CHAPTER 7: LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

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7. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

7.1 Executive Summary

Introduction

7.1.1 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken for the Proposed Development within a study area of 4 km from the proposed overhead line (OHL) elements of the Proposed Development (towers, poles and conductors), which is considered appropriate to identify all potential significant effects. The LVIA has been undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects at ASH design + assessment Ltd (ASH), a registered practice with the Landscape Institute, in accordance with best practice guidance, the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA).

7.1.2 The LVIA considers the two separate subjects of landscape and visual amenity as follows:

- The landscape assessment has considered the potential effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character, designated and protected landscapes.
- The visual assessment has considered the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the visual amenity of those present within the landscape, including established views from residential areas and routes.

7.1.3 The LVIA also gives consideration to cumulative effects occurring as a result of the addition of the Proposed Development to other proposed electrical infrastructure developments within the study area. This includes the proposed associated works comprising Loch Lundie Substation and Coire Glas Switching Station, as well as the consented Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme, and other proposed energy and grid developments within 1.5 km of the study area which do not form a part of the wider Coire Glas project.

7.1.4 Mitigation measures including landform and vegetation restoration through best practice construction techniques are proposed to help minimise effects of the Proposed Development. The residual effects of the Proposed Development with proposed mitigation measures have been assessed after 10 years, allowing for the landscape and vegetation reinstatement to establish.

Summary of Effects

<u>Landscape Effects</u>

7.1.5 The assessment of potential landscape effects has considered Landscape Character Types (LCTs) identified by NatureScot and designated and protected landscapes, including, in particular Special Landscape Areas (SLAs). There would be no significant landscape effects to any of these areas as a result of the Proposed Development.

<u>Visual Effects</u>

7.1.6 The assessment of potential visual effects has considered views from visual receptors in buildings and on public roads and recreational routes. For the majority of receptors, there would be no significant visual effects; and for receptors in Auchterawe, including residents (group ‘B2) and users of the minor road (route ‘R4’), there would be beneficial long-term effects during operation, where the existing prominent OHL would be removed and the Proposed Development would be mostly hidden by existing forestry in the majority of views.

7.1.7 Although the majority of visual effects would not be significant, some long-term significant visual effects during the operation of Proposed Development were found for a small number of receptors using one recreational route near Auchterawe on the Torr Dhuin Trail (route ‘R11’), where the Proposed Development would be noticeable alongside the route and would cross in two locations.

7.1.8 Further temporary significant visual effects during construction of the Proposed Development were identified for Auchterawe residents (group ‘B2’) and users of the Auchterawe minor road (‘route ‘R4’), where the dismantling

of existing steel lattice towers would be very noticeable nearby. Significant temporary visual effects during construction would also be experienced by receptors on three recreational route groupings: Torr Dhuin Trail (route 'R11'), River Oich Trail (route 'R13') near Auchterawe; and paths around River Garry (routes 'R14') near Whitebridge. Parts of these recreational routes would be used for construction access, and construction of the Proposed Development would also be seen adjacent or would cross these routes.

Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects

7.1.9 The cumulative landscape and visual assessment has considered the potential landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development when added to two cumulative baseline scenarios. Scenario 1 comprises other developments associated with the Proposed Development; while Scenario 2 comprises unrelated developments **and** developments in Scenario 1.

7.1.10 For both scenarios, there would be no significant cumulative landscape effects as a result of the Proposed Development. The majority of cumulative visual effects were assessed as being not significant. However, temporary significant cumulative visual effects have been identified for users of recreational routes around River Garry (routes 'R14) near Whitebridge, where construction work for the Proposed Development would cross the routes and would form a noticeable addition to existing minimal visual effects associated with construction of the Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme. However, this is not predicted to lead to a cumulative effect during operation, because there would be no long-term effect from any of the baseline cumulative developments.
Introduction

7.1.11 This Chapter presents the findings of the LVIA for the Proposed Development. The purpose of the LVIA is to identify and describe potential significant effects which may occur as a result of the Proposed Development to views obtained by those living, working and visiting in the area, and to the wider landscape resource, and the residual predicted significance of effects after mitigation. This Chapter considers potential effects, including cumulative effects, of the Proposed Development on visual amenity and landscape character during construction and operation. As described in **Chapter 3: Project Description,** it is anticipated that the effects associated with the construction phase could be considered to be representative of worst-case decommissioning effects on visual amenity and landscape character. As such, a separate assessment of potential decommissioning effects is not included in this Chapter.

7.1.12 The LVIA has been undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects at ASH design + assessment Ltd (ASH), a registered practice with the Landscape Institute. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with best practice guidance, the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA). A table presenting relevant qualifications and experience of key staff involved in the preparation of this Chapter is included in **Technical Appendix 4.1: EIA Team**, contained within Volume 4 of this EIA Report.

7.1.13 The LVIA is also accompanied by a short review of the Proposed Development in relation to the Highland Council's (THC) Loch Ness Sensitivity Study, part of the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG)[1] (see **Technical Appendix 7.3**).

7.2 Scope of Assessment

Consultation and Scoping

7.2.1 The scope of the assessment has been determined through a combination of professional judgement, reference to the relevant guidance documents and consultation with stakeholders through scoping advice and pre-application advice.

[1] The Highland Council (2016/2017) Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance. Available at: https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/712079/onshore_wind_energy/category/465/wind_energy_and_sustainability

7.2.2 To inform the scope of the assessment for the Proposed Development, consultation was undertaken with statutory and non-statutory bodies. Table 7.1 summarises the scoping and consultation responses relevant to the LVIA and provides information on where and/or how points raised have been addressed in this assessment.

7.2.3 Further details on the consultation and scoping responses can be reviewed in **Chapter 5: Scoping and Consultation**, and associated appendices.

Table 7.1: Consultation Reponses

Consultee and Date	Type of Consultation	Response	Comments
NatureScot 17th March 2023	Scoping Response	"It is assumed that the 1km offset shown on the ZTV is intended to account for the LOD but it would be useful to have this confirmed in the EIAR."	This ZTV, included in the Scoping Report, was run from the tower positions shown on the plan, not the LoD. It was run for a distance of 5 km from the towers to provide further ZTV information beyond the edge of the 4 km study area.
		"Given the proposed tower height we would advise that an initial study area radius of 10km be adopted in the first instance and a ZTV produced to this extent – this would also inform selection of viewpoints within the wider area."	A ZTV run to 10 km is shown in **Figure 7.1a,** produced in order to help establish the study area. Following review of the ZTV alongside site verification, and based on site analysis of the perceptibility of similar existing developments in the landscape (including the existing Beauly – Denny 400 kV steel lattice OHL), a study area of 4 km was considered appropriate to identify all potential significant effects (see **Figure 7.1b**).
		"Taking the above into consideration we would advise against scoping out LCTs 221: Rolling Uplands – Inverness and LCT 236 – Smooth Moorland Ridges at this stage, until a more thorough understanding of predicted visibility over these LCTs is gained."	Further review of theoretical visibility and high-level appraisal of potential effects on LCTs 221 and 236 has been undertaken and these areas have been scoped out of the detailed assessment, as detailed in **Table 7.6.**
		"We are content that Wild Land Areas (WLA) WLA18 Kinlochhourn - Knoydart – Morar and WLA19 Braeroy - Glenshirra - Creag Meagaidh can be scoped out."	Noted.
		"Generally, all ZTV mapping should be accompanied by metadata detailing terrain mapping used, viewer height, etc. which should be displayed on every ZTV figure. This information can be found in NatureScot Visual Representation of Wind Farms	This information is shown on the relevant LVIA figures and included within **Technical Appendix 7.1**.

Consultee and Date	Type of Consultation	Response	Comments
		Guidance v2.2 February 2017 which is available on our website."	
Forestry Land Scotland (FLS) West 20th June 2022	Route Stage Consultation Response	Page 2: "Additional visualisations are needed from settlements, roads and recreation routes to allow the impact of the wayleave corridor to be assessed."	Visualisations are provided in Volumes 3A and 3B of this EIA Report from a range of locations on routes and in /near settlements and, where suitable, illustrate wayleave corridors associated with the Proposed Development. **Chapter 14: Forestry** of this EIA Report contains information relating to wayleave corridors and tree felling.
		Comments regarding visual impacts made throughout consultation.	Visual effects of felling and loss of valued woodlands are taken into account in the LVIA, and in options appraisals, as described in **Chapter 2: The Routeing Process and Alternatives** of this EIA Report.
The Highland Council (THC) (1st September 2021	Pre-Application Advice	Page 1-2: "The preferred design approach generally robust in seeking to balance technical and landscape/visual requirements and seems the most logical at this stage. However, there is a need to address the interaction with existing overhead lines. Visualisations will be required in part to provide a greater understanding of the cumulative impact. There is a preference for the undergrounding of more sensitive section and the rationalisation/ of the existing infrastructure, however, if this is not feasible or would lead to an increase in impacts then this should be detailed in the application" … "The Council would encourage further dialogue and a meeting as the scheme progresses and the chance to comment on viewpoint locations for visualisations "	Visualisations are provided in Volumes 3A and 3B of this EIA Report from selected locations. Locations are proposed in the Scoping Report. The design of the Proposed Development and LVIA have considered interaction with existing overhead lines, and proposed developments of relevance (see cumulative assessment in Section 7.10). The consideration of different options are described in **Chapter 2: The Routeing Process and Alternatives** of this EIA Report**.**
		Page 7: Request for Supporting Information to relating to landscape include Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Landscape	The LVIA is reported in this chapter, and visualisations provided in Volumes 3A and 3B of this EIA Report.

Consultee and Date	Type of Consultation	Response	Comments
		Maintenance/Management Plan, Landscape Plan, Visualisations.	See **Chapter 14: Forestry** for further information relating to woodland management.
		Pages 10 and1: Several designated / protected landscapes are listed.	These areas have been considered in this assessment, or scoped out where suitable, as described in the Scoping Report and in this Chapter.
		Page 11: Council Landscape Sensitivity Appraisals: "While this proposal is not wind energy it is considered that there is sufficient crossover with large vertical manmade structures for the Loch Ness study area appraisal to be relevant as background for landscape considerations." Also, Page 12: "it is encouraged that the issues raised in the detailed appraisals of these areas" (relating to LN11, LN13, LN19, LN20, LN5) "are read, considered and, where appropriate, addressed as part of the proposals. There is a need to ensure any gateway qualities, which are addressed in the Loch Ness Landscape Sensitivity Study, are protected. The visual impacts experienced sequentially by recreational users of the outdoors also need considered."	See **Technical Appendix 7.3**.
		Page 12: "There is a need to ensure that the extra screening put in around Auchteraw area is not undermined, so we would welcome you engaging with the feasibility of undergrounding the cables in that locality."	The design of the Proposed Development retains screening in this area as far as possible. Consideration of alternatives are described in **Chapter 2: The Routeing Process and Alternatives**.
		Page 12: "It will need to be clearly demonstrated that any necessary tree felling through the glen, along with clear demonstration of the likely appearance and effect on the A87 itself as well as any local recreational routes and the long-distance trails within the area."	Effects on receptors on routes, including effects of tree felling, are including in the LVIA. See **Chapter 14: Forestry** of this EIA Report for information on tree felling.
		Page 13: Consultation on viewpoints welcomed. " Viewpoints should include receptors from roads, residential properties, recreational routes and nearby hills. Selection will need to	Viewpoints are proposed in the Scoping Report, and include a variety of locations, some of which show how the Proposed Development would be seen with existing overhead lines.

Consultee and Date	Type of Consultation	Response	Comments
		take into account any potential loss of trees/woodland. It should also address such aspects as interaction with existing overhead lines. As stated at the meeting a viewpoint showing where the development crosses the A87 would be useful."	Visualisation Location (VL) 5 shows the road crossing on the A87.
		Page 13: NatureScot consider that " WLAs 18 and 19 are mentioned there may be some visibility from within the WLAs, at this stage" (referring to WLAs 18 and 19) "on the basis of available information, we consider it is unlikely that impacts associated with the preferred route will be of national interest. We may however provide further advice on this issue as the proposals progress and further assessment material is available."	Assessment of Wild Land Areas (WLAs) are scoped out of the assessment, as described in the Scoping Report due to lack of potential for significant effects.

Study Area

7.2.4 The study area comprises the area where any potentially significant effects resulting from the Proposed Development would be likely to occur and has been established through consideration of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), and professional judgement. A ZTV run to 10 km from each tower position has been produced in order to help establish the study area. Following review of this wider ZTV (see **Figure 7.1a**) alongside site verification, and based on site analysis of the perceptibility of similar existing developments in the landscape (including the existing Beauly – Denny 400 kV steel lattice OHL), an LVIA study area of 4 km from the proposed OHL elements of the Proposed Development (towers, poles and conductors) has been considered appropriate to identify all potential significant effects (see **Figure 7.1b**).

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

7.2.5 As an aid to establishing the scope for the LVIA, ZTVs have been produced for the Proposed Development and are presented in **Figures 7.1a-b**. ZTVs are computer generated diagrams which use a terrain model to indicate areas from which the Proposed Development would be theoretically visible. The ZTVs for the Proposed Development have been generated using ESRI ArcGIS software based on a terrain modelled using Ordnance Survey (OS) T5 DTM data.

7.2.6 ZTVs have been run using the designed heights for each tower, as identified in the Tower Schedules (see **Technical Appendix 3.1**).

7.2.7 The ZTVs take account of earth curvature and light refractivity, set to 0.075 in accordance with NatureScot guidance[2].

7.2.8 Whilst ZTVs are useful tools for the identification of potential effects, they are not indicative of an effect in itself. ZTVs do not take into account the potential screening effects of woodland and other localised features such as

[2] Scottish Natural Heritage (2017) Visual Representation of Wind Farms (Version 2.2). Available at: Visual representation of wind farms: Guidance | NatureScot

buildings, trees or local landform which are not captured by the OS T5 data. Nor do they give indication of the way in which a development may relate to its broader landscape context and the receding scale and visibility of features with distance. However, consideration of these aspects is taken into account during the assessment including through professional judgement.

Visualisations

7.2.9 Five visualisations have been produced to support the LVIA work, in accordance with NatureScot[2] and THC visualisation standards[3] and as described in **Technical Appendix 7.1**. These show the predicted appearance of the Proposed Development during operation, prior to the establishment of mitigation planting, and after 10 years, once planting is expected to be established. Visualisations have been produced from the following locations, illustrated on **Figure 7.1b**:

- Visualisation Location 1: Auchterawe Road (OS Grid Reference: 234865, 807668);
  (see **Volume 3A**, **Figure 7.6 a-g** and **Volume 3B, Figure 7.11 a-g**);
- Visualisation Location 2: South Loch Ness Trail by the B862 (OS Grid Reference: 239662, 808900);
  (see **Volume 3A**, **Figure 7.7 a-d** and **Volume 3B, Figure 7.12 a-e**);
- Visualisation Location 3: Core Path LO11.02 near Achadh-nan-darach (OS Grid Reference: 230942, 805163);
  (see **Volume 3A**, **Figure 7.8 a-d** and **Volume 3B, Figure 7.13 a-e**);
- Visualisation Location 4: Faichem (OS Grid Reference: 228750, 801742);
  (see **Volume 3A**, **Figure 7.9 (a-d)** and **Volume 3B, Figure 7.14 a-e**); and
- Visualisation Location 5: A87, west of Invergarry (OS Grid Reference: 228158, 801790);
  (see **Volume 3A**, **Figure 7.10 a-d** and **Volume 3B, Figure 7.15 a-e**).

7.2.10 The visualisations have been produced to support the LVIA work and are intended to show the appearance of the Proposed Development within the landscape setting. Visualisation Locations have not been assessed as viewpoints. The visual assessment is a receptor-based assessment (giving consideration to all potential visual receptors) rather than a viewpoint-based assessment.

7.3 Methodology

Assessment Guidance

7.3.1 The LVIA has been prepared with reference to the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, Third Edition (GLVIA3)[4] and *Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland*[5].

Professional Judgement

7.3.2 GLVIA3 places a strong emphasis on the importance of professional judgement in identifying and defining the significance of landscape and visual effects. As part of this assessment, professional judgement has been used in combination with structured methods and criteria to evaluate landscape value and landscape and visual sensitivity, magnitude and significance of effect. The assessment has been undertaken and verified by two Landscape Professionals (Chartered Landscape Architects) to provide a robust and consistent approach.

