

**Beauly to Blackhillock to New Deer to
Peterhead 400 kV Project
Environmental Impact Assessment Report
Volume 5 | Appendices**

**Appendix 7.3 – Landscape Character Types
Sensitivity and Effects**



Appendix 7.3 – Landscape Effects

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1. Landscape Effects

- 1.1.1 The tables below should be read in conjunction with **Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual**.
- 1.1.2 Locations of LCTs are shown on **Figure 7.4: Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features**, and LCT photos can be found in **Figure 7.5: Landscape Character Type Photos**.
- 1.1.3 **NOTE:** Consideration of year 15 effects is only given where there is a significant proportion of additional forestry management felling¹ or forest edge fringe planting² within the LCT. Forest edge fringe planting through key areas of forestry has been proposed to reduce the impact of the Operational Corridor (OC). Any felling undertaken outwith the OC would be solely under the control of the relevant landowner (and not the Applicant). For the purposes of this assessment, it has been assumed that management felling would take place and that areas of management felling would be replanted back to the OC following installation of the Overhead Line (OHL) (see **Chapter 12: Forestry** for further details).
- 1.1.4 Note also that much of the mitigation for landscape and visual purposes has been embedded in the design for the Proposed Development including deciduous forest edge fringe planting proposed within the OC at the following locations:
- The Aird;
 - Ordiequish Hill;
 - Mill Buie; and
 - A9 at Drummosie.
- 1.1.5 As stated in **Appendix 7.1: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology**, professional judgement is used to determine whether effects of Moderate Adverse are considered to be significant or non-significant. Where an effect of Moderate Adverse is identified as being non-significant, qualification is provided in each instance as to why it is considered non-significant.

¹ Management felling is defined as areas of felling beyond the OC to the nearest 'windfirm' edge (known as the 'green edge'), where the trees have developed next to open ground, in order to reduce the risk of windthrow.

² Forest edge fringe planting refers to deciduous planting within the OC proposed in order to soften the appearance of the coniferous forest edge.

Table 1 - Naturescot LCT 220 Rugged Massif – Inverness (The Highland Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 220 RUGGED MASSIF – INVERNESS (Within The Highland Council)					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“Parallel ranges of massive mountains of irregular landform divided by deep glaciated valleys.”</i>	A large-scale landscape		▪	▪
Landform	<i>“Parallel ranges of massive mountains of irregular landform divided by deep glaciated valleys. Mainly broad, sometimes rounded rugged summits connected by long ridges and relatively few individual mountain peaks, particularly in the east.”</i>	A dramatic, undulating, rugged landscape		▪	▪
Land cover	<i>“Landcover of rock outcrops, glacial debris, deer-grazed heather and rough grassland create a smooth surface with mottled texture, with alpine habitats on high land to the west.”</i> <i>“Steep terrain with many mountain-side burns and occasional lochans in corries and depressions”</i>	Extensive areas of simple regular uniform land cover		▪	▪
Texture	<i>“Almost uniform texture and cover from lower to upper levels in the east makes the size of the hills difficult to perceive.”</i> <i>“Tracts of Caledonian pinewoods and occasional small patches of open birch woodland add colour, texture and seasonal diversity”</i>	A broad landscape with simple and sweeping lines		▪	▪
Built Environment	<i>“Largely uninhabited, few signs of human activity or human artefacts in the interior, and sparse archaeological evidence”</i>	Largely uninhabited and wild			▪
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	Few to no detracting features apart from an existing 132 kV OHL in the southern extents of the LCT.	Few features present			▪
Perceptual aspects	<i>“The hill ranges are predominantly viewed from adjacent straths. From here, the broad summits and long ridges combine to create a fairly even, undulating skyline and a sense of enclosure.”</i> <i>“A sense of remoteness and wildness pervades this landscape, which is particularly intense within the interior, where there are few signs of human activity, and the landscape is generally rugged and seemingly natural.”</i> <i>“It is difficult to perceive the size of the hills, as the moorland cover and rocks vary only subtly with elevation, and there is generally no obvious indication of either horizontal or vertical scale. A sense of remoteness and wildness pervades this landscape, which is particularly intense within the interior, where there are few signs of human activity, and the landscape is generally rugged and seemingly natural.”</i>	Wild and tranquil		▪	▪
Visual Amenity	<i>“Views from the hill tops at the edges of the massif, in turn, also tend to offer expansive views of the lochs, pinewoods, birch woods and settlements of adjacent straths and glens.”</i> - Expansive views from the mountain edges of surrounding LCTs.	Areas with strong features, focal points that define the setting or skyline and expansive views		▪	▪
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	The Proposed Development is located approximately between 2.7 km to 10 km away from this LCT, which is characterised by mountains of irregular landform and low-lying valleys. Vegetative cover is limited to grazed heather and grassland. Tourist destinations include the historical landmark, Hangmans Cottage. The area is uninhabited and distinctively undeveloped. The only detracting feature is the existing OHL to the west of Aigas in the south of the LCT. Given the distance from the Proposed Development, the landscape is moderately capable of accommodating the type of development proposed.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium to High		▪	▪
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following highly valued assets: the Central Highlands Wild Land lies over 6 km to the west of the Proposed Development.	The landscape includes the designated Central Highlands Wild Land and expansive views, and wilderness are highly valued		▪	▪
Features	<i>“Mainly broad, sometimes rounded rugged summits connected by long ridges and relatively few individual mountain peaks, particularly in the east.”</i> <i>“Tracts of Caledonian pinewoods and occasional small patches of open birch woodland add colour, texture and seasonal diversity.”</i> <i>“Largely uninhabited, few signs of human activity or human artefacts in the interior, and sparse archaeological evidence.”</i>	The landscape is generally rugged and seemingly natural with few archaeological sites		▪	▪

NATURESCOT LCT 220 RUGGED MASSIF – INVERNESS (Within The Highland Council)					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
Quality / Condition	This landscape type is largely wild, open and uninhabited. The few minor settlements and roads are located on lower ground adjoining, and mainly within, the adjacent Wooded Glen and Farmed Strath LCTs.	A high-quality landscape with distinctive features			▪
VALUE SUMMARY	The designated landscape is valued for its remote, upland character with high scenic quality, although Wild Lands are not a statutory designation. While there are no designated public rights of way within the Study Area the landscape is likely to be used regularly by the public for walking through the landscape to experience its wildness and tranquillity.	Value is Medium to High		▪	▪
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	LCT 220 OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value		Medium to High		

