of built development on the mountain which detracts from the quality of the view.

5.9.288 The susceptibility of viewers is medium-high. They will be visiting the viewing terrace with the intention of enjoying the views and the Proposed Development will lie within the central sector of the available view. There are, however, a number of factors which will moderate their susceptibility, including the distant location of the Proposed Development, the presence of other existing wind farms visible from this viewpoint and the influence of closer range developments on the amenity and character of the view.

5.9.289 The combination of the value of the view and the susceptibility of the walkers/visitors will lead to an overall sensitivity of **high**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.290 The Proposed Development will be located 24.3km from the viewpoint. This means it will be seen as a relatively small-scale and distant component in the view occupying only a small proportion of a wider ridgeline. It will be seen to the north-west of the viewpoint and set on the distant ridgeline of lower hills that collectively form a gently undulating ridgeline. The turbines will be visible to almost their full extents and backclothed by tiers of more distant hills.

5.9.291 The Proposed Development will not form a new feature in this view, as wind farm development is already visible, most notably with operational Farr and Glen Kyllachy wind farms seen to the rear and right of the Proposed Development, albeit at the more distant ranges of 35.2km and 33.2km respectively. The Proposed Development will also be seen to comply with the existing pattern in which wind farm developments are concentrated in the broad band of foothills to the north of the Cairngorm Mountains, but will present a closer range influence from this type of development and with turbines appearing comparatively larger, albeit at 24.3km still distant. Taking all these factors into account, the magnitude of change will be **low**.

5.9.292 From the distance of 24.3km, infrastructure associated with the Proposed Development will not be readily visible. The processes and plant associated with the construction and decommissioning phases will also not be readily visible, with the exception of the tall cranes which may be discernible, albeit too distant to alter the rating of a **low** magnitude of change.

Significance of Effect

5.9.293 The effect of the Proposed Development on the view from the Cairngorm Mountain Railway Cafe will be **not significant** at a **moderate level** during the construction and operational phases. This assessment relates chiefly to the distance at which the Proposed Development will be located from the viewpoint, which means it will be seen as a relatively small-scale feature and the existing influence from wind farm development on a similar alignment which means it will be seen in addition to other similar developments on the view. The nature of the effect will be adverse.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.294 Under the operational and under-construction cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **low** cumulative magnitude of change. Operational and under-construction wind farms, including Stronelairg, Corriegarth, Dunmaglass, Aberarder, Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Moy, Tom nan Clach, Hill of Glaschyle, and Berry Burn, are currently all visible interspersed within the surrounding hills at distances of 33-48km from the viewpoint. The addition of the Proposed Development would introduce wind farm development at a closer distance to the viewpoint (24.3km), within a sector of the view that contains the more distant Farr and Glen Kyllachy Wind Farms. It would therefore not be a new characteristic element in wider views, and it would maintain a similar pattern of well-spaced wind farms that are visible within the Monadliath Mountains.

5.9.295 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in an operational and under-construction cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.296 Consented and application wind farms would tend to consolidate clusters of wind farm development or be relatively indiscernible due to their distance and landform screening, also interspersed across the Monadhliath Mountains at distances of between 30-43km from the viewpoint. Cumulative effects under these scenarios relating to the addition of the Proposed Development would therefore be similar in nature when compared to those with operational and under-construction wind farms, and consequently a **low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted under the consented and application cumulative scenarios.

5.9.297 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in a consented and application cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.298 Under the scoping cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **low** cumulative magnitude of change. The Highland proposal would be located in the Monadhliath Mountains closer to the viewpoint than other operational and consented wind farms, with distances from the turbines of over 25km, in the same sector of the view as Dunmaglass and Aberarder Wind Farms but extending across a wider extent of the view. The Proposed Development would be located slightly closer to the viewpoint but separated from Highland, situated in the same sector of the view as the distant Farr and Glen Kyllachy wind farm cluster. While the two wind farms would introduce wind farm development at slightly closer distances to the viewpoint, the cumulative magnitude of change would be limited to **low** due to their distance and close association with existing wind farm clusters.

5.9.299 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in a scoping cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Viewpoint 23: Braeriach Summit

Baseline

5.9.300 At 1,296m AOD, Braeriach is the third highest peak in Scotland and is characterised by its vast crescent shaped summit plateau and surrounding dramatic corries. It forms the highest point in the western massif of the Cairngorms and is separated by the central massif by the Lairig Ghru pass. The most popular route to the summit is from the Sugar Bowl carpark at the Cairngorm Mountain Resort, passing through the Chalamain and Lairig Ghru passes before ascending the northern ridgeline via Sron na Lairige (1180m AOD).

5.9.301 Beyond the broad summit plateau which characterises the foreground of the views, the mountain massif dominates, with Cairn Gorm (1,245m AOD) to the north-east, Ben Macdui (1,309m AOD) to the south-east and Cairn Toul (1,291m AOD) to the south, all forming high tops with several more Munros forming wider ridgelines around. Corries cut into the mountain to create steep drops in elevation, especially to the south of Braeriach, where the scenic view comprises the incised valley of Lairig Ghru enclosed by the steep sides of the mountain massif.

5.9.302 In contrast to the undeveloped and wild land of the mountain massif, the view to the north and north-west extends over the afforested foothills and lower slopes of Rothiemurchus and Feshie, beyond which the brighter tones of farm fields denote a more settled and cultivated landscape. The distant tier of low hills that enclose the Spey Valley form a relatively low and uniform ridgeline and while Glen Kyllachy and Farr are located in these hills, at minimum distances of 33.5km and 35.3km respectively, they form distant and minor influences on the overall view.

Sensitivity

5.9.303 The value of this view is high. The view is representative of the Cairngorm Mountains NSA, which denotes the national level of scenic value, and is also representative of the CNP.

5.9.304 The susceptibility of viewers is high. Braeriach presents a remote mountain summit characterised by the surrounding mountain massif and with a distinct lack of built development within the close to middle range. There are, however, a number of factors which will moderate the susceptibility of walkers, including most notably the distant location of the Proposed Development from the viewpoint, as well as the presence of other existing wind farms visible in the same sector of the view and seen at similar ranges.

5.9.305 The combination of the value of the view and the susceptibility of the walkers to the Proposed Development will lead to an overall **high** sensitivity.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.306 The wireline in **Figure 5.39f** shows the Proposed Development set in the Strathdearn Hills at a distance of 24.3km to the north of the viewpoint. The visual influence of the Proposed Development will be limited by a combination of its separation distance from the viewpoint, its location, both in the least remarkable sector of the view and below a low and distant ridgeline, and the baseline influence from wind farm developments in the same sector and on the same ridgeline.

5.9.307 The proposed turbines will appear as relatively small-scale components, occupying a small proportion of a much wider view. Furthermore, they will be seen associated

with a distant upland landscape which in comparison with the dramatic landscape of Braeriach and surrounding mountain massif, will appear as a less scenic component of the overall view. This in turn will diminish the prominence of the Proposed Development as it will not be associated with any of the key features of the view, and it will also be seen in the same sector of the view as the settled and cultivated Spey Valley, which lacks the same sensitivity as the views towards the undeveloped landscapes.