[3] The Highland Council (2016) Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments. Available at: https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/12880/visualisation_standards_for_wind_energy_developments

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

[5] Scottish Natural Heritage, The Countryside Agency. (2002). *Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland*.

Key Stages of the Assessment

7.3.3 GLVIA3 advises that landscape and visual effects should be assessed from a clear understanding of the development proposed and any mitigation measures which are being adopted.

7.3.4 The GLVIA3 methodology for landscape assessment involves an appreciation of the existing landscape resource, the susceptibility of its key components to accept the change proposed, and an understanding of the potential effects which could occur and how these could affect these key components.

7.3.5 Familiarity with the site and the extent, nature and expectation of existing views by visual receptors is a key factor in establishing the visual sensitivity in terms of the development proposed. The guidelines require evaluation of magnitude of change to views experienced by sensitive receptors, comprising individuals living, working, travelling and carrying out other activities within the landscape, and the subsequent evaluation of the significance of effects.

7.3.6 The potential to mitigate adverse effects should also be considered for both landscape and visual assessment.

7.3.7 There are five key stages to the assessment:

- Establishment of the baseline;
- Appreciation of the development proposed;
- Identification of key landscape and visual receptors;
- Identification of potential effects; and
- Assessment of significance of effect.

Establishment of the Baseline

7.3.8 Establishment of the baseline conditions has been undertaken through a combination of desk study and site appraisal. The desk review has involved review the following general documents and sources:

- National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (refer to **Chapter 6: Planning and Energy Policy** for further discussion on planning policies relevant to the Proposed Development)
- The *Highland-wide Local Development Plan* (HwLDP) (THC, 2012[6]), *Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan* (IMFLDP) (THC 2022[7]) and *West Highlands and Islands Local Development Plan* (WestPlan) (THC, 2019[8]).
- Scoping responses and other consultation responses for the Proposed Development (see **Table 7.1** and **Technical Appendix 5.1**);
- Online mapping and aerial photography resources from Ordnance Survey, Google, Bing and National Library of Scotland; and
- The ZTV for the Proposed Development (see **Figures 7.1a and 7.1b**).

7.3.9 Site Survey for the Proposed Development was undertaken in August 2022.

7.3.10 In addition, the following specific baseline activities were undertaken for the two differing assessments of landscape and visual effects:

[6] The Highland Council (2012) *Highland-wide Local Development Plan.* Available at: https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/199/highland-wide_local_development_plan [accessed June 2022]
[7] The Highland Council (2022) Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan. Available at: Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan (reduced) (1).pdf
[8] The Highland Council (2019) *West Highlands and Islands Local Development Plan.* Available at: https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/582/west_highland_and_islands_local_development_plan [accessed July 2022]

Landscape Assessment Baseline Tasks

7.3.11 The desk review for the landscape assessment has included review of the following additional documents and resources:

- Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas (Horner + Maclennan and Wood, 2011)[9];
- NatureScot Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Descriptions[10] (SNH, 2019 [online]); and
- THC Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG) (THC, 2017)[1].

Identification of Baseline Landscape Value

7.3.12 The value of the landscape is an important consideration in informing later judgement of the significance of effects. Landscape value concerns the perceived importance of the landscape when considered as a whole, and within the context of the study area and is established through consideration of the following factors:

- Presence of landscape designations, other inventory or registered landscapes / landscape features or identified planning constraints;
- The scenic quality of the landscape;
- Perceptual aspects, such as wildness or tranquillity;
- Conservation interests such as cultural heritage features or associations, or if the landscape supports notable habitats or species;
- Recreational value; and
- Rarity, either in the national or local context, or if it is considered to be a particularly important example of a specific landscape type.

7.3.13 It should be noted that absence of a designation does not necessarily mean that a landscape or component is not highly valued, as factors such as accessibility and local scarcity can render areas of nationally unremarkable quality highly valuable as a local resource.

7.3.14 Criteria for the allocation of perceived landscape value are outlined in **Table 7.2** below:

Table 7.2: Landscape Value Criteria

Landscape Value	Criteria
High	• The landscape is closely associated with features of international or national importance which are rare within the wider context; • The landscape is of high scenic quality and forms a key part of an important designated landscape or planning constraint; and/or • The landscape is an example of a scarce resource within the local context and is of considerable local importance for its, scenic quality, recreational opportunities or cultural heritage associations.
Medium	• The landscape is associated with features of national or regional importance which are relatively common within the wider context; • The landscape forms part of a designated landscape or is associated with other features of importance but is not rare or distinctive within the local context; and/or • The landscape is one of a number within the local context appreciated for its scenic quality, recreational opportunities or cultural heritage associations.

[9] Horner + Maclennan and Wood, M (2011) Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas, The Highland Council.
[10] NatureScot: (2019): Scottish Landscape Character Types Map and Descriptions [ONLINE] https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-character-assessment/scottish-landscape-character-types-map-and-descriptions [accessed August 2022].

Low	• The landscape characteristics are common within the local and regional context and the landscape is not associated with any particular features or attributes considered to be important; and/or • The landscape is of poor scenic quality and is not appreciated for any recreational or cultural associations.

Visual Assessment Baseline Tasks

7.3.15 A combination of desk and field survey was used to establish the range and distribution of potential visual receptors within the study area. Visual receptors can be defined as individuals occupying and using the study area with the potential to obtain views of the Proposed Development. Potential visual receptors included in the assessment have included those experiencing views from locations such as buildings, recognised routes and popular viewpoints used by the public.

7.3.16 The following additional resources were used to enhance understanding of the use of the study area by potential visual receptors:

- The Highland Council (THC) Core Paths Interactive Map[11] [online];
- Scottish Hill Tracks (Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (Scotways), 2011)[12]; and
- Other web based and published sources providing information on local resources and activities within the study area (see the list of references in **Technical Appendix 7.4**).

7.3.17 Site visits were undertaken to verify the visual receptors identified through desk study, identify any further potential receptors which had been missed and collate information on baseline visual amenity, including information on the types and activities of visual receptors likely to be present, and the nature of the existing views which are obtained. Site recording involved the completion of standardised recording forms and annotation of 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 Ordnance Survey plans, supported by a photographic record of views from key receptor locations.

Appreciation of the Development Proposed

7.3.18 Appreciation of the Proposed Development involves the accumulation of a thorough knowledge of the proposal, its nature, scale and location within the baseline landscape, and any peripheral or ancillary features proposed. Analysis of the proposed activities and changes which would take place leads to an understanding of the potential effects that may occur to the landscape and visual resource.

7.3.19 This stage has included review of all available desk-based information relating to the Proposed Development in terms of its long-term physical appearance and requirements for construction and access, as detailed in **Chapter 3: Project Description**.

Identification of Key Landscape and Visual Receptors

7.3.20 The identification of key landscape and visual receptors with the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development is the first step in the analysis of the potential for significant effects to occur. Landscape and visual receptors can be described as follows:

- **Landscape receptors** comprise key characteristics or individual features which contribute to the value of the landscape and have the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development. Landscape

[11] The Highland Council, Core Paths Interactive Map [ONLINE]: https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2fd3fc9c72d545f7bcf1b43bf5c8445f [accessed January 2022].
[12] The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (Scotways) (2011): Scottish Hill Tracks (Fifth Edition) Scottish Mountaineering Trust.

receptors are identified through analysis of baseline characteristics when considered in relation to the impacts which might result from a development of the type proposed.

- **Visual receptors** comprise individuals experiencing views from locations such as buildings, recognised routes and popular viewpoints used by the public. Potential visual receptors are identified through analysis of desk resources, mapping and field survey, as described under 'Establishment of the Baseline' above. A review of the ZTV in the context of site survey is used to identify the potential for visual receptors to be affected by the Proposed Development.

Identification of Potential Effects

7.3.21 The second step in the assessment process involves the identification of potential effects which may occur as a result of the interaction of the Proposed Development with the identified landscape and visual receptors.

7.3.22 The assessment takes into account direct effects upon existing views, landscape elements, features and key characteristics and, also, indirect effects which may occur secondarily to changes affecting another landscape component or area. The identification of potential effects is a two-fold process, giving consideration as to how these effects may arise from aspects of the Proposed Development and how they may be accommodated by the existing baseline features.

7.3.23 Where it is established that potential effects could be limited by mitigation measures, these are also given consideration.

7.3.24 Potential effects are evaluated through the allocation of criteria for sensitivity and magnitude.

Landscape and Visual Sensitivity

7.3.25 Sensitivity concerns the nature of the baseline landscape or visual receptor, and the ability to accommodate development of the type proposed without compromising the key characteristics and / or composition.

7.3.26 There are two aspects which contribute to the evaluation of landscape and visual sensitivity: value and susceptibility to change. The consideration of these two separate aspects in the differing assessments for landscape and visual amenity are outlined below:

- Landscape
  - Value: The baseline value of the landscape and the contributory value of individual landscape receptors to the landscape as a whole; and
  - Susceptibility: The ability of landscape receptors to accommodate development of the type proposed without changing the intrinsic qualities of the landscape as a whole.
- Visual Amenity
  - Value: The baseline value of a particular view to the visual receptor, including the perceived; and
  - Susceptibility: The susceptibility of the viewer to changes to the view, giving consideration to the particular activity they may be involved in and also the composition of the baseline view and importance of the proposed area of change as a part of the view.

7.3.27 Criteria for the evaluation of sensitivity to change are presented in **Table 7.3**.

Table 7.3: Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Criteria

Sensitivity Rating	Landscape Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity
High	A highly valued landscape of particularly distinctive character susceptible to relatively small changes of the type proposed.	Visual receptors obtaining views from: • dwellings and publicly accessible buildings where the changed aspect is an important element in the view and there are no detracting features present; and • recreational routes and locations where the changed aspect is an important element in the view and there are no detracting features present.
Medium	A reasonably valued landscape with a composition and characteristics tolerant of some degree of change of the type proposed.	Visual receptors obtaining views from: • dwellings and publicly accessible buildings where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present; • recreational routes and locations where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present; • roads and transport routes where the changed aspect is an important element in the view and there are no detracting features present; and • workplaces where the changed aspect is an important element of the view and there are no detracting features present.
Low	A relatively unimportant landscape which is potentially tolerant of a large degree of change of the type proposed.	Visual receptors obtaining views from: • dwellings and publicly accessible buildings where the changed aspect is an unimportant element in the view and / or numerous detracting features are present; • recreational routes and locations where the changed aspect is an unimportant element in the view and / or where numerous detracting features are present; • roads and transport routes where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present; and • workplaces where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present.

Landscape and Visual Magnitude

7.3.28 Magnitude of change concerns the extent to which the existing landscape character or view would be altered by the Proposed Development. Elements specific to the evaluation of magnitude of change for the differing assessments of landscape and visual amenity are detailed below:

- Landscape
  - The degree to which features or characteristics may be removed, altered or added within the landscape;
  - The geographical extent of proposed changes;
  - Whether changes would be direct or indirect; and
  - The potential duration and reversibility of proposed changes (taking into consideration proposed mitigation measures where relevant).
- Visual Amenity
  - The scale or extent of proposed changes within the view;
  - The location of proposed changes within the view, relevant to other existing features;
  - The extent to which this may alter the composition or focus of the view; and
  - The duration and reversibility of proposed changes (taking into consideration proposed mitigation measures where relevant).

7.3.1 Criteria for the evaluation of magnitude of change are presented in **Table 7.4**. In recognition of the differing changes that would occur over time, two ratings for magnitude of change have been included: during the construction of the Proposed Development, and approximately 10 years post construction, once landscape / habitat reinstatement has had time to establish.

Table 7.4: Landscape and Visual Magnitude of Change Criteria

Magnitude Rating	Landscape	Visual
High	Notable change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area ranging to a very intensive change over a more limited area.	Where the Proposed Development would result in a very noticeable change in the existing view.
Medium	Perceptible change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area ranging to notable change in a localised area.	Where the Proposed Development would result in a noticeable change in the existing view.
Low	Virtually imperceptible change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area or perceptible change in a localised area.	Where the Proposed Development would result in a perceptible change in the existing view.
Negligible	No discernible change in any landscape characteristics or components.	Where the Proposed Development would result in a barely perceptible change in the existing view.

Assessment of Significance of Effects

7.3.2 Evaluation of the predicted significance of effect has been carried out through the analysis of the anticipated magnitude of change in relation to the landscape or visual sensitivity, taking into account any proposed mitigation measures, and is established using professional judgement.

7.3.3 In recognition of the potential for effects to vary over time, the assessment has been undertaken at two different stages: during the construction phase, and during operation, once landscape / habitat reinstatement measures have been allowed to establish. This is assumed to be approximately 10 years after the completion of construction and reinstatement works.

7.3.4 The significance of effect for landscape and visual elements is considered as follows:

- Landscape Effects
  - The assessment takes into account identified effects upon existing landscape receptors and assesses the extent to which these would be lost or modified in the context of their importance in determining the existing baseline character.
- Visual Effects
  - The assessment takes into account likely changes to the visual composition, including the extent to which new features would distract or screen existing elements in the view or disrupt the scale, structure or focus of the existing view.

7.3.5 The assessment takes into consideration the potential for effects to be adverse, where changes such as the addition of new distracting features, or the removal of existing positive features, are anticipated to negatively affect the landscape or view; or beneficial, where changes, such as the removal of existing distracting features or the addition of associated planting or other mitigation measures are anticipated to positively influence the landscape or view.

7.3.6 Criteria used for the assessment of effects are presented in **Table 7.5**. For the purposes of the LVIA, effects with a rating of Moderate or greater are considered to be significant in terms of the EIA Regulations.

Table 7.5: Landscape and Visual Significance of Effect Criteria

Effect Significance	Landscape Effects	Visual Effects
Major Adverse	The Proposed Development is at considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape and would be a dominant feature, resulting in considerable reduction in scenic quality and large scale change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.	The Proposed Development would become a prominent and very detracting feature and would result in a very noticeable deterioration to an existing highly valued and well composed view.
Moderate Adverse	The Proposed Development is out of scale with the landscape, or inconsistent with the local pattern and landform and may be locally dominant and/or result in a noticeable reduction in scenic quality and a degree of change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.	The Proposed Development would introduce some detracting features to an existing highly valued view or would be more prominent within a pleasing or less well composed view, resulting in a noticeable deterioration of the quality of view.
Minor Adverse	The Proposed Development does not quite fit with the scale, landform or local pattern of the landscape and may be locally intrusive but would result in an inappreciable reduction in scenic quality or change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.	The Proposed Development would form a perceptible but not detracting feature within a pleasing or valued view or would be a prominent feature within a poorly composed view of limited value, resulting in a small deterioration to the existing view.
Negligible	The Proposed Development sits well within the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape and/or would not result in any discernible reduction or improvement in scenic quality or change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.	The Proposed Development would form a barely perceptible feature within the existing view and/or would not result in any discernible deterioration or improvement to the view.
Minor Beneficial	The Proposed Development would add / remove landscape features or alter the composition of landscape components which would result in a small or localised	The Proposed Development would form a fairly attractive feature and / or remove a fairly detracting feature from an existing less well composed view, resulting in a small

	improvement to the landscape characteristics and scenic quality of the landscape.	improvement to the attractiveness, composition and value of the existing view.
Moderate Beneficial	The Proposed Development would add / remove landscape features or alter the composition of landscape components which would result in a noticeable improvement to the landscape characteristics and scenic quality of the landscape.	The Proposed Development would become a new attractive feature within, or result in the removal or partial removal of an existing detracting feature from, a poorly composed or less well composed view leading to a noticeable improvement to the attractiveness, composition and value of the existing view.
Major Beneficial	The Proposed Development would add / remove landscape features or alter the composition of landscape components which would result in a very noticeable improvement to the landscape characteristics and scenic quality of the landscape.	The Proposed Development would form a prominent new attractive feature within, or result in the removal of an existing very detracting feature from, a poorly composed view leading to a very noticeable improvement to the attractiveness, composition and value of the existing view.

