5 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

5.1 Introduction

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) presented in this chapter identifies the likely impacts on landscape and visual receptors associated with the construction and operation of the Proposed Development described in **Chapter 3 (Volume 1)**. The objectives of the chapter are to:

- describe the landscape and visual baseline;
- identify the potential direct and indirect impacts on landscape and visual receptors; and
- describe any mitigation measures proposed to address likely impacts.

The chapter is supported by the following figures (**Volume 3**):

- Figure 5.1: Site Location and LVA Study Area;
- Figure 5.2a/b/c: Zone of Theoretical Visibility of:
  - (a) Existing OHL;
  - (b) Proposed temporary diversion; and
  - (c) Operational Proposed Development.
- Figure 5.3: Topography and LVA Study Area;
- Figure 5.4: Landscape Character Types (LCTs) within LVA Study Area;
- Figure 5.5: Landscape Designations and Classifications;
- Figure 5.5: Viewpoint Locations;
- Figure 5.7 – 5.14: Viewpoint Baseline Photographs, Cumulative Wireframes and Photomontages
- Figure 5.15 (a/b/c) Zone of Theoretical Visibility of:
  - (a&b) Cumulative developments approved/in planning; and
  - (c&d) Cumulative developments in scoping.

The assessment has been prepared by Ramboll's team of Landscape Architects who have extensive experience of the routing, mitigation and assessment of developments such as that proposed. This assessment has been undertaken in accord with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition (GLVIA3)[1].

5.2 Scope and Methodology

5.2.1 Scope of Appraisal

The LVA considers the effects of the construction and operational stages of the Proposed Development on:

- landscape fabric, caused by changes to the topographical form and physical constituents of the landscape;
- landscape character, caused by changes to key characteristics and qualities of the landscape;
- designated or classified landscapes; and
- visual amenity, caused by changes to the composition of views and the wider visual resource.

The scope and approach to this LVA has been informed by a combination of:

- Consultation outcomes;
- planning policy and formal published guidance and consultations with Argyll and Bute Council (ABC); and
- preliminary and revised landscape and visual analysis.

[1] Landscape Institute. and IEMA, 2013. Guidelines for Landscape and Environmental Impact Assessment. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis.

5.2.2 Limit of Deviation (LOD)

The application is based on a prescribed horizonal and vertical limit of deviation, allowing flexibility in the final micro-siting of towers to reflect localised land, engineering and environmental constraints.

The Vertical LOD allows for up to 20% variation of the pole and tower heights from the Indicative Proposed Alignment and tower/pole schedule (refer to **Chapter 3: Table 3.1, Volume 1**) For the purposes of the LVA, the maximum vertical LOD has been adopted as a worst case and formed the basis for production of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) drawings in **Figures 5.2 and 5.15 (Volume 3a)** and the visualisations in **Figures 5.7 – 5.14 (Volume 3b).**

The horizontal LOD allows the towers to be relocated up to 100m either side of the proposed alignment. The result of this change of relevance to this appraisal is that the Towers could be positioned at higher or lower elevations within the LOD. The ZTV and visualisations considered the LOD.

5.2.3 Consultation

As detailed in **Chapter 1: Introduction** of this Environmental Appraisal (EA), no formal pre application consultation has been undertaken for the Proposed Development. However extensive consultation has been undertaken for the adjacent developments (Creag Dhubh Substation and Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection Project), and key feedback received has been considered within this Chapter where relevant.

Following comments raised during the EIA Scoping Process for the Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection Project[2], consultation letters were issued to Historic Environment Scotland (HES), ABC, West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS) and NatureScot on the 23 July 2021, requesting them to comment on the draft wirelines in the viewpoint list for the OHL, as well as the additional Creag Dhubh Substation[3] vantage point (VP) from the Neil Munro Commemorative Monument. Historic Environment Scotland (HES) responded 5 August 2021 confirming acceptance of the draft wirelines.

NatureScot responded on 25 October 2022 advising that the project is unlikely to have significant impacts on nationally designated landscapes and that, as such, they would not be providing detailed comment on the scope of the LVA. In addition:

- NatureScot suggested repositioning of the viewpoint at Cnoc Lomain (i.e. at NN02552374 -preliminary viewpoint VP2) may be better positioned on a core path slightly to the west. The Cnoc Lomain summit was used as it provides representative views that are open and expansive extending across to Loch Awe towards the Proposed Development in contrast to the Core Path location that is within heavily wooded coniferous forestry. Following advice, no further requirements for change of location were received.
- NatureScot suggested that a VP should be included at Cruachan Reservoir as a destination for families and tourists. However, a viewpoint at the summit of Beinn a' Bhuiridh was selected instead due to its increased intervisibility with the surrounding landscape. Following advice, no further requirements for an additional viewpoint at this location was received.

The Applicant subsequently submitted an EIA Screening request on the 5th September 2022 (**Technical Annex 1.1, Volume 2**). A formal Screening Opinion from the Scottish Ministers was received on 25th November 2022 (**Technical Annex 1.2, Volume 2**). The Screening Opinion confirmed the need for an Environmental Appraisal (EA) due to the scale and nature of the development, and the quality and sensitivity of its landscape setting. Of relevance to this landscape and visual assessment, the Screening Opinion requested that recreation and tourism be given consideration. As set out in the EIA Screening Request (**Technical Annex 1.1, Volume 2**) effects on the amenity of recreational receptors and road users have been considered in Section 1.4.7 of this chapter.

5.2.4 Preliminary Visual Analysis

2 The Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection Project (ECU00002199), which forms part of the wider Argyll and Kintyre 275 kV Strategy, is the subject of a separate application for consent under section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.

[3] The proposed Creag Dhubh substation is subject to a separate application for planning consent (Planning ref: 22/00782/PP)

A preliminary visual analysis was conducted based on the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) in **Figure 5.2a-c (Volume 3a)**, and subsequent field reconnaissance to verify landscape and visual receptors.

5.2.5 Appraisal Methodology

The purpose of the LVA is to identify, predict and evaluate potential impacts associated with the Proposed Development. Wherever possible, identified impacts are quantified; however, the nature of LVA requires interpretation by professional judgement. To provide a level of consistency to the appraisal, the prediction of magnitude of impact and assessment of the residual landscape and visual impacts have been based on pre-defined criteria and are broadly consistent with the following guidance

- Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment's 'Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Third Edition' (GLVIA3) (2013)[4];
- The Countryside Agency and NatureScot 'Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland' (2002)[5];
- NatureScot and the Countryside Agency's 'Topic Paper 5: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity' (2002)[6]; and
- Landscape Institute's 'Technical Guidance Note 05/2019: Visual Representation of Development Proposals' (2019)[7].

In addition, the following guidance has been considered in the selection of appropriate mitigation measures:

- NatureScot 'Constructed Tracks in the Scottish Uplands' 2nd edition (2015)8; and
- Forestry Commission Scotland 'Grants & Regulations Operation Note 25' Version 1.0 (2011)[9]

Data

The LVA was informed by data gathered from the following sources:

- Ordnance Survey Terrain 5 m Digital Terrain Model (DTM);
- Ordnance Survey mapping (1:25,000; 1:50,000);
- NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment – 2020 on-line database10;
- Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study 201711
- Commercially available aerial photography;
- Computer generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility drawings (ZTVs) based on 5 m digital terrain model; and
- Site photography.

Study Area

Defining the Study Area considers:

- the nature of the topography (refer to Figure 5.3, Volume 3);
- the pattern of visibility shown by the ZTV (Figure 5.2, Volume 3);

4 Landscape Institute. and IEMA, 2013. Guidelines for Landscape and Environmental Impact Assessment. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis.

5 NatureScot – The Countryside Agency, 2002, Landscape Character Assessment 'Guidance for England and Scotland.

6 NatureScot – The Countryside Agency, 2002, Topic paper 5: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity

7 Institute, L., 2019. Visual Representation of Development Proposals. 1st ed. Landscape Institute.

8 Nature Scot, 2015. Constructed Tracks in the Scottish Uplands. Available at: https://www.nature.scot/constructed-tracks-scottish-uplands [Accessed 05 October 2022]

9 Forestry Commission. Forest Roads and Tracks. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721055/ON025-ForestRoadsandTracksv1.0issued110809__1_.pdf [Accessed 05 October 2022]

10 NatureScot, (2020). Scottish Landscape Character Types Map and Descriptions. [online] Available at: https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-character-assessment/scottish-landscape-character-types-map-and-descriptions [Last accessed 05 October 2022].

11 Carol Anderson Landscape Associates (2017) Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study [online] Available at: https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ablwecs_-_volume_one_-_main_report_-_final_august_2017_reduced.pdf [Last accessed 07 December 2022].

- the presence of existing vegetation; and
- the pattern of settlement and other visual receptors such as residents, road users, workers and those engaging in recreational activities in the Study Area.

For this appraisal, the 'Study Area' is equivalent to a 10 km[12] radius from the Proposed Development to take account of the potential for long distance views due to topography and the tall structures proposed (see **Figure 5.1** and **Figure 5.3, Volume 3a**). The appraisal only considers receptors and receptor locations within the Study Area that have been identified as having theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development[13].

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions:

- Woodland and shelterbelts and/or roadside vegetation located in the Study Area would be retained for the long term.
- Coniferous commercial plantations within the Study Area will be felled in accordance with the Long Term Felling Plan (LTFP) for Keppochan and Keppochan East (**Figure 5, Technical Appendix 2.1, Volume 2**). .
- Cumulative projects approved but yet to be constructed and those in planning would have construction activities that would overlap to some degree with that of the Proposed Development and a worst case of simultaneous construction of all projects considered has been assumed (refer to section 1.3.4 for the cumulative effects assessment).
- Any LCTs or landscape features (such as Garden and Designed Landscapes) within the Study Area that do not have visibility (refer to **Figures 5.2 (Volume 3a)** for ZTV analysis) of the Proposed Development are assumed not to experience effects and are scoped out of the assessment.

Limitations:

- ZTV analysis has been based on a bare ground terrain model that does not take account of the screening impact of vegetation, micro-topographical forms or built forms. This is of relevance to the assessment of Proposed Development as a significant portion of the Study Area contains commercial forestry, deciduous tree cover, hedges and riparian vegetation. Consequently, visibility would be considerably less than indicated in the ZTV.

Baseline

The existing baseline condition of the site is prepared to understand how the Proposed Development would affect landscape and visual receptors. The baseline is established through a desktop study that identifies:

- landscape character types within the study and an understanding of their sensitivity to the type of development proposed;
- areas designated or classified for stated special qualities; and
- visual receptors most likely to be affected by the Proposed Development, including those using publicly accessible areas such as outdoor recreational areas, settlements, roads, and public rights of way (refer to **Figure 5.5, Volume 3a**).

Visibility Mapping

To assist in evaluating potential landscape and visual impacts arising from the Proposed Development, a ZTV is used to identify the potential extent of the Proposed Development's visibility within the Study Area. The ZTV was

[12] The 5 km Study Area was based upon extensive previous experience in respect to similar development elsewhere and was agreed with ABC through the scoping process.

[13] A Zone of Theoretical Visibility calculates areas that are expected to have visibility of the Proposed Development within the Study Area. The analysis is carried out using a Geographic Information System that contains a Digital Terrain model (to an accuracy of +/-1.5m) and modelled heights of the Proposed Development.

produced by computer modelling using ArcMap GIS software, and a 5 m Digital Terrain Model (DTM). ZTV analysis is used to understand the visibility of the:

- existing OHL poles located within the RLB (**Figure 5.2a**);
- proposed OHL diversion that would be in place temporarily for up to 18 months (**Figure 5.2b**); and
- Proposed Development during operation (**Figure 5.2c**).

The resulting ZTVs are shown on **Figure 5.2 (a, b, c), Volume 3a**, overlaid on OS 1:50,000 mapping to indicate locations where the potential visibility for the baseline, construction and operation phases of the project and to help identify receptors that may be affected.