5.9.308 The Proposed Development will be seen to the fore of Glen Kyllachy and Farr wind farms, visible during clear conditions at 33.5km and 35.3km respectively. Although visible at the closer range of 24.3km, the proposed turbines will be visible in a sector of the view where the influence from wind farm development already exists, and this will moderate the magnitude of change. Furthermore, operational wind farms are visible across the wider hill groups from the north-west to the north-east, albeit occurring as distant and small-scale features.

5.9.309 The distance of the viewpoint from the Proposed Development means that associated infrastructure will not be visible, and although the tall cranes used in construction and decommissioning may be discernible, they will not increase the magnitude of change rating owing to their comparatively small scale at this range, which during the construction phase will also be **low**.

Significance of Effect

5.9.310 The effect of the Proposed Development on this view will be **not significant** at a **moderate** level during the construction and operational phases. Despite the high sensitivity relating to the value of the CNP and NSA designation and the susceptibility of walkers, the limited visual influence of the Proposed Development and the existing influence from the operational wind farms means that the Proposed Development will not redefine the character of the view. The nature of the effect will be adverse.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.311 Under the operational and under-construction cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **low** cumulative magnitude of change. Operational and under-construction wind farms, including Stronelairg, Corriegarth, Dunmaglass, Aberarder, Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Moy, Tom nan Clach, Hill of Glaschyle, and Berry Burn, are currently all visible interspersed within the surrounding hills at distances of 33-48km from the viewpoint. The addition of the Proposed Development would introduce wind farm development at a closer distance to the viewpoint (24.3km), within a sector of the view that contains the more distant Farr and Glen Kyllachy Wind Farms. It would therefore not be a new characteristic element in wider views, and it would maintain a similar pattern of well-spaced wind farms that are visible within the Monadliath Mountains.

5.9.312 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in an operational and under-construction cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.313 Consented and application wind farms would tend to consolidate clusters of wind farm development or be relatively indiscernible due to their distance and landform screening, also interspersed across the Monadhliath Mountains at distances of between 34-46km from the viewpoint. Cumulative effects under these scenarios relating to the addition of the Proposed Development would therefore be similar in nature when compared to those with operational and under-construction wind farms, and consequently a **low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted under the consented and application cumulative scenarios.

5.9.314 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in a consented and application cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.315 Under the scoping cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **low** cumulative magnitude of change. The Highland proposal would be located in the Monadhliath Mountains closer to the viewpoint than other operational and consented wind farms, with distances from the turbines of over 23km, in a similar sector of the view as Dunmaglass and Aberarder Wind Farms but extending across a wider extent of the view. However, the Highland proposal would increase the horizontal extent of this wind farm cluster, which would reduce the separation between Dunmaglass and Aberarder cluster and the Farr and Glen Kyllachy cluster. The Proposed Development would be located slightly closer to the viewpoint but separated from Highland, situated in the same sector of the view as the distant Farr and Glen Kyllachy wind farm cluster. It would not reduce the separation between the two wind farm clusters, but it would contribute towards the increased cumulative effects associated with these two clusters. As a result, the cumulative magnitude of change would be **medium-low**, but this is primarily attributed to the lateral spread of the Highland proposal, rather than the Proposed Development.

5.9.316 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in a scoping cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium-low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Viewpoint 24: Creagan a Chaise

Baseline

5.9.317 This viewpoint has been selected to represent the visual effects of the Proposed Development on walkers in the Cromdale Hills. Creagan a' Chaise has been selected as it forms the highest summit in the range. The view looks west towards the Proposed Development which will be seen at a minimum distance of 29.0km. The viewpoint is located in the CNP and on the edge of the Blackwater, Ben Rinnes and Tomintoul Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV).

5.9.318 The Cromdale Hills form a distinct north-east to south-west ridge of hills, separated from the surrounding uplands by the low-lying Spey Valley to the north-west, and the Avon Valley to the east and south-east. The summit of Creagan a' Chaise lies in the southern part of the ridge. It is marked by the large Jubilee Cairn and can be reached from either Cromdale in the north or Milton in the east. Tracks leading onto the grouse moors, assist access onto the hill from both directions, with navigation over the heather moorland required to reach the summit.

5.9.319 The view from the summit is panoramic. Upland landscapes occur in every sector from the viewpoint, collectively forming an almost continuous ridge around the Cromdale Hills. The upland landscape to the south comprises the mountain massif of the Cairngorm Mountains, which form the main attraction of the wider view on account of their scale and mass, as well as their more dramatic skyline profile. There is very little, large-scale or small-scale development evident in this sector. To the south-east, the profile of the hills becomes lower and smoother, and parts of Strath Avon become visible between the hills, denoting a more settled aspect to this landscape, albeit with large scale development also not evident.

5.9.320 To the north-east, the ridge of the Cromdale Hills forms a closer range feature, with the distinct profile of Ben Rinnes visible to the right and distant wind farm development evident across the long and level ridgeline to the left, including Berry Burn at 18.1km and Paul's Hill. To the north-west, the background hills appear to flatten further and the views across the Spey Valley open up to reveal a landscape which is both farmed and forested and in which settlement is mostly dispersed, but also with small towns, such as Grantown on Spey readily evident. Wind farms form a more distant feature than in the north-east sector, with Tom nan Clach visible at 25.8km, Moy at 32.8km, Glen Kyllachy visible at 34.8m and Farr at 35.9km. It is further to the west that the Proposed Development will be located to the fore of the very distant Dumnaglass Estate (45.1km).

5.9.321 The Strathdearn Hills, in which the Proposed Development will be located, form a background feature in this view, their distance accentuated by the broad expanse of the valley landscape evident in the middle-ground. Without any distinct profile, they merge with the wider ridgeline of the upland landscape, in which there are no focal points or features, other than the distinctive outline of the Ben Wyvis range visible in the far distance, albeit only on clear days.

Sensitivity

5.9.322 The value of the view is -high. The summit of the hill marks a semi-formal viewpoint which walkers visit with the intention of enjoying the panoramic view and this, along with the inclusion of the viewpoint in the designated area of the CNP and on the edge of the AGLV, raises the value of the viewpoint.

5.9.323 The susceptibility of walkers will be high. The expectation of walkers will be to enjoy a panoramic view of a largely undeveloped landscape. The presence of operational wind farms in the view will reduce susceptibility by making this type of development an established feature of the view. Furthermore, the Proposed Development will be located in a sector of the view which is less remarkable than the other sectors and in which wind farm development already occurs.

5.9.324 The combination of the high value of the view and the high susceptibility of walkers leads to an overall sensitivity of **high**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.325 The wireline in **Figure 5.40f** shows the Proposed Development set in the Strathdearn Hills at a distance of 29.0km. The proposed turbines will appear as relatively small-scale components, especially in the context of the much wider upland ridge that extends through this sector and adjoining sectors. The separation between the viewpoint and the Proposed Development is accentuated by the intervening presence of the Spey Valley and the settled and cultivated character of this landscape reduces the sense wildness evident in the unsettled sectors of the view.