7.4 Assumptions and Limitations

7.4.1 The LVIA is subject to the following limitations and assumptions:

- The prominence of the Proposed Development in the landscape and views will vary according to the prevailing weather conditions. The LVIA has been carried out, as is best practice, by assuming the 'worst case' scenario i.e. on a clear, bright day in winter, when neither foreground deciduous foliage nor haze can interfere with the clarity of the view obtained.
- The assessment of operational effects assumes that disturbed areas not required for the operation of the Proposed Development (temporary tracks, laydown and working areas, excavations for tower foundations etc.) would be successfully reinstated to reflect, as far as possible, similar vegetation types and appearance to that present prior to construction. It is noted that these vegetation types may not necessarily comprise identical habitat types and value to those previously present. Habitat change is discussed separately in **Chapter 8: Terrestrial Ecology**.
- ZTVs are used to inform the landscape, visual and cumulative assessments. The limitations and technical specifications for production of ZTVs are included in paragraphs 7.2.5 to 7.2.8 and **Technical Appendix 7.1**.
- The field assessment of visual effects has been undertaken from public roads, footpaths or open spaces. For residential receptors, assumptions have been made about the types of rooms in buildings and about the types and importance of views from these rooms. For there to be a visual effect, there is the need for a viewer and therefore only buildings that are in use have been considered in the visual assessment.
- The assessment of effects on visual receptors occupying buildings such as residences and public buildings includes consideration of potential for views from exterior areas associated with the building including gardens where appropriate. These effects are referenced where relevant.
- The assessment reflects the baseline situation at the time of site work (August 2022) and therefore does not take account of any changes to the landscape fabric which have taken place after this date. Whilst the Proposed Development would be present within a situation where the Coire Glas Pumped

Storage Scheme would be present, this has been considered in the cumulative assessment, rather than the baseline for the Proposed Development.

7.5 Baseline Conditions: Landscape

Overview

7.5.1 The study area for the Proposed Development covers the meeting point of two broad steep-sided glens: the Great Glen and Glen Garry. These glens are characterised by a mosaic of woodland, broad rivers, pastural fields and rural settlement, and large, linear lochs which form broad open spaces across the valley floor. The steep valley sides are typically clothed with a mix of woodland and coniferous forest plantation which breaks into a pattern of forest, moorland and small lochs characterising the upper plateaux above the glens. Caledonian Pine Forest also characterises some of the slopes on the southern side of Glen Garry. A cluster of steep-sided mountains just to the south-west of the Corridor including Sròn a Choire Ghairbh and the distinctive, conical Ben Tee form a visual focus within the landscape, drawing views throughout much of the study area. The two glens provide important transportation corridors through the surrounding upland landscape, accommodating the main trunk roads, A82 and A87, and the Caledonian Canal through the Great Glen. Overhead line infrastructure also forms an existing feature throughout the study area whilst wind turbines are a feature of the hills to the west.

Landscape Designations

7.5.2 Landscapes can be ascribed an international, national, regional or local designation that recognises the importance of the landscape for its scenic interest or attractiveness. Areas of landscape may also be protected by planning policy at either a national or regional level.

7.5.3 The following designated or protected landscapes fall within the study area (see **Figure 7.2**):

- National Context:
  - None.
- Regional / Local Context:
  - Loch Lochy and Loch Oich Special Landscape Area (SLA); and
  - Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA.

7.5.4 Assessment of the Proposed Development in relation to both the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA and the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA has been scoped out of the LVIA because it is considered that the potential for significant effects to occur is very unlikely. Both SLAs fall only within he very periphery of the study area and show generally limited ZTV coverage from the floor of the great glen, with tree cover likely to limit intervisibility. Although a greater degree of intervisibility is shown for the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA, in areas such as Ben Tee and the eastern side of Loch Oich given the distance from the Proposed Development and the setting within which it would be experienced, within forest and seen the in the context of existing wind turbines, it is unlikely that the special qualities of this SLA which are focussed more within the Great Glen and on the mountains would be affected.

Landscape Character

7.5.5 NatureScot has undertaken detailed review and classification of various landscape areas and types of Scotland (SNH, 2019 [online][10]). Seven individual Landscape Character Types (LCTs) are identified within the 4 km study area for the Proposed Development as follows (see **Figure 7.2**):

- LCT 220: Rugged Massif – Inverness;
- LCT 221: Rolling Uplands – Inverness;
- LCT 225: Broad Steep-Sided Glen;
- LCT 235: Broad Forested Strath;
- LCT 236: Smooth Moorland Ridges;
- LCT 237: Rocky Moorland – Lochaber; and
- LCT 239: Interlocking Sweeping Peaks.

7.5.6 These LCTs are considered to provide an accurate representation of landscape character across the study area and have therefore been used as the basis for the landscape assessment. However, following review of the ZTV and initial site survey, it is considered that the potential for significant landscape effects to LCTs 221 (Rolling Uplands – Inverness) and 236 (Smooth Moorland Ridges) is very unlikely, and therefore these LCTs are not considered further within this LVIA. The rationale for scoping out these LCTs is detailed in **Table 7.6**.

Table 7.6: High Level Appraisal of LCTs Scoped out of the Detailed Assessment

LCT	Reason for Scoping Out
LCT 221: Rolling Uplands – Inverness	Only a relatively small portion of this LCT falls within the study area and the ZTV indicates that there would be limited intervisibility within this area where the Proposed Development would be seen in the context of other OHL infrastructure around the Fort Augustus Substation and would replace an existing steel lattice OHL. This is considered very unlikely to lead to a significant landscape effect.
LCT 236: Smooth Moorland Ridges	Only a very small portion of this LCT lies within the study area, all at over 3 km from the Proposed Development. Intervisibility is restricted to the enclosing slopes of the Great Glen where the enclosure of the glen forms the main influence. It is considered unlikely that this would lead to significant effects to the wider smooth moorland ridges LCT.

7.5.7 The remaining LCTs are described in further detail in **Table 7.7** to **Table 7.12** below, along with the key characteristics which have been identified by NatureScot. Characteristics of specific note and relevance within the study area have also been identified.

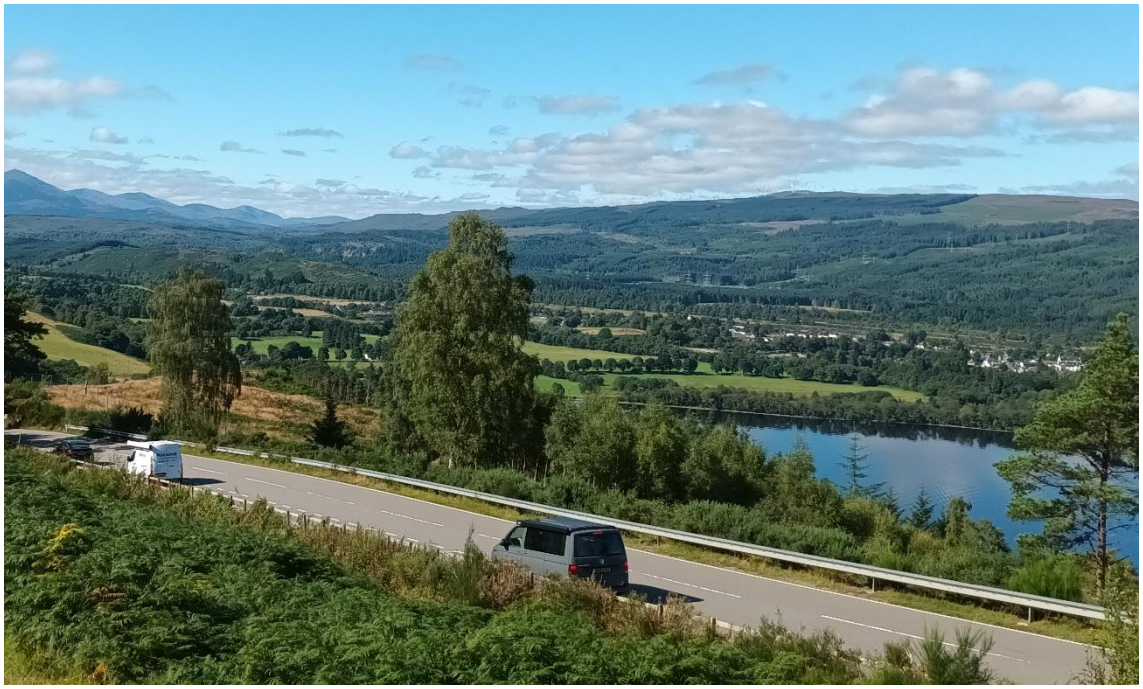
Table 7.7: LCT 220 – Rugged Massif - Inverness

LCT 220 from Meall Dubh Looking down towards the Study Area past the Millennium Wind Farm

Description	Within the study area, this LCT covers the higher moorland hills and forested slopes to the north-west including the area of the extended Millennium Wind Farm. It is described as an extensive landscape of parallel mountain ranges defined by glaciated valleys. Mountains have with broad, rounded summits and few distinct peaks which leads to a difficulty to perceive scale. A few small lochans and bogs lie in corries and depressions and many small burns dissect the mountain slopes. Landcover comprises heather, rough grassland and bog with rocky outcrops and exposed, frost-shattered rock on the higher summits. Occasional birch or pine woods provide some diversity on lower ground. The LCT is largely uninhabited with few signs of human activity, limited to estate activities such as occasional tracks or patterns of muirburn. This gives a sense of wildness and remoteness. However, the part of the LCT within the study area is atypical of this LCT description by NatureScot, with lower hills and reduced remoteness due to the presence of nearby forestry, existing OHLs and wind turbines at Millennium Wind Farm.
Identified Key Characteristics	• Parallel ranges of massive mountains of irregular landform divided by deep glaciated valleys; • Mainly broad, sometimes rounded rugged summits connected by long ridges and relatively few individual mountain peaks, particularly in the east; • Steep terrain with many mountain-side burns and occasional lochans in corries and depressions; • Landcover of rock outcrops, glacial debris, deer-grazed heather and rough grassland create a smooth surface with mottled texture, with alpine habitats on high land to the west; • Almost uniform texture and cover from lower to upper levels in the east makes the size of the hills difficult to perceive; • Tracts of Caledonian pinewoods and occasional small patches of open birch woodland add colour, texture and seasonal diversity; • Largely uninhabited, few signs of human activity or human artefacts in the interior, and sparse archaeological evidence; • Hill ranges combine to create a fairly even undulating skyline and a sense of enclosure when viewed from straths; • Views from the hill tops at the edges of the massif offer expansive views of the adjacent straths and surrounding landscape character types; and • A sense of remoteness and wildness which is particularly strong within the interior.

Key Local Characteristics within the study area	• Broad, rounded mountains of irregular landform and rugged summits, connected by long ridges, leading down into deep glaciated valleys; • Steep terrain with many mountain-side burns and occasional lochans in corries and depressions; • Landcover of rock outcrops, glacial debris, deer-grazed heather and rough grassland create a smooth surface with mottled texture; • Tracts of Caledonian pinewoods, with some large areas of clearfell and wayleave corridors, and occasional small patches of open birch woodland add colour, texture and seasonal diversity; • Hill ranges combine to create a fairly even undulating skyline and a sense of enclosure when viewed from straths; • Views from the hill tops at the edges of the massif offer expansive views of the adjacent straths and surrounding landscape character types; • A sense of relative remoteness compared with settled glens below, but equally a sense of connectivity with the wider landscape through the presence of tracks and OHLs crossing through this landscape and into adjacent areas; and • Wind turbines present in this LCT and visible in other parts of the landscape also provide a sense of connectivity with the surrounding area and perception of development.
Landscape Value	This LCT does not fall within any designated or protected landscape areas but has value for its remote qualities and as a backdrop to other landscapes. Nevertheless, within the study area it has few of the key characteristics identified by NatureScot and is relatively common and unexceptional in nature within the wider context. Landscape Value is considered to be Low - Medium.

Table 7.8: LCT 225: Broad Steep-Sided Glen

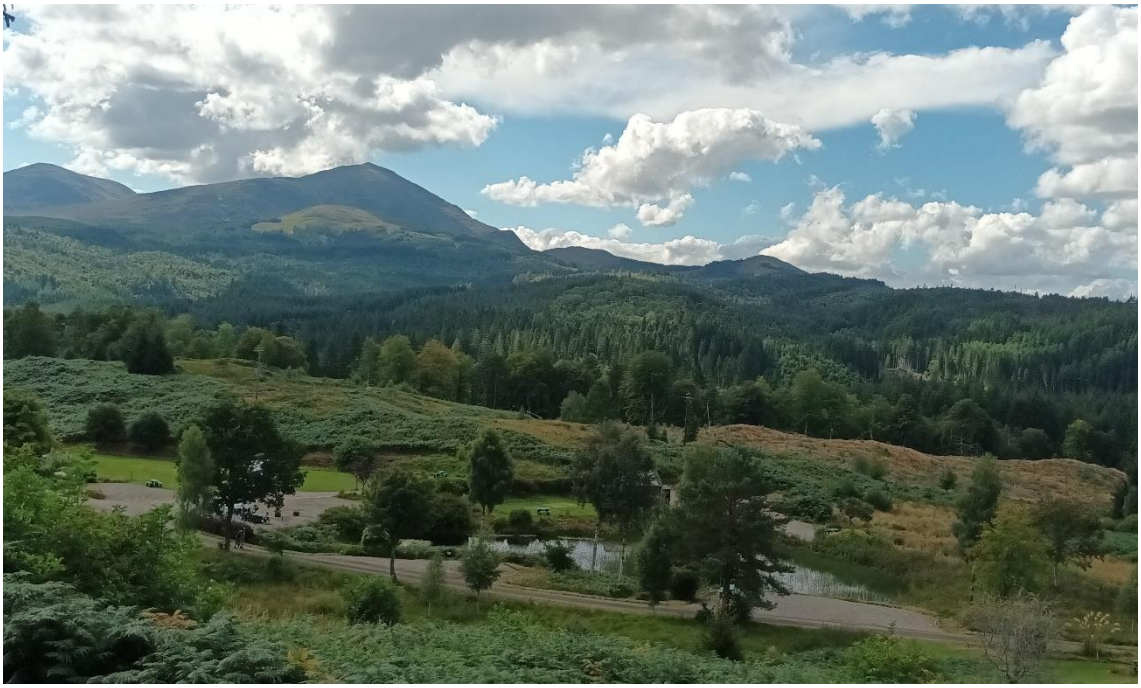


LCT 225 looking south-west over the Great Glen from the B862

Description	Comprising the area of the Great Glen between Loch Oich and Loch Ness, including the settlement of Fort Augustus. It is characterised by a long, linear steep-sided glen, the floor of which is occupied by Loch Ness (although only a very small part of the loch falls within the study area). The steep sides are cut by many rapidly descending burns and small rivers, often with waterfalls. Conifer forests dominate large areas of the lower glen slopes, often with rigid pronounced edges which contrast with the character of the underlying landform. Semi-natural woodlands frequently line the loch edges and are present on the flatter land between the lochs. The steep terrain restricts agricultural

	land use and settlement to a few flatter places on the loch shore and the alluvial plains at the ends of the lochs, particularly at the south end of Loch Ness where the core settlement of Fort Augustus dominates the character. In these alluvial plains, these small-scale landscapes of open agricultural land, woodlands and settlement add diversity, and also contrast with the large scale forested and moorland backdrop. There is a strong sense of linear enclosure within the glen with funnelled views along its length and particularly along the loch but also across the loch and glen where the steep sides for a long, linear skyline. The glen provides a busy transport and recreational corridor for the A82 trunk road, the Caledonian Canal through Loch Ness and the Great Glen Way walking and cycling routes.
Identified Key Characteristics	• A clearly defined, broad, linear, steep sided, v-shaped glen and deep loch cutting through mountains and hills, with limited areas of flatter ground; • Large-scale conifer forests with small areas of open moorland covering most of the glen sides, particularly the lower slopes; • Small patches of broad leaved woodlands, mostly in side glens and close to the shore; • Agricultural land on less steep slopes, glen intersections and alluvial plains; • A few settlements, with a well-defined core, located at glen intersections and on gentler slopes, separated by long stretches of relatively uninhabited land; • Contrast between the busy trunk road and larger settlements on the west side and the quiet minor road on east side which has fewer settlements separated by large undeveloped areas; • Strong evidence of past settlement in the number and diversity of archaeological and historic sites from prehistoric times to the 20th Century; • Contrast between the visual and seasonal diversity of broadleaf woodland and bright, open pockets of farmland and the forested and moorland surroundings. • Contrast between the smaller scale landscapes of settled, lower slopes and the large scale moorland and forested backdrop; • A simple linear and enclosed visual composition of bands of land, water and sky, with long skylines of even height, and the glen and loch as unifying features; and • Visual focus directed along the linear route of the glen or across the water to the opposite shore and up to the skyline.
Key Local Characteristics within the study area	• Clearly defined, linear, steep sided glen, with flat alluvial valley floor; • Large areas of coniferous forestry plantation typically clothing the lower slopes; • Central core of settlement and tourism activity in Fort Augustus at the southern end of Loch Ness and a series of locks marking the meeting point of the Caledonian Canal and the loch; • Patchwork of small agricultural areas, woodland, small forest plantations and scattered settlement characterise the alluvial plain between Loch Oich and Loch Ness; • The A82, Caledonian Canal and Great Glen Way follow the linear route of the glen and provide different ways of sequentially experiencing the landscape; • Contrast between the intimate scale and more diverse landscapes of the valley floor and the broad structure of forest and moorland hills which define the backdrop; • Typically open, linear skyline; and • Existing steel lattice OHL infrastructure cutting across the glen floor and up glen sides, focussed on the Fort Augustus Substation.
Landscape Value	This LCT falls within the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA, although the majority of the area within the study area is outwith the SLA. It is nevertheless, a popular and valued landscape as a setting for local settlement, as a transport corridor, for visiting tourists and as a setting to the A82, Caledonian Canal and Great Glen Way. Landscape value within the study area is considered to be Medium.