Given the limitations of ZTV analysis above, it is used as a tool to inform understanding of the general pattern of visibility associated with the Proposed Development. Understanding where screening occurs has been developed during previous assessment work undertaken for other built elements proposed as part of the Argyll and Kintyre 275 kV Strategy[14] and has been used to verify the findings of the ZTV. Where there are discrepancies between on the ground visibility and the ZTV, they are described in the text.

Illustrative Tools

In addition to the ZTV, figures are used to show the location:

- Visual Receptors within the Study Area (**Figure 5.5, Volume 3a**)
- Viewpoint (VP) locations selected to represent the impact on the identified receptors (see area (**Figure 5.5, Volume 3a).**
- Baseline photography for all VP locations is provided (**Figure 5.7 – 5.14**). Photomontages are prepared for all eight viewpoints with annotations provided where required to indicate location and extent of the Proposed Development within the view.
- Photomontages are prepared by combining a 3D model of the Proposed Development with the photograph of the existing view and rendering the image using Adobe Photoshop (see **Figures 5.7 – 5.14, Volume 3a**).

It should be noted that, while photography and visualisations provide valuable tools to assist in explaining the visibility and appearance of Proposed Developments, they should not be expected to replicate the actual view or predicted view that would be experienced on the ground.

Site Survey and Fieldwork

Site Photography was undertaken on 30/09/22 and 14/11/22 at the representative viewpoint locations (refer to **Figure 5.5, Volume 3a**) to support the Appraisal. Site visits have been undertaken to understand landscape character and visual amenity within the *surrounding* area as part of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments delivered under the wider Argyll and Kintyre 275 kV Strategy helping to provide context and understanding of the landscape and visual baseline.

Viewpoints and Visual Receptors

Viewpoints (VPs) are used to determine the level of visual impact at specific locations that are representative of the different potential receptors identified in the baseline. Understanding the impact at identified VPs collectively allows for the verification of impacts of the Proposed Development on the wider visual amenity of the Study Area.

Only receptors with potential visibility (as indicated by the ZTV and verified by baseline research with field work) are considered for inclusion in the visual impact appraisal.

[14] The Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection Project ADD Ecu reference, which forms part of the wider Argyll and Kintyre 275 kV Strategy, is the subject of a separate application for consent under section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.

Eight VPs are selected to provide a representative distribution of the locations where the Proposed Development would be visible for identified sensitive receptors within the Study Area (Refer to **Figure 5.5, Volume 3a**). VP locations were provided to ABC and NatureScot for comment on 11/08/22.

Identified receptors are described in the Baseline Conditions Section (Section 1.3) and in **Table 5.1**. All VPs are located within publicly accessible areas and within the Argyll and Bute Area of Panoramic Quality (APQ) that is described in section 1.3.4 and special qualities listed in **Technical Annex 5.1**.

Table 5.1: Viewpoint Locations

VP Ref	Name	Approximate Coordinates (x,y) *Distance and Direction to nearest boundary of Proposed Development*	Receptors Associated with the location	Description of VP
VP1	Neil Munro Monument	209587, 719031719031 *Approx. 1.1 km* *East*	Tourist and Recreational Users (Hill Walkers) LCT 7c North Loch Awe Craggy	Recreational viewpoint with theoretical views of the Proposed Development in proximity. In proximity to A819.
VP2	Cnoc Lomain, Argyll and Bute	204475,724103204475724103 *Approx. 5.4 km* *Northwest*	Tourist and Recreational Users LCT 7c North Loch Awe Craggy	Recreational / summit viewpoint with theoretical views westwards towards the Proposed Development in proximity to C300 Argyll and Bute Adopted Core Path.
VP3	Cruach Mhor Summit	214159,721895214159721895 *Approx. 5.2 km* *Northeast*	Tourist and Recreational Users LCT 7c North Loch Awe Craggy Upland Ben Lui WLA	Recreational / summit viewpoint within Ben Lui Wild Land Area, with theoretical views southwest towards the Proposed Development within Ben Lui Wild Land Area.
VP4	Beinn a Bhuiridh Summit	209380,728308209380728308 *Approx. 9.2km* *North*	Tourist and Recreational Users (Hill Walkers) LCT 2 High Tops Loch Etive WLA	Recreational/ summit viewpoint, within Loch Etive Mountains Wild Land Area, with theoretical views southwards towards the Proposed Development
VP5	Beinn an t-Sithein	218015,719505218015719505 *Approx. 9.55 km* *East*	Tourist and Recreational Users (Hill Walkers) LCT 2 High Tops Ben Lui WLA	Recreational/ summit viewpoint within Ben Lui Wild Land Area, with theoretical views westwards towards the Proposed Development
VP5	Ardanaiseig House GDL	209355,72455320935553 *Approx. 5.4 km* *North*	Tourist and Recreational Users Ardanaiseig GDL LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic	Recreational/ tourist receptor location within the grounds of the Ardanaiseig GDL, along the banks of Loch Awe and those involved in water-based activities on the Loch.

Table 5.1: Viewpoint Locations

VP Ref	Name	Approximate Coordinates (x,y) *Distance and Direction to nearest boundary of Proposed Development*	Receptors Associated with the location	Description of VP
VP7	Beinn Ghlas Summit	213074213074, 718214 *4.7km* *South West* *Approx. 4.7 km* *Southeast*	Tourist and Recreational Users (Hill Walkers) LCT 5a Loch Fyne Upland Forest-Moor Mosaic	Recreational/ summit viewpoint with theoretical views northwest towards the Proposed Development
VP8	A85 Layby	209910,7258590725859 *Approx. 5.8 km* *North*	Tourists, Road users and Residential receptors LCT 2 High Tops	Representative of tourist and road users alongside some residential receptors located to the north of the A85 and those involved in water-based recreational activities on the Loch.

Assessment of Potential Effects

In accordance with GLVIA3, effects are identified by establishing and describing the changes to the landscape and visual baseline resulting from the Proposed Development impacts. The potential impacts to relevant receptors are considered for both construction and operation, along with the mitigation that is embedded into the Proposed Development design to reduce, remedy or avoid the effects arising.

The level of effect resulting from the Proposed Development is derived by understanding the magnitude of impact and the sensitivity of the receptor, as indicated in **Table 5.2**, below. As discussed in **Chapter 2: Environmental Appraisal Methodology and Scope**, it is noted that, while the EA methodology has broadly followed the impact assessment approach, the Proposed Development was not considered in the Screening Opinion(ECU00004505), received November 2022, to constitute EIA development and so , in accordance with GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13 on the terminology to be used in non-EIA Landscape and Visual Appraisals, terminology regarding 'significance' is not utilised in the LVA.

The level of effect is described as none, negligible, minor, moderate, or major.

Effects can be adverse (resulting in the loss or erosion of key characteristics of the landscape and/or view), or beneficial (resulting in an enhancement of improvement to the baseline condition of the landscape and/or view). For the purposes of this assessment effects are assumed to be adverse unless stated otherwise. It should be noted that effects may vary over the lifetime of the Proposed Development, through construction and operational phases, and taking account of proposed mitigation measures.

Table 5.2 provides an indicative matrix used to determine the level of landscape and visual effects based on a combination of the magnitude of impact and sensitivity of receptors to the type of development proposed. Definitions for sensitivity and magnitude are given below.

Table 5.2: Level of Landscape and Visual of Effects

	Sensitivity of Receptor to Impact			
Magnitude of Impact		**High**	**Medium**	**Low**
	High	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate

Table 5.2: Level of Landscape and Visual of Effects				
Sensitivity of Receptor to Impact				
	Medium	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Minor
	Low	Moderate	Minor	Minor/ Negligible
	Negligible	Minor	Minor/ Negligible	Negligible
	None	None	None	None

Sensitivity

Landscape Sensitivity

The sensitivity of landscape receptors to impacts arising from the Proposed Development has been defined as high, medium and low. Sensitivity is determined by professional interpretation of the receptor's value and susceptibility to the type of development proposed.

The value attached to landscape receptors (i.e. landscape character) is reflected by designations and associated protections. However, landscape designations are not the sole indicator of value. The following factors are also important considerations in ascribing value:

- landscape quality;
- scenic quality;
- rarity;
- representativeness;
- conservation interest;
- recreation value;
- perceptual aspects; and
- cultural associations.

Susceptibility to impact concerns the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the Proposed Development without undue negative consequences for the maintenance of the baseline landscape and/ or visual context and/ or the landscape planning policies and strategies.

The susceptibility of landscape character to impact is defined as high, medium or low based on an interpretation of a combination of parameters including:

- the scale and pattern of the landscape and its elements/ features;
- the simplicity or complexity of the landscape;
- the nature of skylines;
- landscape quality or condition;
- existing land use;
- visual enclosure/ openness of views; and
- the scope for mitigation in character with the existing landscape.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

The sensitivity of visual receptors has been defined as high, medium and low based on professional interpretation, combining judgements of their susceptibility to the type of impact or development proposed and the value attached to the views.

The susceptibility of different visual receptors to impact in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of:

- the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at locations; and
- the extent to which their attention or interest may be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience (and expect) at that location.

In relation to the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at the viewpoint, visual susceptibility is defined as follows:

- High:
  - Residents of dwellings.
  - Users of outdoor recreational facilities including strategic recreational footpaths, cycle routes or rights of way, whose attention is focused on the landscape.
  - Visitors to cultural/ historic assets where views out from the location are key to the enjoyment and experience of the asset, important landscape features with physical, cultural or historic attributes, beauty spots or picnic areas.
  - Travellers on key tourist routes where vehicles are likely to contain passengers who have a particular interest in views of the landscape.
- Medium:
  - General road users, commuters and travellers not primarily focused on the landscape.
- Low:
  - People engaged in outdoor sports or recreation (other than appreciation of the landscape), commercial buildings, and other locations where people's attention may be focused on their work or activity, rather than their surroundings.

Magnitude of Impact

Each of the landscape and visual impacts identified are evaluated in terms of their size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced, and their duration and reversibility.

The magnitude of impact arising from the Proposed Development in respect of landscape character has been described as high, medium, low, negligible or none based on the interpretation of a combination of largely quantifiable parameters, as follows the:

- distance of the receptor from the Proposed Development;
- extent of existing landscape elements that would be altered/ lost;
- adding of new landscape elements and the proportion of the total extent of the landscape elements that this represents;
- degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape would be altered by removal or alteration to existing components or with the addition of new elements;
- context in which the Proposed Development would be seen (i.e., similar land uses in the vicinity of the development);
- geographic area over which the loss/ alteration to landscape elements would be perceived;
- alteration of the skyline/ altering the vertical scale in relation to the existing landscape features;
- duration of the impact; and
- reversibility of the impact.

The criteria used in ascribing magnitude of impact in respect of visual amenity is as follows, the:

- scale of impact in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and impacts in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the Proposed Development;

- degree of contrast or integration of any new features or impacts in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and textures;
- nature of the view of the Proposed Development;
- relative amount of time over which it would be experienced and whether views would be full, partial or glimpsed;
- angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;
- distance of the viewpoint from the Proposed Development; and
- extent of the area over which the impacts would be visible.

Table 5.3 categorises the magnitude of impacts.

Table 5.3: Magnitude of Impact

Magnitude	Definition
High	Total loss or considerable alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape character and/ or composition of views. The development is highly prominent or even dominant and could become the defining characteristic of views and landscape character.
Medium	Represents a notable alteration or loss of key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape character and/ or composition of views. The development is prominent, but not dominant. In such circumstances the development may become 'a' defining characteristic of the view of landscape, but not 'the' defining characteristic.
Low	Constitutes a partial loss to one or more key characteristics of the landscape or views. Localised impacts within an otherwise unaltered landscape or visual context.
Negligible	Represents a barely discernible loss or alteration to one or more key elements, features or characteristics of the baseline conditions. The underlying landscape character or view composition would be essentially unimpacted.
None	No discernible impact apparent.

Cumulative Impacts and Effects

A cumulative impact assessment is undertaken to establish the impact of the Proposed Development when considered in conjunction with similar consented, consented, in-planning and reasonably foreseeable developments within the Study Area (see **Chapter 2: Environmental Appraisal Methodology and Scope**).