5.9.326 The Proposed Development will form a relatively compact group that will be seen set below the long and low ridgeline on which other wind farm developments are located. Although aligned with the more distant Dumnaglass Estate, the very limited visibility of this wind farm means that it will have little influence on the assessment. The more readily visible albeit also distant Tom nan Clach to the north and Glen Kyllachy and Farr to the north-west, present a context in which operational wind farms from an existing feature in this sector of the view and which are associated

with the low hills where the Proposed Development is located. There is also an existing influence from Paul's Hill Wind Farm in the sector to the right, which is outwith the cumulative study area. Taking all these factors into account, the magnitude of change that the Proposed Development will have on the view during the operational phase will be low. This assessment relates principally to the distance of the Proposed Development from the viewpoint, the unremarkable nature of the hills with which it will be associated and the existing influence of other wind farm developments on this view.

5.9.327 The distance of the viewpoint from the Proposed Development means that associated infrastructure will not be visible, and although the tall cranes used in construction and decommissioning may be discernible, they will not increase the magnitude of change rating owing to their comparatively small scale at this range, which during the construction phase will also be **low**.

Significance of Effect

5.9.328 The effect of the Proposed Development on this view will be **not significant** at a **moderate-minor** level during the construction and operational phases. Despite the medium-high sensitivity relating to the value of the CNP designation and the susceptibility of walkers, the limited visual influence of the Proposed Development and the existing influence from the operational wind farms means that the Proposed Development will not redefine the character of the view. The nature of the effect will be adverse.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.329 Visibility of any notable operational and under-construction wind farms is described in the baseline description above.

5.9.330 Under the operational and under-construction cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **low** cumulative magnitude of change. Operational and under-construction wind farms are apparent in views to the west and north, while views to the east and south are currently unaffected by wind farm development. Operational and under-construction wind farms, including Corriegarth, Dunmaglass, Aberarder, Farr, Glen Kyllachy, Moy, Tom nan Clach, Paul's Hill, Hill of Glaschyle, and Berry Burn, are currently all visible interspersed within the surrounding hills at distances of 15-52km from the viewpoint. The addition of the Proposed Development would introduce an additional wind farm development at a distance of 29km, within a sector of the view that contains the more distant Dunmaglass Wind Farm, which due to intervening distance may or may not be apparent dependent on weather conditions. The Proposed Development would therefore not be a new characteristic element in wider views, and it would reinforce a similar pattern of well-spaced wind farms that are visible across the hills to the north of Strath Spey. Its closer distance to the viewpoint than Dunmaglass would increase the magnitude of change, but not above a low level.

5.9.331 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in an operational and under-construction cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.332 Consented and application wind farms would tend to be relatively indiscernible due to their distance and landform screening, with the exception of Clash Gour and Ourack, which would markedly increase the lateral extent of the Berry Burn/ Hill of Glaschyle wind farm cluster. The broader pattern of development across wider views would be maintained with separation maintained between the various wind farm clusters, and as such cumulative effects under these scenarios relating to the addition of the Proposed Development would be similar in nature when compared to those with operational and under-construction wind farms. Consequently, a **low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted under the consented and application cumulative scenarios.

5.9.333 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in a consented and application cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

5.9.334 Under the scoping cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would result in a **medium-low** cumulative magnitude of change. The Highland proposal (34.3km) would be situated at a closer distance to the viewpoint than other existing and consented wind farms, and as a result it would be slightly more apparent in the view. The Proposed Development would be situated at a similar distance from the viewpoint to the east of Highland, and while slightly separated and less widespread, the wind farms would be seen in combination. Given the intervening distance, this would increase the cumulative magnitude of change to medium-low.

5.9.335 The cumulative visual effect of the Proposed Development in a scoping cumulative scenario would therefore be **moderate** and **not significant**. This is due to a combination of the factors that lead to the medium-low cumulative magnitude of change on the view and the high sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Turbine Lighting Visibility

5.9.336 **Table 5.12** below provides a summary of the potential visibility of nacelle lights for each of the LVIA viewpoints, this is based on the nacelle light ZTV (**Figure 5.15**) and details of how many lit turbines will be theoretically visible from each of the viewpoints included in the LVIA.

Table 5.12 Turbine Lighting Visibility at Viewpoints

No.	Viewpoint	Nacelle Lighting Theoretical Visibility	
		Default Scheme	Agreed Reduced Scheme
1	C1121 Road (near Glenkyllachy Lodge)	4	2
2	U1116 Road (near Garbole)	9	3
3	Core Path LBS114 (by Insharn)	4	1
4	C1121 Road (near Kyllachy House)	5	2
5	A9 (Slochd)	7	2
6	U1116 Road (near Carn Eitidh)	26	10
7	Tomatin	19	9
8	Carn Sleamhuinn	26	10
9	A9 (River Findhorn Crossing)	21	8
10	Track near Geal Charn Mor	25	9
11	Carn a' Choire Mhoir Summit	26	10
12	A9 (near Carrbridge)	9	4
13	A9 (north of Tomatin)	15	6
14	Carrbridge	12	5
15	Carn na h-Easgainn Summit	26	10
16	Carn an Fhreiceadain Summit	20	8
17a	Meall a Bhauchaille	25	9
17b	Craiggowrie	25	9
18	Achnahannet	21	7
19	Carn na Saobhaide Summit	10	4
20	Braes of Balnagowan, Nethy Bridge	15	5
21	A95 (near Dulnain Bridge)	18	7
22	Cairn Gorm Mountain Railway Cafe	26	10
23	Braeriach Summit	26	10
24	Creagan a Chaise	26	10
25	Meall Fuar Mhonaidh	0	0

Turbine Lighting Intensity

5.9.337 The lighting intensity ZTV (**Figure 5.16**) illustrates different lighting intensities (depending on different vertical angles from the nacelle mounted aviation light) across the surrounding landscape. Many of the viewpoints within the areas closest to the Proposed Development will have reduced intensity as a result of the negative vertical angle in which the nacelle lights would be viewed. **Table 5.13** below provides a summary of the reduced intensity for the nacelle lights based on the light intensity data presented on **Figure 5.16** that may be introduced as further mitigation.