Table 7.9: LCT 235: Broad Forested Strath;

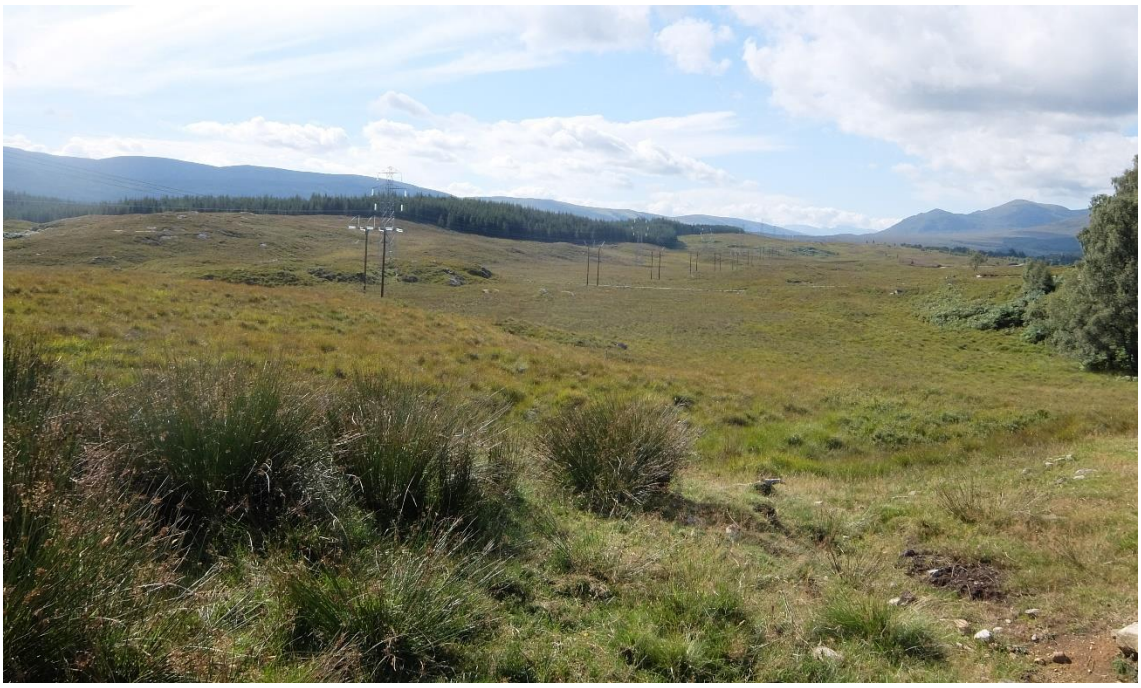


LCT 235 looking south-west from Faichem towards Ben Tee

Description	Within the study area, this LCT comprises the area of the Great Glen to the north of Loch Lochy, Glen Garry and surrounding forested and moorland slopes. It is characterised by a gently undulating, strath, covered with a broad mosaic of coniferous and deciduous woodland and open pasture, and occupied by large open water lochs. Strips of improved pasture are enclosed by post and wire fencing are associated with crofts and small farms across the glen floor. Coniferous forest has a strong influence on the landscape, forming vast swathes across the land with brown patches where clear felling has occurred. Deciduous woodlands occur below the more sheltered ridges, within steep river gullies and as scattered birch across parts of the glen floor. Linear settlements are concentrated along roads across the glen floor with larger villages situated in open areas, surrounded by the forests. The straths provide a route for linear infrastructure including roads, railways, transmission lines and the Caledonian Canal.
Identified Key Characteristics	• Broad, low-lying straths with rolling relief and sculptural glacial landforms. • Simple, large scale mosaic of forested ridges, rolling pastures and heather moorland, but dominated by swathes of forestry. • A comparatively densely settled landscape with villages, houses and sporadic commercial development. • Quarries hidden amongst the woodland cover. • Strong communication and service corridors. • Long distance views from surrounding hills over the glens, which are framed by steep glen sides. • Lochs, rivers or canals on glen floor have often been engineered or substantially altered by man.
Key Local Characteristics within the study area	• Broad, flat-bottomed strath enclosed by short, steep valleyside and rounded hills clothed by large areas of coniferous forest. • Improved and semi-improved agricultural lands characterise the more easterly valley floor, interspersed with areas of native woodland, scrub and more formal policy woodlands around parts of Loch Oich and the Glengarry Castle Hotel. • Area to the south side of Loch Garry, characterised by a more undulating landform of small knolls and rounded slopes, clothed by more continuous coniferous forest with areas of ancient Caledonian Pine woodland. • Open, sloping areas of agricultural land on the northern valleyside, set within the broader framework of forestry.

	• Linear settlement of Invergarry, characterised by traditional stone buildings set within mature oak woodland. • River Garry flows through the valley floor from Loch Garry, sometimes through sections of rocky gorge. • Areas of remote, moorland plateau above the forestry line; and • The valley provides a route for infrastructure including the busy A87 road, and existing steel lattice transmission lines, both crossing the glen, and travelling linearly along the upper glen side.
Landscape Value	Parts of this LCT on the eastern periphery of the study area lie within the edge of the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA. However, the majority of the LCT is not contributory to this designation. The area nevertheless has some value as a setting for residential and tourism development, for recreation and for the areas of Caledonian Pine woodland. Landscape value is Low – Medium.

Table 7.10: LCT 237: Rocky Moorland – Lochaber

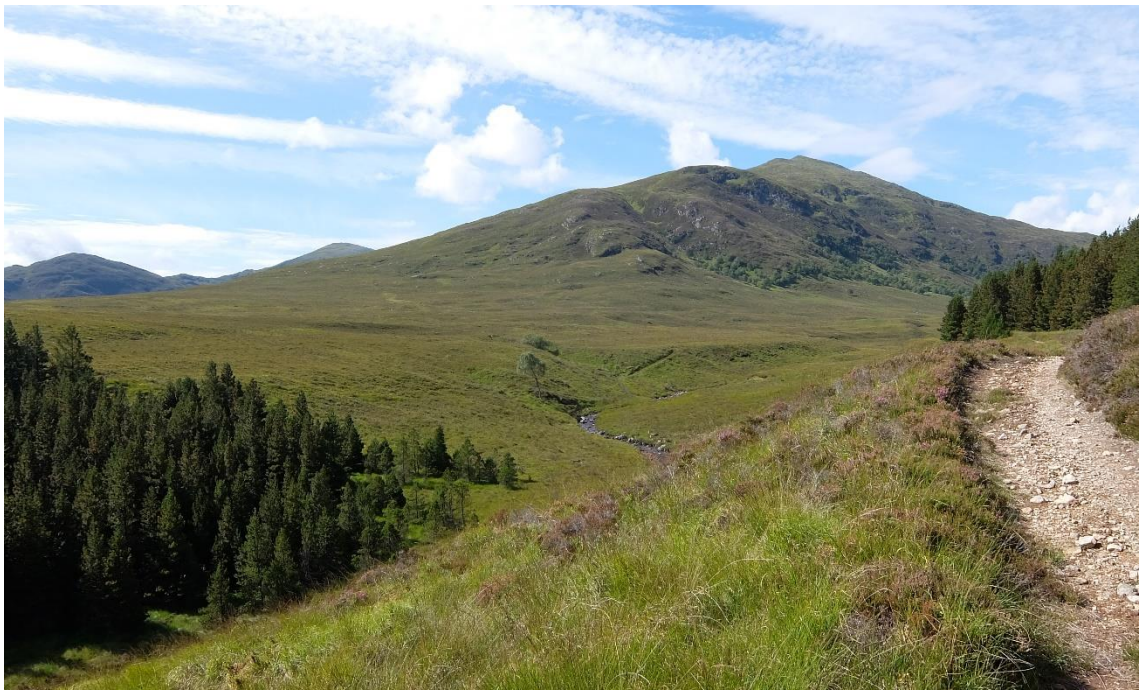


Looking south across LCT 237 from near Achadh-nan-darach

Description	Within the study area, this LCT covers the upper slopes and plateau area to the north of Glen Garry, including the area around Loch Lundie. It is described as an area of shallow slopes and undulating moorland plateaux with a coverage of heather and deer grass interrupted by small rocky outcrops, and with a distinctive, rocky texture. There are no obvious peaks or summits and the skyline appears as an undulating, crinkled silhouette. Small lochs occupy higher, flatter areas of moorland where vertical features tend to appear prominent. There is limited historic or present settlement associated with this LCT with signs of human occupation limited to areas of historic peat cutting and relict field systems. However, infrastructural features are often present including existing overhead transmission lines and wind turbines. Perceptions of wild character associated with rugged, more remote and higher areas are locally reduced by these features.
Identified Key Characteristics	• Rugged, undulating plateaux of heather moorland with a textured and crinkled skyline and no distinct summits or peaks. • Large patches of coniferous forestry. • Uniform expanses of marshy grassland, sedges and rushes, rocky outcrops and • stunted trees. • Isolated, upland lochans.

	• Infrastructure and engineered structures associated with hydro-electricity schemes such as pylons, dams and sub-stations. • Closely related to Smooth Moorland Ridges with long views but lacking the latter's distinctive smooth relief.
Key Local Characteristics within the study area	• Rugged, undulating plateaux of heather moorland with a textured and crinkled skyline and no distinct summits or peaks within the LCT, although hills in nearby LCTs are noticeable as a backdrop to this LCT, including Ben Tee to the south-west and Mam a'Chroisg to the north. • Large patches of coniferous forestry in the south-west of the LCT. • Uniform expanses of marshy grassland, sedges and rushes, rocky outcrops and stunted trees. • Isolated, upland lochans and lochs (such as Loch Lundie). • Infrastructure and engineered structures associated with hydro-electricity schemes such as pylons, dams, and views of wind turbines in adjacent LCT. • Long vistas across areas of open, undulating moorland.
Landscape Value	A small part of the LCT within the Great Glen falls within the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA but this area is atypical of the LCT in general with little visual connection to other areas. Overall, the LCT is valued for recreational opportunities and some remote qualities and scenic qualities near Loch Lundie, but its characteristics are generally common within the wider context. Landscape value is Low - Medium.

Table 7.11: LCT 239: Interlocking Sweeping Peaks



LCT 239 looking towards Ben Tee

	This LCT covers the southern edge of the study area within the area around the mountain of Ben Tee. It is described as a landscape of distinctive pyramidal peaks, steep sweeping slopes and deep glens. There is a rocky character to the landscape with jagged peaks, leading to a distinctly mountainous form and experience. Vegetation comprises a sparse covering of grasses and heather, grazed by sheep and deer and decreasing with height. Habitation is infrequent and the remote and rugged landscape with limited accessibility gives a sense of wild character. Long panoramic views are experienced from elevated areas and the mountains form a dramatic skyline and backdrop to lower lying landscapes.

	The Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme would be set within this LCT and may alter the sense of remoteness to some degree. However, this is not taken into account in the baseline for the landscape assessment, but is covered in the cumulative assessment.
Identified Key Characteristics	• Pyramidal mountain summits with a jagged profile, often appearing as overlapping, peaks along glen views. • Sweeping slopes with screes plunging directly into deep glens or lochs with little or no flat shoreline fringe. • Sparsely vegetated with few trees. • Numerous rocky outcrops punctuate the steep, rugged terrain. • Inaccessible and remote with wild character. • Long panoramic views.
Key Local Characteristics within the study area	• The distinctive conical mountain of Ben Tee forms a prominent focal point within the LCT and wider area; • Open, sweeping glen lying to the south-east of Ben Tee with steep, enclosing slopes and a sense of deep enclosure; • Principal landcover of heather and rough grassland, with rocky outcrops and extensive falls of scree on steeper slopes; • Open areas of elevated moorland plateau surround Ben Tee to the north and east with occasional small lochans and pools, and areas of bog; • Pockets of native woodland in gullies and on steeper slopes; • Elevated, panoramic views over Glen Garry and the hills to north and up the Great Glen; • Limited human interventions and lack of access gives sense of remoteness.
Landscape Value	This LCT forms a principal part of the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA, although only falling partially within the designated area within the study area. It is valued for its remote qualities, recreational opportunities and striking landform which forms a focal point throughout the surrounding landscape. The remote qualities would be slightly adulterated by the introduction of the Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme but this is not taken in account in the baseline. Landscape value is Medium - High.

7.6 Baseline Conditions: Visual Amenity

Interpretation of the ZTV

7.6.1 The ZTV (see **Figure 7.1b**) indicates that there would be widespread theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development within around 2.5 km, but more intermittent visibility beyond this distance, typically involving fewer than 5 towers and occasionally up to around 15 towers, visible from elevated facing slopes, including Ben Tee, around the Millennium Wind Farm and the facing valley slopes of the Great Glen.

7.6.2 Greatest numbers of visible towers (up to 30) are shown as most likely to be seen from areas of facing slopes between Glen Garry and Lon Mòr, and particularly from areas within 1 - 2 km of the Proposed Development to the east and north-east of Loch Lundie. However, ground truthing of the ZTV suggests that in reality, within some of these areas, woodland forestry may limit the numbers of towers which would be seen. Higher numbers of towers are also indicated as potentially visible from parts of the glen-sides and plateau areas to the north and south of Glen Garry, such as above Wester Mandally and Faicham but within the glen and around areas where settlement is present, theoretical visibility is shown to be reduced to much fewer towers with around 5 or 6 towers theoretically visible from Invergarry. Extensive woodland cover in this area would also be likely to further reduce intervisibility with proposed towers in this area.

7.6.3 The ZTV also suggests intervisibility of around 10 towers within settlement areas around Auchterawe and some limited and more distant theoretical visibility with other settlement areas in the Great Glen around Aberchalder, Newtown and Fort Augustus. Theoretical visibility within the Great Glen also covers transport and recreational routes to the north of Loch Oich including the A82, Great Glen Way and Caledonian Canal. As is the case for

other parts of the study area, this would be likely to be reduced in some areas by woodland and forest cover which is prevalent throughout this part of the Great Glen.

7.6.4 The ZTV indicates that there would be no intervisibility with other settlement areas around the shore of Loch Oich including North Laggan and Invergarry Castle, and within the Great Glen to the south of Fort Augustus including Ardachy House and Cullachy House and therefore these areas are not included in the visual assessment.

Visual Receptors

7.6.5 Visual receptors within the study area comprise residents or others present in and around buildings and settlement areas and those using routes (including transport and recreational routes) through the study area.

