

Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275kV Connection Environmental Impact Assessment

Volume 4 | Appendix 8.4

Residual Effects on Landscape Character Types

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Appendix 8.4 – Residual Effects on Landscape Character Types

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LCT Ref.	Landscape Character Type	Distance and Direction from the Proposed Development	Sensitivity to the type of Development Proposed	Predicted Visibility	Magnitude of Impact	Residual Effect on LCT
40	Craggy Upland – Argyll	Proposed Development located within LCT	High	<p>The Proposed Development would be located across the lower slopes of the Craggy Upland LCT, as the landform descends towards the eastern shoreline of Loch Awe. This lower lying area of the LCT has a greater influence from human intervention than the more elevated areas of the LCT present further to the east of the alignment, and the more remote landscapes found to the south west.</p> <p>Human intervention and influence is evident in the area of the Proposed Development, evidenced by the presence of the A819 and A85 roads which pass through the LCT, scattered properties and minor settlements located along these transportation corridors, existing transmission infrastructure both in the Craggy Uplands LCT and in adjacent LCTs and large areas of coniferous forestry (and associated track networks) which characterise these lower slopes.</p> <p>The development is positioned away from the open moorland landscape found at more elevated locations, instead passing through areas where the landscape is more actively managed, such as areas of forestry and farming. It would not be skylined in views from adjacent landscapes. The presence of conifer plantations and areas of woodland across the lower slopes would aid in reducing the influence of the Proposed Development across the wider area of the LCT, and from adjacent LCTs. The character of the landscape, with its rocky outcrops and rounded knolls would also provide intermittent screening of access tracks and tower bases.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would introduce a new large scale linear infrastructure into the irregular upland landscape. The OHL would be located on the lower slopes of the LCT, and would be associated with existing linear infrastructure such as the A819, the A85, the West Highland railway line, and overhead transmission lines which pass through the LCT in the area of the proposed development.</p> <p>The proposed development would be largely located within, or along the edge of areas of commercial forestry plantations which occupy large swathes of the moorland landscape to the north and west of the LCT. The proposed development would be located on the lower slopes of the moorland landscape, away from the open hill tops and slopes which are characteristic of the more elevated areas of the LCT.</p> <p>The size of the proposed towers would not appear out of scale with the broad character of the LCT. It is considered that the LCT is able to accommodate development of this nature without any notable effects on its perceived size or scale. The presence of existing forestry and associated track networks would also reduce the impact of the proposed development upon the character of the landscape, providing some context for the infrastructure associated with the proposed development.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would represent a notable addition to the landscape in the area of the development and would form a prominent but localised change within a broader, unaltered context. Locally, the magnitude of impact would be Medium.</p> <p>However, the Craggy Upland LCT is an extensive character type across the study area, extending across large expanses of landscapes on either side of Loch Awe, to the south east of Mull and the Kyles of Bute to the south of Loch Fyne. Any effects arising from the Proposed Development would be highly localised and would not affect the broader LCT overall. The magnitude of impact on the Craggy Upland LCT overall would be Low.</p>	The effect would be locally Major/ Moderate (significant), reducing to Moderate (and not significant) overall.
37	Upland Glens – Argyll	850 m north	Medium	<p>The northern extent of the Proposed Development would be located adjacent to the Strath of Orchy unit of this upland glen landscape. There is no visibility of the Proposed Development from other units of this LCT within the study area.</p> <p>According to the ZTV presented in Figure 8.3b (EIAR Volume 3a), up to 20 of the proposed development's towers would be theoretically visible from the majority of Strath of Orchy unit of the Upland Glens LCT, including from the A85 corridor and northern edge of Loch Awe. However, field reconnaissance suggests that actual visibility is more constrained due to the screening effect of dense intervening vegetation within the strath landscape, along the A85 corridor, and the mixed woodland which is present on the glen sides. Actual views of the proposed development would be limited.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would not influence the relationship between the upland glen landscape and the surrounding mountainous landscapes which enclose and contain it. The Proposed Development is located across the low hills of a neighbouring upland landscape. It would be backclothed by topography, screened in many locations by vegetation, and would form a feature on the skyline. The alignment would form a largely imperceptible feature in views from within the Strath of Orchy landscape and therefore its influence across the LCT would be minimal.</p> <p>Given the limited extent of actual visibility within this LCT, the lower lying and backclothed position that the proposed development would occupy, the magnitude of impact on the Upland Glens LCT would be Slight.</p>	Moderate/Minor and not significant. The proposed development would have no significant effect on the defining characteristics of this landscape and would not adversely affect its interrelationship between the LCT and the surrounding mountains which contain it.
35	Rugged Mountains	1.6 km north west	High	<p>The ZTV indicates that visibility of the Proposed Development from the LCT would be restricted to site facing slopes of mountains which are present within the southern part of this large LCT as it lies within the study area. These include Ben Lui (including minor summits of Stob Dubh, Beinn a'Chleibh & Creag na Cloiche Gile) to the north east, Beinn Donachain, Beinn Eunaich, Beinn a'Chochuill & Stob Daimh to the north west, and Ben Cruachan to the west.</p> <p>Actual visibility of the proposed development would be reduced due to the screening afforded by woodland and forestry in proximity to the proposed development. The OHL would not be skylined in views from this LCT.</p>	<p>The LCT extends over a large area, covering a much larger area of landscape than is present within the study area and which is more reflective of the key characteristics of the LCT.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is located within an adjacent landscape where human influence is notably evident. Electricity infrastructure (existing OHLs and switching stations), road and rail infrastructure and settlement are notable features within the landscape surrounding the Proposed Development. While the OHL would introduce a new linear element into panoramic views from the surrounding mountains, it would not impact upon the key characteristics of this LCT. It would not interrupt intervisibility between mountain tops nor would it form a dominant element in the landscape.</p>	The significance of the effect would be Moderate/ Minor and not significant