Table 5.13 Turbine Lighting Intensity (Candela) at Viewpoints

No.	Viewpoint	Turbine Lighting Intensity (cd)		
		Vertical Angle	2000 cd	200 cd
1	C1121 Road (near Glenkyllachy Lodge)	-5.3	<170cd	<17cd
2	U1116 Road (near Garbole)	-4.88	<170cd	<17cd
3	Core Path LBS114 (by Insharn)	-4.8	<170cd	<17cd
4	C1121 Road (near Kyllachy House)	-5.25	<170cd	<17cd
5	A9 (Slochd)	-3.81	220cd to 170cd	22cd to 17cd
6	U1116 Road (near Carn Eitidh)	-1.31	980cd to 420cd	98cd to 42cd
7	Tomatin	-2.96	420cd to 220cd	42cd to 22cd
8	Carn Sleamhuinn	0.15	2200/2500cd	220/250cd
9	A9 (River Findhorn Crossing)	-2.86	420cd to 220cd	42cd to 22cd
10	Track near Geal Charn Mor	0.07	2200/2500cd	220/250cd
11	Carn a' Choire Mhoir Summit	0.26	2200/2500cd	220/250cd
12	A9 (near Carrbridge)	-2.66	420cd to 220cd	42cd to 22cd
13	A9 (north of Tomatin)	-2.26	420cd to 220cd	42cd to 22cd
14	Carrbridge	-2.43	420cd to 220cd	42cd to 22cd
15	Carn na h-Easgainn Summit	0.15	2200/2500cd	220/250cd
16	Carn an Fhreiceadain Summit	0.72	2200/2500cd	220/250cd
17a	Meall a Bhauchaille	0.36	2200/2500cd	220/250cd
17b	Craiggowrie	0.08	2200cd to 980cd	220cd to 98cd
18	Achnahannet	-1.31	980cd to 420cd	98cd to 42cd
19	Carn na Saobhaide Summit	0.22	2200/2500cd	220/250cd
20	Braes of Balnagowan, Nethy Bridge	-1.38	980cd to 420cd	98cd to 42cd
21	A95 (near Dulnain Bridge)	-1.34	980cd to 420cd	98cd to 42cd
22	Cairn Gorm Mountain Railway Cafe	0.89	2200/2500cd	220/250cd
23	Braeriach Summit	1.42	980cd to 420cd	98cd to 42cd
24	Creagan a Chaise	0.07	2200/2500cd	220/250cd
25	Meall Fuar Mhonaidh	-	-	-

5.9.338 It is apparent from **Figure 5.16** that the full intensity of the lights would be theoretically experienced when on similar or more elevated terrain. These elevated areas are found intermittently across the Study Area, most notably across scattered areas of the Monadhliath Mountains to the south-west of the Proposed Development, and across the some of the larger mountains across the north-west of the CNP. These potentially affected areas vary in distance and this would influence the effect of the lighting. By comparison, the lighting intensity would be reduced to

varying degrees at the majority of the viewpoints which are located at lower elevations, and consequently experience a lower vertical lighting angle.

5.9.339 Whilst it is noted that the actual intensity of light perceived at the majority of assessment viewpoints (and within the Study Area) is likely to be less intense than the maximum intensity of the light (2,000 cd when visibility is less than 5km), the LVIA assesses the maximum possible intensity of light observed at each of the viewpoints considered and represents this maximum intensity in corresponding visualisations.

5.9.340 In reality, it is extremely unlikely that 2,000 cd lighting will ever be experienced at its full intensity as it will only operate when visibility is reduced by climatic conditions. Reduced visibility will also affect perception of the intensity of the light fitting. 20 of the 25 viewpoints are beyond 5km from the Proposed Development, and one of these viewpoints has no visibility of the lights under the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme. Therefore, the worst-case intensity experienced at the majority of the LVIA viewpoints would likely be represented by the 200 cd scenario. This is because the 2000 cd intensity lights would only be in operation when visibility is less than 5km and in this situation they would appear far less intense due to the poor visibility surrounding the Proposed Development.

Assessment of Effects on Visual Receptors

5.9.341 The second part of the assessment of effects on views is the assessment of the effects that the Proposed Development would have on the views from principal visual receptors. The principal visual receptors considered in the assessment include settlements and route corridors (including roads, walking routes and national cycle routes) all of which are shown on **Figure 5.5**, and shown in conjunction with the ZTV on **Figure 5.11a-b**. The principal visual receptors assessed in detail have been selected as they have potential to undergo significant effects as a result of the Proposed Development. A preliminary assessment to identify these receptors has been carried out through the use of ZTVs and wirelines to indicate the extents, level and nature of theoretical visibility and site work to determine the extents, level and nature of actual visibility. This process has identified the following principal visual receptors as requiring detailed assessment:

- Settlements – Tomatin and Carrbridge;
- Roads – C1121, A9 and A938;
- Cycling Routes – NCR7;
- Popular mountains across the Study Area; and
- Core Paths – LBS114 (Sustrans Route 7).

Tomatin

5.9.342 An assessment of the worst-case visual effects, including cumulative and night-time effects, of the Proposed Development on the settlement of Tomatin is provided in the assessment of Viewpoint 7 (Tomatin) earlier in **Section 5.9**. Viewpoint 7 provides representative views that would be experienced by residents from the southern edge of the village on a section of the C1121 road, where the highest levels of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development are predicted to occur. The views would be experienced by some residents from scattered properties nearby and those visiting the Tomatin Free Presbyterian Church. A **high** magnitude of change and a **major** and **significant** effect is predicted at this location.

5.9.343 Effects across other parts of the village are likely to be of a similar or lower magnitude. For example, there will be similar views available from some of the residential properties on Juniper Drive where a **high** magnitude of change would be experienced by residents, while the screening from landform, woodland and buildings will ensure that there is **no change** in views from many of the northern parts of the village around Strathdearn Primary School, the post office, Ard Park, Old Mill Road, and The Strathdearn Hub. Where more elevated but interrupted views are available from the few properties located to the north of the railway viaduct, a **low** magnitude of change would be experienced by residents.

5.9.344 There is no theoretical visibility predicted across the various buildings associated with Tomatin Distillery on the outskirts of the village.

5.9.345 A night-time visualisation for this settlement has been produced and an assessment of night-time effects has been carried out for Viewpoint 7. Where visibility of the wind turbine hubs is predicted across the southern parts of the village, the effect of the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme with 2000 cd on residents is considered to be **major** and **significant**, while the effect of the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme with 200 cd on residents is considered to be **major-moderate** and **significant**.

Carrbridge

5.9.346 An assessment of the worst-case visual effects, including cumulative effects, of the Proposed Development on the settlement of Carrbridge is provided in the assessment of Viewpoint 14 (Carrbridge) (**Figures 5.30a-e**) earlier in **Section 5.9**. Viewpoint 14 provides representative views from the north of the village, close to the Carrbridge Hotel, on a section of the A938, where the highest levels of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development are predicted to occur. A **low** magnitude of change and a **moderate** and **not significant** effect is predicted at this location.

5.9.347 Effects across other parts of the village, including buildings along the B9153, such as the Village Hall, Landmark Forest Adventure Park, the Primary School, and a number of shops, as well as streets adjoining the B9153, are likely to be of a lower magnitude, primarily due to screening from woodland and forestry which interrupts views towards the Proposed Development from the majority of the settlement.

5.9.348 A night-time visualisation for this settlement has not been produced and a full assessment of night-time effects has not been carried out. However, overall conclusions can be drawn from the day-time assessment of effects on views from this settlement and the wider night-time viewpoint assessment throughout the Study Area. It is considered that where visibility of the Proposed Development's hubs is predicted (such as at Viewpoint 14), the effects on residents of the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme with 2000 cd and 200 cd lights are likely to be **not significant**. This is due to the extensive woodland that interrupts views towards the Proposed Development from the majority of the settlement, and the presence of some artificial lighting associated with residential properties and street lighting.

