



Clune Wind Farm

Technical Appendix 5.3

Assessment of The Highland Council's Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance

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1 Assessment of Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This technical appendix relates to Chapter 5 Landscape and Visual of the Clune Wind Farm EIA Report. In response to the EIA Scoping Opinion, the following table provides an appraisal of the ten landscape and visual criteria set out in The Highland Council’s Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (2016) (‘OWESG’), which are detailed in section 4 of the OWESG. Each of the criterion are considered in respect of the potential effects that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development.

Table 5.3-1: Assessment of OWESG Criteria

No	Criterion	Response
1	<p><i>‘Relationship between Settlements/Key locations and wider landscape respected:</i></p> <p><i>the extent to which the proposal contributes to perception of settlements or key locations being encircled by wind energy development.</i></p> <p><i>Development should seek to achieve a threshold where: turbines are not visually prominent in the majority of views within or from settlements/key locations or from the majority of its access routes.’</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development would result in localised significant visual effects on parts of the closest settlement of Tomatin at distances of between 5-7km. Visual effects on all other settlements in the wider LVIA Study Area would be not significant. These visual effects would not lead to the perception of Tomatin being encircled by wind turbines.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would be apparent from some of the key access routes to settlements and key locations in the LVIA Study Area, but views would generally be experienced for only a short duration due primarily to extensive woodland/forestry and landform screening.</p> <p>Overall, it can be concluded that while there are some significant visual effects predicted on receptors at local settlements and those travelling on access routes, turbines would not be visually prominent in views from the majority of settlements and access routes in the LVIA Study Area.</p>
2	<p><i>‘Key Gateway locations and routes are respected:</i></p> <p><i>the extent to which the proposal reduces or detracts from the transitional experience of key Gateway Locations and routes.</i></p> <p><i>Development should seek to achieve a threshold where: Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise detract from landscape characteristics which contribute to the distinctive transitional experience found at key gateway locations and routes.’</i></p>	<p>There are no references to ‘key gateway locations’ within the ‘Rolling Uplands’ or ‘Strath in Rolling Uplands’ landscape areas in the Dava Moor, Nairn And Monadhliath Area Wind Energy Landscape Sensitivity Pilot Study (2021), and there are no landscape and visual effects predicted upon the key gateway locations identified in the Pilot Study.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would not overwhelm views from key routes, such as the A9, A938 and the Perth-Inverness railway line, with any significant effects associated with the introduction of the Proposed Development contained within very short sections of the A9 and A938 roads, and Perth-Inverness railway line. The magnitude of change would be lower than ‘high’ at all of</p>

		<p>these locations, experienced along very short sections of the routes. Overall, the magnitude and extent of these effects would therefore be sufficient to ensure that they do significantly detract from the overall appreciation of transitional experiences and key gateway locations.</p> <p>The Proposed Development has therefore achieved a threshold where it would not <i>'overwhelm or otherwise detract from landscape characteristics which contribute to the distinctive transitional experience'</i>.</p>
3	<p><i>'Valued natural and cultural landmarks are respected:</i> <i>the extent to which the proposal affects the fabric and setting of valued natural and cultural landmarks.</i></p> <p><i>Development should seek to achieve a threshold where: the development does not, by its presence, diminish the prominence of the landmark or disrupt its relationship to its setting.'</i></p>	<p>Chapter 6 Cultural Heritage of the EIA Report has assessed that the Proposed Development would have a significant effect on only one cultural heritage asset: Woodend Cairn (SM11739). While this impact is considered significant in EIA terms, it is not considered to impact the integrity of the setting of the asset under Policy 7 h) ii of NPF4. Many contributing factors to the setting of the asset would be retained such as the ability to understand and experience the placement of the asset along the watercourses and valleys that the cairn overlooks, as well as its contemporaneous assets to which it relates both in the wider valley and in close proximity.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development <i>'does not, by its presence, diminish the prominence of the landmark or disrupt its relationship to its setting.'</i></p>
4	<p><i>'The amenity of key recreational routes and ways is respected:</i> <i>The extent to which the proposal affects the amenity of key recreational routes and ways (e.g. Core Paths, Munros and Corbetts, Long Distance Routes etc.)</i></p> <p><i>Development should seek to achieve a threshold where: Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of key routes and ways.'</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development will have no significant effects on the majority of the key recreational routes within the 45km Study Area.</p> <p>The exception occurs for some of the closest sections of the LBS114 (Sustrans Route 7) Core Path and National Cycle Route 7. Significant visual effects are assessed to arise along sections of these routes; however, the affected sections are short and occur within the immediate local surroundings of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>It is considered that while there are some localised significant effects on recreational routes, the Proposed Development has achieved a threshold where it does <i>'not overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of key routes and ways'</i> across the majority of the Study Area.</p>
5	<p><i>'The amenity of transport routes is respected:</i> <i>the extent to which the proposal affects the amenity of transport routes (tourist routes as well as rail, ferry routes and local road access).</i></p> <p><i>Development should seek to achieve a threshold where: Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of transport routes.'</i></p>	<p>As described in relation to criterion 2 above, key transport routes will be respected as the Proposed Development would not overwhelm views from transport routes, such as the A9, A938 and the Perth-Inverness railway line, with any significant effects associated with the introduction of the Proposed Development contained along very short sections of the routes.</p> <p>There would be localised significant visual effects experienced along short sections of the C1121 road through Strathdearn, but there would also be considerable screening from woodland and landform along other sections and this would moderate effects from the majority of the route.</p> <p>It is considered therefore that the Proposed Development has achieved a threshold where overall it does not</p>