Table 8.4.1 Assessment of Effects on Landscape Character Types within the Study Area

					<p>The aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the LCT, such as the relatively uninhabited and inaccessible/ perceived wildness qualities would not be affected to a degree whether this character would be altered. The proposed development would be viewed at an oblique angle in the context of existing liner infrastructure.</p> <p>The magnitude of impact would be Negligible. The Proposed Development would represent a barely discernible alteration to the baseline character of the Rugged Mountains LCT. The underlying landscape character would be essentially unchanged.</p>	
	Steep Ridges and Mountains	1.3 km east	High	<p>The very northern portion of the Steep Ridges and Mountains LCT falls within the LVIA study area.</p> <p>The ZTV indicates that views of the Proposed Development would be limited to the north western edge of the LCT, on site facing slopes. Across the majority of areas where views of the proposed development are theoretically visible, such as the north western slopes of Beinn Bhuidhe and Beinn an t'Sitheir, up to 21 towers would be viewed at distances of up to 8.5 km. This increases to up to 47 towers at the summit of Beinn a Sroine, to the north of the OHL at a distance of approximately 5.1 km.</p> <p>From the majority of the LCT, the Proposed Development would be viewed routing across the landscape at a lower elevation, seen in the context of the A819, the A85, the West Highland railway line and other linear infrastructure including existing transmission line to the north west of Loch Awe. From the northern extent of the LCT, in the area of Beinn a Sroine, views would look down the line, and the OHL would comprise only a small proportion of the view.</p> <p>It is likely that actual visibility would be much reduced, given the level of woodland and forestry in the landscape surrounding the Proposed Development.</p>	<p>The LCT extends over a much wider area of landscape than is present within the study area.</p> <p>Similar to the Rugged Mountains LCT, while the Proposed Development would introduce a new element into panoramic views from the surrounding mountains, it is not anticipated that it would impact upon the key characteristics of this LCT. The alignment would be located within an adjacent landscape which is characterised by human intervention and settlement and would fit with the existing context found in the lower lying landscape types.</p> <p>The proposed development would not impact upon the perception of the Steep Ridges and Mountains LCT – it would not alter the perceived size of scale of the mountain ranges or the feeling of seclusion that the interior of this landscape provides. The perception of wildness within the LCT would not be impacted.</p> <p>The magnitude of impact would be Negligible. The Proposed Development would represent a barely discernible alteration to the baseline conditions of the Steep Ridges and Mountains LCT. The underlying landscape character would be essentially unchanged.</p>	The significance of the effect would be Moderate/ Minor (not significant)
	Rocky Coastland – Argyll	100 m west	High	<p>The ZTV indicates that visibility of the Proposed Development from across the Rocky Coastland LCT would be largely contained to the area of the LCT which lies to the east and west of Loch Awe at its northern end. This includes the western shore from Carn Dubh/ Inverinan to the Loch Awe hotel, and the eastern shore from the bay at Lag na Luinge to Portsonachan.</p> <p>Actual visibility of the proposed development would be substantially less than that indicated by the ZTV due to screening achieved by existing areas of woodland which lie within the Rocky Coastland LCT, and by forestry plantations and woodland which are present in the adjacent Craggy Upland LCT. This is particularly the case along the eastern shore of Loch Awe, where local undulations in topography which foreshorten views and mature areas of woodland would prevent the proposed development from having any influence on the character of this coastal landscape.</p> <p>Visibility would increase to the west of Loch Awe, where longer distance views across the loch toward the hills beyond would include the Proposed Development. The proposed development would appear on elevated topography above Loch Awe and would form a new horizontal feature in the landscape, at a distance of over 2 km. The OHL would be viewed in the context of the A819, local roads which pass along the loch shoreline, the A85 and the West Highland Railway Line, as well as existing electricity infrastructure including existing an existing transmission line which crosses Loch Awe to the north of Portsonachan.</p>	<p>The magnitude of impact on this LCT would be Negligible, but with localised Slight impacts experienced at locations to the west of Loch Awe where the Proposed Development would form a new linear element in the view.</p>	The significance of the effect would be Moderate/ Minor (not significant)