Nethy Bridge

5.9.349 An assessment of the worst-case visual effects, including cumulative effects, of the Proposed Development on the settlement of Nethy Bridge is provided in the assessment of Viewpoint 20 (Braes of Balnagowan, Nethy Bridge) earlier in **Section 5.9**. Viewpoint 20 (see **Figures 5.36a-f**) provides views from an elevated part of the village at Braes of Balnagowan that would be experienced by residents, above Nethy Bridge Hotel, where rare uninterrupted views can be experienced. A **moderate** and **not significant** effect is predicted at this location.

5.9.350 Effects across other parts of the village are likely to be of a lower magnitude, due to enclosure from woodland and buildings entirely screening views of the Proposed Development. In particular, residential properties situated in eastern parts of the village, such as Lynstock Crescent, MacKenzie Crescent, Dorback Place, and Dirdhu Crescent, would receive no visibility in reality due to surrounding forestry and riparian woodland close to the River Nethy. Across western parts of the village, such as Dell Road, Station Road, Mill Lane, there would also be no visibility due to intervening woodland. In summary, with the exception of Braes of Balnagowan and its immediate surroundings, which include the grounds of the Nethybridge Hotel, there would be no visibility of the Proposed Development in reality.

5.9.351 A night-time visualisation for this settlement has not been produced and a full assessment of night-time effects has not been carried out. However, overall conclusions can be drawn from the day-time assessment of effects on views from this settlement and the wider night-time viewpoint assessment throughout the Study Area. It is considered that where visibility of the Proposed Development's hubs is predicted (such as at Viewpoint 20), the effects on residents of the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme with 2000 cd and 200 cd lights are likely to be **not significant.** Where only blade tip theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is experienced effects would be not significant. This is due to the extensive woodland that interrupts views towards the Proposed Development from the majority of the settlement, and the presence of some artificial lighting associated with residential properties and street lighting.

C1121

Baseline

5.9.352 The minor C1121 road provides access to Tomatin from Glenkyllachy in Strathdearn. Theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is predicted to varying degrees along its entire length.

5.9.353 Effects from the most potentially affected sections of this route are illustrated by Viewpoints 1 (C1121 Road (near Glenkyllachy Lodge)) (**Figures 5.17a-h**), 4 (C1121 Road (near Kyllachy House) (**Figures 5.20a-k**), and 7 (Tomatin) (**Figures 5.23a-h**).

Sensitivity

5.9.354 The value and susceptibility of views along the relevant sections of the C1121 varies along their length. This is primarily due to the differing levels of enclosure associated with the various sections of the road. As a result, the sensitivity tends to vary between a **medium** and **high** level.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.355 Theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is predicted along the closest sections of the road intermittently for approximately 3.5km between Glenkyllachy Lodge and Corrievorrie. Landform provides an element of screening to southern parts of the wind farm, which reduces the magnitude of change to a degree. Potential effects along this stretch of the road are illustrated by Viewpoint 1 (C1121 Road (near Glenkyllachy Lodge) where a **high** magnitude of change would be experienced by road users at distances of between 2-3km.

5.9.356 Further west along Strathdearn, there is extensive woodland alongside the road between Corrievorrie and Woodend, which for the most part ensure that views across the strath towards the Proposed Development are either entirely screened or interrupted. On occasion, there are more open views that can be glimpsed by road users and these are illustrated by Viewpoint 4 (C1121 Road (near Kyllachy House) where a **high** magnitude of change would be experienced by road users at distances of between 2-3.5km.

5.9.357 Between Woodend and the Mid Morile along a 500m stretch of the road, there are some intermittent open views towards the Proposed Development, where a **high** magnitude of change would be experienced by road users at distances of between 3.5-4km, due to the proximity and scale of the turbines above the containing hills to the south of the strath.

5.9.358 Between Mid Morile and the Findhorn Bridge, extensive screening from forestry would provide enclosure and ensure that the there is no change to the existing views received alongside this section of the road.

5.9.359 Where the road heads north, between the Findhorn Bridge and Juniper Drive in Tomatin, there would be open views, oriented towards the Proposed Development, when travelling south. Potential effects along this stretch of the road are illustrated by Viewpoint 7 (Tomatin) where a **high** magnitude of change would be experienced by road users at distances of between 5-6km.

5.9.360 Beyond the junction with Juniper Drive, woodland and buildings tends to screen views towards the Site, with only a short section of the road to the north of the junction with Old Mill Road likely to receive interrupted views of the Proposed Development at distances of 6-7km. Due to the screening by intervening woodland, forestry and buildings along this section of the road, a **low** to **medium-low** magnitude of change would be experienced by road users travelling south.

Significance of Effect

5.9.361 Overall, there would be intermittent visibility of the Proposed Development from the C1121 road in reality, with long sections of the road where road users would not experience visibility of the Proposed Development, primarily as a result of screening from woodland/forestry. The effect of the Proposed Development on road users would therefore vary between **no change** and **not significant** and **major** and **significant** where intermittent views along localised sections of the route between Corrievorrie and Woodend, Woodend and Mid Morile, and Findhorn Bridge and Juniper Drive are experienced.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.362 An assessment of cumulative effects for three of the potentially affected sections of the road are provided earlier in **Section 5.9** in the assessments of Viewpoints 1 (C1121 Road (near Glenkyllachy Lodge)) (**Figures 5.17a-h**), 4 (C1121 Road (near Kyllachy House) (**Figures 5.20a-k**), and 7 (Tomatin) (**Figures 5.23a-h**).

5.9.363 In relation to the potentially affected section of the road to the north of the village of Tomatin, there would only be theoretical cumulative visibility of one operational wind farm and no consented, application or scoping stage wind farms. Farr Wind Farm is theoretically visible to the west, perpendicular to the direction of the road, but it would be screened by forestry in reality. There would therefore be no cumulative effects experienced across the settlement under the operational and under-construction, consented, application, and scoping cumulative scenarios.

Night-time Assessment

5.9.364 An assessment of night-time effects for two of the potentially affected sections of the road are provided earlier in **Section 5.9** in the assessments of Viewpoints 1 (C1121 Road (near Glenkyllachy Lodge) and Viewpoint 7 (Tomatin). These views are representative of the likely affects that would be experienced where views of turbine hubs are visible along sections of the road. In summary, where theoretical visibility of turbine hubs with lights is predicted, the effect of the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme with 2000 cd and 200 cd on road users is likely to be **significant**.

A9

Baseline

5.9.365 The A9 road meanders through the Study Area from Dalwhinnie in the south-west to Inverness in the north-west, with the route passing close to the north-east of the Site. The road passes through two key corridors in the Study Area: Strath Spey in the south-west and the corridor associated with the Slochd pass and the Findhorn River in central and northern parts of the Study Area.

5.9.366 Given the absence of any theoretical visibility along sections of the road to the south of the Study Area, between Dalwhinnie and Carrbridge, the relevant sections of the road for the purposes of this assessment are those between Carrbridge and Moy, where theoretical visibility is intermittent.