Building-based Receptors

7.6.6 Building-based receptors included in the assessment are mostly focussed within the lower lying areas of Glen Garry and the Great Glen. These areas are discussed as follows, and illustrated on **Figure 7.4a**:

Great Glen (Receptor Groups B1 – B6)

7.6.7 The village of Fort Augustus (Receptor Group B1), set at the end of Loch Ness, provides the main concentration of buildings within this part of the Great Glen including residential, business and tourist properties. The central core is focussed around a set of canal locks, the A82 and loch edge. Other views are typically across the loch and glen floor to the east, although views of the wider surrounding forested hills are obtained from some parts.

7.6.8 Other building receptor groups within the Great Glen include smaller settlement clusters and individual properties at Auchterawe (Receptor Group B2), around Kytra Lock and Coiltry (Receptor Group B3) Newtown (Receptor Group B4), and around Bridge of Oich and Aberchalder (Receptor Group B5). Views from these property groups are typically across small field areas of the valley floor or featuring the canal, with some woodland and forest plantation limiting the extent of views. Existing steel lattice towers form a close feature within views from properties at Auchterawe.

7.6.9 There is also a remote hill walkers' bothy situated at Achadh-nan-darach (Receptor Group B6), to the south-west Auchterawe where filtered south-easterly views are obtained across undulating moorland towards Ben Tee.

Glen Garry (Receptors Groups B7 – B12)

7.6.10 The main settlement of Invergarry (Receptor Group B8) provides the greatest concentration of building-based visual receptors within Glen Garry. This is a linear settlement set at the junction of the A82 and A87 and stretching west for a short distance along the A87 at the eastern end of Glen Garry. Smaller settlements along the valley floor include Easter and Wester Mandally (also part of Receptor Group B8) along the southern valley floor; a couple of properties within forest near (Receptor Group B10), and a small group of properties on the north shore of Loch Garry close to the western edge of the study area (Receptor Group B12). Views obtained from these properties are from low vantage, and often limited by trees and woodland, although more open views are obtained from some properties around Mandally and Invergarry across fields on the floor of the glen, and properties on the shore of Loch Garry, across the open water of the loch. These views are backclothed by the surrounding forested hills with Ben Tee sometimes forming a focal point in south and south-westerly views.

7.6.11 A small number of smaller settlement clusters and individual properties are set on the slightly higher glen sides where more elevated views across the glen are obtained. On the south side of the glen, there are northerly and easterly elevated views obtained from Glenluie, a single residential property (Receptor Group B9). On the northern side of the glen, Leacan Dubh and Munerigie (Receptor Group B11), a couple of residential and farm

properties; and Faicham (Receptor Group B7), a group of residential and farm properties and a small camping site have a generally southerly aspect, with views across the glen, featuring Ben Tee, although views from some properties / camping pitches are reduced by woodland and trees.

Route-based Receptors

7.6.12 Potential route-based visual receptors include those using public roads and recreational users of paths, tracks and other established walking routes. Routes within the study area are illustrated on **Figure 7.4b**. Views from the following routes have been identified within the study area for inclusion within the assessment (see **Figure 7.4b)**. See **Technical Appendix 7.2** for further information.

Public Roads

7.6.13 Travellers using four public roads have been included in the visual assessment as follows:

- Route R1: A82
  - Following the length of the Great Glen, used by residents and longer-distance travellers, and is popular as a tourist route. Travellers obtain varied views within the study area, often enclosed and channelled by surrounding woodland and forest, but with occasional longer range views from more open sections.
- Route R2: A87 Road
  - Leading west through Glen Garry from the Great Glen and comprising one of the main routes to Skye, this route is used by residents, longer distance travellers and tourists. Views are largely enclosed by trees and landform within the study area, with some glimpsed views of Loch Garry and passing views of properties in Invergarry.
- Route R3: B862
  - Leading from Fort Augustus around the south-eastern side of Loch Ness and ascending the glen side, this route is followed by the South Loch Ness Trail walking route and National Cycle Route (NCR) 78 and used by vehicle travellers and recreational users. Views are enclosed within the valley from the lower part but there are more extensive, elevated views overlooking Loch Ness and the Great Glen, from the route ascending the hill, particularly for those travelling south-west.
- Route R4: Minor road through Auchterawe
  - A single-track minor road leading to properties at Auchterawe and a forest car park at Torr Dhuin[13], which also comprises part of the recreational route Scottish Hill Track (SHT) 259). It is used by residents, visitors and recreational users. Views are largely enclosed by trees and landform, with short range views across small fields around Auchterawe where an existing steel lattice tower is close and prominent. The route passes close to Fort Augustus Substation where other OHL infrastructure converges and is seen in passing.

7.6.14 Other minor public roads in the study area have been scoped out of the detailed assessment as it is considered unlikely that there would be any significant effects for travellers on these routes. These routes typically serve residential clusters and are broadly accommodated in the associated assessment of building-based receptors These include minor roads around Fort Augustus, the minor road past Ardachy House and routes through Faichem and Mandally.

Recreational Routes

7.6.15 Recreational users include walkers, cyclists, horse riders and boat users. The following routes used by a range of receptors have been included in the assessment:

[13] https://forestryandland.gov.scot/visit/torr-dhuin

- Route R5: Recreational Routes through the Great Glen
  - Various routes, following the Great Glen, including the Great Glen Way long distance trail following the Caledonian Canal Tow Path, (Core Path IN16.07) and alternative routes to either side of Loch Oich (Core Paths IN16.15/LO11.06 and IN16.08/LO11.03), the Caledonian Canal and Great Glen Canoe Trail and parts of NCR 78. Views are mostly low level and enclosed, with some more open views across the glen from some sections.
- Route R6: Bridge of Oich to Achadh-nan-darach Track
  - Track alongside the River Oich and Invervegar Burn, also Core Path IN16.09/ LO11.02. Views are semi-open along the floor of the Great Glen, and towards hills to the west featuring wind turbines on the skyline. Some views include existing OHLs to the west, particularly near Achadh-nan-daradh.
- Route R7: Invergarry to Achadh-nan-darach Track
  - Track crossing open moorland to the east of Loch Lundie and through woodland along Aldernaig Burn (also Core Path LO11.02 and part of Scottish Hill Track 259). Views vary from open expansive views across moorland and Loch Lundie to distant hills and areas of forestry, to views enclosed within woodland. Existing steel lattice and wood pole OHLs run alongside this most of this track.
- Route R8: Torr Dhuin to Achadh-nan-darach Track
  - Track through Inchnacardoch Forest, leading to Achadh nan-darach from the north-east (also Core Path IN16.10 and part of Scottish Hill Track 259). Views are largely enclosed by forestry. Existing steel lattice and wood pole towers glimpsed and cross the route at various points.
- Route R9: Core Path IN16.14 (Auchterawe Woods Path)
  - Track through Inchnacardoch Forest to the north-west of Auchterawe. Views are largely enclosed, with some elevated views over Auchterawe and Fort Augustus Substation through clearings and of existing OHL wayleave corridors.
- Route R10: Core Path IN16.13 (Torr Dhuin to River Oich walk)
  - Track rough forestry from Torr Dhuin car park following River Oich with views largely enclosed by forest. Also comprises part of Scottish Hill Track 259.
- Route R11: Core Path IN16.12 (Torr Dhuin Trail)
  - Circular trail through woodland from Torr Dhuin car park leading to an informal ‘viewpoint’ at Torr Dhuin. Views are otherwise mostly enclosed by woodland but with existing steel lattice towers also seen at close proximity. The route also includes part of Scottish Hill Track 259.
- Route R12: Jenkins Park Forest Walks
  - Group of tracks within forestry to the west of Auchterawe and Jenkins Park including Core Paths IN16.02, IN 16.03, IN16.11 and IN16.16. Views are typically enclosed in forest with some elevated glimpsed views over the Great Glen.
- Route R13: River Oich Trail
  - Circular woodland trail along to the west of the River Oich with views either enclosed by forestry, or open across River Oich and with some views of Fort Augustus Substation and steel lattice towers where the route crosses the Beauly-Denny wayleave corridor.
- Route R14: River Garry Paths
  - Group of accessed via Whitebridge Car Park including Core Paths LO11.01, LO11.09 and Ciste Dubh Trail. Views are mostly enclosed by woodlands and focused over the river. Some of these routes appear overgrown and little used.
- Route R15: Whitebridge Forest Paths
  - Various trails within the forest at Whitebridge, including Core Path LO11.08 and waymarked Allt na Cailliche Trail. Views are mostly contained within forest and focused over the stream and waterfalls though with some more open elevated views through forest clearings.

- Route R16: Scottish Hill Track 238
  - This is part of a longer distance route) which follows forestry tracks within the study area and continues round the hills and Loch Arkaig (also part of the Cape Wrath Trail, Great Glen Option). Within the study area, views are largely enclosed by forest.
- Route R17: Ascent / Descent of Ben Tee
  - Path through forest and unmarked route to mountain summit offering expansive elevated views over Glen Garry and the Great Glen, increasing with height.

7.7 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects: Landscape

7.7.1 This section of the LVIA provides an assessment of the effects that the Proposed Development would have on the landscape character within the study area during construction, and during operation, 10 years after completion, in accordance with the effects criteria outlined in Section 7.3.

7.7.2 Assessment of potential effects on each LCT (see **Figure 7.2**) are presented in **Table 7.12** to **Table 7.16**.

Table 7.12: LCT 220 – Rugged Massif

Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which could be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • Expansive views of the adjacent straths and surrounding landscape experienced from the edge of the massif; • The sense of relative remoteness compared with settled glens below; • The sense of development and connectivity with the wider landscape through the presence of tracks and OHLs crossing through this landscape and into adjacent areas and wind turbines.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a landscape of some local value with a sense of relative remoteness compared with the settled glens below. However, the presence of tracks and OHLs crossing this LCT, and wind turbines in this LCT gives some suitability for further concise, built development which follows the pattern of existing developments. Sensitivity is considered to be Low – Medium.
Potential Effects	Potential effects to landscape receptors may include: • The Proposed Development may appear within expansive views from hilltops and form a distraction within the wider open landscape; • The Proposed Development may increase the sense of development within the surrounding landscape and the sense of connectivity with adjacent LCTs leading to a blurring of the contrast between LCTs; • Construction activities or permanent features in the wider landscape, could disrupt the remote and settled sense of place.
Nature and Magnitude of Effect	There would be no direct change to this LCT. Indirect change would be limited to the appearance of the Proposed Development within the south-easterly and easterly context where it would replace the existing 132 kV Fort William – Fort Augustus OHL, following a similar alignment. This intervisibility would be limited to a few southern and eastern facing slopes, largely within a forested area and also on open slopes around the turbines of the extended Millennium Wind Farm, as indicated by the ZTV (see **Figure 7.1b**) within around 1 km and 4 km. The towers would appear similar to the existing towers in this context and would therefore be representative of a characteristic already present within this area. However, they would appear noticeably taller than those they would replace. Construction works would form a greater focus and presence of activity than operational towers due to the appearance of tracks, excavated foundation areas and construction plant. The magnitude of change would be Low during construction and Negligible during operation, after 10 years.

Significance of Effect	Construction works would temporarily form an increased focus and distraction in the adjacent LCT but effects would be limited given and forestry screening. From the edge of the LCT, increased movement of vehicles may be perceived, and could lead to some limited disruption to remote qualities at some times. However, although possibly more frequent for a short period, this is not predicted to have any noticeably increased effect on the landscape character compared to existing activities which may already be expected to occur, such as maintenance traffic for the wind farm or forestry traffic. As such, any change to the character of this LCT is likely to be barely perceptible. During operation, the Proposed Development may be perceptible in expansive views but given existing OHL development nearby, some of which would be replaced by the Proposed Development, is unlikely to form a form a new distraction in the wider landscape or increase the perception of development. The effect would be **Negligible** (not significant) during construction, and **Negligible** (not significant) during operation after 10 years.

Table 7.13: LCT 225: Broad Steep-Sided Glen

Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which could be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • Contrast between the intimate scale and more diverse landscapes of the valley floor and the broad structure of forest and moorland hills which define the backdrop; • Typically open, linear skyline; • Existing patterns of steel lattice OHL infrastructure across the landscape.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a moderately valued landscape. The broad structure and wooded qualities which already accommodate some development of the type proposed give some localised opportunity for further, limited development. However, in parts, the small, intimate scale of the valley floor, and simple linear skyline are very susceptible to further large scale development of this type. Sensitivity is considered to be Medium - High.
Potential Effects	Potential effects to landscape receptors may include: • The Proposed Development may lead to the presence of more activity, construction and focus within the broad patterns of the backdrop, forming a distraction from the more complex valley floor areas; • The Proposed Development through valley floor areas, may fragment or dominate the smaller scale patterns and characteristics of these areas; • The appearance of the Proposed Development on the skyline could reduce the perceived height of the containing valleyside and draw focus from the smaller scale landscapes of the valley floor; and • The Proposed Development may add to the presence of existing steel lattice OHLs which may increase a perceived dominance of these structures within the landscape.
Nature and Magnitude of Effect	Approximately 5 km of the Proposed Development comprising 17 towers falls within this LCT, situated within forested areas on the north-western side of the glen, and to the south and south-east of Auchterawe. The ZTV (see **Figure 7.1b**) indicates that there would be relatively wide intervisibility with towers throughout the LCT, with only a few small areas on the lower glen floor and northern slopes likely to be unaffected. The Proposed Development would replace the existing 132 kV Fort William – Fort Augustus OHL, following a similar alignment, but with fewer, taller towers. However, there would be a slight variation in alignment around Auchterawe and the approach to the Fort Augustus Substation, where the new OHL would take a more easterly route through forest, and the existing OHL, through a small open area of fields, would be removed. Although replacing the existing towers, the taller towers of the Proposed Development would be more widely seen to break the skyline in the westerly context of areas on the valley floor such as Coiltry, although in reality the presence of woodland around the valley floor limits the extent to which this skyline is seen. By contrast, the Proposed Development would be less noticeable than existing towers

	within the localised landscape around Auchterawe due to its alignment within the forest. In all areas, construction works would form a more noticeable feature than permanent towers in the local context, although many aspects of these works may appear similar to existing forestry activities. The magnitude of change would be locally Low – Medium around Auchterawe and along the alignment (elsewhere Negligible) during construction. Given that the Proposed Development would involve the replacement of existing, similar structures which are already present in the LCT, albeit with towers of greater scale, the magnitude of change during operation, after 10 years, would be locally Low around Auchterawe (elsewhere Negligible).
Significance of Effect	The introduction of the Proposed Development within the wooded context of this LCT, is likely to be perceived similarly as the existing OHL it is replacing, for the most part between Auchterawe and Achadh-nan-darach. The replacement of smaller steel lattice towers with fewer, larger towers would be perceptible from some areas and would have a slightly greater influence on character, but given the wooded character, they would be unlikely to distract from the smaller scale valley floor area. In the area around Auchterawe, the change would be more noticeable, where the existing OHL towers through an open field would be replaced with fewer, taller towers through forestry to the south-east of the existing OHL which would reduce their influence on the local character. Towers would be more noticeable crossing elevated ground to the south-west of Auchterawe, breaking the skyline. This may fragment some small-scale features of this local landscape and towers would be locally prominent in these areas. However, this would to some extent be balanced by the removal of existing prominent towers crossing open fields. The presence of some towers on the skyline could also reduce the perceived height of the containing valleyside and draw focus from the smaller scale landscapes of the valley floor. During construction, there would be increased activity, including felling, which may disrupt the quiet settled sense of place, although some activity may be similar to forestry operations. The effect would be **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant) during construction, and **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during operation, after 10 years.