Table 8.4.2: Assessment of Residual Cumulative Effects on Landscape Character Types

LCT Ref.	Landscape Character Type	Sensitivity to the type of Development Proposed	Predicted Cumulative Visibility	Magnitude of Cumulative Impact	Residual Cumulative Effect on LCT
40	Craggy Upland – Argyll	High	<p>Intermittent cumulative visibility would occur across elevated open summits including Cruach Mhor and Coire an Stacain to the north east of the LCT.</p> <p>Cumulative visibility would largely be contained to along the eastern slopes of the Glen Aray Valley including the summits and site facing slopes of Tom an Aighe, Beinn Ghlass to the east and Stud Scardan to the south east. From these areas, the southern tie in point of the proposed development would be viewed in conjunction with the proposed Creag Dhubh substation and the proposed Creag Dhubh to Inveraray 275 kV transmission line.</p> <p>There would be very limited (if any) cumulative visibility of the Blarghour Wind Farm from within the Craggy Upland LCT.</p> <p>Actual visibility from the Craggy Uplands LCT would be substantially reduced from that shown on the cumulative ZTVs, as substantial areas of mature woodland (and forestry) surround these developments, which would provide a high degree of screening and filtering.</p>	<p>Across the Craggy Upland LCT, combined cumulative visibility of the proposed development in combination with other proposed developments within the study area is largely contained within the Glen Aray valley, with some elevated cumulative visibility at summits to the north east of the LCT.</p> <p>Key cumulative impacts would be experienced in the area of the Creag Dhubh substation, where both the proposed development and the proposed Creag Dhubh to Inveraray 275 kV transmission line connect into. In this area, the character of the landscape would be altered from an area of forestry with a transmission line passing through, to a landscape which is characterised by transmission infrastructure. The existing transmission line would also contribute to the proliferation of development within the LCT in this area however will be removed following construction of the Dalmally to Creag Dhubh and Creag Dhubh to Inveraray OHLs. In the area of the substation, cumulative impacts on the character of the Craggy Upland LCT are considered to be of Substantial magnitude.</p> <p>With distance from the substation, the cumulative impact would reduce. Cumulative visibility is largely contained within the Glen Aray Valley, and to some elevated summits to the north east of the LCT. Additionally, cumulative visibility of the proposed development in combination with the Creag Dhubh substation, the Creag Dhubh to Inveraray OHL and Blarghour Wind Farm is theoretically available to the north west, above Ardenaisaig House. Actual visibility of these development from this area is likely to be limited to within the area of the substation, forming a 'hub' of transmission development in longer distance views but it is considered unlikely that this would influence the overall character of the LCT.</p> <p>Therefore, the magnitude of impact on the character of the Craggy Upland LCT, overall, is considered to be low.</p>	<p>Locally Major, and therefore significant, the greatest effects being experienced in the area of the Creag Dhubh substation.</p> <p>Moderate/ Minor (not significant) on the Craggy Upland LCT overall</p>
37	Upland Glens – Argyll	Medium	<p>The cumulative ZTVs indicate that there would some theoretical cumulative visibility of the Proposed Development and the proposed Creag Dhubh to Inveraray OHL from the north western edge of the Strath of Orchy unit of the Upland Glens LCT.</p>	<p>Given the low-lying nature of this LCT, the presence of a high level of woodland and forestry within the intervening landscape and the increased distance between the Upland Glen LCT and the proposed Creag Dhubh to Inveraray OHL it is considered unlikely that actual views of this development would be available.</p> <p>Therefore the magnitude of cumulative impact on this LCT would be negligible.</p>	<p>Minor (not significant)</p>
35	Rugged Mountains	High	<p>The cumulative ZTVs indicate that there would some theoretical cumulative visibility of the Proposed Development, the proposed Creag Dhubh to Inveraray OHL, the proposed Creag Dhubh substation and the Blarghour Wind Farm from the site facing slopes and open summits along the southern boundary of the Rugged Mountains LCT.</p> <p>The proposed development would sit in the middle ground, extending north west from the 'hub' of cumulative development which is located at a distance of at least 7 km to the south of the LCT boundary. Actual visibility would be reduced from that shown in the ZTVs, as elements such as woodland, forestry and local undulations in topography in the intervening landscape providing screening and filtering of development in the view. Creag Dhubh substation and the Creag Dhubh to Inveraray OHL would form small elements in the view from these locations, largely screened by forestry which surrounds these developments. It is considered unlikely that they would be notable features in the open and expansive views from this LCT.</p>	<p>The magnitude of cumulative impact would be low. The proposed development would contribute to the proliferation of transmission infrastructure in the landscapes to the south of the Rugged Mountains LCT, within an area already influenced by communications and transmission infrastructure and which contains a high degree of settlement (settlements, roads, rail etc).</p> <p>It is anticipated that Blarghour Wind Farm would be the most notable of the cumulative developments viewed in combination with the proposed development. These two developments are visually distinct and it is considered unlikely that, when viewed from the Rugged Mountains LCT, they would unduly influence the underlying characteristics of this LCT.</p>	<p>Moderate (not significant)</p>