5.9.367 Effects from the most potentially affected sections of this route are illustrated by Viewpoints 5 (A9, Slochd) (**Figures 5.21a-e**), 9 (A9 (River Findhorn Crossing)) (**Figures 5.25a-f**), 12 (A9 (near Carrbridge)) (**Figures 5.28a-e**), and 13 (A9 (north of Tomatin)) (**Figures 5.29a-g**).

Sensitivity

5.9.368 The value and susceptibility of views along the relevant sections of the A9 varies along their length. This is primarily due to whether sections of the road are located within the CNP and/or areas of forestry. As a result, the sensitivity tends to vary between a **medium** and **high** level.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.369 There is theoretical visibility of varying numbers of turbines between Carrbridge Station and Black Mount in the CNP along a 5km section of the road. The majority of this stretch of road is subject to a strong degree of enclosure from the pine forests that line the road in the direction of the Proposed Development, with only a brief stretch of visibility in reality experienced from the bridge across the River Dulnain near Carrbridge. Potential effects along this short 400m stretch of the road are illustrated by Viewpoint 12 (A9 (near Carrbridge)) where a **medium** magnitude of change would be experienced by road users.

5.9.370 A short stretch of theoretical visibility is predicted along a short 1km section of the road at Slochd, where the road passes through a well contained valley. As a result of the containment of the valley from landform, woodland/forestry and also the parapets of the bridge, visibility in reality is greatly reduced. Potential effects along this short stretch of the road are illustrated by Viewpoint 5 (A9, Slochd) where a **low** magnitude of change would be experienced by road users.

5.9.371 Theoretical visibility of the majority of the wind turbines is predicted along a 5km stretch of the road to the north, north-east, east, and south-east of Tomatin. In reality, woodland provides enclosure along the length of this section of road with the exception of a short 400m section along the River Findhorn Crossing. Open views are available towards the Proposed Development from the River Findhorn Crossing, although there is some screening from the nearby railway bridge. Potential effects along this short stretch of the road are illustrated by Viewpoint 9 (A9 (River Findhorn Crossing)) where a **medium-high** magnitude of change would be experienced by road users.

5.9.372 Further north, there is one final approximately 2km section of the road that is predicted to receive theoretical visibility of varying numbers of turbines. This stretch is bordered by trees along its length and as a result it is only possible to experience an occasional glimpse towards the Site at road junctions. Potential effects along a very short stretch of the road where views can be glimpsed are illustrated by Viewpoint 13 (A9 (north of Tomatin)) where a **low** magnitude of change would be experienced by road users.

Significance of Effect

5.9.373 Overall, there would be extremely limited instances of visibility of the Proposed Development in reality, primarily as a result of screening from woodland/forestry. The effect of the Proposed Development on road users of the majority of the A9 would be **no change** and **not significant**, but where visibility does occur effects would be at worst **major-moderate** and **significant** along localised sections of the route where the road passes over the River Dulnain bridge and the River Findhorn Crossing.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.374 An assessment of cumulative effects for each of the four potentially affected sections of the road are provided earlier in Section 5.9 in the assessments of Viewpoints 5 (A9, Slochd) (**Figures 5.21a-e**), 9 (A9 (River Findhorn Crossing)) (**Figures 5.25a-f**), 12 (A9 (near Carrbridge)) (**Figures 5.28a-e**), and 13 (A9 (north of Tomatin)) (**Figures 5.29a-g**).

Night-time Effect

5.9.375 An assessment of night-time effects for one of the potentially affected sections of the road are provided earlier in **Section 5.9** in the assessment of Viewpoint 12 (A9 (near Carrbridge)) (**Figures 5.28a-e**). These views are representative of the likely affects that would be experienced where views of turbine hubs with lights are visible along sections of the road. In summary, where theoretical visibility of turbine hubs with lights is predicted, the effect of the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme with 2000 cd and 200 cd lighting on road users is likely to be **significant**.

A938

Baseline

5.9.376 The A938 road connects the A9, north of Carrbridge, to the A95 at Dulnain Bridge. The road is relatively short extending over approximately 14km in an east to west direction.

5.9.377 There is widespread theoretical visibility across the majority of the route but visibility is affected to varying degrees by surrounding woodland and forestry.

5.9.378 Effects from one of the most affected sections of this route are illustrated by Viewpoint 14 (Carrbridge) (**Figures 5.30a-e**).

Sensitivity

5.9.379 The value and susceptibility of views along the relevant sections of the A938 varies along their length. This is primarily due to whether sections of the road are located within areas of forestry and/or settlement. As a result, the sensitivity tends to vary between a **medium** and **high** level.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.380 There is extensive theoretical visibility predicted along the majority of the A938 between the A9 and Dulnain Bridge, but in reality, visibility from the majority of the road sections is screened by either forestry/woodland bordering the roadside or

intervening forestry between the road and the Proposed Development. This high level of screening primarily arises due to the relatively consistent elevation of much of the road and its orientation. The magnitude of change along these sections therefore tends to vary between **no change** and **low**.

5.9.381 There is one section where visibility may be experienced in reality due to an absence of intervening forestry and this is located around Balnaan, situated approximately 2km west of Dulnain Bridge. Along this 1km section of road, intermittent oblique views towards the Proposed Development would be available intermittently. From distances of around 17km, it is predicted that visibility of a large number of the turbines would be visible, although approximately half of the towers would be screened by landform. As a result, it is considered that a **medium-low** magnitude of change is likely to be experienced by road users travelling along this section of the road.

Significance of Effect

5.9.382 Overall, there would be extremely limited instances of visibility of the Proposed Development in reality, primarily as a result of screening from woodland/forestry. The effect of the Proposed Development on road users of the majority of the A938 would therefore be **no change** and **not significant**, but where visibility does occur around Balnaan effects would be at worst **moderate** and **significant** along this short section of the route.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.383 There would be no theoretical visibility of any operational and under construction, or consented wind farms from this road. There would therefore be **no change** to the operational and under construction, and consented cumulative scenarios as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development, and for the avoidance of doubt, cumulative effects on road users would be **not significant**.

5.9.384 In the application scenario, there is some limited cumulative theoretical visibility of the application stage Ourack and/or Lethen wind farms along a short around Tullochgribban. However, there is extensive forestry bordering the road at these locations, and as a result there would be no visibility of the Proposed Development in reality. There would therefore be no additional cumulative effects in the application scenario, so for the avoidance of doubt cumulative effects would therefore be **not significant**.

5.9.385 In the scoping scenario, there would be extensive cumulative visibility with Highland Wind Farm along the majority of the route. However, due to the absence of visibility of the Proposed Development in reality, the potential for combined cumulative effects is contained to those short sections around Balnaan where visibility of the Proposed Development is predicted to occur. From these relatively distant stretches of the road, the Proposed Development would extend the horizontal extent of wind farm development on the distant ridgelines in oblique views. The wind farms would be located sufficiently close to one another that they would appear as a single large wind farm, with the Proposed Development providing a slightly closer influence. As a result, a **medium-low** cumulative magnitude of change is predicted along this approximately 2km stretch of road, and these effects would be **not significant**.