NATURESCOT LCT 220- RUGGED MASSIF – INVERNESS (Within The Highland Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction activity associated with the Proposed Development would only be distantly perceptible from within the higher and eastern extents of the LCT and would not have a direct impact due to it being located approximately between 2.7 km to 10 km away from this LCT. Indirect impacts may occur on visual amenity from within the LCT, however construction is likely to be perceived against a backdrop of landform and forestry and seen in distant views within the context of existing appreciation of overhead lines throughout the landscape to the east. Local impacts on LCT. 220 (Higher and eastern extents) – Negligible. Overall impact on LCT. 220 – No Change	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Local impact on LCT 220: Negligible Overall impact on LCT. 220: No Change	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect on LCT 220: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 220: Neutral (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development is not located within LCT 220 therefore there would be no direct impacts on the landscape. The Proposed Development is located between approximately 2.7 km to 10 km to the east of the LCT, on the other side of the River Beauly and Torr Mor. Intervisibility is limited by intervening landform and the well wooded River Beauly corridor, although there may be a distant appreciation of the Proposed Development from local summits such as Torr Breac, Buachaille Breige, Breakachy Hill and Beinn a Chlaonaidh and would likely be backclothed by landform and forestry, with the closest intervisibility being from the west of Beauly on the lower slopes of Creag na Manachainn. Any perception of the Proposed Development would be in the mid to far-distance, in the context of expansive views and an existing appreciation of existing OHLs and would not substantially affect the experience or key characteristics of the LCT. Any impact on visual amenity is limited by a combination of appreciable distance and intervening landform and vegetation. Local impacts on LCT. 220 (Higher and eastern extents) – Negligible. Overall impact on LCT. 220 – No Change		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local impact on LCT 220: Negligible Overall impact on LCT. 220: No Change	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect on LCT 220: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 220: Neutral (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> There would be no change in distant perception of the Proposed Development during the summer months due to the lack of vegetation through the LCT. Deciduous vegetation around the Proposed Development in the landscape to the west would slightly integrate it into its surrounds but towers would still be visible above intervening tree lines. Local impacts on LCT. 220 (Higher and eastern extents) – Negligible. Overall impact on LCT. 220 – No Change		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local impact on LCT 220: Negligible Overall impact on LCT. 220: No Change	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect on LCT 220: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 220: Neutral (non-significant)

Table 2 - Naturescot LCT 345 Farmed and Forested Slopes – Ross & Cromarty (The Highland Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 345 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES – ROSS & CROMARTY (Within The Highland Council)					
Representative viewpoint 10 is located within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ page 3 for viewpoint location).					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“Complex pattern of farmland, tree cover, forests and woodland on sloped, often terraced land rising from firths or river plains to mid-elevations and often backed by large scale forest plantations where there are adjacent hills.”</i>	A varied landscape incorporating both larger scale farming and woodlands with pockets of more intimate, smaller scale landscapes		▪	
Landform	<i>“Lower areas are gentle slopes becoming flat in some areas where they meet the coastal plain”</i>	A moderately undulating, sloping landscape		▪	
Land cover	<i>“Overall impression of a well-treed landscape, but within which farming is the dominant land use.”</i> <i>“Terraces of open land, interspersed with forest plantations and woodlands on mid slopes.”</i> <i>“Generally higher proportion of trees, woodland and forest plantations in upper slopes, forming a well-connected network within which fields are located.”</i> <i>“Gradual change to more open landscapes at lower levels.”</i>	A varied and distinctive mosaic of landscape cover with varied field boundaries		▪	▪
Texture	<i>“Generally higher proportion of trees, woodland and forest plantations in upper slopes, forming a well-connected network within which fields are located.”</i> <i>“Complex pattern of farmland, tree cover, forests and woodland on sloped, often terraced land rising from firths or river plains to mid-elevations and often backed by large scale forest plantations where there are adjacent hills.”</i>	A broad, intricate landscape with a variety of textures and patterns		▪	▪
Built Environment	<i>“Wide range and distribution of archaeological sites indicating a long history of human settlement. Occasional large settlements in a predominantly rural landscape.”</i>	Built form typically comprised of small farms interspersed by a diverse range of building / settlement size, style, and ages		▪	
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>“Jetties and piers extend across the mudflats and shallows to the deeper parts of the firth waters.”</i> - Occasional large settlements in a predominantly rural landscape. - The A9 and existing OHLs are major detracting features.	A network of both major and minor roads, scattered housing and electricity infrastructure crosses the LCT, but overall few detracting features are present in the rural landscape		▪	
Perceptual aspects	<i>“The open areas and terraces afford long distance views between woodland and tree groups.”</i> <i>“The landscape offers small areas of tranquillity and enclosure through woodland and forestry but there is often awareness of development through scattered housing, OHLs and main roads.”</i> - A connection with water afforded around the Beaully Firth.	Small areas of enclosure and visual containment creates intimacy and intrigue, adding to the strength of the rural character. Busier feeling closer to the A9 and areas of housing		▪	
Visual Amenity	<i>“Views from more open, terraced areas across lowlands or firth to hills or out to sea.”</i> - The skyline is punctuated by pylons and blocks of woodland. - The Beaully Firth is an important setting and focus of views.	Sloping, gently undulating and treed landscape limits long-distance views and creates visual intimacy. More open views from lower slopes		▪	▪
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	The Proposed Development is located between 2 km to 10 km from the LCT, which is predominately characterised by farmland with substantial woodland cover, particularly on higher landform. Residential areas, predominantly scattered individual properties and Charlestown, are located at a lower elevation or along the A9 corridor and where the landscape becomes more open between woodland. Very few detracting features apart from existing OHLs, the A9 and areas of housing.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium		▪	
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following highly valued assets: Several Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings; and	Undesignated landscape		▪	

NATURESCOT LCT 345 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES – ROSS & CROMARTY (Within The Highland Council)					
Representative viewpoint 10 is located within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ page 3 for viewpoint location).					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
	National Cycle Route 1 runs through the landscape to the north of the Beaully Firth, providing a key recreational route that affords views distant views south across the Beaully Firth towards The Aird.	Cultural Heritage interest. National cycle route, with network of local roads and a small selection of Core Paths			
Features	<i>“Archaeological sites indicate a long history of human occupation. These include a significant number of prehistoric ceremonial monuments such as burial cairns and prehistoric settlements characterised by low circular stone foundation of hut circles, some with associated field systems.”</i> <i>“Tower houses, fortified residences and sporting estates with their attendant buildings, and extensive areas of historic design landscape are also found in the area.”</i>	Principally rural, contains historic features and sites. Tree planting is extensive on upper slopes and forms a key element throughout the landscape		▪	▪
Quality / Condition	A good quality landscape with historic sites and traditional houses, the quality of the landscape has deteriorated slightly due to development of new housing sites. - Overall impression of a well-treed landscape, but within which farming is the dominant land use. - Much of this LCT is well settled in a rural sense, with farms, occasional crofts and small holdings linked by minor roads. Large settlements are occasional and relatively contained, mainly located along the main trunk road, in the low to mid-slopes of the Cromarty Firth and near Dornoch Firth.	A good quality landscape with distinctive features but with some urban detractors present within Strathglass including an existing power station, major roads and existing overhead lines		▪	
VALUE SUMMARY	There are no landscape designations within LCT 345 (within the 10 km Study Area). However, the proximity of the Beaully Firth estuary to the south of the LCT offers high levels of scenic quality, particularly from the village of North Kessock.	Value is Medium to High		▪	▪
				SENSITIVITY	
SENSITIVITY	LCT 345 OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value			Medium	