The assessment of effects arising from the cumulative developments has been conducted using the same methodology as set out above. The Study Area used for the Proposed Development[15] is used to identify the cumulative projects.

When assessing cumulative effects, consideration is given to the:

- in-addition effects, dealing with the contribution the Proposed Development would make to the effect of energy developments; and
- in-combination effect, where the combined effect of the Proposed Development and other similar (cumulative) developments.

For both in- addition and in combination effects, cumulative impacts are considered in respect of the following development scenarios:

- the Proposed Development and existing and consented developments; and

[15] The cumulative Study Area was decided based upon extensive previous experience in respect to similar developments elsewhere (in Argyll or across Ramboll's portfolio)

- the Proposed Development, existing and consented developments, and in planning projects (including selected scoping schemes).

The differentiation of these two scenarios is intended to reflect the degree of certainty associated with each type of development.

Table 5.4a sets out the definitions used to define the magnitude of cumulative impact.

Table 5.4a: Magnitude of In-Addition Cumulative Impact

Magnitude	Definition
High	The Proposed Development when considered in conjunction with other cumulative developments would represent a considerable or possibly fundamental increase in the influence of electricity developments on the character of the landscape and/ or the composition of views.
Medium	The Proposed Development when considered in conjunction with other cumulative developments would represent a notable and possibly considerable increase in the influence of electricity infrastructure on the character of the landscape and/ or the composition of views. Moderate cumulative impacts may, however, equate to a localised change within an otherwise unaltered context.
Low	The Proposed Development when taken in conjunction with other cumulative developments would represent a minor addition to the influence of electricity infrastructure on the character of the landscape and/ or the composition of views. The change would be discernible, but the original baseline conditions would be largely unaltered.
Negligible	The Proposed Development when taken in conjunction with other cumulative developments would represent a barely discernible addition to influence of electricity infrastructure on the character of the landscape and/ or the composition of views. The baseline condition of the landscape or view would, for all intents and purposes, be unaffected.
None	No other cumulative development would be apparent.

Table 5.4b: Magnitude of In Combination Cumulative Impacts

Magnitude	Definition
High	The Proposed Development and other cumulative developments, taken together, would represent a defining characteristic of the landscape character and/or view.
Medium	The Proposed Development and other cumulative developments, taken together, would represent a key characteristic of the landscape character and/or view.
Low	The Proposed Development and other cumulative developments, taken together, would represent a discreet/separate and a localised feature of the landscape character and/or view.
Negligible	The Proposed Development and other cumulative developments, taken together, would represent a barely discernible constituent of the character of the landscape and/ or the composition of views.
None	No other cumulative development would be apparent.

5.3 Baseline Conditions

5.3.1 Landscape Context

Topography

The Proposed Development site is located within an area of varied topography, ranging from low elevations between 50 and 100 m AOD on the shores surrounding Loch Awe that has a dramatic mountainous backdrop with the high summits of Beinn a Bhuiridh at (897 m AOD), Meall Cuanail (918 m AOD) and Ben Cruachan (1125 m AOD).

The site itself is positioned on the mid, north-easterly slopes of Cruach na Gearr-choise (570 m AOD) the northern-most hill in a group that includes Mulllach namm Maol (535 m AOD) and Cruach Mhor (589 m AOD), which form dividing summits between Loch Awe and Loch Fyne. Crags create an undulating topography around the slopes of the hill that splay and shallow as they descend to the lower land at Loch Awe to the west. The north easterly part of Site stretches out towards land that rises again to the high point at Craig nan Sassanach (250 m AOD). Beyond to the north east and east the land dips to river valleys before rising again to summits at Beinn Ghlas (550 m AOD) and Cruach Mhor (414 m AOD). Further to the east, the land rises to Beinn an t-Sithien (594 m AOD), south of the Lochan Shira reservoir.

Hydrological Features

The Proposed Development site is located at the watershed between the River Awe and the Loch Fyne coastal catchment. The linear shape of the Site crosses the slope of An-Aodann with the most northly point of the site on the slopes of Archan River and its most southerly area sloping down towards the River Aray valley. To the site's north west boundary a burn crosses in a north easterly direction before joining other tributaries and turning south to run into the River Aray valley. A second burn crosses at the southern tip of the Site in an easterly direction before curving north and east again to join other tributaries again running into the River Aray valley (see **Volume 1, Chapter 7: Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Geology and Soils, Plate 1;** and **Volume 3a, Figure 7.1**).

Landcover

The Proposed Development is located within a semi-mature commercial plantation and the cleared operational corridor for the Taynuilt to Inverary 132 kV OHL. The operational corridor has low level grasses and shrubs and some riverine vegetation associated with the burns that cross the site. Bounding the operational corridor is predominantly forestry of varying stages of maturity with a network of access tracks.

As shown in **Figure 5.1 (Volume 3a), t**he Study Area includes:

- Higher ground where vegetation is a mix of moorland grasses and shrubs with areas of exposed craggy rocks characteristic of the upland moor habitat type.
- Valley slopes with large swathes of forestry managed conifer plantations of varying maturity that create dark, irregular shapes interspersed with evidence of felling.
- Lower land along the shores of Loch Awe include areas of deciduous woodland and agricultural fields of irregular shape and size bounded by fencing, hedgerows, shelterbelts16 and low stone walls.

Land Use

As shown in **Figure 5.1 (Volume 3a),** the landscape is typified by:

- small settlements, isolated dwellings and farmsteads scattered across lower lying topography and associated with road corridors. The main settlements in the Study Area include Cladich, Ardbrecknish and Portsonachan.
- forestry that represents one of the main land uses with farming prevalent along the banks of Loch Awe and the lower slopes of Cruach na Gearr-choise, Mullach nam Maol and Craig nan Sassanach, with open moorland used for grazing.
- existing electricity infrastructure with the Lochan Shira reservoir and Hydroelectric power station and operational Taynuilt to Inverary 132kV OHL.
- main transport routes that cross the Study Area include the A819, crossing north / south, and the A85 that follows the Loch Awe shoreline at the base of Beinn a Bhuiridh and Meall Cuanail. The B340 follows the eastern shore of Loch Awe.

5.3.2 Landscape Fabric

[16] Shelterbelt – A line of trees or shrubs to protect an area, especially a field of crops or livestock, from fierce weather. ADD to glossary

The Site itself has no specific features of scenic quality or rarity and its character is influenced by its use for the existing 132kV OHL route between Taynuilt to Inverary and surrounding forestry commercial plantations.

- Medium Value due to its:
- lack of notable features and relatively small area
- character of human influence from its existing land use of forestry and the 132kV Operational Corridor.
- Medium susceptibility to the type of development proposed due to it:
- location with proximity to the existing 132kV Operational Corridor.
- position within the Aray valley that provides topographical screening to surrounding areas.
- periodically screening by surrounding commercial forestry plantations.
- . Overall sensitivity is judged to be Medium.

5.3.3 Landscape Character

Studies of distinct Landscape Character Types (LCTs) have been used[17]. These are used as a basis for the description of the landscape character of the areas within the Study Area (refer to **Figure 5.4, Volume 3a**). The characteristics and key features of the LCTs that fall within the study are listed in full in Technical **Annex 5.1** and shown in **Figure 5.4, Volume 3a**. The assessment of Sensitvity to the type of development proposed is summarised below.

Based on the ABLWECS study, and the preliminary landscape and visual appraisal, the landscape character types that would be subject to potential effects from the Proposed Development comprise:

- LCT 7c: North Loch Awe Craggy Upland
- LCT 2: High Tops
- LCT 4: Mountain Glens
- LCT 5a Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic
- Craggy Upland LCT 7
- LCT 20: Rocky Mosaic LCT 20

The sensitivity of these LCTs to the type of development proposed are described below.

LCT 7c: North Loch Awe Craggy Upland

The area forms the scenic basin of the head of Lock Awe and is located to the north, north east and north west of the Study Area.

- High Value due to its:
- designation as part of the North Argyll APQ and its role in providing the backdrop to the high sensitivity landscape around the head of Loch Awe with its pattern of wooded islands that are nationally rare.
- role in providing the foreground to views of Ben Cruachan.
- High to Medium susceptibility to the type of development proposed depending on location due to:
- its undulating topography and forestry that provides some potential for screening of the type of development proposed.
- the existing 132kV Inverary to Taynuilt OHL and operational corridor landscape feature crosses the south of the LCT.
- Overall sensitivity is judged to be High.

[17] https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/23585038.pdf Accessed 11/10/22.

LCT 2: High Tops

The LCT occurs in the north of the Study Area on the slopes of Beinn a Bhuiridh. The LCT comprises of a diverse landform with gullies, scarp slopes and rocky screes.

- High Value: due to
- the Ben Lui and Loch Etive Mountains WLA occurring within the LCT
- Located within the North Argyll APQ.
- High susceptibility to the type of development proposed depending on location due to:
- High elevation allowing full and expansive views to the surrounding landscape.
- Recognised sense of wildness and remoteness within limited human influence.
- Overall sensitivity is judged to be High.

LCT 4: Mountain Glens

The LCT occurs within the Study Area at the head of Loch Awe in the north and along Glen Shira to the east and south east.

- High Value: due to location within the Located within the North Argyll APQ.
- High susceptibility to the type of development proposed due to:
- The enclosed nature of the landscape that may channel views particularly at head of Lochs.
- Small-scale of the landscape that is narrow and linear.
- Presence of settlements.
- Overall sensitivity is judged to be High.

LCT 5a Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic

The LCT is in proximity to the Proposed Development, spanning from the north east of the Site round to the south west in a narrow band along Loch Fyne, providing a transition between the Craggy Upland (7) and Rocky Mosaic type (20).

- High Value due to:
- Areas falling within the North Argyll APQ;
- Providing the backdrop to Loch Fyne and Inveraray Castle.
- High to Medium susceptibility to the type of development proposed due to:
- Large areas of forestry plantation
- Small-scale of the landscape that is narrow and linear.
- Presence of settlements.
- Overall sensitivity is judged to be High.

Craggy Upland LCT 7

The LCT is located to the southwest and west of the Proposed Development, providing the upland plateau on either side of Loch Awe.

- High to Medium Value due to its:
- Its amorphous landform and simple landform within a large area that is not designated
- role in providing the setting and surrounds to Loch Awe with oak-birch woodland on lower slopes.
- Medium susceptibility to the type of development proposed due to:
- Large areas of commercial forestry plantation
- Undulating topography providing some opportunity for screening

- No prominent summits and elevations of approximately 300ms.
- Existing windfarms (such as An Suidhe) and associated connecting infrastructure.
- Overall sensitivity is judged to be Medium.

LCT 20: Rocky Mosaic LCT 20

The LCT occurs along the shores of Loch Awe and Loch Fyne, and along the River Aray valley

- High Value due to:
- Areas falling within the North Argyll APQ;
- Relative prevalence of settlements;
- Role in forming the Loch Awe edge.
- High susceptibility to the type of development proposed due to:
- The small scale of the landscape and sense of containment;
- Low elevation with potential for skylines to interrupted.
- No prominent summits and elevations of approximately 300ms.
- Overall sensitivity is judged to be High

5.3.4 Landscape Designations and Classifications

The location and geographical extent of landscape designations and classification within the Study Area are shown on **Figure 5.5, Volume 3a.** Baseline features and key special qualities of each designation or classification are listed in the **Technical Appendix**.

Area of Panoramic Quality (APQ) – North Argyll

The Proposed Development is located within the North Argyll APQ (refer to **Figure 5.5, Volume 3a)**. The APQs are important in providing '*a wider landscape setting to the much more closely defined National Scenic Areas (NSAs)*.' [18], APQs are also noted for their importance for their physical landforms, science value and environmental assets they represent[19]. Discussion of the key special features of the APQ within the area surrounding the North of Loch Awe during a wind farm inquiry are used in this assessment[20] to support the understanding of the baseline character of the area. Special features identified for the APQ within the study are listed within the Technical Appendix. All Representative VPs are located within the APQ and the baseline views support the understanding of the special qualities of the APQ within the Study Area.