Table 7.14: LCT 235: Broad Forested Strath

Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which could be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • Valley-sides, knolls and undulating slopes clothed with coniferous forest cover; • Areas of Caledonian Pine Forest and other native woodlands which provide diversity; • Broad pattern of open, sloping agricultural areas and forest cover on the northern glen side; • Areas of remote, moorland plateau above the forest line; and • Existing patterns of steel lattice OHL infrastructure across the landscape.
Landscape Sensitivity	This LCT has some, limited value. The broad pattern of forest cover and existing forest management, and presence of some existing, similar development, gives some opportunity to accommodate development of the type proposed without notable landscape change, although open and settled areas along the floor of the strath and towards the east are more susceptible to the introduction of new, large features within the landscape, and localised features such as Caledonian Forest cover are more susceptible to the direct effects of a wayleave . Sensitivity is considered to be Medium.
Potential Effects	Potential effects to landscape receptors may include:

	• The appearance of a wayleave and new OHL through forest cover may form a distracting or eye-catching feature which does not respond to local variations in the landscape and may fragment landscape features; • Potential direct loss of Caledonian forest or other native woodlands may reduce diversity and perceived value in the landscape; • The Proposed Development may appear prominent within open areas of the valley side where the height of towers may lead to a perceived reduction the height of enclosing slopes; • The Proposed Development during construction and operation may affect the sense of remoteness within the upland, moorland plateau areas; and • The Proposed Development may draw the existing pattern of OHL development into new areas or lead to increased prominence of OHLs leading to a greater influence of this type of development on the landscape character.
Nature and Magnitude of Effect	The Proposed Development would commence in this LCT and cross Glen Garry near the eastern end of Loch Garry, with a length of around 3.5 km within the LCT, comprising 11 towers. This is a part of the LCT which is strongly characterised by forest cover. The Proposed Development would pass through an area of undulating forested knolls on the south side of the A87, and ascend a smooth forested slope on the north side of the glen, requiring the establishment of a new wayleave which would form a linear clearing through the forest, cutting across the glen. The ZTV suggests that towers would be intervisible with the majority of the LCT excluding parts within the Great Glen and some forested areas to the south of Loch Garry. However, within this setting, it is likely that woodland throughout the LCT would limit wider intervisibility. There is the potential for tops of towers to appear above the tree line which would lead to some wider indirect change, most likely to be perceived within the setting of more elevated clearings within the forest and occasionally, open areas of the valley floor. Wayleave areas would potentially be intervisible with elevated slopes on the opposite sides of the valley but would be concealed from most areas by other forest and woodland cover. Construction works would also be perceived in localised areas. These would appear not dissimilar to forestry works which might be expected to occur within this LCT, but of a somewhat greater intensity within localised areas around tower positions. The magnitude of change would be Low – Medium during construction and Low during operation, after 10 years.
Significance of Effect	The introduction of the Proposed Development and associated wayleave corridor within the wooded context of this LCT is likely to be perceptible as a linear feature fragmenting and cutting through forest cover, and potentially reducing diversity in the local context through the loss of some small areas of native woodland (potentially including small areas of Caledonian Pine Forest). It would potentially appear prominent in some locations where it may reduce the perceived height of landform, such as near the River Garry crossing, but this would be very localised, due to the enclosure of surrounding forest areas. In upland, moorland plateau areas, north-east of the A87, it would lead to some localised increase the prominence of development and may reduce the sense of remoteness. However, this area is already influenced to some extent by existing steel lattice towers and a wood pole OHL that continues west along the north of Loch Garry. Although part of the OHL would run alongside an existing OHL, it would also bring OHL development into new areas south of the A87/Glen Garry where it would increase the prominence of OHL development in the local landscape. However, forestry and landform would limit the extent of this effect. During construction, activity would increase the perception of development, although may appear somewhat similar to forestry activities which would already be expected to take place in this landscape, and therefore may not appear very noticeably out of place. The level of effects is predicted to be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction and operation, after 10 years.

Table 7.15: LCT 237: Rocky Moorland – Lochaber

Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which could be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • Rugged, undulating plateaux of heather moorland with a textured and crinkled skyline and no distinct summits or peaks within the LCT, although hills in nearby LCTs are noticeable as a backdrop to this LCT, including Ben Tee to the south-west and Mam a' Chroisg to the north. • Large patches of coniferous forestry in the south-west of the LCT. • Presence of infrastructure and engineered structures such as OHLs in this LCT, and views of wind turbines in adjacent LCT. • Sense of isolation within moorland and lochan landscape; • Long vistas across areas of open, undulating moorland and across scenic Loch Lundie.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is an LCT of some value within the local context. The presence of existing similar OHL infrastructure gives some opportunity to accommodate further development of the type proposed, although the LCT is susceptible to changes which would lead to infrastructure becoming more dominating over more valued aspects of the landscape such as Loch Lundie. Sensitivity is considered to be Medium.
Potential Effects	Potential effects to landscape receptors may include: • The Proposed Development may detract from the rugged undulating moorland and long vistas and contribute focal features through the landscape or on the skyline. • The Proposed Development may alter the perceived scale of landscape features, including the relative height of hills in the distance and heights of existing OHLs crossing the landscape; • The appearance of a wayleave and OHL through forest cover may fragment an existing area of coniferous forestry; • The Proposed Development during construction and operation may affect the sense of isolation associated with upland moorland and lochan landscape; and • The Proposed Development may draw the existing pattern of OHL development into new areas or lead to increased prominence of OHLs leading to a greater influence of this type of development on the landscape character.
Nature and Magnitude of Effect	Approximately 4 km of the Proposed Development would cross this LCT, comprising 16 towers, replacing the existing Fort William – Fort Augustus 132 kV OHL; and replacements towers for the diversion into the proposed Loch Lundie Substation. Towers along the majority of the route would be fewer in number, but noticeably taller than those which would be replaced. The Proposed Development would follow a broadly similar alignment through the landscape to the OHL it would replace but would pass through a forested area for around 1.5 km, and therefore more contained by forestry, compared to the existing OHL to be removed which is situated outside the forest edge, which runs alongside an existing wood pole OHL which would remain. This short section of the Proposed Development would require felling to establish a wayleave. The Proposed Development would also cross on an east/west trajectory, to the south of Loch Lundie where the existing OHL follows an alignment to the south. The ZTV (see **Figure 7.1b**) indicates that intervisibility of the Proposed Development would be relatively widespread throughout the plateau area surrounding Loch Lundie, and rocky moorland areas to the north of the forest plantation. However, the Proposed Development would be most likely to appear be seen within the southern context of the loch and within the north-eastern part of the LCZ, north of the forest plantation, with the forestry area likely to limit the intervisibility of towers between these two areas to occasional tops, seen from higher areas. There would be a greater spread of intervisibility throughout the wider LCZ during construction due to the construction and use of access routes and dismantling of existing towers. The new towers for the diversion into the proposed Loch Lundie Substation would replace existing towers of a

	similar scale in a slightly different alignment, and would not be perceptible as a change to landscape characteristics. Magnitude of change would be Low - Medium during construction, reducing to Low during operation, after 10 years, taking account of both the towers which would be constructed and those which would be removed.
Significance of Effect	The introduction of the Proposed Development OHL within this LCT may be perceived as an improvement to the landscape characteristics of this LCT since there would be fewer OHL towers running alongside the forest edge, given the removal of an existing steel lattice OHL in this alignment. The Proposed Development would instead be relatively contained crossing through a felled wayleave in a forestry block. This may slightly fragment the forestry, but tree cover would still be perceived to extend across a large area. To the north of the forestry, the new larger towers may alter the perceived scale of other landscape features, and pull visual focus slightly. However, the larger scale towers are unlikely to noticeably increase the prominence of OHLs when taking into account the steel lattice OHL would be replaced and the existing wood pole OHL which would remain. The potential for beneficial effects associated with the alignment of the Proposed Development through forestry is balanced out by the potential for adverse effects associated with the larger scale of the proposed OHL towers compared to those they would replace. Therefore, a neutral effect is predicted as the Proposed Development is not expected to result in a discernible reduction or improvement in scenic quality. During construction, the perception of development and activity, including the removal of the existing towers as well as the erection of the new would increase the level of effect. The level of effects is predicted to be **Minor Adverse** (not significant), during construction, reducing to **Negligible** (not significant) during operation, after 10 years.

Table 7.16: LCT 239: Interlocking Sweeping Peaks

Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which could be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • The role of Ben Tee as a focal point within the LCT and wider area; • Elevated, panoramic views over Glen Garry and the hills to north and up the Great Glen; and • Sense of remoteness.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a valued LCT, with remote and characteristics, open slopes and striking landform and exposed, elevated qualities which are very susceptible to change of the type proposed. Sensitivity is therefore considered to be High.
Potential Effects	Potential effects to landscape receptors may include: • The Proposed Development during construction or operation may intrude into views towards Ben Tee or distract from its role as a focal point; • The Proposed Development may form a distraction within elevated panoramic views; • Activities relating to the construction of the Proposed Development or permanent features may affect the sense of remoteness.
Nature and Magnitude of Effect	There would be no direct change to this LCT with the closest tower being located within the surrounding landscape context, around 2 km to the north. The ZTV indicates that intervisibility with the Proposed Development would theoretically occur across a relatively limited area including the facing slopes and summit of Ben Tee and an elevated ridgeback of moorland to the east of the mountain. Potential change occurring within these areas would be limited to the appearance of the Proposed Development within the northerly landscape context where construction activities including felling works, and the operational wayleave corridor, tracks and towers would appear within the panoramic elevated views which would be obtained. These

	features would be seen within a context of existing, forest management, wind turbines of the Millennium Wind Farm, and other, smaller steel lattice OHLs, some of which comprise those which would be removed as part of the Proposed Development. Given the context and limited area of the LCT affected, it is considered that this would constitute a barely perceptible change to characteristics, although construction activities over an extended area would be slightly more noticeable than the operational development. The magnitude of change is predicted to be Low during construction and Negligible during operation, after 10 years.
Significance of Effect	The construction of the Proposed Development, within the northerly context to this LCT is likely to be perceived as a linear construction corridor across Glen Garry and extending northwards past Loch Lundie within the elevated panoramic views which are obtained. This linear corridor would be emphasised by the inclusion of tracks and areas of felled wayleave. However, this would be experienced from only limited parts of the LCT, and seen at considerable distance as part of a very wide context where existing forest activities and other infrastructure is already present. Whilst more extent of the Proposed Development would be experienced with increased height (i.e. from the upper slopes and summit of Ben Tee), this would also be with a greater sense of distance and disconnect due to the elevation and expansive vistas experienced at this height. By ten years post construction, with the re-growth of vegetation within wayleaves and reinstatement and softening of access tracks and tower foundation areas, this is unlikely to lead to any perceived change in the key characteristics of this LCT where existing infrastructure is already experienced as part of the context, some of which would be replaced by the Proposed Development. No change to the sense of remoteness is predicted, and there would be unlikely to be any change the role of Ben Tee as a focus within the LCT. The level of effect is predicted to be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction, and **Negligible** during operation.

Summary of Landscape Effects

7.7.3 A summary of the effects on LCTs during construction and operation is provided in **Table 7.17** and **Table 7.18**. Significant effects are those identified as being Moderate or greater. 'L' is used to denote a localised effect (limited to a particular, distinct part of the landscape).

Table 7.17: Summary of Landscape Effects During Construction

LCT or Designated / Protected Landscape	Beneficial Effect						Adverse Effect				
	Major	Moderate - Major	Moderate	Minor – Moderate	Minor	Negligible / Scoped Out	Minor	Minor – Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Major	Major
LCT 220: Rugged Massif – Inverness;						•					
LCT 225: Broad Steep-Sided Glen;								•			
LCT 235: Broad Forested Strath;							•				

LCT or Designated / Protected Landscape	Beneficial Effect						Adverse Effect				
	Major	Moderate - Major	Moderate	Minor – Moderate	Minor	Negligible / Scoped Out	Minor	Minor – Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Major	Major
LCT 237: Rocky Moorland – Lochaber							•				
LCT 239: Interlocking Sweeping Peaks							•				
Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA						•					
Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA						•					

Table 7.18: Summary of Landscape Effects During Operation (After 10 Years)

LCZ or Designated / Protected Landscape	Beneficial Effect						Adverse Effect				
	Major	Moderate - Major	Moderate	Minor – Moderate	Minor	Negligible / Scoped Out	Minor	Minor – Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Major	Major
LCT 220: Rugged Massif – Inverness;						•					
LCT 225: Broad Steep-Sided Glen;							•				
LCT 235: Broad Forested Strath;							•				
LCT 237: Rocky Moorland – Lochaber						•					
LCT 239: Interlocking Sweeping Peaks						•					
Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA						•					
Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA						•					

7.8 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects: Visual Amenity

7.8.1 This Section of the LVIA discusses the findings of the detailed visual assessment undertaken for the Proposed Development. It evaluates and describes the likely changes to existing views from buildings, routes and other popular destinations during the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development and the

extent to which these changes would affect the visual amenity of residents, visitors and other users of the landscape in accordance with the effects criteria outlined in Section 7.3.

Building-based Receptors

7.8.2 Twelve building-based receptor groups have been included in the assessment as described in **Technical Appendix 7.2** and Section 7.6, and shown on **Figure 7.4a**. The assessment has identified that the majority of effects to building-based receptors would be not significant. Temporary significant effects were identified for one of these building-based receptor groups during construction only. Long-term beneficial effects, though not significant, were also assessed for receptors on in one built receptor group during operation.

7.8.3 Visual effects for receptors included in the assessment are described below.

Great Glen (Receptor Groups B1 – B5)

7.8.4 A temporary significant visual effect has been identified for Receptor Group B2 (Auchterawe) during construction. For these receptors, construction effects would be **Moderate Adverse** (significant) as works to dismantle existing steel lattice towers would be very noticeable in main views, whilst other construction activity and traffic may also be visible. During operation (after 10 years), effects would be reduced and the Proposed Development is expected to lead to an improvement to the existing view due to the removal of the existing steel lattice towers, and realignment of the Proposed Development towers within the forest area. This would comprise a **Minor – Moderate Beneficial** (not significant) effect because the Proposed Development would be mostly hidden by existing forestry in the majority of views, although the tops of some towers may be seen above the forest. Towers may also be seen in oblique views from more southerly properties, particularly crossing elevated ground at Torr Dhuin. A worst-case view from this area is illustrated by Visualisation Location 1 (Auchterawe Road) (see **Volume 3A, Figures 7.6a-g of and Volume 3B, Figures 7.11a-g**).

7.8.5 **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effects have been identified during construction and operation for receptors in Receptor Group B3 (Kytra Lock, Coiltry and Inverhaven) where there would be likely to be some views of the Proposed Development above trees, although landform and forestry on Torr Dhuin would be likely to conceal most parts of the Proposed Development from the lower properties.

7.8.6 **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effects are also predicted during construction for receptors in Receptor Groups B4 (Newtown) and B6 (Achadh-nan-darach Bothy), where construction works may be perceptible in views, although partially screened by landform and/or trees. These effects are expected to reduce to Negligible during operation (after 10 years) because there would be limited perceptibility of the Proposed Development due to distance, tree screening and where visible, it would not be expected to have a greater effect on the visual amenity than the existing steel lattice towers it would replace.

7.8.7 The visual effect for Receptor Groups B1 (Fort Augustus) and B5 (Properties around Bridge of Oich and Cullochy) is predicted to be **Negligible** during both construction and operation. For these receptors, the Proposed Development would be barely perceptible, due to the effects of distance, screening from surrounding woodland and landform, and the Proposed Development is considered unlikely to result in any greater effect on visual amenity than the existing steel lattice OHL it would replace.

Glen Garry (Receptor Groups B7 – B12)

7.8.8 No significant effects are predicted for any visual receptors within this group.

7.8.9 **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant) effects are predicted during construction and operation (after 10 years) for receptors in Receptor Group B7 (Faichem), since the Proposed Development would be noticeable crossing through a new wayleave corridor through forestry in some elevated main views, seen adjacent to Ben Tee. Some construction activity, including tree felling, would be visible to the north-west, but likely to be filtered

or screened by trees. VL 4 (Faichem) is located within this receptor group, and illustrates elevated views that would be anticipated from some receptors this area (see **Figure 7.9a-d of Volume 3A** and **Figure 7.14a-e of Volume 3B**).

7.8.10 **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effects are predicted during construction and operation (after 10 years) for receptors in Receptor Group B11 (Leacan Dubh and Munerigie), since the Proposed Development is likely to be perceptible in oblique main views. The tops of towers are likely to be seen above forested hills to the east of Ben Tee, but would be relatively distant in views.

7.8.11 **Negligible** (not significant) effects would also be anticipated during construction and operation (after 10 years) for other receptors in the Glen Garry in Receptor Groups B8 (Invergarry), B9 (Glenluie), B10 (Whitebridge) and B12 (Properties on shore of Loch Garry). For these receptors, the Proposed Development would be barely perceptible, due to the effects of distance, screening from woodland and landform.