NATURESCOT LCT – 345 – FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES – ROSS & CROMARTY (Within The Highland Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction works associated with the Proposed Development would be distantly perceptible from within the LCT but would not have a direct impact. The visual amenity afforded from the more elevated areas of the LCT is an important characteristic, particularly when looking across the Beauly Firth, River Beauly valley and towards hills associated with The Aird to the south. Construction activity, including the progressive installation of towers via cranes or helicopter through the landscape to the south / southeast would be distantly perceived together with large areas of felling over The Aird. There would be a very minor but temporary change on the southern extent of the LCT in terms of visual amenity and perceived tranquillity as a result of construction activity and disturbance to the landscape to the south. These effects would be perceptual, localised, and indirect only. Local impacts on LCT. 345 (southern extents) – Negligible. Overall impacts on LCT. 345 – No Change.	Medium	<u>During Construction</u> Local magnitude of change on LCT 345: Negligible Overall impact: No Change	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect on LCT 345: Negligible Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 345: Neutral (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development is not located within LCT 345 therefore there would be no direct impacts on the landscape. The Proposed Development is located between 2 km to 10 km from the LCT, with a section of landscape to the northwest of the River Beauly closest to the Proposed Development. There would be some intermittent intervisibility from the well wooded landscape between the LCT and the Proposed Development, particularly from local roads and properties on the lower slopes of hills to the northwest of the river. More distant views are afforded from north of the Beauly Firth, looking towards The Aird in the background. The perception of this landscape would not change as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development within the landscape to the south / southeast, which would be seen in the mid to far-distance beyond existing retained 275 kV and 132 kV OHLs. Due to a combination of appreciable distance, areas of woodland and intervening landform there would only be an indirect, negligible but perceptible change in terms of visual amenity on a small portion of the LCT. Local impacts on LCT. 345 (southern extents) – Negligible. Overall impacts on LCT. 345 – No Change.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local magnitude of change on LCT 345: Negligible Overall impact on: No Change	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect on LCT 345: Negligible Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 345: Neutral (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> There would only be a slight change in the extent of perception of the Proposed Development during summer months due to intervening deciduous vegetation, but it would remain a perceivable feature in the mid to far-distance within important views from the landscape looking towards hills the south. Local impacts on LCT. 345 (southern extents) – Negligible. Overall impacts on LCT. 345 – No Change.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local magnitude of change on LCT 345: Negligible Overall impact: No Change	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect on LCT 345: Negligible Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 345: Neutral (non-significant)

Table 3 - Naturescot LCT 346 Open Farmed Slopes (The Highland Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 346 OPEN FARMED SLOPES (Within The Highland Council)					
Representative viewpoint 3 is located within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' page 1 for viewpoint location). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photo 1 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“Areas of distinctive, large, regular fields of large farms, with occasional small patches of birch woodland and conifer plantations and lines of trees descending the slopes.”</i>	Open large-scale landscape		▪	
Landform	<i>“Open, convex, generally north-east facing farmed slopes.”</i>	Open consistent sloping gradient		▪	
Land cover	<i>“Low to moderate intensive farming with rectangular fields of different sizes.”</i> <i>“Mix of crofting, small holdings and large farms giving rise to a patchwork of rectangular fields of different sizes.”</i> <i>“Smooth slopes of arable and pasture fields forming a regular pattern, lined with occasional small trees, fences or gorse hedges.”</i>	<i>“Mix of crofting, small holdings and large farms giving rise to a patchwork of rectangular fields of different sizes”</i>		▪	
Texture	<i>“Areas of distinctive, large, regular fields of large farms, with occasional small patches of birch woodland and conifer plantations and lines of trees descending the slopes.”</i> <i>“Few trees woodlands or plantations, field boundaries are fences”</i>	Simple and sweeping lines, linear features and patterns		▪	
Built Environment	<i>“Areas of distinctive crofting patterns with generally smaller fields and regularly scattered croft buildings. Large farms in certain areas”</i> <i>“Scattered settlement patterns and network of minor roads running along contour lines, with few groupings in villages or towns.”</i>	Scattered settlement patterns. Varied farm sizes with a diverse range of building / settlement size, style, and ages		▪	
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	Existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs to the north and west of Beauly Substation and the A835.	Few features present apart from scattered settlement, OHLs, local roads and telegraph poles		▪	
Perceptual aspects	<i>“The prominent headlands either side of the Sutors are distinctive. The hills form a balanced pair, marking the entrance to the Cromarty Firth. Their highly recognisable form is visible from land in all directions, from long distances inland and across the Moray Firth.”</i> - Broad feeling of containment by surrounding landform and forestry. Lower lying land often utilised by transport corridors, reducing tranquillity.	Broadly contained but limited tranquillity		▪	
Visual Amenity	<i>“Ever present views which are open, expansive and outward looking.”</i> <i>“Views from this open landscape are outward looking, with the eye being drawn to the expanse of river plains, or the hills to the south and west. The skyline is marked by occasional blocks of woodland.”</i>	Views from this open landscape are outward looking with distant focal points		▪	▪
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	The Proposed Development is located between 1 km to 10 km from the LCT, which is predominately characterised by farmland with woodland cover. Residential areas are located at lower elevations, where the landscape becomes more open. A small area of the landscape is located to the west of Beauly and north of the River Beauly, within 1 km of the Proposed Development. Detracting features include an existing OHL and telephone lines.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium		▪	
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	There are no landscape designations within LCT 346 (within the 10 km Study Area). However, the scenic quality of the LCT is of high value and offers a sense of remoteness with few detracting features.	Undesignated landscape Relatively strong sense of place		▪	
Features	<i>“The road network is often regular, running along the contour lines. In steeper areas and around crofts, roads can be sinuous, or angled to follow field patterns.”</i> <i>“A long history of human occupation is evidenced by burial cairns and prehistoric settlements, some with associated field systems.”</i>	Principally rural, containing many historic features and sites		▪	