- High Value due to:
- Its designation.
- Its key special features, in particular with the nationally rare pattern of wooded islands at the North of Loch Awe and its juxtaposition with the slopes of Ben Cruachan.
- Its recreational value with hill walkers, water-based sports and tourists
- High susceptibility to the type of development proposed due to:
- Areas at high elevations with expansive views across the landscape;
- The intricate small scale settled and farmed loch fringes within the Area;
- The diversity of landscapes and rich cultural heritage associated with the Area.
- Overall sensitivity is judged to be High

18 https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ablwecs_-_volume_one_-_main_report_-_final_august_2017_reduced.pdf

19 https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/23585038.pdf Accessed 11/10/22.

20 As described by Carol Anderson Architects UPPER SONACHAN WIND FARM INQUIRY - DPEA REFERENCE WIN-130-2SNH and Argyll and Bute Council - Landscape and Visual Topic Paper

Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDLs)

Ardanaiseig House GDL (GDL00018) is situated approximately 5km to the north of the Site (refer to **Figure 5.5, Volume 3a**). The garden is valued for its designed landscape that comprises of woodland, gardens, parkland and architectural features. The woodland canopy contributes to the shoreline scenery from the A85 along the north shore of Loch Awe[21]. The sensitivity of the landscape classification is judged to be High.

- High Value due to its:
- role as a feature on the high sensitivity head of Loch and setting of the diverse wooded islands in this area.
- Designed landscape with a woodland canopy that contributes to shoreline scenery
- Its recreational value tourists.
- High susceptibility to the type of development proposed due to:
- Views across Loch Awe and to the surrounding landscape.
- The intricate small scale of the landscape within this area.
- Overall sensitivity is judged to be High

The ZTV indicates Ardanaiseig House GDL would have theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development and was therefore included as a representative viewpoint.

Wild Land Areas (WLAs)

Whilst Wild Land Areas (WLAs) are of national importance and there can be adverse effects on them from developments out with their boundaries Policy 4 (g) the National Planning Framework, NPF4, now approved by the Scottish Parliament[22], states that '*Buffer zones around wild land will not be applied, and effects of development outwith wild land areas will not be a significant consideration.'* That said early consideration was given to potential effects on the Ben Lui and Loch Etive Mountains WLAs (refer to **Figure 5.5, Volume 3a**).

Ben Lui WLA

This classified landscape is located approximately 4.8 km east of the Proposed Development. This relatively small WLA is 145 km^2 with its western half overlapping with the North Argyll APQ. The area is formed by complex, high and sometimes craggy hills with several steep glens but is readily accessible with no part over 10 km from a road. Forest plantations define much of the northern edge and parts of the west and south, forming dark homogenous areas that interrupt the sense of a continuous mountain landscape and emphasise the limited extent of the WLA.

Ben Lui is in the north east and is described as the 'Queen of the Scottish Mountains'. Arresting, panoramic views are experienced at the top of slopes to adjacent hill ranges including Ben Cruachan from the south west and Ben Challum and Ben More from the north-eastern hills. Upland areas have a sense of naturalness with waterfalls and small lochs. Steep sides of glens provide a strong sense of enclosure that channel views. The WLA is defined by surrounding human elements in views from higher slopes that limit the extent of the WLA. OHL cut through the area, with Hydro-electric power generation at Glen Shira as its associated infrastructure.

A review of the wild land characteristics of the WLA and the limited geographical extent of the Proposed Developments viewshed, its distance and position relative to the Proposed Development suggests that there would be no prospect of significant effects on the integrity of the WLA, a position accepted by NatureScot in their Screening consultation response (ECU00004505). Therefore, no further assessment of effects on this WLA has therefore be undertaken

VP3 is located within this WLA.

[21] http://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/GDL00018

[22] TransformingPlanning.Scot – The Scottish Government Revised Draft NPF4 available at: https://www.transformingplanning.scot/national-planning-framework/revised-draft-npf4/ Accessed 14/11/22

Loch Etive Mountains[23]

A small part of this expansive WLA is with the north of the Study Area approximately 8.7 km north of the Proposed Development. The WLA covers 507 km^2 that spans the Lochaber and Argyll border and is also designated as an APQ. A largely uninhabited area with high, rugged mountains divided by steep glens and complex geology that are described as awe-inspiring. The WLA includes a series of deep glens carved through mountains with arresting side slopes and spectacular geological features that contribute to a strong sense of naturalness The WLA is predominantly viewed from roads on its outside edges, in particular from the A82 an A85. Where there is good access, these areas are popular with visitors. Ben Cruachan and through routes attract hill walkers that experience stunning, long distance, panoramic views from the tops of ridges. Forest plantations are present on some lower slopes and can reduce the sense of naturalness experienced within the area.

A review of the wild land characteristics of the WLA and the limited geographical extent of the Proposed Developments viewshed, its distance and position relative to the Proposed Developments suggests that there would be no prospect of significant effects on the integrity of the WLA, a position accepted by NatureScot in their consultation response (ECU00004505). Therefore, no further assessment of effects on this WLA has therefore be undertaken

VP 4 is located within this WLA.

The LVA considers potential effects on a range of visual receptors presented on **Figure 5.5: Visual Receptors, Volume 3a**, including:

- Residents of settlements and scattered properties;
- Road users and receptors on transportation routes including tourists;
- Recreational and tourist receptors including hill walkers, those participating in water-based activities on Loch Awe, and cyclists on footpaths/cycle routes/roads.

Settlement

ZTV analysis indicates (refer to **Figure 5.2c, Volume 3a**) there are no settlements with visibility of the Proposed Development. No individual residencies located within 1 km of the Proposed Development of the Site have visibility and are scoped out of the assessment with no Residential Visual Assessments deemed to be required in support of this LVA.

Transport Routes

Transport receptors would include both commuters that are focused on drivers and those that are passengers and would be more focused on the landscape including tourists. Routes that cross the Study Area with theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development include the A819, B840, B845 and A83.

ZTV analysis indicates (Refer to Figures 5.2a-c) that there is no visibility from B840 and potential visibility from:

- the A85 Tourist route, of the existing and Proposed Development as receptors travel along the shores the head of Loch Awe as represented by VP8.
- very small stretches of the A819 north of Cladich and as it passes along the shores of Loch Awe at Lag na Luinge. No viewpoint has been selected along this route due to the limited visibility anticipated due to roadside vegetation at the ZTV locations identified.
- small stretches of the B845, represented by VP2 at Cnoc Lomain, north of Kilchrenan with:

[23] https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2021-09/Wild%20land%20Description%20Loch-Etive-mountains-July-2015-09.pdf Accessed 5 October 2022

Recreational Receptors

Recreational activities within the wider landscape include walking trails and water-related activities on Loch Awe and Loch Shira. Argyle and Bute Core Paths are located within the Study Area. The ZTV (Refer to **Figures 5.2a-c**) indicates potential visibility from:

- parts of core paths: C300 (c) and C171 (b) and C523 with views represented by VP2;
- Summit views from:
- Cruach Mhor represented by VP3;
- Beinn a Bhuiridh represented by VP4;
- Beinn an t-Sithein represented by VP5;
- Beinn Ghlas represented by VP7.
- the waters in the northern area of Loch Awe with views represented by VP 5 and VP8.
- Ardanaiseig House GDL shoreline represented by VP5.

Representative baseline views and the visual and landscape receptors they represent are described in **Technical Annex 5.1**. The location of the viewpoints is shown on **Figure 5.5** (**Volume 3a**).

Summary of Sensitive Receptors

Sensitive landscape and visual receptors (i.e. this rated as having a High sensitivity in the preceding baseline analysis) are summarised in the **Table 5.5**, below.

Table 5.5 summarises the sensitive receptors within the Study Area that have been scoped into the LVA, including both landscape and visual receptors. Additionally, the overall sensitivity of the receptor to change is indicated.

Table 5.5: Summary of Sensitive Landscape and Visual Receptors

Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity
Landscape Fabric	Medium
Landscape Character	
LCT 7c North Loch Awe Craggy Upland LCT 2 – High Tops LCT 4 Mountain Glens LCT 5a Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic	High
LCT 7 Craggy Upland	Medium
Landscape Designations / Classifications: • Area of Panoramic Quality – North Argyll • *Wild Land Areas (scoped out of the appraisal)* • Ardanaiseig House GDL (GDL00018) GDL	High
Visual receptors	
Residents of scattered properties and Kichrenan (scoped out of the appraisal)	High
Recreational water-related activity and walkers	High
Road users (commuters)	Medium
Tourists	High

5.4 Assessment Results

The following section assesses the impacts and residual effects arising from the Proposed Development.

5.4.1 Construction

Impacts from the construction phase would include:

- Formation of the temporary diversion that would require eight wood poles, at a maximum height of 15 m above ground level positioned south of the existing 132 kV Taynuilt to Inveraray OHL between existing Towers 35a and 35b.
- Approximately 700 m of new permanent access track along the length of the diversion to allow for the construction and removal of the wood poles.
- Approximately 1.9 ha of land cover would be permanently changed for new access tracks.
- Felling of approximately 2.4 ha of commercial plantation woodland within and Site (107.5 ha) to clear for construction, as well as ongoing management of the operational corridor.
- Tower foundations and associated construction activities would require a working area of 5,400 m^2, of this an estimate 72 m^2 of soil (9 m^2 per Tower foundation leg) and associated landcover would be changed permanently as a result of the Proposed Development.
- A 1.5 ha temporary laydown area to be developed for the proposed Creag Dhubh Substation (Planning ref: 22/00782/PP) would be used for this Proposed Development and therefore, there would be no new and/ or additional effects and is not considered in this appraisal.

And be mitigated by:

- the localised area of works and short-term period of activity;
- the integration of the temporary diversion with the existing operational Taynuilt to Inverary 132kV OHL
- a small loss of forestry within the landscape that would be felled within the next 3 year without the Proposed Development;
- screening to the north east to south west by established, mature commercial forestry within no current felling plans;
- screening to the north west to south by topography;
- distance from the Proposed Development at areas of higher elevation within the Study Area;
- the relatively small scale of the construction activity within an expansive, open landscape.

Landscape

Landscape Fabric

The Proposed Development construction impacts on landscape fabric would be direct impacts on landscape would include;

- Change in landcover with soil and vegetation removed;
- Early felling of areas of forestry for temporary diversion;
- Addition of temporary and permanent tracks.
- Disturbance by plant and activity for an 18 month period

Impacts on the Medium sensitivity landscape fabric within the Proposed Development Site are judged to be a notable change within the Site due to the proportion of the area required for works and disturbance to landcover within this small area with a **Medium** magnitude impact. **Moderate** effects would be experienced that are highly localised to the area of works and for a short-term period of activity;

Landscape Character

<u>North Loch Awe Craggy Upland (LCT where Proposed Development is located)</u>

Direct impacts on character would be experienced in the North Loch Awe Craggy Upland LCT where impacts would be highly localised to the Proposed Development Site. Impacts on Landscape Character surrounding the Site would

be indirect and small scale, with screened by topography to the west and south and mature commercial forestry with no current felling plans until at least 2025 for the majority of the woodland to the north east and south west (refer to **Figure 5, Technical Appendix 2.1, Volume 2)**.

- Impacts on the North Loch Awe Craggy Upland LCT would be localised and would not alter the landscape context with the area due to the Proposed Development being within the context of the existing 132kV OHL feature. Magnitude of impact: **Low**

The effect during construction: **Moderate**

Surrounding LCTs

Indirect Impacts on surrounding landscape would be due to a perceived increase in the prominence of construction activity. The impacts would be greatest in close proximity to the Proposed Development where the enclosed topography of the Aray Valley faces the Site (**Figure 5.2b, Volume 3a**). As shown in the ZTV analysis, the Temporary Diversion poles would have a similar visibility to the existing 132kV OHL towers (**Figure 5.2a and b, Volume 3a**) with all poles potentially visible in proximity to the south east and at higher elevations to the north and north west. Impacts at higher elevations would be mitigated by distance.