Night-time Effect

5.9.386 Night-time visualisations have not been produced from any locations along this route but based on the assessment of daytime effects and experience gathered from night-time site visits, there is only very limited potential for effects to occur. Where visibility of lighting is experienced, it would tend to be glimpsed along short, distant sections of the road at distances of around 17km in the context of baseline lighting, such as vehicle headlights, and as a consequence the effects of the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme are likely to be **not significant** under both the 2000 cd and 200 cd scenarios.

National Cycle Route 7

Baseline

5.9.387 NCR7 meanders through the Study Area from Dalwhinnie in the south-west to Inverness in the north-west, with the route passing close to the north-east of the Site. The road passes through two key corridors in Study Area: Strath Spey in the south-west and the corridor associated with the Slochd pass and Findhorn River in central and northern parts of the Study Area.

5.9.388 There is some discrepancy as to whether NCR7 encompasses an alternative link route from Carrbridge to Slochd, utilising the LBS114 Core Path that passes through Sluggan and Insharn to the west of the A9, rather than the A938. This section of the route is not included in the current mapping provided by Sustrans, but historically it is labelled on OS mapping. This particular section focussing on NCR7 does not include an assessment of this potential route section, but any potential effects are instead identified in the following section in relation to the Core Path that follows the same route.

5.9.389 Given the absence of any theoretical visibility along sections of the road to the south of the Study Area, between Dalwhinnie and Carrbridge, the relevant sections of the

road for the purposes of this assessment are those between Carrbridge and Moy, where theoretical visibility is intermittent.

5.9.390 Effects from one of the sections of this route are illustrated by Viewpoints 7 (Tomatin) (**Figures 5.23a-h**) and 14 (Carrbridge) (**Figures 5.30a-e**).

Sensitivity

5.9.391 The value and susceptibility of views along the relevant sections of NCR7 varies along its length. This is primarily due to whether sections of the route are located within the CNP and/or areas of forestry. As a result, the sensitivity tends to vary between a **medium-low** and **high** level.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.392 There are four sections of NCR7 between Carrbridge and Moy where theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is predicted.

5.9.393 Along the sections of the route between Carrbridge and Black Mount, there is extensive theoretical visibility of a large proportion of the turbines, but there is considerable screening from forestry along the majority of this section of the route. The screening would ensure that no views towards the Proposed Development would be experienced for all of the route, apart from the most westernmost section around Black Mount, where glimpses of between 1-7 turbine blade tips would be experienced beyond the A9 road over a 300m distance. At a distance of approximately 6km from the Proposed Development, it is considered that a **low** magnitude of change to the views would be experienced from this short section of the route.

5.9.394 Further west, a short section of theoretical visibility is predicted around Slochd where the NCR7 follows a slightly less elevated route to the nearby A9 road, and as a result, it would not experience the same views illustrated by Viewpoint 5. Eastern segments of this section of the route would be subject to woodland screening which would ensure that no change to existing views is experienced, but there would be more open views available intermittently along the section between Slochd Mhor Lodge and the minor road's junction with the A9. Where these more open views are available, there would be visibility of between 1-7 turbines, generally only their blades, with very limited visibility of tower sections. At distances of around 4km from the Proposed Development, a **medium-low** magnitude of change to the views would be experienced by cyclists from this short section of the route.

5.9.395 A longer section of theoretical visibility is predicted around the Findhorn Bridge and Tomatin village where visibility would vary according to screening from landform, forestry and buildings. The worst-case effects from this section of the route are illustrated by Viewpoint 7 where a **high** magnitude of change is predicted to arise, but it would vary between **no change** and **high** across the length of this section of the route, in accordance with the factors mentioned earlier, which are also detailed in the visual assessment of Tomatin village earlier in **Section 5.9**.

5.9.396 Further north, a final section of the route would be subject to theoretical visibility between the entrance to Tomatin Distillery and the section of the NCR7 that passes Invereen. For the majority of this section of the route intervening forestry screens views towards the Site with only a short 400m section in the north predicted to experience visibility in reality, due to a break in the surrounding woodland/forestry. From this short section of the route, the majority of the blades would be visible, but only a few hubs, at distances of around 8km, so a **low** magnitude of change would be experienced by cyclists.

Significance of Effect

5.9.397 The visual effect of the Proposed Development on cyclists on NCR7 would therefore be at worst **major** and **significant** between Findhorn Bridge and Tomatin village, due to a combination of the factors that lead to the high magnitude of change on the views and the high sensitivity of the cyclists. A borderline significant visual effect would also be experienced from the section of the NCR7 between Slochd Mhor Lodge and the minor road's junction with the A9. From all other sections of NCR7 effects would be **not significant**.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.398 An assessment of cumulative effects for the closest potentially affected sections of the route is provided earlier in **Section 5.9** in the assessments of Viewpoints 3 (Core Path LBS114) and 7 (Tomatin), where there would be **no change** to the various cumulative scenarios. The cumulative magnitude of change along the other short, affected sections of the NCR7 would at worst **low** and **not significant**.

Night-time Effect

5.9.399 Night-time visualisations have not been produced from any locations along this route but based on the assessment of daytime effects and experience gathered from night-time site visits, there is only limited potential for effects to occur. Where visibility of the hubs of T2 and T5 are predicted along the closest sections of the route, such as close to Viewpoints 3 and 7, it is considered that the aviation lighting will contrast with the dark skies in these relatively remote areas. Along these potentially affected sections of the NCR7, the effects of the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme at night-time is likely to be **significant** under both the 2000 cd and 200 cd lighting scenarios, and **not significant** along all other sections of the route where landform and forestry screening is present and hubs aren't theoretically visible.

Core Paths

Baseline

5.9.400 The preliminary assessment identified that a single Core Path (LBS114 (Sustrans Route 7)) has the potential to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development. The Core Paths is located within the local surroundings of the Proposed Development and the route of the path is illustrated in **Figure 5.11b**.

Sensitivity

5.9.401 Core Paths are identified by local authorities to provide members of the public with reasonable access throughout their area, and as a result they are of high value.

5.9.402 Users of the Core Paths will have an appreciation of the surrounding landscape and its contribution to views that can be experienced from the routes. There is a limited influence from development in the surrounding landscape, however much of the route is influenced by coniferous forestry and the associated management practices, and consequently the susceptibility of Core Path users is considered to be medium.

5.9.403 In combining the medium value with the medium-high user susceptibility, the sensitivity of users of Core Paths is considered to be **medium-high**.

Magnitude of Change

5.9.404 An assessment of the worst-case visual effects, including cumulative effects, of the Proposed Development on the closest sections of LBS114 (Sustrans Route 7) Core Path is provided in the assessment of Viewpoint 3 earlier in **Section 5.9**. Viewpoint 3 (see **Figures 5.19a-e**) provides representative views that would be experienced by walkers and cyclists using the Core Path along a short stretch approximately 1.7km long, where unobstructed views of the Proposed Development would be experienced. A **high** magnitude of change and a **major** and **significant** effect is predicted at this location.

5.9.405 The majority of the rest of this Core Path is situated in forestry, or is subject to enclosure from nearby forestry, and as a result it is predicted that there would be **no change** to the views from other sections of the route.