Table 8.4.2: Assessment of Residual Cumulative Effects on Landscape Character Types					
	Steep Ridges and Mountains	High	<p>Cumulative visibility would occur at a small number of elevated locations, including the group of summits at Beinn an t-Sithein, Beinn Bhudhe and Stac a Chuirn in the central area of the LCT, and north of Loch Shira at Beinn Bhoidheach and Beinn Bhalgairean.</p> <p>Successive views of the proposed development would be available from these locations, with views of the alignment to the north west and views of the Creag Dhubh Substation, Creag Dhubh to Inveraray OHL and Blarghour Wind Farm available to the west.</p>	Given the limited geographic extent of the proposed development's visibility from the Steep Ridges and Mountains LCT, the magnitude of cumulative impact is considered to be negligible .	Moderate/ Minor (not significant)
	Rocky Coastland – Argyll	High	<p>The cumulative ZTVs indicate that there would some theoretical cumulative visibility of the Proposed Development in conjunction with the Blarghour Wind Farm, the proposed Creag Dhubh substation and the proposed Creag Dhubh to Inveraray OHL from the northern extent of the LCT as it extends along the banks of the mouth of the River Awe.</p> <p>It is likely that actual views would be substantially reduced across this LCT due to the levels of established woodland which align the river banks and therefore the influence of cumulative development across the LCT would not be notable. In additional, forestry which surrounds the Creag Dhubh substation and the Creag Dhubh to Inveraray OHL would further reduce the presence of these developments in the view.</p>	Given the low-lying nature of this LCT, the presence of a high level of woodland and forestry within the LCT and within the intervening landscape the magnitude of cumulative impact on this LCT would be low .	Moderate/ Minor (not significant)