The impact of the Proposed Development's construction activities on landscape character would be **Low:**

- within proximity to the Site Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic and Craggy Upland LCTs and would dissipate to None with distance and with screening by topography (refer to **Figure 5.3** for topography and **Figure 5.4** for LCT area**)**.
- at higher elevations within areas of the High Tops LCT with full views of construction impacts that would be highly localised within an otherwise unaltered landscape context, dissipating in the LCT quickly with distance from the fringes of the LCT to None.

The effect on Landscape Character during construction would be **Moderate** to **Minor** in these areas, dissipating to None with distance and screening by topography.

The impact of the Proposed Development's construction activities on landscape character would be **Negligible** within:

- the Mountain Glens LCT due to the distance of activities (approximate 5km to closest part of the Site) and partial screening by topography and shoreline vegetation.
- The Rocky Mosaic LCTs due to partial views of activity due to screening by topography and shoreline vegetation.

The effect on Landscape Character during construction would be **Minor** in these areas, dissipating to None with distance.

Landscape Designations and Classification

North Argyll APQ

Direct effects would occur on the landscape fabric (as described above) within a small area of the APQ (as described above). Construction activity would occur within the sensitive area around the head of Loch Awe with partial views of activity and temporary diversion from locations around the shoreline. At elevated areas within the APQ full views of activity would be possible within the foreground back clothed against rising topography.

The magnitude of construction impacts on this designation would be Low within proximity to the Proposed Development and where forms the foreground context at elevated area. At these locations within the APQ, impacts would be Low as a notable change within and unaltered landscape context.

Effects on the APQ would be **Moderate** reducing to None with distance.

Ardanaiseig House GDL

Indirect perceptual impacts on the feature would be experienced as partial views of activity and the temporary diversion and disturbance to tranquillity from noise associated with construction experienced against a back clothing by topography. Aesthetic impacts would only be expected within the panorama views from along Loch Awe looking east. Construction. Impacts would be Negligible as barely discernible from this feature, short-term and reversible.

Effects on the GDL would be **Minor**.

Visual

Effects on visual amenity of transportation routes

Receptors on routes are judged to be High sensitivity due to the possibility of tourists as passengers using the routes. Commuters focused on the road would be of Medium sensitivity.

A85 Tourist Route

Views would be limited to a small area (Figure 5.14c for Proposed Development extent). Between three and eight of the temporary diversion poles would be visible for short periods over approximately 5km of the route (refer to **Figure 5.2b)**. Partial glimpses of construction activity and temporary diversion would be experienced while travelling at speed with screening by intervening topography and vegetation (roadside and shoreline that would be a mix of deciduous reducing screening during winter months). Impacts are judged as Negligible with the underlying composition of the view essentially unchanged. The effect on receptors would be **Minor**.

A819

Views would be limited to two short stretches of the route. At approximately 8km from the Proposed Development, up to 5 poles of the temporary diversion would be visible and at 3km this would reduce to 4 poles due to screening by topography (refer to **Figures 5.2b** for area of visibility along the route). Partial glimpses of construction activity and the temporary diversion would be screened by topography and roadside vegetation (mix of deciduous reducing screening during winter months). Impacts are judged as Negligible with the underlying composition of the view essentially unchanged. The effect on receptors would be **Minor**.

B845

Views would be limited to a stretch of 3km at approximately 5km from the Proposed Development where up to two poles of the temporary diversion would be visible (refer to **Figure 5.2b**). Partial glimpses of construction activity and the temporary diversion would be screened by topography, areas of commercial forestry plantation (on rotational felling cycles) and roadside vegetation (mix of deciduous reducing screening during winter months). Impacts are judged as Negligible with the underlying composition of the view essentially unimpacted. The effect would be **Minor**.

Effects on the visual amenity of recreational routes.

All recreational receptors within the Study Area are judged to be High sensitivity due to the focus on the landscape for the activities identified. (Refer to **Figure 5.5** for location of receptors)

Core paths: C300; C171 (b) and C523

Views would be limited to a small area of the view (refer to Figure 5.8c for Proposed Development extent within the representative VP2 at this distance and aspect). The impact would be experienced for a short period (refer to **Figure 5.2b**) with views possible while travelling along approximately:

- a 3.5 km stretch of the C3000 where two poles of the temporary diversion would be visible;
- a 2.5 km stretch of the C171 (b) where two poles of the temporary diversion would be visible; and
- a 3.5 km for C525 where two poles of the temporary diversion would be visible.

Views would be screened by topography and intervening forestry (some areas with planned felling prior to 2030 in the LTFP (**Technical Annex 2.1, Volume 2**). Impacts are judged as Negligible with the underlying composition of the view essentially unimpacted. The effect would be **Minor**.

Hill Walkers

Views would be limited to a small area of the view (**Figures 5.9c,10c,11c,13c** for Proposed Development extent within view for summit locations). Full vie.ws are expected to be possible by Hill Walkers due to the elevation. Impacts would be mitigated by distance and backclothing against rising topography. Impacts are judged as Negligible with the underlying composition of the view essentially unimpacted. The effect would be **Minor.**

Water-based recreation

Views would only be possible within a small area of Loch Awe (refer to **Figure 5.2b**) and would occur within a small extent of the view (refer to **Figures 5.12c and 14.c** for the extent of the Proposed Development from shoreline locations near areas of Loch water visibility). Views would be screened by topography, shoreline deciduous vegetation and intervening forestry (some areas with planned felling prior to 2030 I the LTFP[24]). Impacts are judged as Negligible with the underlying composition of the view essentially unchanged. The effect would be **Minor**.

5.4.2 Operation

Impacts from the Operation of the Proposed Development would include:

- a permanent loss of soil and vegetation cover where required for the foundations of tower legs (approximately 72m^2) and 1.9ha for new permanent access tracks.
- addition of two new towers to the Taynuilt to Inverary 132kV OHL 141 m and 115 m away from the existing corridor to accommodate the Tie-In to the Proposed Substation.
- change in land use from commercial forestry to the operational corridor for the Tie-In to the proposed substation, approximately 170m between angle tower 35A and tower 35B, and 137m between angle tower 35A and tower 35B, with a width of between 50 and 80m depending on the nature of the woodland.
- Creation of approximately 700 m of new permanent access track and upgrades to 495m of track.

Impact from the Proposed Development during operation would be mitigated by occurring within the context of the existing 132kV OHL operational corridor.

Landscape

Effects on Landscape Fabric

Operational Impacts on landscape fabric would be permanent and localised within the 102 ha Site. The change in landcover and use would be a notable alteration to features within the site. The impact within the localised area would be **Medium** with **Moderate** effects**.**

Effects on Landscape Character

North Loch Awe Craggy Upland (LCT where Proposed Development is located)

The Proposed Development would have localised direct impacts within the Site. Effects would be experienced within the context of the existing Taynuilt to Inverary 132kV OHL. No notable landscape features would be lost and the underlying character would be essentially unimpacted.

Perceptual impacts on the broader LCT are mitigated by backclothing by rising topography, screening by topography, particularly to the north west to south (refer to **Figure 5.3** and **5.2c)** and large areas of commercial forestry with no planned felling to the north east to south (Figure 5). Impacts on the LCT as close proximity are shown by representative VP1 (refer to **Figures 5.7 a-c**) and distance to the northeast is shown by VP 3 (refer to **Figure 5.9 a-c)** and to the north west by VP2 (refer to **Figure 5.8 a-c**).

The impact would be Low within in proximity to the Site reducing with distance to None. Effects would be **Moderate** reducing to None with distance.

Surrounding LCTs

Detailed appraisal across each character area is provided in the **Technical Appendix.**

The impacts would be greatest in proximity to the Proposed Development and where the enclosed topography of the Aray Valley faces the Site (**Figure 5.2b**). As shown in the ZTV analysis, the Proposed Development would have a similar visibility to the existing 132kV OHL towers (**Figure 5.2a and c**) with all towers potentially visible in proximity, to the south east and at higher elevations to the north and north west. Impacts at higher elevations would be mitigated by distance and backclothing by rising topography.

The impact of the Proposed Development's on landscape character would be **Low:**

- within the north east area of Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic LCT 5a as represented by VP7 (**Figures 5.13 a-c)**;
- within small areas of Craggy Upland LCT 7.
- at higher elevations within areas of the High Tops LCT 2 with full views of the Proposed Development would be localised within an otherwise unaltered landscape context, dissipating in the LCT quickly with distance from the fringes of the LCT to None as shown by representative VP4 and 5 (**Figures 5.10 an 5.11 a-c**).
- the Mountain Glens LCT where all four towers would be potentially visible across the shores of Loch Awe against a back cloth of rising topography as shown by representative VP8 (**Figures 5.14 a-c)**.

The effect on Landscape Character would be **Moderate to Minor** within relatively small area of the LCTs (refer to **Figure 5.2c) dissipating** to None with distance.

The Rocky Mosaic LCT would experience the Proposed Development at distance and with screening by topography and shoreline deciduous vegetation (with reduced screening anticipated in winter months), the impact would be a barely discernible change to an existing feature that is **Negligible** as demonstrated in VP5 (refer to **Figure 5.12 a-c).** The effect on Landscape Character would be **Minor** dissipating to None with distance.

Effects on Landscape Designations and Classifications

North Argyll APQ

The North Argyll APQ would experience a permanent change of land cover and use within a localised area of the Proposed Development. A small perceptual increase in the presence of the existing 132kV would occur due to the Tie-In to the Substation within proximity and at higher elevations where full views would be possible.

The Proposed Development would impact aesthetic qualities where experienced in views around the basin at the head of Loch Awe that has been identified as a particularly sensitive and nationally rare feature of the APQ. The Proposed Development would be:

- be seen in views across Loch Awe shorelines as represented by VP5 (refer to **Figure 5.12 a-c);**
- in the foreground of views form the Cruachan massif as represented by VP8(**Figures 5.14 a-c)**;
- relatively dispersed area of potential visibility (Figure 5.2c) with APQ;
- seen against a backclothing of rising topography.
- In the context of existing operational Taynuilt to Inverary 132kV OHL;
- a very small element within the landscape.

The Proposed Development would not compromise the APQ's scenic value within the sensitive area of the head of Loch Awe or undermine the integrity of the designation. The impact would be Low localised impact that would not alter the landscape context.

The effect would be **Moderate** and dissipate to None with distance.

Ardanaiseig House GDL

The Proposed Development would be part visible from the shoreline areas of the Ardanaiseig House GDL as represented by VP5 (refer to **Figure 5.12 a-c)**. The majority of the Proposed Development would be screened by topography with Tower 35A visible (refer to the wireframe and photomontage provided in **Figure 5.12a and c)** due to screening by topography. The feature would occur within the context of the existing 132kV OHL and would be barely discernible change within the setting of the GDL. The impact is expected to be Negligible with Minor effects that are permanent. The features identified for classification would not be compromised.

The effect would be **Minor** on the shoreline and None where there is no visibility within the GDL.

Visual

Effects on visual amenity of transportation route during operation

Receptors on routes are judged to be High sensitivity due to the possibility of tourists using the routes.

A85 Tourist Route

Views would be limited to a small area (**Figure 5.14c** for Proposed Development extent at VP8 as a representative view from this location). Part of full views of the Proposed Development (up to part of all four towers indicated by the ZTV, refer to **Figure 5.2c**) would be possible while moving at speed. Views would be screened by intervening topography and vegetation (roadside and shoreline that would be a mix of deciduous reducing screening during winter months). Impacts would be Low to None with the unaltered visual context. The residual effect on the amenity of receptors would therefore be **Moderate to None**.

A819

Views would be limited to two short stretches of the route. At approximately 8km from the Proposed Development, up to one tower of the Proposed Development would be visible and at 3km where up to all four towers would be visible(refer to **Figures 5.2c** for area of visibility along the route). Views would be screened topography and roadside vegetation (mix of deciduous reducing screening during winter months) and areas of commercial forestry (on a rotational felling cycle). Impacts are judged as Negligible with the underlying composition of the view essentially unimpacted. The residual effect on the amenity of receptors would therefore be **Minor**.