NATURESCOT LCT 346 OPEN FARMED SLOPES (Within The Highland Council)					
Representative viewpoint 3 is located within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' page 1 for viewpoint location). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photo 1 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
Quality / Condition	A good quality landscape with historic sites and traditional houses, the quality of the landscape has deteriorated slightly due to development of new housing sites and electricity infrastructure.	A good quality landscape with distinctive features but with some urban detractors present		▪	
VALUE SUMMARY	There are no landscape designations within LCT 346 (within the 10 km Study Area). However, the proximity of the inner Moray Firth offers high levels of scenic quality and expansive views are afforded.	Value is Medium		▪	
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	LCT 346 OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value		Medium		

NATURESCOT LCT 346 – OPEN FARMED SLOPES (Within The Highland Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction activity, including the progressive installation of towers via cranes, potential use of helicopters, and the removal of the existing 132 kV OHL between Beauly and Knocknagael substations would be briefly perceived from within the nearest area of landscape to the west of Beauly, from the lower to mid slopes associated with Torr Breac and Cnoc Criot, but would not have a direct impact. The visual amenity afforded from the more elevated areas of the LCT is an important characteristic, particularly when looking across the Beauly Firth, River Beauly valley and towards hills associated with The Aird to the south. Construction activity, including the progressive installation of towers via cranes or potential use of helicopters through the landscape to the south / southeast would be distantly perceived together with large areas of felling over The Aird. There would be a very minor but temporary change on a localised portion of the LCT in terms of visual amenity and perceived tranquillity as a result of construction activity and disturbance to the landscape to the south / southeast. Local magnitude of change on LCT 346 – Negligible.	Medium	<u>During Construction</u> Local magnitude of change on LCT 346: Negligible Overall impact: No Change	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect on LCT 346: Negligible Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 346: Neutral
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development is not located within LCT 346, therefore there would be no direct impacts on the landscape. However, it is anticipated that the Proposed Development may slightly affect the perceptual and aesthetic qualities of this LCT, particularly to the west of Beauly where mid to long-distance views of the Proposed Development would be most available. However, any views would be brief and predominantly screened by intervening landform and blocks of commercial forestry and woodland within the River Beauly valley. There would be some intermittent intervisibility between the LCT and the Proposed Development, particularly from local roads and properties on the lower slopes of hills to the northwest of the river. More distant views are afforded from north of the Beauly Firth, looking towards The Aird in the background. The perception of this landscape would not change as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development within the landscape to the south / southeast, which would be seen in the mid to far-distance beyond existing retained 275 kV and 132 kV OHLs. Due to a combination of appreciable distance, areas of woodland and intervening landform there would only be an indirect, negligible but perceptible change in terms of visual amenity. Local magnitude of change on LCT 346 - Negligible.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Overall magnitude of change on LCT 346: Negligible Overall impact: No Change	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect on LCT 346: Negligible Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 346: Neutral
<i>Summer</i> There would only be a slight change in the extent of perception of the Proposed Development during summer months due to intervening deciduous vegetation, but it would remain a perceivable feature in the mid to far-distance within important views from the landscape looking towards hills the south / southeast. Local magnitude of change on LCT 346 - Negligible.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Overall magnitude of change on LCT 346: Negligible Overall impact: No Change	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect on LCT 346: Negligible Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 346: Neutral

Table 4 - Naturescot LCT 229 Enclosed Farmland (The Highland Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 229 ENCLOSED FARMLAND (Within The Highland Council)					
Representative viewpoints 1, 2, 6 & 58 are located within or view the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ pages 1 & 2 for viewpoint locations). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 2 & 3 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment		LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“Broad undulating glens interspersed with low rounded ridges sloping to lower plains”</i> <i>“Contrasting small scale, intimate croft lands, small rectangular fields, simple arrangement of buildings, narrow lanes, gullies and small scrubby woodlands.”</i> <i>“Medium size geometric fields.”</i>	A varied landscape incorporating both larger scale farming and woodlands with pockets of more intimate, smaller scale landscapes		▪	
Landform	<i>“Broad undulating glens interspersed with low, rounded ridges sloping to lower plains.”</i>	A moderately undulating, sloping landscape		▪	
Land cover	<i>“Open space and tree cover provides varying degrees of enclosure for fields and buildings as well as a diverse mix of landscape patterns, colours and textures.”</i> <i>“Large areas of intensive agriculture with medium-sized geometric fields divided by rows of mature deciduous trees and woodland, with some stone dykes.”</i> <i>“Large estate houses, including Beaufort Castle, set in woodlands and parklands with avenues of trees, prominent in the intensive agricultural land.”</i>	A varied and distinctive mosaic of landscape cover, with areas of larger and more regular agricultural fields and forests balanced with woodlands, meandering streams and rivers, estate parklands, small pasture fields, evenly distributed crofts, narrow lanes and varied field boundaries		▪	▪
Texture	<i>“Mixed agricultural land-use balanced with a high proportion of trees, woodlands, small scale forests and hedgerows.”</i> <i>“Contrasting small scale, intimate croft lands, small rectangular fields, simple arrangement of buildings, narrow lanes, gullies and small scrubby woodlands.”</i>	A broad, intricate landscape with a variety of textures and patterns		▪	▪
Built Environment	<i>“Diverse range of settlement with many small farms and crofts, several villages and estates.”</i> <i>“Network of major and minor roads, including the A862, following geometric field boundaries.”</i> <i>“Wide distribution and range of historic sites dating from prehistoric cairns and settlements to more recent sporting estates.”</i>	Built form typically comprised of small farms interspersed by a diverse range of building / settlement size, style, and ages. Presence of increased urbanisation and modern built form diluting historic structure and distinctiveness		▪	
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>“This landscape is crossed by many pylon runs which cut across the landform and open spaces, often undermining the rural character and intimate sense of scale and enclosure.”</i> - Beauly Substation lies to the north of the River Beauly while the existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs lie immediately north of the Proposed Development while the existing Beauly Denny 400 kV OHL can also be seen on the western boundary of the LCT. A further 132 kV OHL cuts through the northern extent of the LCT between Beauly and Kirkhill. <i>“The A833, A862 and numerous local roads also run through the landscape with traffic openly visible.”</i>	A network of both major and minor roads and electricity infrastructure crosses the LCT. Beauly Substation is located within the northwest section of the LCT, well screened by woodland and low lying, but still creating some concentration of overhead lines and towers around it		▪	
Perceptual aspects	<i>“Views tend to be limited within this landscape by the landform and woodland, creating intrigue and a varying range of spaces which constantly change whilst travelling through the area.”</i> <i>“Areas which are semi-enclosed by landform and trees convey a sense of intimacy, as attention is directed to foreground details within the shelter of the spaces.”</i>	Sense of enclosure and visual containment creates intimacy and intrigue, adding to the strength of the rural character		▪	▪
Visual Amenity	<i>“The skyline is characterised by forested hills to the south and west.”</i> <i>“Areas of trees and woodland afford physical and visual containment for many farm buildings and small settlements, blocking their visibility from the main roads, thus helping retain the strength of rural character. Within crofting areas, views tend to be restricted by the density and close proximity of vertical landscape elements which also increase the sense of enclosure.”</i>	Sloping, gently undulating and treed landscape limits long-distance views and creates visual intimacy		▪	▪