Route-based Receptors

7.8.12 Seventeen routes or route groupings have been included in the assessment, as described in **Technical Appendix 7.2** (see **Figure 7.4 b**). The assessment has identified that the majority of effects to route-based receptors would be not significant. Temporary significant effects were identified for receptors on four of these routes during construction and in the long-term on one route during operation. Long-term beneficial effects, though not significant, were also assessed for receptors on one route during operation.

7.8.13 Visual effects for receptors included in the assessment are described below.

Public Roads (Routes R1 – R4)

7.8.14 Temporary significant effects are predicted during construction for receptors on one public road: Route R4 (Minor road through Auchterawe). For users of this route, there would be **Moderate Adverse** (significant) effects during construction, where dismantling of the existing nearby steel lattice OHL would be very noticeable from the south-western part of the route, and felling works and construction of new towers would also be seen in forest areas to the south-west. During operation (after 10 years), effects would be reduced, and the Proposed Development is expected to result in an improvement to the visual amenity for users of this route due to the removal of existing prominent towers. **Minor – Moderate Beneficial** (not significant) effects are predicted, because the Proposed Development would be mostly hidden by existing forest from the majority of the route, although the tops of some towers may be seen above the forest. Towards the south-western end of the route, towers would be more prominent in the south-westerly view, crossing elevated ground at Torr Dhuin, as shown by Visualisation Location 1 (Auchterawe Road) (see **Figure 7.6a-g of Volume 3A** and **Figure 7.11a-g of Volume 3B**). However overall, the effect on this short section of the route is considered to be outweighed by the beneficial effects elsewhere.

7.8.15 **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effects are assessed for receptors on Routes R2 (A87) and R3 (B862) during construction and operation (after 10 years). The Proposed Development (and in particular the associated felled wayleave corridor) would be perceptible from sections of these routes. However, these would be brief views and seen in passing, and in the context of a landscape where ongoing forest management and existing OHLs are already visible. VL 5 (A87, west of Invergarry) is located on route R2, and illustrates a view looking north-west along the road (see **Figure 7.10a-d of Volume 3A** and **Figure 7.15a-e of Volume 3B**), while VL 2 (South Loch Ness Trail by the B862) is located on route R3, and illustrates an elevated view looking south-west (see **Figure 7.7a-d of Volume 3A** and **Figure 7.12a-e of Volume 3B**).

7.8.16 **Negligible** (not significant) effects are anticipated for receptors on route R1 (A82) during construction and operation (after 10 years) since the Proposed Development would form a barely perceptible change to the overall visual experience for receptors on this route.

Recreational Routes (Routes R5 – R17)

7.8.17 Significant effects are anticipated during construction and operation (after 10 years) for receptors on one recreational route: R11 (Core Path IN16.12 (Torr Dhuin Trail)); and during construction for receptors on two further recreational routes: R13 (River Oich Trail) and R14 (River Garry Path).

7.8.18 For receptors on recreational route R11 (Torr Dhuin Trail), effects would be **Moderate - Major Adverse** (significant) during construction. Part of this route would be used for construction access and views of construction dismantling and tree felling would be very noticeable from various sections. The visual effect would reduce during operation (after 10 years), because the route would no longer be affected by construction activities. However, a **Moderate Adverse** (significant) effect is predicted because the steel lattice towers would be noticeable, following a section of this track and crossing the route in two locations.

7.8.19 **Moderate Adverse** (significant) effects would also be experienced by receptors on recreational routes R13 (River Oich Trail) and R14 (River Garry Paths), but during construction only. From route R13, construction would be visible along and nearby this route, since the Proposed Development would pass alongside this route for about 800m and would cross it at either end. From route R14, construction would also be visible in the immediate vicinity as parts of these routes would be used for access, and the new towers, tree felling and other construction activity would be noticeable nearby from short sections, alongside the river. These effects for receptors on both Routes R13 and R14 would reduce during operation (after 10 years) to **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant). These operational effects would not be significant since the Proposed Development would affect only short sections of the routes, and would be otherwise screened by trees.

7.8.20 **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant) effects would be experienced for receptors on three recreational routes during construction: R6 (Bridge of Oich to Achadh-nan-darach Track), R7 (Invergarry to Achadh-nan-darach Track) and R8 (Torr Dhuin to Achadh-nan-darach). During construction, these routes would be used for access and construction activity would be noticeable nearby and in the surrounding area, particularly where the Proposed Development would cross the route or run alongside it. For receptors on Route R7, dismantling of the existing OHL would also be noticeable alongside the route. During operation, effects would reduce for receptors on these three recreational routes. For receptors on routes R6 and R8, these effects would reduce in operation to **Minor Adverse** (not significant), since the replacement of the existing OHL with larger towers would be perceptible from parts of the routes, and for Route R6, would form a noticeable but very localised change where the OHL would cross the route.

7.8.21 For receptors on Route R7, operational effects are predicted to be **Negligible** (not significant). Although the Proposed Development would form a noticeable change within the view, the adverse effects of the new, taller towers seen from some parts of the route would be offset by beneficial changes where existing steel lattice towers running alongside this route would be removed. From these sections of the route the Proposed Development would lead to fewer towers, set back from the route, including a section through forestry where the lower parts of the towers would be concealed. Overall, from some parts of the route, a slight positive effect is anticipated, whilst for others, there may be a slight negative effect and therefore, the Proposed Development is not predicted to lead to any overall deterioration or improvement to the visual amenity of recreational users. An example of the visual effect from this route is given by Visualisation Location 3 (Core Path LO11.02 near Achadh-nan-darach) which illustrates the view looking south-south-west along the route (see **Figure 7.8a-d of Volume 3A and Figure 7.13a-e of Volume 3B**).

7.8.22 **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effects are predicted for receptors on Route R16 (Scottish Hill Track 238), during construction and operation whereby the Proposed Development would be screened from the majority of the route, but would be noticeable for a very short section where it would cross. For receptors on Route R9 (Core Path IN1.614 (Auchterawe Woods Path), **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effects would also be experienced, but during construction only since part of it would be used for access and construction would be

visible from a very short section of the route, where it would be crossed by the Proposed Development. This effect would reduce to **Negligible** (not significant) during operation since the replacement of the existing OHL would have a barely perceptible influence on the visual amenity for users of the route overall.

7.8.23 **Negligible** (not significant) effects are predicted during construction and operation for receptors on Routes R5 (Recreational Routes through the Great Glen), R10 (Core Path IN16.13 (Torr Dhuin to River Oich walk)), R12 (Jenkins Park Forest Walks), and R15 (Whitebridge Forest Paths) and R17 (Ascent / Descent of Ben Tee). From these routes, the Proposed Development would form a barely perceptible change to the overall visual experience for recreational users.

Summary of Visual Effects

7.8.24 A summary of the effects on building-based and route-based visual receptors during construction and operation is provided in **Table 7.19** and **Table 7.20**. Significant effects are those identified as being Moderate or greater.

Table 7.19: Summary of Visual Effects During Construction

Visual Receptor Type	Beneficial Effect						Adverse Effect				
	Major	Moderate - Major	Moderate	Minor – Moderate	Minor	Negligible / Scoped Out	Minor	Minor – Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Major	Major
Building-based Receptors	-	-	-	-	-	6	4	1	**1**	-	-
Route-based Receptors	-	-	-	-	-	6	4	3	**3**	**1**	-
Totals	-	-	-	-	-	12	8	**4**	**4**	**1**	-

Table 7.20: Summary of Visual Effects During Operation (After 10 years)

Visual Receptor Type	Beneficial Effect						Adverse Effect				
	Major	Moderate - Major	Moderate	Minor – Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Minor	Minor – Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Major	Major
Building-based Receptors	-	-	-	1	-	8	2	1	-	-	-
Route-based Receptors	-	-	-	1	-	8	5	2	**1**	-	-
Totals	-	-	-	2	-	16	7	**3**	**1**	-	-

7.9 Cumulative Effects

7.9.1 The Proposed Development would form part of the wider Coire Glas Grid Connection which also includes the proposed Coire Glas Switching Station, and Loch Lundie Substation, both of which would be the subject of separate applications under the Town and Country Planning Act. The Proposed Development would also be closely associated and dependent on the construction of the consented Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme. The cumulative assessment has therefore considered the effects of the Proposed Development in addition to these other associated elements. In addition, the cumulative assessment has also included consideration of other grid infrastructure or other energy projects currently proposed (either consented, or for which a valid planning application has been made) within 1.5 km of the LVIA study area (5.5 km from the Proposed Development).

7.9.2 The cumulative assessment baseline has been set out considering two different scenarios as follows:

- Scenario 1 (see **Figure 7.5a**): Including other associated development, including:
  - The Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme (consented);
  - The proposed Loch Lundie Substation (pre-application); and
  - The proposed Coire Glas Switching Station (pre-application);
- Scenario 2 (see **Figure 7.5b**): Including other unrelated developments in addition to those included in Scenario 1:
  - The proposed Skye Reinforcement (application); and
  - The proposed Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Grid Connection (application).

7.9.3 These developments are shown on **Figure 7.5a-b** and described in **Table 7.21** below.

Table 7.21: Developments Included in the Cumulative Assessment Baseline

Scenario 1	
Development Name	**Description**
Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme (consented)	The upper works comprising a dam up to 92 m in height, access tracks and construction areas. The lower works on Loch Lochy-side (tunnel portals, outlet and administration buildings) would have little shared visibility with the Proposed Development and are therefore not considered
Loch Lundie Substation (pre-application)	400 kV / 132 kV Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) substation comprising approximate 350 m x 300 m fenced compound containing switchgear, transformers and a control building with an approximate maximum height of 13m above platform level.
Coire Glas Switching Station (pre-application)	A switching station platform, housing both SSEN Transmission and Developer switchgear. Overall approximate size 270 m x 120 m, split into two separate fenced compound comprising: a 400 kV Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) switching station SSEN Transmission compound (containing switchgear and two control buildings, approximately 170 m X 120 m, with an approximate maximum height of 13 m above platform level; and a Developer compound approximately 100 m x 120.
Scenario 2 (in addition to Scenario 1)	
Skye Reinforcement (application)	132 kV steel lattice OHL to a new cable sealing end compound south-east of Loch Lundie, replacing existing Quoich to Aberchalder wood pole OHL and redundant steel lattice towers; and underground cable* from the new cable sealing end compound to Fort Augustus Substation, replacing existing Skye Tee wood pole OHL.

Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Grid Connection (application)	132 kV wood pole OHL leading to around 2 km to the west of Fort Augustus substation where it would convert to underground cable*.

*Note: the underground cable sections of the cumulative baseline developments have not been considered in the cumulative assessment due to their limited likely long-term effects.

7.9.4 Although it was previously proposed in the Scoping Report to include the consented Millennium South Wind Farm in the cumulative baseline, it was noted that the consent for this development has now lapsed, and therefore it has been removed from the list of sites for consideration.

7.9.5 Cumulative effects are assessed from a baseline where the Proposed Development forms an addition to the other cumulative developments. As the Scenario 1 developments either form part of the same wider project or are closely related, the cumulative effects are considered during both construction and operation as construction works would be likely to take place concurrently. However, due to the difficulties in predicting the timing and construction works for other non-associated developments, Scenario 2 considers effects during operation only.

7.9.6 Because a Negligible effect is considered highly unlikely to lead to a significant cumulative effect, any receptors predicted to have a Negligible effect from the Proposed Development, have been scoped out of the cumulative assessment.

Cumulative Landscape Effects

7.9.7 The effects of the Scenario 1 developments would be focussed within the southern part of the study area, principally likely to affect LCT 235 (Broad Forested Strath), LCT 237 (Rocky Moorland – Lochaber) and LCT 239 (Interlocking Sweeping Peaks - Lochaber). The LVIA has identified that the Proposed Development would have a Minor Adverse effect for all three LCTs during construction. A Minor Adverse effect is also predicted for LCT 235 during operation, but this is predicted to be Negligible for both LCT 237, and LCT 239 during operation.

7.9.8 The Scenario 1 cumulative landscape assessment for operational effects therefore only discusses LCT 235 (Broad Forested Strath).

7.9.9 When considering Scenario 2, the effects of the Skye Reinforcement Project are mostly likely to be focussed within LCT 235 and LCT 237, where the new steel lattice towers would be erected and an existing wood pole OHL would be removed. However, potential beneficial effects of this development occurring from the removal of existing wood poles and redundant steel lattice towers would also affect LCT 225 (Broad Steep-Sided Glen).

7.9.10 The Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Grid Connection would be situated within LCT 220 (Rugged Massif) and LCT 225 (Broad Steep-Sided Glen). However, it would be fully comprised of underground cable within LCT 225 on the approach to Fort Augustus Substation, and likely to have a very minimal effect on this LCT. The LVIA for the Proposed Development has identified that the operational effect on LCT 220 would be Negligible, whilst the effect on LCT 225 would be Minor Adverse. Given the likely Negligible effect on LCT 220 where the greatest effect of Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Grid Connection would be focussed, and the likely minimal operational effect of this development on LCT 225, Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Grid Connection has been scoped out of further consideration in the cumulative landscape assessment.

7.9.11 The Scenario 2 cumulative assessment is therefore focussed on the cumulative effects of the Proposed Development in addition to the Skye Reinforcement within LCT 235 and LCT 225. However, given the number of cumulative baseline developments which would be situated within LCT 237, brief consideration is also included for this LCT, even though the effect of the Proposed Development on this LCT is predicted to be Negligible.

Construction Phase (Scenario 1 only)

7.9.12 The cumulative baseline during construction of the various Scenario 1 developments would lead to direct effects from the Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme within LCT 235 (Broad Forested Strath) resulting from the use of access tracks, borrow pits and site establishment / working areas. However, these works would be mostly set within forest in Glen Garry and the effect would therefore be relatively localised. There would also be direct effects from the Coire Glas Switching Station, within a similar area. Construction effects of the Loch Lundie Substation would be focussed within LCT 237 (Rocky Moorland – Lochaber) on the plateau to the north of Glen Garry, also set within forestry, with likely limited intervisibility and visual connection occurring between these two developments. There would also be some localised indirect effects, mostly within the plateau area of LCT 237 and the upper northerly slopes of Glen Garry in LCT 235, due to intervisibility with construction works for other elements of the pumped storage scheme around the dam site. However, these parts of the pumped storage scheme would be likely to appear relatively distant from the other developments and visually distinct within the landscape.

7.9.13 The construction works for the Proposed Development, would add an additional corridor of construction activity between the works within Glengarry Forest, associated with the pumped storage scheme and switching station, and the works on the plateau for the Loch Lundie Substation. It is likely that this would lead to a perceptible increase in the sense of construction occurring within these LCTs, as it would form a linear connection between the different areas of baseline construction activity. However, due to the forested qualities of LCT 235, the different areas of works would still be very localised. There would be likely to be very few areas within LCT 235 where these works would be perceived in combination. The additional construction works in association with those for the Loch Lundie Substation may be experienced slightly more widely on the upper plateau of LCT 237 which may lead to some further reduction in the isolated and remote qualities of this area. However, these qualities would already be affected to some degree by the substation works, and the introduction of the Proposed Development into the cumulative baseline where works for the substation are already occurring, is not predicted to lead to a greater level of effect than would occur with the Proposed Development alone because the areas affected by both developments would be similar.

Operational Phase (Scenario 1 and Scenario 2)

7.9.14 During operation, under the cumulative baseline Scenario 1, the Proposed Development would form a linear connection between two developments of the Coire Glas Switching Station, and the Loch Lundie Substation. Following the reinstatement of working areas, the Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme would be more remote from these other developments within the mountain landscape of LCT 239 (Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Lochaber), and unlikely to combine to lead to any landscape effects.

7.9.15 Similar to the construction phase, the forested character of LCT 235 (Broad Forested Strath) would limit the landscape effects to relatively localised areas, and with the smaller operational footprint of the developments, and anticipated use of planting or other mitigation for the cumulative baseline developments, it is unlikely that the different developments would be experienced concurrently. Taking this into account, it is considered that the cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in addition to the baseline developments, would not be greater than it would be when considering it alone. In LCT 237, the beneficial effect of the removal of the existing OHL and alignment of the Proposed Development through a forest area is predicted to balance out other adverse effects. When this is considered within a baseline where the Loch Lundie Substation is present, there is the potential for some additional forest removal associated with the substation to reveal slightly more of the Proposed Development, but the effect would be similar, and unlikely to be greater.