B845

Views would be limited to a stretch of 3km at approximately 5km from the Proposed Development where replacement angle tower 35A would be visible would be visible (refer to **Figure 5.2c**). Views would be screened by topography, areas of commercial forestry plantation (on rotational felling cycles) and roadside vegetation (mix of deciduous reducing screening during winter months). Impacts are judged as Negligible with the underlying composition of the view essentially unchanged. The residual effect on the amenity of receptors would therefore be **Minor**.

Effects on the visual amenity of recreational receptors

All recreational receptors within the Study Area are judged to be High sensitivity due to the focus on the landscape for the activities identified. (Refer to **Figure 5.5, Volume 3a** for location of receptors)

Core paths: C300; C171 (b) and C523

Views would be limited to a small area of the view (refer to **Figure 5.8 a-c** for Proposed Development extent within the representative VP2 at this distance and aspect) and would be a partial view of replacement angle tower 35A (refer to **Figure 5.2c**). The impact would be experienced for a short period (refer to **Figure 5.2b**) with views possible along a stretch of: 3.5km from C300; 2.5km for C171(b); 3.5km for C525. Views towards the Proposed Development would be screened by topography and intervening forestry (some areas with planned felling prior to 2030 in the

LTFP (**Technical Annex 2.1, Volume 2**). Impacts are judged as Negligible with the underlying composition of the view essentially unaltered. The residual effect on the amenity of receptors would therefore be **Minor**.

Hill Walkers

Views would be limited to a small area of the view (**Figures 5.9c,10c,11c,13c** for Proposed Development extent within view for summit locations). Full views are expected to be possible by Hill Walkers due to the elevation. Impacts would be mitigated by distance (closest receptors 1km as represented by VP1, see **Figures 5.7 a-c**) and backclothing by topography. Impacts are judged as Negligible with the underlying composition of the view largely unchanged. The residual effect on the amenity of walkers would therefore be **Minor.**

Water-based recreation

Views would only be possible within a small area of Loch Awe (refer to **Figure 5.2c**) and would occur within a small extent of the view (refer to **Figures 5.12c and 14.c** for the extent of the Proposed Development from shoreline locations near areas of Loch water visibility). Partial glimpses would be experienced at distance (approximately a minimum of 4 km), backclothed against rising topography and screened by topography, shoreline deciduous vegetation and intervening forestry (some areas with planned felling prior to 2030 I the LTFP[25]). Impacts are judged as Negligible as the underlying composition of views from the Loch and Loch sides would be largely unaffected. on this basis the residual effect on the amenity of receptors would be **Minor**.

Effects at Representative Viewpoints

Figures 5.7c to Figure 5.14c (**Volume 3b**) provide photomontages of the Proposed Development at each viewpoint location and are used in the assessment to understand impacts on landscape and visual amenity above. Baseline views and the analysis impacts across viewpoints are provided in the Technical Appendix.

5.4.3 Cumulative Effects

As stated in section 5.2.5. this section appraises the effects under two cumulative scenarios, the:

- in-addition effects attributable the Proposed Development when considered in conjunction with cumulative developments of relevance to this appraisal; and
- in-combination effects, representing the total effect of the Proposed Development taken together with cumulative developments. Such effects are not attributable to the Proposed Development itself, but are an expression of the influence of how all relevant energy developments are anticipated to influence the landscape and visual resource.

Only those cumulative developments that are of a similar size, scale or nature as the Proposed Development have been considered and are shown in **Figure 5.15 (a,b,c,d), Volume 3a**. Some developments within the Study Area have been omitted from the detailed assessment due to lack of intervisibility or substantial restriction of views due to mitigation by screening (by topography and/or vegetation) and/or distance. Two examples are:

- The wind farm on the south east edge of the Study Area on the slopes of Clachan Hill is scoped out of the appraisal as it would not been seen in conjunction with the Proposed Development due to its location.
- Cruachan Extension Project submitted for planning in May 2022 (ECU00004492) is scoped out due to distance, restricted visibility, and relative location.

The developments above are considered unlikely to contribute to any significant cumulative effects during construction or operation and would not be expected to materially change the effects identified in the assessment.

For the two cumulative scenarios above (in addition and in combination), impacts are considered (full assessment provided in **Technical Annex 5.1)** for:

A. Existing and consented (but currently unbuilt) developments considered in this assessment are:

- Crossaig to Inveraray 275 kV OHL construction of approximately 81 km of 275 kV OHL from the existing Inveraray Switching Station to the existing Crossaig Substation and ancillary development including an additional section of Overhead Line as a Tie-In to Port Ann Substation (ECU00000455 – in construction and part of the Argyll and Kintyre 275 kV Strategy);
- Blarghour Wind Farm, 17 turbines of maximum height of 135.5m, located approximately 5 km south west of the proposed development (EC00005257 consented).

B. Existing and consented, along with cumulative developments in planning and pre-planning stages that are considered comprise:

- Creag Dhubh to Inveraray 275 kV OHL Connection Project to construct and operate an approximately 9km double circuit 275kV OHL supported by steel lattice towers and connections to Proposed Creag Dhubh substation (in planning ECU00003442 part of the Argyll and Kintyre 275 kV Strategy);
- Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection Project, a 13.3 km OHL Connection (in planning ECU00002199, part of the Argyll and Kintyre 275 kV Strategy);
- Creag Dhubh Substation Project located adjacent to the Proposed Development and shown in photomontages (refer to **Figures 5.7c-5.14**) (in planning 22/00782/PP, part of the Argyll and Kintyre 275 kV Strategy).
- Blarghour Wind Farm Variation to increase the turbine tip height to 180m (ECU0004481 – scoping, preapplication complete)
- Car Duibh Wind Farm with 25 turbines each up to 200m to turbine blade tip located approximately 7.8km south west (ECU00003254 – scoping, preapplication)
- Blarghour Wind Farm OHL Connection Project (pre planning – alignment not yet known);
- Ladyfield Wind Farm with 15 turbines up to 180m tip height, approximately 3.5km south east of the Proposed Development (pre-planning[26]).

Due to the commercial nature of the forestry within the Study Area, screening by forestry is considered as impermanent with varying degrees of mitigation over time. Therefore a worse-case scenario of felling around the developments is considered when appraising the cumulative impacts and effects only (LTFP have been used to appraise effects in sections 1.4.1, 1.4.2 and 1.4.3).

Cumulative Effects during Construction

Landscape

Cumulative impacts are considered for the projects approved and in planning that would likely overlap in construction with the Proposed Development. Projects that are existing, or already under construction (Crossaig to Inveraray 275kV OHL), would not contribute to construction and are not considered. Those in pre-planning would unlikely reach construction at a similar time as the Proposed Development and are not considered. Cumulative construction impacts are considered form:

Projects considered:

- Blarghour Wind Farm (consented)
- Creag Dhubh to Inveraray 275 kV OHL Connection Project (in planning)
- Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection Project (in planning)
- Creag Dhubh Substation Project (in planning)

Effects on Landscape Fabric

Within this assessment landscape fabric is judged as medium value and medium susceptibility to the type of development proposed (see section 1.3.2 above). However, value and susceptibility of landscape fabric to the type

[26] No ECU reference, information obtained from Ladyfield Renewable Energy Park | Ridge Clean Energy

of development proposed may vary across the Study Area and therefore this appraisal takes a conservative approach of High to Medium sensitivity when assessing cumulative effects.

Construction impacts of the Proposed Development on landscape fabric are set out in section 1.4.1. Impacts expected from the cumulative projects are set out in **Technical Annex 5.1**. When these impacts are considered alongside the Cumulative Projects that are approved and in planning:

- *in addition* magnitude of impact would be **Low** as a barely discernible addition to the influence of electricity infrastructure construction with **Moderate - Minor** effect.
- *in combination* the area of landscape fabric impacted with increase and is considered **Low** as minor addition to the influence of construction on landscape fabric within the Study Area with **Moderate.**

Effects on landscape character

Landscape character varies in sensitivity between Medium and High across the Study Area.

Construction impacts of the Proposed Development on landscape character are set out in section 1.4.1. When the impacts are considered alongside the Cumulative Projects that are approved and in planning:

- *in addition* magnitude of impact would be **Negligible** in proximity to the Proposed Development, or where visible within the landscape (refer to the ZTV analysis in **Figure 5.2c** and **Figures 5.7 a-c**). On High sensitivity LCTs surrounding the Proposed Development **Minor** effects would occur. On Medium sensitivity areas, effects would be **Minor-Negligible.** Effects would reduce to None with distance.
- *in combination* the magnitude of impact would be **Medium** in proximity to the Proposed Development, substation, Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL and Creag Dhubh to Inveraray 275 kV OHL Connection Projects' where activity is concentrated within a localised area of the landscape. Combined cumulative impacts would also increase at higher elevations where full visibility of all construction activity within the study would be possible (refer to ZTV analysis in **Figures 5.7 a and b**). Impacts at higher elevations would be experienced at distance and would comprise a small area of the expansive view (demonstrated in the wireframes provided at **Figure 5.8b, 5.9b, 5.10b ,5.12b**). Impacts are expected to reduce to None with distance from the Proposed Development and where there is no visibility due to screening by topography to the west and south west. **Major/Moderate - None** effects on landscape character would be experienced within the Study that are temporary and localised.

Effects on landscape designations and classifications

North Argyll APQ

Construction of the Proposed Development, Creag Dhubh Substation and Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL and Creagh Dhubh to Inveraray Connection Projects would occur within the North Argyll APQ with direct impacts on the landscape as described above (refer to cumulative impact on Landscape Fabric). When the Proposed Development is considered:

- *in addition,* the cumulative magnitude of impact would be **Low** due to the direct impact on landscape form, or where visible with the APQ. The impact would not undermine the integrity of the designation and would be a barely discernible addition to the influence of electricity infrastructure construction with **Moderate** effect
- *in combination* magnitude of impact would be **Medium** within the APQ where direct effects occur localised around Creag Dhubh. **Medium** impacts would be expected due indirect perceptual effects where activity is viewed across the head of Loch Awe and at higher elevations within the APQ. The impact would be short-term and expected to reduce to None with distance and where there is no visibility. **Major/Moderate** effects on the APQ would be localised and short term.

Ardanaiseig House GDL

At this landscape feature, cumulative construction impacts are only expected to be experienced from the Proposed Development and Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection Project (**Figure 5.7a-d**). Construction of the Creag Dhubh Substation would be screened by topography (refer to **Figure 5.14b**). Blarghour Wind Farm construction would not be expected to be visible from this classified landscape feature following ZTV analysis (shown in **Figure 5.7d, Volume 3a**).

- *in addition,* the cumulative magnitude of impact would be Negligible as a barely discernible addition to the influence of electricity infrastructure construction with Minor effect due to screening of activities by topography.
- *in combination* magnitude of impact would be **Low** as a minor perceptual increase due to location of the activities occurring within an area of the GDL's setting to the east.

Visual

The impacts of the Proposed Development on visual amenity are described in section 1.4.7.

Effects on transportation routes visual amenity

A83

Cumulative impacts would be expected from the Proposed Development viewed with the construction of Blarghour Wind Farm (**Figure 5.d**), Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection Project and Crossaig to Inveraray 275 kV OHL (refer to **Figure 5.7a**). The Substation activity would be screened by topography (refer to **Figure 5.7a**). Views would be partial glimpses, experienced while moving at speed and at distance with intervening screening by topography and vegetation (roadside, shoreline deciduous woodland and commercial forestry on rotational felling cycles). The projects considered are dispersed over a large area of the view due to the linear nature of the OHL Connection project and distance of Blarghour Windfarm.