NATURESCOT LCT 229 ENCLOSED FARMLAND (Within The Highland Council)					
Representative viewpoints 1, 2, 6 & 58 are located within or view the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' pages 1 & 2 for viewpoint locations). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 2 & 3 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	The Proposed Development would intersect the LCT for approximately 5.4 km, through a landscape characterised by agricultural land-use and extensive tree cover with limited long-distance views and a sense of enclosure in crofting areas. The landscape contains detracting features located at the northern boundary of the LCT, including existing OHLs, roads, telephone lines and a substation. However, these features are largely imperceptible beyond the immediate vicinity due to the enclosed and intimate nature of the surrounding landscape.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium to High		▪	▪
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following highly valued assets: • Beaufort Castle garden and designed landscape; • Belladrum garden and designed landscape; • North Coast 500, A862 tourist routes; • small to medium sized areas of ancient woodland, across most of the LCT; and • a small number of small-scale schedule monuments e.g. forts, cairns, stone circle. The landscape is esteemed for its historic destinations and cultural significance and serves as the annual venue for the Belladrum Tartan Heart Festival.	Undesignated Landscape Beaufort Castle garden and designed landscape is present, with numerous listed buildings and archaeological sites. The LCT is readily accessible through a network of local roads and a small selection of Core Paths. Many tourists pass through the area		▪	
Features	• <i>"Wide distribution and range of historic sites indicating its long history of human occupation, dating from prehistoric cairns and settlements to more recent sporting estates."</i> • <i>"Tower houses, fortified residences and sporting estates with their attendant buildings, and extensive areas of historic design landscape are also found in the area."</i>	Principally rural, containing historic features and sites. Tree planting is extensive and forms a key element throughout the landscape. Many features worthy of conservation		▪	▪
Quality / Condition	A good quality landscape with historic sites and traditional houses, the quality of the landscape has deteriorated slightly due to development of new housing sites. • <i>"Pronounced and dynamic river meanders of Strathglass"</i> • <i>"There are several extensive pylon runs which are aligned with the valley floor or sides, or cross the valley and ascend to the skyline, forming prominent man-made features"</i> • Roads which generally relate well to landform, with a limited number of river crossing points.	A good quality landscape with distinctive features but with some urban detractors present within Strathglass including an existing power station, major roads and existing overhead lines		▪	
VALUE SUMMARY	There are no landscape designations in the LCT. Designated heritage interest includes the private estate of Beaufort Castle garden and designed landscape and scattered heritage assets, including a church and cemetery near Black Bridge. The Core Path / designated public path network within the LCT is relatively sparse. People pass through the LCT on the A833 and short sections of the A831 / A862 to access Black Bridge cemetery, Kiltarlity and Core Paths alongside the River Beauly, so would be familiar with the landscape and any changes to it.	Value is Medium		▪	
				SENSITIVITY	
SENSITIVITY	LCT 229 OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value			Medium to High	

NATURESCOT LCT 229 - ENCLOSED FARMLAND (Within The Highland Council)

LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction activity would be perceptible through the LCT and result in both direct and indirect impacts on visual amenity, tranquillity and perception of the enclosed farmland due to intervisibility from adjacent landscapes of LCTs 222, 342 & 346. Construction, including the installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes, or potentially helicopters, the removal approximately 4 km of existing 132 kV OHL from Beauly to Knocknagael substations, temporary introduction of access tracks and felling would be seen against the existing retained 275 kV OHL but would be highly noticeable between Fanellan and Easter Moniack and would be seen from the adjacent LCT 342. Felling within and beyond the OC between Fanellan and the A862 would be particularly intrusive through the River Beauly corridor and result in a noticeable change to land cover. Proposed access tracks are not anticipated to result in any additional permanent change to vegetation cover. Impacts are not anticipated to be as pronounced on the wider landscape, with key characteristics of the wooded and enclosed landscape being largely unaffected. However, the introduction of construction through a well-used and valued section of the landscape would impact perceived tranquillity and visual amenity across a large section of the northern extents of the LCT. Local Impact on the River Beauly valley between Fanellan and Easter Moniack (northern section of the LCT) – High. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 229 – Low to Medium.	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: High Overall magnitude of change on LCT 229: Low to Medium	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect on the River Beauly valley between Fanellan and Easter Moniack: Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 229: Moderate Adverse (significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development intersects the LCT for approximately 5.4 km and would introduce a new detracting built feature into the northern extents, although seen in the context of existing but smaller OHLs. The Proposed Development would traverse the valley of the River Beauly, extending eastwards across Croiche Wood and intersect with the A862, and remain perceptible as it briefly traverses LCT 342 Farmed River Plains on either side of the A862 and Kirkhill. The Proposed Development would traverse a combination of wooded and open farmland, a low-lying wooded river valley and an important tourist route in the A862. The existing 275 kV OHL would be seen parallel to the Proposed Development between Beauly Substation and Kirkhill and provides a context within which the Proposed Development would not be entirely incongruous in the landscape. The removal of existing towers associated with the 132 kV OHL from Beauly to Knocknagael substations would be perceived between the existing Beauly Substation and Inchmore and would slightly alleviate the impact of the introduction of new taller towers through the landscape. At a local level the introduction of a new OHL is anticipated to slightly impact land cover with a greater impact on perception, rural quality and visual amenity of the landscape. The OC would result in felling that would be noticeable at the local level and result in towers being more prominent but not change the wider structure of landcover within the LCT, being well wooded. The impact of the Proposed Development would be more pronounced in instances where the OHL would traverse open fields, interrupting the visual experience of the landscape, and at the local level in proximity to the River Beauly corridor. At a broader scale, existing woodland and topography serves to limit the impact of a change in vegetation cover and the introduction of a new OHL. The setting of Beaufort Castle would not be directly impacted. Local Impact on the River Beauly valley between Fanellan and Easter Moniack – Medium to High. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 229 – Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall magnitude of change on LCT 229: Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect on the River Beauly valley between Fanellan and Easter Moniack: Moderate to Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 229: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant).
<i>Summer</i> There would only be a minor change in terms of perception of the Proposed Development in summer months due to the additional screening provided by deciduous vegetation through the river and major road corridors. The Proposed Development would remain a prominent new vertical feature within the landscape and impacts are not anticipated to change. Local Impact on the River Beauly valley between Fanellan and Easter Moniack – Medium to High. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 229 – Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall magnitude of change on LCT 229: Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect on the River Beauly valley between Fanellan and Easter Moniack: Moderate to Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 229: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant)