7.9.16 In Scenario 2, the addition of the Skye Reinforcement to the baseline would not be likely to change this situation. There would be little perceptible change in the baseline landscape character resulting from this development because the introduction of new steel lattice towers would be balanced by the removal of the Quoich – Aberchalder Wood Pole OHL and redundant steel lattice towers in a similar area. With the removal of

the Skye Tee wood pole OHL through LCT 237 and LCT 225, the baseline would be less affected by OHL development, but this is not predicted to change the level of landscape effect for the Proposed Development because the Fort William – Fort Augustus OHL which would be replaced by the Proposed Development would still be present in the baseline landscape.

7.9.17 Predicted cumulative landscape effects are detailed in **Table 7.22**Error! Reference source not found.. Effects of Moderate or greater are significant.

Table 7.22: Cumulative Landscape Effects

LCT	Cumulative Effects		
	Construction	Operation	
	Scenario 1	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
LCT 225: Broad Steep-sided Glen	N/A	N/A	Negligible
LCT 235: Broad Forested Strath	Minor Adverse (not significant)	Minor Adverse (not significant)	Minor Adverse (not significant)
LCT 237: Rocky Moorland – Lochaber	Minor Adverse (not significant)	Negligible	Negligible
LCT 239: Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Lochaber	Minor Adverse (not significant)	Negligible	Negligible

Cumulative Visual Effects

7.9.18 All the Scenario 1 developments are within forest and upland areas on the slopes and plateau areas to the north and south of Glen Garry and therefore cumulative effects are most likely to occur for building based receptors situated in more elevated locations such as Faichem, Glenluie and Achadh-nan-darach and recreational users of paths and tracks.

7.9.19 Of the Scenario 2 developments, the Skye Reinforcement would affect further visual receptors alongside Loch Garry, including at Leacan Dubh and Munerigie and the A87, and would also lead to some beneficial effects around Achadh-nan-darach where the Skye Tee wood pole OHL would be removed. Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Grid Connection would have limited operational visual effects within the study area as it would comprise a buried cable on the approach to Fort Augustus Substation.

7.9.20 Receptors identified as having a Negligible effect from the Proposed Development have been scoped out of the cumulative assessment. Of those that remain, the following have been identified for consideration of potential cumulative effects.

- Scenario 1 (construction and operation)
  - Building-based receptors at Receptor Locations B6 (Achadh-nan-darach Bothy) and B7 (Faichem);
  - Recreational users of Route R7 (Invergarry to Achadh-nan-Darach Track (Core Path LO11.02)) on the plateau to the north of Glen Garry (this would be considered during construction and operation, because the Negligible effect during operation relates to a balance of adverse and beneficial effects); and
  - Recreational users of Routes in Glengarry Forest including Route R14 (River Garry Paths), Route R16 (Scottish Hill Track 238 (The Dark Mile (Loch Arkaig) to Invergarry) and Route R17 (Ascent / Descent of Ben Tee).
- Scenario 2 (operation only)
  - Building-based receptors at Receptor Location B11 (Leacan Dubh and Munerigie); and
  - Travellers on Route R2 (A87).

7.9.21 The following receptors are not considered in the cumulative assessment during operation for either scenario, because they have been assessed to have Negligible effects from the Proposed Development:

- Receptor Location R6 (Achadh-nan-darach Bothy); and
- Receptor Location R17 (Ascent / Descent of Ben Tee).

Construction Phase (Scenario 1)

7.9.22 During construction, views from Achadh-nan-darach Bothy (Receptor Location B6), featuring the proposed Loch Lundie Substation construction works would be likely to be limited to occasional effects of passing construction traffic, as the site itself would be likely to be hidden by trees. It is therefore unlikely that there would be any perceptible cumulative visual effects for receptors at this location.

7.9.23 Visual effects for properties at Faichem (Receptor Location B7) would be limited to distant views of works for the Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme. Construction of the Proposed Development would be likely to be more noticeable in the view and the two developments may be viewed as a larger, associated area of work. However, given the distance of the pumped storage scheme works, it is unlikely that this would lead to a greater effect than that predicted for the Proposed Development alone.

7.9.24 The cumulative baseline developments would be likely to lead to some visual effects for recreational users of Route R7 (Invergarry to Achadh-nan-darach) and Route R16 (Scottish Hill Track 238 (The Dark Mile (loch Arkaig), which would be likely to be used by construction traffic, and would pass close by areas of localised construction activity. There may also be a limited effect on receptors using Route R14 (River Garry Paths). The Proposed Development would add further construction traffic to these routes and would lead to some additional construction works being perceived, as described in the visual assessment (see **Technical Appendix 7.2**). This increase in construction activity is likely to be noticeable for users of Route R7 (where the works would cross, and appear alongside a greater length of the route) and Route 14 (where the works would cross the route in two places). The increased construction activity would be less noticeable for Route R16, because a similar and relatively localised section of the route would be affected to that already likely to be affected by the Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme and Coire Glas Switching Station.

7.9.25 Route R17 would be fundamentally changed by the Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme, as it would be upgraded to form the main access route to the dam. This would lead to an intensive level of work and use of this route, and the additional effects of the Proposed Development at the northern end of the route would have very little additional effect in this context.

Operational Phase (Scenario 1 and Scenario 2)

7.9.26 As described in 7.9.21, the operational assessment does not consider the cumulative visual effects of receptors at Receptor Location R6 (Achadh-nan-darach Bothy) or using Route R17 (Ascent / Descent of Ben Tee) because the Proposed Development would have a Negligible operational effect on these receptors. However, although a Negligible operational effect is also predicted for users of Route R7 (Invergarry to Achadh-nan-darach), this has been considered in the operational cumulative assessment because the Negligible effect arises from a balance of adverse and beneficial effects.

7.9.27 During operation, the Scenario 1 developments would be briefly visible from Routes R7 Invergarry to Achadh-nan-darach) (Loch Lundie Substation) and R16 (Scottish Hill Track 238 (The Dark Mile (Loch Arkaig) (Coire Glas Switching Station and access to Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme). The Proposed Development would be likely to be seen in association with these developments, and as an extension to them. This would have a very localised and barely perceptible effect on Route R16, affecting receptors on a part of the route already likely to be affected by the Coire Glas Switching Station, but would have a slightly greater effect on Route R7, where an additional section of track to the north of the forestry block within which the substation would be located would obtain views of the Proposed Development. However, this would be balanced by the removal of the existing Fort Augustus – Fort William OHL and therefore the effect overall would be unlikely to be greater.

7.9.28 For Route R14 (River Garry Paths), the Proposed Development would be much more noticeable from various sections of these routes, because the wayleave would cross them. However, there would be unlikely to be any perceptible operational effects of the baseline developments from these routes and therefore this would not constitute a cumulative effect.

7.9.29 Receptors at Building-based Receptor Location B7 (Faichem) may obtain distant views of the Coire Glas Pumped Storage Dam, in combination with the Proposed Development. This would lead to some increased effect on the view, but as the dam would appear distant the cumulative effect is not predicted to be greater than the effect for the Proposed Development alone.

7.9.30 When the Scenario 2 developments are added to the Scenario 1 developments, there may be some localised increased effects for Route R7 as part of the baseline, with users obtaining some new views of the proposed Skye Reinforcement from a short section. However, the removal of existing wood pole OHLs and redundant steel lattice towers which would take place as a result of this project would be likely to offset these adverse effects. This is therefore unlikely to lead to any change in the cumulative effect occurring from the Scenario 1 developments.

7.9.31 The Scenario 2 developments would not be visible from any of the other visual receptor locations considered as part of Scenario 1 and therefore there would be no change to the effects predicted. However, the Skye Reinforcement would add to the cumulative baseline for receptors at Receptor Location B11 (Leacan Dubh and Munerigie) and travelling on Route R2 (A87).

7.9.32 For Receptor Location B11, the Skye Reinforcement towers would appear much closer and more prominent than the Proposed Development, similar to the existing redundant towers that would be removed as part of the removal of the Quoich to Aberchalder wood pole OHL. Therefore, the cumulative effect would be very similar to the effect of the Development without the cumulative baseline. For Route R2, the Skye Reinforcement would cross the route, seen in passing views in a similar manner to the Proposed Development and may be briefly glimpsed at times alongside the route within forestry. Combined visibility of the two developments would be unlikely. The effect of two OHL crossings within around 4 km of the route where forestry predominantly encloses the view is considered unlikely to be any greater than the effects of one crossing and therefore the cumulative effect would be similar to the effect of the Proposed Development on its own.

7.9.33 Predicted cumulative visual effects are detailed in **Table 7.23.** Effects of Moderate or greater are considered significant.

Table 7.23: Cumulative Visual Effects

Visual Receptor Location	Cumulative Effects		
	Construction	Operation	
	Scenario 1	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Receptor Location B6: Achadh-nan-darach Bothy	Negligible	N/A	N/A
Receptor Location B7: Faichem	Minor – Moderate Adverse	Minor – Moderate Adverse	Minor – Moderate Adverse
Receptor Location B11: Leacan Dubh and Munerigie	N/A	N/A	Minor Adverse
Route R2: A87	N/A	N/A	Minor Adverse
Route R7: Invergarry to Achadh-nan-Darach Track	Minor – Moderate Adverse	Negligible	Negligible
Route R14: River Garry Paths	**Moderate Adverse**	N/A	N/A
Route R16: Scottish Hill Track 238 (The Dark Mile (Loch Arkaig) to Invergarry)	Minor Adverse	Negligible	Negligible
Route R17: Ascent / Descent of Ben Tee	Negligible	N/A	N/A

7.10 Mitigation

Embedded Mitigation

7.10.1 Much of the mitigation for landscape and visual purposes has been embedded in the design for the Proposed Development, in the form of the route and alignment selection process. This process is discussed in detail within **Chapter 2: The Routeing Process and Alternatives**. In general, the alignment has been designed to conform topography and minimise potential prominence on ridgelines or fragmentation of areas of distinctive landscape character. Care has also been given to minimise the potential prominence of the Proposed Development in views from properties and popular tourist sites. Whilst the Proposed Development would generally follow the route of the existing 132 kV Fort William to Fort Augustus OHL which it would replace (north of Loch Lundie) two particular modifications have been made to try to reduce the landscape and visual effect:

- At Loch Lundie, the Proposed Development has been brought into the existing forest plantation, as opposed to the alignment of the existing OHL which follows the edge of the plantation. Whilst this move has partly been made to assist a tie-in to the proposed Loch Lundie substation, it would also reduce the landscape and visual effects of OHLs on the area around Loch Lundie.
- At Auchterawe, the alignment of the Proposed Development has been moved east, into the existing forest plantation where the existing OHL crosses open fields to the front of properties. This is expected to give an overall beneficial visual effect for residents in this area, although it is recognised that there would be negative effect for users of a path route within the forest.

Implementation Stage Mitigation

7.10.2 Mitigation measures to be considered during the implementation of the Proposed Development would include the use of best practice construction and restoration techniques.

7.10.3 The reinstatement of areas disturbed during construction would be fundamental to ensuring that the Proposed Development would be successfully accommodated into the existing landscape in the longer term. Careful reinstatement of landform would be employed across working areas, cable laying corridors and temporary

tracks, re-using materials excavated during the construction period to reflect the terrain within adjacent areas. Further details on these measures are included in **Technical Appendix 3.4: Outline Site Restoration Plan.** Landform would be remodelled around new steel lattice towers, and new, permanent tracks to ensure that these tied smoothly into their surroundings and to minimise the visual extent of these features where possible – for example, to help conceal foundations or the running surfaces of tracks from visual receptor locations or within the wider landscape.

7.10.4 Reinstatement of landform would include the creation of suitable gradients for cut and fill slopes associated with access tracks to enable the replacement of peat / soils and re-establishment of vegetation. Where the receiving terrain is not suitable to allow these gradients, the use of suitable geoengineering techniques, such as jute matting would be utilised to help establish vegetation and prevent erosion.

7.10.5 The natural regeneration of native species is the preferred method of achieving vegetation restoration, as outlined in the Outline Site Restoration Plan (see **Technical Appendix 3.4**), and Peat Management Plan (PMP) (see **Technical Appendix 10.1**). Where native soils or vegetation were considered insufficient to support natural re-vegetation, this would be supplemented by seeding with an agreed seed mix.

7.11 Residual Effects

7.11.1 The assessment of operational effects takes into account the likely benefits of the embedded and implementation phase mitigation measures which are proposed and therefore the operational effects identified should be considered representative of residual effects.

7.12 Summary and Conclusions

Landscape Effects

7.12.1 The landscape assessment has established that there would be no likely significant effects to landscape character as a result of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development would locally increase the perception of development in some landscape character types, to varying degrees, but effects would not be significant, largely due to the balance of effects relating to the removal of part of the existing Fort William to Fort Augustus OHL, but also due to the wooded character of much of the study area, which would help to visually contain the Proposed Development, and the presence of other OHLs and built features which reducing sensitivity to change of the type proposed.

7.12.2 The landscape assessment has also identified that there would be no significant effects to the value and special qualities of any designated or protected landscapes, including the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA and the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA. The integrity of these areas would therefore remain intact.

Visual Effects

7.12.3 The visual assessment has found that the majority of visual effects would not be significant, due to screening from trees and landform, the effects of distance, and the similarities between the Proposed Development OHL and the OHL to be removed.

7.12.4 Long-term significant effects during the operation of the Proposed Development have been identified for receptors using only one recreational route, Torr Dhuin Trail, which is accessed from the FLS Torr Dhuin carpark at Auchterawe, where the Proposed Development would be noticeable alongside the route and would cross in two locations.

7.12.5 Further temporary significant effects have been identified during construction for receptors in Auchterawe, including residents and users of the minor road, due to the dismantling of existing steel lattice towers which would be very noticeable nearby. Temporary construction-based significant effects are also predicted for the nearby recreational routes, Torr Dhuin Trail, and River Oich Trail through forestry to the south and east of

Auchterawe, as well as a group of paths around River Garry, accessed from the FLS Whitebridge carpark. Parts of these recreational routes would be used for construction access, and construction of the Proposed Development would also be seen adjacent or would cross these routes.

7.12.6 The assessment has also identified that there would be long-term but not significant, beneficial effects for road and residential receptors in Auchterawe during operation, because the existing prominent OHL would be removed and the Proposed Development would be mostly hidden by existing forestry in the majority of views.

7.12.7 All other visual effects to receptors included in the assessment were identified as being not significant during both construction and operation.

Cumulative Effects

7.12.8 The cumulative landscape assessment carried out for the Proposed Development has identified that there would be no significant cumulative landscape effects, arising from the addition of the Proposed Development resulting from either associated or non-associated developments, during either construction or operation. This is because, where cumulative effects are anticipated, the baseline cumulative developments are already likely to alter the landscape to the extent that the additional changes of the Proposed Development would not lead to very noticeable further change. The rationalisation of the existing OHL network around Loch Lundie, where both the Proposed Development and the Skye Reinforcement would lead to the removal of some existing OHLs would also result in the cumulative developments forming a less noticeable change to the character of the landscape.

7.12.9 The cumulative visual assessment has identified that there would be a short-term significant cumulative visual effect for users of recreational routes around River Garry, accessed from the FLS Whitebridge carpark, where construction work for the Proposed Development would cross the routes and would form a noticeable addition to existing minimal visual effects associated with construction of the Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme. However, this is not predicted to lead to a cumulative effect during operation, because there would be no long-term effect from any of the baseline cumulative developments.

7.12.10 All other cumulative visual effects were assessed as being not significant.

Conclusions

7.12.11 The LVIA has concluded that there would be localised significant temporary visual effects to a small number of residential receptors, users of a minor road and recreational receptors in areas around Auchterawe and the River Garry, during construction. A significant visual effect is predicted to continue through the operational phase for recreational users of a small group of routes around the River Garry, to the north of the Whitebridge carpark, but all visual effects would be not significant by 10 years post construction. No significant effects to landscape character are predicted and there would be no noticeable effects to any designated or protected landscapes. A temporary significant cumulative visual effect would be experienced by users of recreational routes around River Garry, during construction, relating to construction of the Proposed Development and Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme, but these cumulative visual effects would not be significant during operation and all other cumulative effects would not be significant.