A819

Cumulative impacts would be expected from Proposed Development, Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection Project (refer to **Figure 5.7a**) and Crossaig to Inveraray 275 kV OHL (refer to **Figure 5.7b**) for very short distances. The Substation activity would be screened by topography (**refer to Figure 5.7a).** The projects considered are dispersed over the view due to the linear nature of the OHL Connection project. The Blarghour windfarm would not be visible along this route (refer to **Figure 5.7d, Volume 3a**). When considered:

B845

Cumulative impacts would be expected where the Proposed Development is visible in views with Blarghour Wind Farm (refer to **Figure 5.7d)** Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection Project (refer to **Figure 5.7a**) and Crossaig to Inveraray 275 kV OHL (refer to **Figure 5.7b**) for short periods along this route. The substation would be screened by topography (refer to **Figure 5.7a, Volume 3a**). During operation the Proposed Development would be part visible with the Ladyfield Windfarm in scoping.

Effects on recreational visual amenity

Core paths: C300; C171 (b) and C523

Cumulative impacts would be expected from construction of the Proposed Development, the construction of Blarghour Wind Farm (**Figure 5.d**), Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection Project (refer to **Figure 5.7a**) and Crossaig to Inveraray 275 kV OHL (refer to **Figure 5.7b**). The Substation activity would be screened by topography (**refer to Figure 5.7a**).

Impacts would be experienced for short distances along the paths, at a distance of at least 7km and at mid-elevations (approximately 150m AOD). Ground level construction activity would be screened by topography for the paths as shown in the wireframe for VP2 in proximity to the paths (refer **to Figure 5.8b, Volume 3a**)

Hill Walkers

Cumulative impacts would be expected from construction of at higher elevations such as represented by VP4 and VP5. As shown in the wireframe for theses representative viewpoints (refer to **Figures 5.10b and 5.11b**), although

construction activity would be fully or part visible (Crossaig to Inveraray 275 kV OHL) , it would be experienced at distance and form a small element within expansive views.

Water-based recreational receptors

Cumulative impacts would be expected from construction of the Proposed Development, Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection Project (refer to **Figure 5.7a**) and within a very small area from the Creag Dhubh to Inveraray 275 kV OHL (refer to **Figure 5.7b**) and Blarghour Wind Farm (**Figure 5.d**). The Substation activity would be screened by topography (**refer to Figure 5.7a, Volume 3a**).

Effects across visual receptors from the Proposed Development when considered:

- In addition
- to the projects existing and consented impacts would be Negligible with **Mino**r to **Minor/Negligible** effects.
- to projects existing, consented, in planning and scoping the relative increasingly small scale of the proposed development would continue to be a be Negligible with **Mino**r effects.
- In combination
- to the projects existing and consented impacts would be Low with **Moderate** to **Minor** effects
- to projects existing, consented, in planning and scoping the impacts would be Medium with **Moderate/Major** to **Moderate** effects that are highly localised to developments.

Cumulative effects during Operation

Landscape

Detailed assessment in provided in the **Technical Appendix.**

Effects on Landscape Fabric

Cumulative impacts on landscape fabric would include permanent loss of soil and vegetation, change of land use and levels of human influence. Impacts would be concentrated within the area of Creag Dhubh and decrease as the projects disperse across the Study Area due to the distance between these projects as shown in **Figures 5.7 a-d (Volume 3a)**.

- In addition
- to the projects existing and consented impacts would be Low with **Moderate** to **Mino**r effects.
- to projects existing, consented, in planning and scoping the relative increasingly small scale of the proposed development would continue to be a **Low** impact with **Moderate** to **Minor effects**.
- In combination
- to the projects existing and consented impacts would be Low with **Moderate** to **Minor** effects
- to projects existing, consented, in planning and scoping the impacts would be Medium with **Moderate/Major** to **Moderate** effects that are highly localised to developments.

Effects on landscape character

Landscape character varies in sensitivity between Medium and High across the Study Area.

Cumulative direct impacts on landscape character would occur where the cumulative projects are and would be concentrated around the Creag Dhubh area where several projects converge.

Indirect cumulative effects occur:

- in proximity to the Creag Dhubh area where the substation and OHL connection projects converge, with the impact increasing within the relatively enclosed Aray Valley due to the addition of the turbines of in scoping Ladyfield windfarm located on the eastern slopes.

- At elevations where all projects are visible although impacts can be mitigated within these areas by distance and backclothing by rising topography.

When the Proposed Development is considered:

- In addition
- to the projects existing and consented impacts would be Negligible across all LCTs with **Mino**r effects.
- to projects existing, consented, in planning and scoping the relative increasingly small scale of the proposed development would continue to be a **Negligible** impact with **Minor effects**.
- In combination with
- projects existing and consented impacts on character range from Low to None across the Study Area with a general lack of connected visibility with the projects considered. Effects would range from **Moderate** to **None** effects
- projects existing, consented, in planning and scoping the impacts increase to Medium where projects are concentrated or highly visible within the landscape with the potential to influence the underlying character within the Aray Valley and surrounding Loch Awe with **Moderate/Major** effects that would be localised.

Effects on landscape designation and classifications

North Argyll APQ

Direct impacts on the APQ landform and features would occur surrounding Creag Dhubh. Indirect impacts would occur around the sensitive area of Loch Awe and at elevations where all developments would be visible within the foreground of views, in some areas to the east crossing view. Impacts on the APQ are Negligible when the Proposed Development is considered in addition due to its small scale and localised impact within a small area. In combination with the Ladyfield wind farm in particular, increasing the impact due to turbines interrupting skylines around Loch Awe.

When the Proposed Development is considered:

- In addition
- to the projects existing and consented impacts would be Negligible with **Mino**r effects.
- to projects existing, consented, in planning and scoping the relative increasingly small scale of the proposed development would continue to be a Negligible impact with **Minor effects**.
- In combination with
- projects existing and consented impacts on the APQ would be Low due to the visual separation and distance of the projects to the Proposed Development. Effects would range from **Moderate** to **None**.
- projects existing, consented, in planning and scoping the impacts increase to Medium where projects are concentrated or highly visible within the landscape within the sensitive APQ area surrounding Loch Awe with **Moderate/Major** effects.

Ardanaiseig House GDL

At this location, cumulative operational impacts are expected from the Proposed Development, Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection Project and Ladyfield Windfarm (in scoping). The substation and Blarghour Wind Farm would be screened from this location analysis shown in **Figure 5.7a & d**). Impacts would be screened by shoreline woodland that may decrease in winter due to the mix of deciduous species (see **Figure 5.12 a and c, Volume 3a**). Cumulative impacts would be indirect and perceptual on the setting of the feature.

When the Proposed Development is considered:

- In addition
- to the projects existing and consented impacts would be Negligible with **Mino**r effects.

- to projects existing, consented, in planning and scoping the relative increasingly small scale of the proposed development would continue to be a Negligible impact with **Minor effects**.
- In combination with
- projects existing and consented impacts would be Low due to the visual separation and distance of the projects to the Proposed Development. Effects would range from **Moderate** to **None**.
- projects existing, consented, in planning and scoping the impacts increase to Medium with **Moderate/Major** effects.

Visual

A85

Cumulative impacts are unlikely to occur with existing and consented projects due to the distance from each other and visual separation. Impacts increase when projects in scoping are considered, particularly due to the Ladyfield wind farm interrupting skylines from this location (see **Figure 5.14b).**

A819

Cumulative impacts would be expected from Proposed Development, Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection Project (refer to **Figure 5.7a**) and Crossaig to Inveraray 275 kV OHL (refer to **Figure 5.7b**) for very short distances. The Substation activity would be screened by topography (**refer to Figure 5.7a).** The projects considered are dispersed over the view due to the linear nature of the OHL Connection project. The Blarghour windfarm would not be visible along this route (refer to **Figure 5.7d**). During operation, the Ladyfield windfarm (in scoping) would be seen against the skyline from this location although would be in the opposite direction from the route so unlikely to be seen together at proximity.

B845

Cumulative impacts would be expected where the Proposed Development is visible in views with Blarghour Wind Farm (refer to **Figure 5.7d)** Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection Project (refer to **Figure 5.7a**) and Crossaig to Inveraray 275 kV OHL (refer to **Figure 5.7b**) for short periods along this route. The substation would be screened by topography (refer to **Figure 5.7a, Volume 3a**). During operation the Proposed Development would be part visible with the Ladyfield Windfarm in scoping.

Effects across visual receptors from the Proposed Development when considered:

- In addition
- to the projects existing and consented impacts would be Negligible with **Minor** effects.
- to projects existing, consented, in planning and scoping the relative increasingly small scale of the proposed development would continue to be a Negligible impact with **Minor effects**.
- In combination with
- projects existing and consented impacts would be Low due to the visual separation and distance of the projects to the Proposed Development. Effects would range from **Moderate** to **None**.
- projects existing, consented, in planning and scoping the impacts increase to Medium with **Moderate/Major** effects.

Effects on recreational visual amenity

Core paths: C300; C171 (b) and C523

Cumulative impacts would be expected from construction of the Proposed Development, the construction of Blarghour Wind Farm (**Figure 5.d**), Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection Project (refer to **Figure 5.7a**) and Crossaig to Inveraray 275 kV OHL (refer to **Figure 5.7b**). The Substation activity would be screened by topography (**refer to Figure 5.7a**).

Impacts would be experienced for short distances along the paths, at a distance of at least 7km and at mid-elevations (approximately 150m AOD). Ground level construction activity would be screened by topography for the paths as shown in the wireframe for VP2 in proximity to the paths (refer **to Figure 5.8b, Volume 3a**)

Hill Walkers

Cumulative impacts would be expected from construction of all Approved and Proposed Developments at higher elevations such as represented by VP4 and VP5. As shown in the wireframe for theses representative viewpoints (refer to **Figures 5.10b and 5.11b**), although the Approved and Proposed development construction activity would be fully or part visible (Crossaig to Inveraray 275 kV OHL) , it would be experienced at distance and form a small element within expansive views.

Water-based recreational receptors

Cumulative impacts would be expected from construction of the Proposed Development, Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV OHL Connection Project (refer to **Figure 5.7a**) and within a very small area from the Crossaig to Inveraray 275 kV OHL (refer to **Figure 5.7b**) and Blarghour Wind Farm (**Figure 5.d**). The Substation activity would be screened by topography (**refer to Figure 5.7a**).

As shown in the wireframe for representative viewpoints at VP 5 and 8 (refer to **Figures 5.12b and 5.14b, Volume 3b**), the construction activity would be experienced in the foreground, potentially interrupting skylines in areas. Screening by topography and shoreside deciduous forestry would mitigate the impacts. Shoreline screening would be expected to reduce during winter months.

Effects across visual receptors from the Proposed Development when considered:

- In addition
- to the projects existing and consented impacts would be Negligible with **Mino**r effects.
- to projects existing, consented, in planning and scoping the relative increasingly small scale of the proposed development would continue to be a Negligible impact with **Minor effects**.
- In combination with
- projects existing and consented impacts would be Low due to the visual separation and distance of the projects to the Proposed Development. Effects would range from **Moderate** to **None**.
- projects existing, consented, in planning and scoping the impacts increase to Medium with **Moderate/Major** effects.

5.5 Summary of Assessment and Proposed Mitigation

Potential impacts during construction of the Proposed Development are detailed in **Table 5.7** below, which also details the relevant receptor and mitigation or control measures.