Table 5 - Naturescot LCT 342 Farmed River Plains (The Highland Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 342 - FARMED RIVER PLAINS (Within The Highland Council)					
Representative viewpoints 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 54 are located within or view the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' pages 1 & 3 for viewpoint locations)					
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 4, 5 & 6 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“Broad expanse of mainly flat, connected river valley flood plains, with central meandering rivers.”</i>	Large scale landscape, broad valleys, gently undulation with large scale field pattern		▪	
Landform	<i>“Broad undulating glens interspersed with low, rounded ridges sloping to lower plains”</i>	A moderately undulating, sloping landscape		▪	▪
Land cover	<i>“Contrast of the flat, open plain and the adjacent surrounding concave slopes rising to steep hill and mountain edges to the north, west and south.”</i> <i>“Meandering and mainly natural course of rivers and associated wetlands and salt marshes at lower reaches.”</i>	Smooth regular flowing, flat, relatively uniform landscape		▪	▪
Texture	<i>“Woodland and tree cover of roadside and field-side trees lines, shelterbelts and small plantations interspersed with large scale fields.”</i>	Broad expanse of mainly flat, connected river valley flood plains		▪	
Built Environment	<i>“Relatively sparse settlement, mainly of estate farms and cottages which avoid wetter areas, with occasional and relatively contained larger settlements on low plains as well as elevated sandy gravel deposits.”</i> <i>“Important prehistoric ceremonial monuments consisting of standing stones and henges.”</i> <i>“There are three towns within the valley, with Dingwall and Beauly in close proximity to river or coastal wetlands, and Muir of Ord situated on slightly higher ground at the water shed formed by a band of raised gravel deposits between Beauly and Cromarty Firths.”</i>	Built form typically comprised of small farms interspersed by a diverse range of building / settlement size, style, and ages Relatively sparse settlement, mainly of estate farms and cottages.		▪	
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>“The flat land contains most of this area’s major roads, and occasional minor roads extend into the drier areas of farmland, to connect with farmsteads.”</i> - Existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs are prominent through open fields and over the River Beauly.	Contains the A862, towns of Beauly and Muir of Ord and existing OHLs, all openly visible.		▪	
Perceptual aspects	<i>“This generally flat landscape includes a low amount of tree cover, but it is distributed across the drier ground and outer edges of the plain. This divides the landscape into compartments, sometimes limiting long-distance views.”</i>	Open views result in a relative lack of tranquillity and a busy feel in proximity to roads and settlements. In more remote areas within forestry and woodland the landscape feels more remote and wild		▪	
Visual Amenity	<i>“This generally flat landscape includes a low amount of tree cover, but it is distributed across the drier ground and outer edges of the plain. This divides the landscape into compartments, sometimes limiting long-distance views.”</i> - Views across this area are afforded from the many surrounding hills and slopes.	Varying vegetation cover sometimes affords long-distance views. Extensive views along plains, straths and the surrounding moorland and mountains are available in other areas		▪	▪
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	The Proposed Development intersects the LCT for approximately 4.1 km, which is predominantly characterised by open farmland with limited woodland cover. The area is surrounded by hills and a topography that provide views across the central river valley. The perceptual qualities encompass a scenic yet developed landscape with visible OHLs, an aggregate quarry and an industrial estate.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium to High		▪	▪

NATURESCOT LCT 342 - FARMED RIVER PLAINS (Within The Highland Council)					
Representative viewpoints 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 54 are located within or view the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' pages 1 & 3 for viewpoint locations)					
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 4, 5 & 6 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following highly valued assets: • Inner Moray Firth RAMSAR, Inner Moray Firth SPA and Beaully Firth SSSI; • Brahan garden and designed landscape; • Beaully Village Square Conservation Area; • North Coast 500, A862 Tourist route; and • some small areas of ancient woodland. There is also a potential Garden and Designed Landscape proposed at Reelig.	Undesignated Landscape Few ecology and heritage features Visitors pass through the area using the popular North Coast 500 and A862		▪	
Features	• <i>“The river area was an important prehistoric focal point for ceremonial activity, indicated by the large number of henge monuments in the area.”</i> • <i>“There are also prehistoric standing stones, burial cairns and the important medieval priory at Beaully.”</i>	Strong sense of place, with features worthy of conservation		▪	▪
Quality / Condition	• <i>“Woodland cover is low and fragmented, but combined with the regular pattern of trees lining fields and roads”</i> • <i>“A large proportion is enclosed farmland of managed estates with field patterns dating from the 18th-19th Century, characterised by well-ordered, usually large fields, often with tree-lines and a narrow shelter belts.”</i>	A good quality Landscape but with some potential for substitution		▪	
VALUE SUMMARY	There are no landscape designations in the LCT but there are cultural heritage assets and the landscape is well perceived from tourist routes.	Value is Medium		▪	
				SENSITIVITY	
SENSITIVITY	LCT 342 OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value			Medium to High	