Significance Effect

5.9.406 In summary, walkers or cyclists would experience localised **major** and **significant** visual effects along a relatively short section of the LBS114 (Sustrans Route 7) Core Path. Along all other sections of the Core Path, there would be **no change** to existing views.

Cumulative Assessment

5.9.407 An assessment of cumulative effects for the closest potentially affected sections of the route are provided earlier in Section 5.9 in the assessments of Viewpoints 3 (Core Path LBS114), where **no change** is predicted to occur to the various cumulative scenarios.

Night-time Assessment

5.9.408 The sensitivity of this viewpoint remains medium-high for users of the Core Path.

5.9.1 Potential for night-time effects is likely to be limited to the short stretch of the LBS114 (Sustrans Route 7) Core Path close to Viewpoint 3 where theoretical visibility of turbine hubs is predicted to arise. In particular, where the hubs of T2, T5 and T15 are predicted to be visible, the lighting associated with these turbines would be apparent above the ridgeline at relatively short distances of between 3-4km. At this range, the effects of the Agreed Reduced Aviation Lighting Scheme at night-time are likely to be **significant** under both the 2000 cd and 200 cd lighting scenarios, but **not significant** along all other sections of the route where forestry screening is present and/or hubs aren't theoretically visible.

5.10 Summary of Effects

5.10.1 The potential effects on the landscape and visual receptors that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development have been assessed in this chapter. The process taken involved identifying those receptors within the 35km Study Area with the potential to be significantly affected. The significance of these effects has been assessed through combining the sensitivity of each receptor with a prediction of the magnitude of change that would occur as a result of the Proposed Development. The findings of the assessment are presented in **Table 5.14** below.

5.10.2 In summary, the assessment has shown that the effects of the Proposed Development on the landscape and visual resource of the great majority of the Study Area are likely to be not significant, which means that for the great majority of the Study Area, and the receptors that lie within it, the effect of the Proposed Development is not defining and the existing, baseline characteristics of the landscape and views will continue to prevail. The receptors that would not be significantly affected by the Proposed Development in isolation include the following:

- Wild Land Areas;
- Special/Local Landscape Areas; and
- the great majority of the landscape character types that are found within the Study Area.

5.10.3 While the effect on the majority of the Study Area will be not significant, as described above, the LVIA has indicated that there is potential for the Proposed Development to result in some significant effects on receptors that lie in closer proximity to the Site. The LVIA has identified that there is potential for significant effects to arise upon the following receptors:

- The landscape character of the Site and some of its surroundings, including parts of the Rolling Uplands – Inverness, Rolling Uplands – Cairngorms, Forested Upland Fringe, and Upland Strath LCTs;
- the perception of three of the 42 SLQsD associated with the CNP relating to *'Layers of receding ridge lines'* (SLQ29), *'Grand panoramas and framed views'* (SLQ30), and '*Dark skies'* (SLQ32) experienced from some north-western areas of the Park;
- Views experienced by residents from parts of the local settlement of Tomatin;
- Views experienced by road users from short sections of the C1121, U1116, A9 and A938 roads;
- Views experienced by cyclists from short sections of NCR7;
- Views experienced by hill walkers from some hill summits located within the Monadhliath and Cairngorm Mountain ranges;
- Views experienced by recreational walkers from a short section of the LBS114 (Sustrans Route 7) Core Path; and
- Views experienced at night-time from the settlement of Tomatin, sections of the C1121 and A9 roads, NCR7, and the LBS114 (Sustrans Route 7) Core Path, and the summit of Craiggowrie.

5.10.4 In addition to these effects arising as a result of the Proposed Development in isolation, there are also likely to be some significant cumulative effects upon the following receptors:

- Parts of the landscape character of the Rolling Uplands – Inverness LCT in all cumulative scenarios, the Rolling Uplands – Cairngorms LCT in the scoping cumulative scenario, and the Forested Upland Fringe LCT in the scoping cumulative scenario; and
- Views experienced by road users from short sections of the U1116 road in all cumulative scenarios.

5.10.5 An appraisal of the 10 landscape and visual criteria set out in THC's OSWEG is provided in **Technical Appendix 5.3**. The appraisal concludes that the Proposed Development would respond effectively to the 10 landscape and visual criteria in the OWESG by minimising landscape and visual effects upon the relevant receptors. Where breaches of the criteria thresholds would arise they would relate to localised landscape and visual effects.

5.10.6 This summary indicates that the Proposed Development will result in some significant effects on aspects of the landscape and visual resource. It is important to note, however, that assessments of this type tend to focus on those locations and receptors where significant effects may arise, and there are large parts of the 35km Study Area where ZTVs show that there will be no visibility, or limited visibility, of the Proposed Development, including those receptors that are listed above.

Table 5.14 Summary of Effects

Receptor	Significant effect?
Rough Grassland/ Moorland	no
Rolling Uplands – Inverness LCT	yes (localised)
Rolling Uplands – Cairngorms LCT	yes (localised)
Forested Upland Fringe LCT	yes (localised)
Upland Strath LCT	yes (localised)
Upland Glen – Cairngorms LCT	no
Mountain Massif – Cairngorms LCT	no
Cairngorms National Park	yes (localised)
Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA	no
Viewpoint 1: C1121 Road (near Glenkyllachy Lodge)	yes (day and night-time)
Viewpoint 2: U1116 Road (near Garbole)	yes
Viewpoint 3: Core Path LBS114 (by Insharn)	yes
Viewpoint 4: C1121 Road (near Kyllachy House)	yes
Viewpoint 5: A9 (Slochd)	no
Viewpoint 6: U1116 Road (near Carn Eitidh)	yes
Viewpoint 7: Tomatin	yes (day and night-time)
Viewpoint 8: Carn Sleamhuinn	yes
Viewpoint 9: A9 (River Findhorn Crossing)	yes
Viewpoint 10: Track near Geal Charn Mor	yes
Viewpoint 11: Carn a' Choire Mhoir Summit	yes
Viewpoint 12: A9 (near Carrbridge)	yes (day and night-time)
Viewpoint 13: A9 (north of Tomatin)	no
Viewpoint 14: Carrbridge	no
Viewpoint 15: Carn na h-Easgainn Summit	yes
Viewpoint 16: Carn an Fhreiceadain Summit	no
Viewpoint 17a and b: Meall a Bhuachaille/ Craiggowrie	Yes (day and night-time)
Viewpoint 18: Achnahannet	yes
Viewpoint 19: Carn na Saobhaidhe Summit	no
Viewpoint 20: Braes of Balnagowan, Nethy Bridge	no
Viewpoint 21: A95 (near Dulnain Bridge)	no
Viewpoint 22: Cairn Gorm Mountain Railway Cafe	no
Viewpoint 23: Braeriach Summit	no
Viewpoint 24: Creagan a Chaise	no
Viewpoint 25: Meall Fuar Mhonaidh	no
Tomatin	yes (localised) (day and night-time)

Carrbridge	no
Nethy Bridge	no
A9	yes (localised) (day and night-time)
A938	yes (localised)
National Cycle Route 7	yes (localised) (day and night-time)
LBS114 (Sustrans Route 7) Core Path	yes (localised) (day and night-time)