Table 5.7: Potential Landscape and Visual Impacts during Construction and Relevant Mitigation/ Control Measures

Potential Impact	Mitigation Proposed	Responsibility / Timing of Mitigation Measure	Receptor and Residual Effect
Phase 1: Enabling works			
Diversion with 8 wood poles of 15 m in height south of the existing OHL that would be in place for 18 months – temporary	Removal of all temporary tracks and worksites, as soon as possible after the construction is complete and the temporary infrastructure is no longer needed.	Principal Contractor	**Landscape Fabric:** Minor, direct, short-term and predominantly reversible **Landscape Character:**

Table 5.7: Potential Landscape and Visual Impacts during Construction and Relevant Mitigation/ Control Measures

Potential Impact	Mitigation Proposed	Responsibility / Timing of Mitigation Measure	Receptor and Residual Effect
trackways, bogs along a length of 743 m and removal of 2.4 ha of commercial forestry	Revegetation of any bare earth exposed during construction. Works to be undertaken in daytime hours, if lighting is required, it would be located and directed to avoid sensitive receptors[27]. Forestry Felling and Construction activities undertaken in accordance with approved Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and the Woodland Report (**TA 2.1, Volume 2**) Compensatory Planting would be provided (refer to **Technical Annex 2.1, Volume 2** for further details to ensure no net loss).		LCT 7c North Loch Awe Craggy Upland: Minor to None, direct and indirect, short-term and predominantly reversible LCT 2 High Tops/ LCT 4 Mountain Glens/ LCT 5a Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic: Minor to none, indirect, short-term and reversible. LCT 7 Craggy Upland: Minor/Negligible to None, indirect, short-term and reversible. **Landscape Designations:** North Argyll – APQ: Minor to none, indirect, short-term and reversible. Ardanaiseig House GDL: Minor to none, indirect, short-term and reversible. Visual Receptors: High: Minor Medium: Minor/Negligible
Construction of a new section of permanent access track 700 m long and 4.5m wide. Upgrade 495 m of existing access track.	Works delivered in accordance with approved CEMP and the Woodland Report (**TA 2.1, Volume 2**)	Principal Contractor	
Phase 2: Construction of Tie-in			
Construction of tower foundations (method to be confirmed based on ground conditions). Likely to require 20 tonne excavator, 14 tonne piling rig and supply of cement. Foundations to depths up to 4m	No more than two excavations open at any time. Each foundation would take 4 weeks. Excavation area would be backfilled using original excavated material where possible.	Principal Contractor	

[27] Guidance Note 1 for the reduction of obtrusive light (2021) available at: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/ Accessed on 15/11/22

Table 5.7: Potential Landscape and Visual Impacts during Construction and Relevant Mitigation/ Control Measures			
Potential Impact	**Mitigation Proposed**	**Responsibility / Timing of Mitigation Measure**	**Receptor and Residual Effect**
with 50m x 50m compound for section towers and 80m x 80m for angle towers. Each tower anticipated to take five days for construction with a crane.	Works delivered in accordance with approved CEMP and FMP.		

5.5.1 Operation

Potential impacts during operation are detailed in **Table 5.8**, which also details the relevant receptor and mitigation or control measures, where appropriate.

Table 5.8: Potential Landscape and Visual Impacts during Operation and Relevant Mitigation/ Control Measures			
Potential Impact	**Mitigation Proposed**		**Receptor and Residual Effect**
Two new Terminal Towers (35B and 35B installed (approximately 141 m and 115 m away from the existing 132 kV Inveraray to Taynuilt OHL), extending up to approximately 29 m (T35B) and 31 m (T35B) in height. Replacement of existing Tower 35A (19.9 m tall) with an angle tower, extending up to 38.4 m tall[28]. Existing Tower 35A, which is 25.7 m tall, would be replaced with an angle tower, extending up to approximately 28.4 m[29] . Creation of a new section of overhead line between angle tower 35A and 35B (approximately 170 m) to terminal tower 35AB and 35B (approximately 137 m), and	Access tracks will be constructed in accordance with the Forestry Commission guidance on Forest Roads and Access Tracks[30] and guidance provided by NatureScot on Constructed Tracks in the Scottish Uplands to select a design that is sympathetic to the surrounding landscape.	Principal Contractor	**Landscape Fabric:** Minor, direct, permanent **Landscape Character:** LCT 7c North Loch Awe Craggy Upland: Minor to None, direct and indirect, permanent. LCT 2 High Tops/ LCT 4 Mountain Glens/ LCT 5a Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic: Minor to none, indirect, permanent. LCT 7 Craggy Upland: Minor/Negligible to None, indirect, permanent. **Landscape Designations/Classifications:**

[28] Given the proposed replacement tower would result in a height increase of greater than 20% when compared to the existing tower, the works cannot be undertaken subject to The Overhead Lines (Exemptions) (Scotland) Regulations 2013. Accordingly, the proposed replacement tower will be included within the s37 application.

[29] The LOD for the proposed new angle tower would not exceed 20% of the existing height. Therefore, these works are exempt from the s37 consent application and would be completed under The Overhead Lines (Exemptions) (Scotland) Regulations 2013. A s37 application would be needed should the tower height exceed 30.84 m.

[30] 30 Forestry Commission. Forest Roads and Tracks. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721055/ON025-ForestRoadsandTracksv1.0issued110809__1_.pdf [Accessed 05 October 2022]

Table 5.8: Potential Landscape and Visual Impacts during Operation and Relevant Mitigation/ Control Measures

Potential Impact	Mitigation Proposed		Receptor and Residual Effect
downleads to substation gantry. Creation of approximately 700 m new permanent access track and upgrades to approximately 495 m of existing access track (between B–C in **Figure 3.1b**) connecting to the access track to be upgraded for the proposed Creag Dhubh Substation (between A–B in **Figure 3.1b**).			North Argyll – APQ: Minor to none, indirect, permanent. Ardanaiseig House GDL: Minor to none, indirect, permanent. **Visual Receptors:** Moderate at proximity (VP1) dissipating to Minor with distance and time as replanted forestry increase screening surrounding the Proposed development. Minor effects on Hill Walkers at high elevations (VP3, 4, 5, 7) Minor effects on receptors surrounding and using Loch Awe (VP2, 5 and 8) No effects at locations to west and south where screening by topography and forestry occurs). Negligible impacts during periods of no forestry screening.

5.6 Conclusion

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal identifies the potential for construction and operation effects on the landscape and visual resource within the Study Area arising from the Proposed Development. The landscape appraisal addresses the effect of the change and development on the landscape, while the visual appraisal considers the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity and landscape character.

The Proposed Development is a Tie-in that would connect the existing 132 kV Inveraray to Taynuilt OHL to the proposed Creag Dhubh Substation to allow connection for renewable generation in the area to the wider electricity network. To facilitate these works a temporary diversion of the existing 132 kV Taynuilt to Inveraray OHL will be in place for 18 months.

Construction

Direct impacts on landscape fabric would occur due to the removal of soil, vegetation, with felling of forestry plantation (proportion due for felling in the next three years soil and excavation for construction of a temporary diversion and Tie-In connection to the proposed Creag Dhubh substation. Removed vegetation and felled trees would be restored and revegetated where not used for the Operational Corridor for the Tie-In to the Substation. Temporary tracks and compound areas would be removed, and appropriate ground cover reinstated. There would be a Moderate effect on landscape fabric within the Site during this phase.

Operation

The introduction of two replacement angle towers and two new tower structures would increase the area used for electricity within the landscape at this location, reducing the area used for forestry and permanently changing to low vegetation suitable for the operational corridor. Vegetation would also be permanently lost in areas used for permanent access tracks and tower foundations. The effect would be Moderate on landscape fabric within the Site.

5.6.1 Landscape Character

Construction

Landscape character would be impacted by construction activity (as set out in landscape fabric above) including the presence of plant (excavator and crane), increased HGV movement, associated noise and vehicle activity. During construction, the existing 132kV OHL diversion would require eight wood poles positioned south of the existing line, although with a similar ZTV to the existing OHL poles.

The embedded mitigation in the CEMP would help to limit the impact of construction activities. In addition, construction impacts would be short-term in nature with the more visually intrusive activity of erecting towers taking approximately 20 days. Overall the construction would be short-term taking up to 18 months. There would be Moderate effects to landscape character at closer proximity with direct impacts in the North Loch Awe Craggy Upland LCT (7a). Impacts would dissipate to None with distance.

Operation

Effects of the Proposed Development during operation would be Moderate localised direct impacts within the North Loch Awe Craggy Upland LCT with changes in land use and cover within a small area.

Surrounding areas would be experience a perceptual increase of electricity infrastructure within their surrounds. Moderate to Minor effects are expected in proximity and at higher elevations where the Proposed Development would be visible backclothed against rising topography. Effects would dissipate to None with distance or where there is no visibility due to topography and/or forestry screening.

5.6.2 Landscape Designations

The Proposed Development is situated within the North Argyll APQ, located at a mid-elevation with a back cloth of rising topography within the context of the existing Taynuilt to Inveraray 132kV OHL within an area of commercial forestry plantation.

Construction

Effects on the APQ be direct and indirect where activity impacts on views at higher elevations. Partial views of activity and new temporary diversion from the loch base around the sensitive North of Loch Awe seen against a back clothing of rising topography. Effects would be moderate in proximity and at higher elevations.

Operation

Direct effects from a change of land use within the APQ, indirect effects at proximity and at elevations. Majority of Proposed Development would be screened form the sensitive area around the head of Loch Awe. Effects would be Moderate and dissipate with distance.

The Proposed Development would not be expected to compromise the APQ's scenic value or undermine the integrity of the designation.

A partial element of a replacement tower would be visible from the Ardanaiseig House GDL shoreline due to the screening by topography. Effects would be Minor and the features identified for classification would not be compromised.

Visual Receptors

The 10 km study encompasses a range of receptors. Zone of Theoretical Visibility analysis demonstrates that settlements would not be impacted by the Proposed Development and no scattered residences are located within 1km of the Site. Therefore residential receptors have been scoped out of the assessment.

Construction

Transport receptors are expected to have partial, glimpsed views of any construction activity that would be short term and reversible with Minor to Minor/Negligible effects. Recreational receptors are expected to experience the

greatest impact at closest proximity (represented by VP1) where noise and tree felling may be a minor alteration to the existing view, although impacts are short-term and consistent with the baseline of an actively managed forestry area. Impacts are expected to range from Moderate in proximity to None at distance.

At the elevated locations of Cruach Mhor, Beinn a Bhuiridh, Ben Ghlas and Cnoc Lomain the Proposed Development would be seen against rising topography and would compose a very small element of the view. Full views are expected to be possible by Hill Walkers due to the elevation with impacts would be mitigated by distance and backclothing by rising topography. Impacts are judged as Negligible with the underlying composition of the view essentially unimpacted. The effect would be Minor.

Operation

Impacts would be greatest at locations closest to the Proposed Development. The locally recognised Neil Munro monument is located 1.1km east of the Proposed Development with expected High sensitivity receptors at this location. Effects would be Moderate as a partial change to the view.

At higher elevations to the north and east, as represented by VPs 3, 4, 5 and 7 the Proposed Development would be visible within a small area of the view and back clothed against rising topography within an area of commercial forestry plantation. Due to distance and the expansive views at these locations, the impacts are judged to be a barely discernible alteration to an existing 132kV OHL feature with a Negligible impact on visual amenity and landscape character. Effects would be Minor at these locations.

Along the shores of Loch Awe and areas to the west and south west the majority of Proposed Development would be screened by topography. Where visible effects would be Moderate. Receptors using the Core Paths C300; C171 (b) and C523 would have partial glimpses of T35A if not screened by intervening vegetation with Minor to None effects.

Cumulative

Landscape

Overall, in addition effects of the Proposed Development during construction would be Minor due to the small scale of the activity and short duration of construction (18-month period). In combination, effects would increase to Moderate due to the concentration of activities (Substation; Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275 kV and Creag Dhubh to Inveraray 275 kV OHL Connection Projects) within the location of the Proposed Development. Effects are expected to dissipate to None with distance and/or screening by topography.

During operation, the Proposed Development's in addition effect would by Minor, increasing to Moderate when considered in combination with projects in planning/approved. Due to the two additional windfarms in scoping effects could increase to Major/Moderate due to the prominence of the turbines in the landscape increasing the influence of electricity infrastructure on character.

Visual

During construction in addition cumulative effects are assessed as Minor on transport and recreational receptors, as demonstrated across all viewpoints. When considered in combination with those projects that are approved and in planning, the effects would be Moderate at VP1 where activity is concentrated with the convergence of projects, but quickly dissipating to Minor with distance.

During operation, in addition effects would be Minor reflecting the small scale of Proposed Development. In combination with the projects considered approved and in planning. Effects increase to Moderate across receptors and viewpoints when considered *in combination* due to the area of the views potentially impacted due to the dispersed nature of the projects considered. When scoping projects are also considered in combination, effects can increase to Major/Moderate due to the Ladyfield are seen against the skyline and at high elevations where windfarms would be located across the mid-ground view.