NATURESCOT LCT 342 - FARMED RIVER PLAINS (Within The Highland Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction activity would be perceptible within the LCT between Wester Balblair and Drumchardine and within adjacent LCTs 228 & 229 resulting in both direct and indirect impacts. The installation of towers via cranes, the removal of two sections totalling approximately 3 km of the existing 132 kV OHL from Beauly to Knocknagael substations, formation of access tracks through open fields and localised small areas of felling would be prominent through the low-lying river plains. OC and management felling³ would also be noticeable on the lower to upper slopes of The Aird to the south of the A862, crossing three LCTs; 342, 228 & 222 with large areas of felling on the upper slopes. Sections of the existing 132kV would be removed within the LCT across the River Beauly and on low lying farmland to the south of Inchmore. Construction activity across the River Beauly to the north of Croiche Wood would be relatively well contained by surrounding woodland within the river corridor but viewed from numerous local Core Paths, impacting local perception of tranquillity. To the east, construction would be seen alongside the A862 North Coast 500 tourist route within open fields and intrude on people's perception of the landscape to the south with additional height and movement associated with progressive tower installation, cable stringing and the introduction of new, detracting, built features through an attractive landscape, impacting visual amenity and land cover. Together with the removal of the existing 132 kV OHL, construction works would be highly intrusive on visual amenity and the perceptual qualities through the River Beauly corridor and within open fields around Easter Moniack, Inchmore and through the A862 corridor both from within the LCT itself and from adjoining landscapes. Local Impact around Easter Moniack - High. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 342 - Negligible to Low.	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: High Overall magnitude of change on LCT 342: Negligible to Low	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect around Easter Moniack: Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 342: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development intersects and would result in direct impacts on the LCT over a length of approximately 4.1 km across two sections either side of LCT 229. Indirect impacts are likely to occur as a result of intervisibility of the Proposed Development passing through LCT 229 to the east of the River Beauly for 1.2 km and crossing LCTs 222 and 228 on The Aird for approximately 1.6 km to the southeast. The new OHL would parallel the retained 275 kV OHL across the River Beauly and A862 with relatively small areas of felling increasing prominence of towers at the crossing points from Core Paths and the A862 North Coast 500 tourist route. To the south of the A862 the Proposed Development deviates from the existing retained OHL through the intimate, attractive landscape around Easter Moniack, where it would be seen as a new OHL through open fields and would be a dominant feature within views from the A862, with angle towers particularly prominent, resulting in impacts on visual amenity and perceptual qualities. The removal of the existing 132 kV OHL to the north of the A862 would be a noticeable benefit in terms of the removal of a detracting built feature and would slightly offset the impact of the introduction of new taller towers through the landscape. Impacts at the local level within LCT 342 mostly relate to the introduction of a prominent new, detracting, built feature through open fields within a local landscape of high scenic value and an adverse change to the perceptual and rural qualities of the immediate landscape. Visual amenity is an important characteristic of this landscape and would be adversely but indirectly impacted by the perception of felling and the Proposed Development on the western slopes of The Aird to the southeast where a cleared corridor of forestry would make towers more prominent on the hillside. At the wider level, new development of this type would not represent a substantial change in terms of perceptual or physical qualities due to the presence of the retained 275 kV OHL, a 132 kV OHL to the north of the Proposed Development and urban features including towns, major roads and low transmission lines. The Proposed Development is anticipated to be broadly contained by surrounding landform and forestry and would be perceived within a small area in the southern extents of the LCT. Relatively small areas of felling, in the context of the LCT, would not affect the wider characteristics of the landscape. The Proposed Development is not anticipated to substantially change the overall key characteristics of LCT 342. Local Impact around Easter Moniack – Medium to High. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 342 – Negligible to Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall magnitude of change on LCT 342: Negligible to Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect around Easter Moniack: Moderate to Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 342: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> Deciduous vegetation alongside the River Beauly, A862 and on field boundaries would only slightly reduce the prominence and perception of the Proposed Development in summer months and no change to the impacts on the landscape during winter are anticipated. Local Impact around Easter Moniack – Medium to High. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 342 – Negligible to Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall magnitude of change on LCT 342: Negligible to Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect around Easter Moniack: Moderate to Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 342: Minor Adverse (non-significant)

³ Management felling is defined as areas of felling beyond the OC to the nearest 'windfirm' edge (known as the 'green edge'), where the trees have developed next to open ground, in order to reduce the risk of windthrow.

NATURESCOT LCT 342 - FARMED RIVER PLAINS (Within The Highland Council)

LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Management felling planting back to the edge of the OC and forest edge fringe planting within the OC (refer to Appendix 7.6 Forestry Landscape Mitigation Principles) is likely to have re-established in this time on the slopes of The Aird. The management felling planting on the lower slopes of The Aird within LCT 342 and on the upper slopes within LCT 222, together with deciduous forest edge fringe planting would help to integrate towers into the surrounding retained forestry, partially screen the lower to mid-portions of some individual towers and soften the appearance of the artificially straight tract of open forestry by making the edges more organic and natural looking when viewed from the landscape around Easter Moniack to the northwest. Within the LCT itself there would be a small improvement in terms of physical land cover and returning a small area of felled forestry back to its original state. Visual amenity and perceptual qualities would also improve slightly by reducing the prominence of the Proposed Development on The Aird but these improvements most relate to the perception of the adjoining landscapes. The new OHL would remain a detracting built feature through the attractive local landscape of LCT 342. Local Impact around Easter Moniack – Medium to High. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 342 – Negligible to Low.		<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall magnitude of change on LCT 342: Negligible to Low	<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local effect around Easter Moniack: Moderate to Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 342: Minor Adverse (non-significant)

Table 6 - Naturescot LCT 228 Rolling Farmland and Woodland (The Highland Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 228 ROLLING FARMLAND AND WOODLAND (Within The Highland Council)					
Representative viewpoints 12 and 13 are located within or view the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ page 3 for viewpoint locations). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 7, 8 & 9 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment		LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“Gently sloping, simple coastal edge with the firths, falling to well-defined raised beaches in places.”</i>	Undulating landscape with medium scale field pattern with smaller more intimate areas		▪	▪
Landform	<i>“Varied landform of rolling, north-facing hill slopes and plateaux. Contrast of the flat, open plain and the adjacent surrounding concave slopes rising to steep hill and mountain edges to the north, west and south.”</i>	A moderately undulating, complex landscape		▪	
Land cover	<i>“Agriculture and woodland land use of large conifer forests and broadleaf woodlands alongside watercourses and associated with settlement.”</i> <i>“Meandering and mainly natural course of rivers and associated wetlands and salt marshes at lower reaches.”</i>	Diverse mix of landcover and fairly even balance of open agricultural land and woodlands		▪	▪
Texture	<i>“Varying patterns of openness and enclosure created by woodland and hedgerows mixed with open fields and dense conifer forests with dark linear edges.”</i> <i>“Diversity added by open broadleaf woodlands along stream gorges, riverbanks, small woodlands, trees, hedgerows and designed landscapes.”</i>	Varied rural landscape		▪	▪
Built Environment	<i>“Settled landscape, mostly of small farms and isolated houses, interconnected by a network of major and minor roads.”</i> <i>“Other scattered settlements of old buildings in traditional layout, associated with road junctions and bridging points.”</i> <i>“Clusters of farm buildings and open fields are generally set against a wooded backdrop.”</i> <i>“Minor roads follow the geometric edges of field enclosures and conifer forests.”</i>	Settled landscape, mostly of small farms and isolated houses, interconnected by a network of major and minor roads	▪	▪	
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>“Settlements are scattered throughout the area and are typically associated with road junctions and bridging points. Where settlements have been extended with new housing and retail developments, mainly around the south and east of Inverness, the new layout often dominates the original settlement pattern and eradicates the former field and woodland patterns, transforming the character from rural to urban.”</i> <i>“A large number of major infrastructure features cross this landscape, including major trunk roads (A82) and street lighting, pylons and overhead lines, rail lines, bridges and viaducts.”</i> <i>“There is a confusing clutter of linear and vertical man-made structures over large parts of this landscape. These tend to conflict with the underlying rural character of the area.”</i> 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs running parallel to each other pass through the LCT between Inchmore and Knocknagael Substation. A single 275 kV OHL then runs east from the substation on the boundary of LCT 223.	There is constant activity in this landscape due to the presence of major transport routes, and the close proximity of a high proportion of settlement, including new housing estates and individual rural houses, large retail developments, and the proximity to the city of Inverness. There are also existing OHLs in the landscape.	▪	▪	
Perceptual aspects	<i>“Confusing clutter of linear and vertical manmade structures over large parts of this landscape sometimes visible on skylines and sometimes combined with new large-scale development.”</i> <i>“In some areas estate features create foci and patterns within this landscape, for example with stone walls, beech hedging, parkland and wooded policies creating a sense of history and tradition. There is constant activity in this landscape due to from the presence of major transport routes, and the close proximity of a high proportion of settlement.”</i>	There is constant activity in this landscape due to the presence of major transport routes and close proximity to the settlement of Inverness. A changing landscape on the outskirts of Inverness. A mix between enclosure and tranquillity in some areas and busier when in proximity to settlements and roads.	▪		
Visual Amenity	<i>“The skyline is characterised by rolling hills and blocks of woodland.”</i> <i>“Visibility is limited in places which are surrounded by woodland, focusing attention upon foreground detail. In contrast, occasional open areas on the upper slopes allow distant views northwards over the firths.”</i>	Varying vegetation cover sometimes affords long-distance views. Extensive views along plains, straths and the surrounding		▪	