		<i>'overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of transport routes.'</i>
6	<p><i>'The existing pattern of Wind Energy Development is respected:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the degree to which the proposal fits with the existing pattern of nearby wind energy development, considerations include:</i> • <i>turbine height and proportions;</i> • <i>density and spacing of turbines within developments;</i> • <i>density and spacing of developments;</i> • <i>typical relationship of development to the landscape;</i> • <i>previously instituted mitigation measures; and</i> • <i>Planning Authority stated aims for development of area.</i> <p><i>Development should seek to achieve a threshold where: the proposal contributes positively to existing pattern or objectives for development in the area.'</i></p>	<p>It is considered that this criterion is achieved due to the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Proposed Development is located entirely within the NatureScot Rolling Uplands - Inverness landscape character type like many other operational wind farms, such as Glen Kyllachy, Farr, Dunmaglass, Corriegarth, and Stronelairg; • The Proposed Development would maintain a similar degree of separation between operational and consented wind farms currently interspersed across the Monadhliath Mountains; • While the scale of the proposed wind turbines is larger than older, operational wind farms, it is lower than many current wind farm proposals, and this helps to it to integrate better into the surrounding landscape; • The number of wind turbines in the Proposed Development is similar to many of the nearby operational and consented wind farms; • The Proposed Development would reinforce the existing approach of avoiding development within Wild Land Areas; and • There are very few significant cumulative landscape and visual effects predicted to arise in relation to the operational and under-construction, consented and application cumulative scenarios in the LVIA.
7	<p><i>'The need for separation between developments and/or clusters is respected:</i></p> <p><i>the extent to which the proposal maintains or affects the spaces between existing developments and/ or clusters.</i></p> <p><i>Development should seek to achieve a threshold where: The proposal maintains appropriate and effective separation between developments and/ or clusters.</i></p>	<p>As described in relation to criterion 6 above, the Proposed Development would maintain a similar pattern of development with operational, under-construction and consented wind farms.</p> <p>In relation to 'combined' cumulative effects, the LVIA concludes that the Proposed Development would not alter the current perception of a '<i>landscape with wind farms</i>' characteristic currently experienced within the Monadhliath Mountains. The addition of the Proposed Development would result in the redefining of a localised area of upland landscape (the Site area) as a '<i>wind farm landscape character type</i>' at the local level but not in the wider landscape context where the '<i>landscape with wind farms</i>' characteristic would be maintained at the regional level and as such would not give rise to a perception of a '<i>wind farm landscape</i>' in the eastern highlands.</p>
8	<p><i>'The perception of landscape scale and distance is respected:</i></p> <p><i>the extent to which the proposal maintains or affects receptors' existing perception of landscape scale and distance.</i></p> <p><i>Development should seek to achieve a threshold where: the proposal maintains</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development would have an effect on receptor's perception of landscape scale and distance within a localised area surrounding the Site. This primarily relates to receptors located within the surrounding smaller scale straths, where the contrast between the large scale of the wind turbines may be apparent against the smaller scale features within the straths.</p> <p>At greater distances, the wind turbines are perceived to be situated upon the broader, large scale landform of the</p>

	<i>the apparent landscape scale and/or distance in the receptors' perception.'</i>	<p>Monadhliath Mountains, and as a result the juxtaposition between the Proposed Development and nearby straths is less apparent.</p> <p>It is considered therefore that the Proposed Development broadly achieves a threshold whereby <i>'the apparent landscape scale and/or distance in the receptors' perception'</i> is maintained, apart from where more challenging scale comparisons can be experienced within a localised part of the landscape surrounding the Site.</p>
9	<p>'Landscape setting of nearby wind energy developments is respected:</p> <p><i>the extent to which the landscape setting of nearby wind energy developments is affected by the proposal.</i></p> <p><i>Development should seek to achieve a threshold where: proposal relates well to the existing landscape setting and does not increase the perceived visual prominence of surrounding wind turbines.'</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development would be experienced in a similar strategic landscape context to the existing wind energy development.</p> <p>Through its large scale and simplicity of pattern, the upland landscape of the Site and surrounding landscape context has the capacity to accommodate the Proposed Development, and on balance therefore it is considered that the Proposed Development achieves a threshold whereby the <i>'proposal relates well to the existing landscape setting'</i>, accepting that there would be an increased perception of wind turbines in the area.</p>
10	<p>'Distinctiveness of Landscape character is respected:</p> <p><i>the extent to which a proposal affects the distinction between neighbouring landscape character types, in areas where the variety of character is important to the appreciation of the landscape.</i></p> <p><i>Development should seek to achieve a threshold where: integrity and variety of Landscape Character Areas are maintained.'</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development is located wholly in the NatureScot Rolling Uplands - Inverness landscape character type so direct landscape and visual effects are contained to this specific character type, and as such any discernible changes in landcover would not affect the transition between neighbouring character types.</p> <p>There would be changes to the way in which the setting of Strathdearn is perceived from with a localised area around the Site, due to the introduction of wind turbines on the containing skyline, but these changes would be less apparent at greater distances.</p> <p>It is considered therefore that with the exception of some localised areas closest to the Proposed Development, the wind farm broadly achieves a threshold where the <i>'integrity and variety of Landscape Character Areas are maintained'</i></p>

1.2 Conclusion

- 1.2.1 The assessment finds that the Proposed Development responds effectively to the 10 landscape and visual criteria in the OWESG by minimising landscape and visual effects upon the relevant receptors. Where the Proposed Development conflicts with the criteria, these breaches of the threshold are contained to receptors contained with a localised areas surrounding the Site.