NATURESCOT LCT 228 ROLLING FARMLAND AND WOODLAND (Within The Highland Council)					
Representative viewpoints 12 and 13 are located within or view the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ page 3 for viewpoint locations). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 7, 8 & 9 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
		mountains to the south and west are available in other areas			
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	The Proposed Development intersects the LCT for approximately 5 km, which is characterised by varied landform and a balance of open farmland and woodland cover. The landscape is largely enclosed due to a combination of steep terrain and large areas of forestry associated with The Aird and Drummossie Muir. Detracting features are frequent within the LCT, including OHLs and major transport routes.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium		▪	
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following designations and highly valued assets: - Dalcross Castle and Leys Castle garden and designed landscapes; - Culloden Battlefield; - Culloden Muir, Inverness (Riverside) Conservation Area; ‘Great Glen Way’ and The ‘Caledonian Way’ (Route 78) Scotland Great Trails; - National Cycle Network (Route 1, 78); - Unnamed Scotland Heritage Path - Long Distance Path; - Highland Tourist Route, A82; - Kildrummie Kames SSSI, Torvean Landform SSSI and Moniack Gorge SAC & SSSI; - frequent areas of small to large sized ancient woodland; and - numerous scheduled monuments.	Undesignated Landscape Despite the high tourism and recreational value of the landscape, the area includes many man-made elements which interfere with the rural character of the area		▪	▪
Features	<i>“The historic Caledonian Canal crosses the east of the area, following a sinuous route which mirrors that of the adjacent River Ness.”</i> - There are many archaeological sites and monuments in this LCT, reflecting the conditions suitable for a long history of human occupation. <i>“Tower houses, fortified residences and sporting estates with their attendant buildings, and several historic houses with designed landscapes are also found in the area.”</i>	Strong sense of place, with features worthy of conservation		▪	▪
Quality / Condition	<i>“The distinctiveness and extent of this type is gradually reducing as Inverness and surrounding commuter towns expand.”</i> <i>“Sense of history and tradition around estates, due to stone walls, beech hedging, parkland and wooded policies.”</i> <i>“An active, busy landscape, particularly in the vicinity of adjoining urban areas and major transport routes.”</i>	A good quality Landscape but with some potential for substitution		▪	
VALUE SUMMARY	Despite the area including many man-made elements which interfere with the rural character of the area, this is a valued landscape due to presence of Battlefield of Culloden, a major tourist attraction, with high levels of tourism and recreational value of the landscape.	Value is High			▪
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	LCT 228 OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value		Medium to High		

NATURESCOT LCT 228 - ROLLING FARMLAND AND WOODLAND (Within The Highland Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction activity would be perceptible through the LCT across two discreet sections of the landscape, with further indirect impacts anticipated due to intervisibility from the surrounding landscape. Direct impacts occur where felling to accommodate the OC takes place within the LCT to the southeast of Easter Moniack on the lower slopes of Mam a Chatha within Reelig Wood on the western slopes of The Aird. To some degree surrounding retained vegetation would contain perception of low-level construction activity, but the linear corridor of felling and the installation of towers would be perceived from the landscape around Easter Moniack to the west. Between The Aird and Clava Mains / the A9, works associated with the installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes, and potentially helicopters, formation of access tracks and removal of two sections of the existing 132 kV OHL from Beauly to Knocknagael substations (4.7 km and 4.4 km) would be highly noticeable locally within this LCT, particularly where crossing the A82, River Ness and Caledonian Canal and through open fields on rising landform around Essich approaching the Drum Mossie Muir. It would also be noticeable through the adjacent LCTs 222 and 223, slightly exacerbating impacts associated with the introduction of towers and an OHL during the construction period. Construction activity would also be perceived distantly from Culloden Battlefield within the LCT, beyond the existing retained 275 kV OHL. Felling to accommodate the OC within the LCT to the southeast of the River Ness up to the Drum Mossie Muir would be intermittent and very localised and would not result in a noticeable change of landcover through the wider, well wooded landscape. Indirect perceptual impacts would result from the OC and management felling to the west of the A82 on the eastern slopes of The Aird, where it would be seen within adjoining LCTs 222 & 225. Construction activity and felling would also be noticeable for approximately 5.5 km through the adjacent LCT 223 to the west of the A9, seen parallel to the existing 275 kV OHL. Impacts on the wider landscape are not anticipated to be as pronounced due to the scale of the landscape and presence of numerous detracting features. Local Impacts on the setting of the western slopes of The Aird and on the River Ness valley to the east of The Aird – Medium to High. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 228 – Low.	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall magnitude of change on LCT 228: Low	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect on the setting of the western slopes of The Aird and on the River Ness valley to the east of The Aird: Moderate to Major Adverse (Significant) Overall Effect on LCT 228: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development intersects the LCT for approximately 5 km across two distinct areas of the landscape on either side of The Aird, introducing both direct and indirect impacts as a result of intervisibility from the surrounding landscape, with the Proposed Development being perceived through adjoining LCTs 222, 223 & 225. At the westernmost extent of LCT 228, the Proposed Development traverses Reelig Glen to the southeast of Easter Moniack, before heading southeast across the lower slopes of Mam a Chatha to the south of Newtonhill on The Aird within a long corridor of highly visible cleared forestry. Towers are unlikely to be openly perceived over the higher ground of The Aird from within the LCT through extensive forestry and the impacts resulting from a change of land cover and introduction of new detracting built features on the western slopes of The Aird are more associated with views from settlements, roads and footpaths to the northwest, within LCTs 342 and 229 around Easter Moniack, changing the perception of The Aird and impacting visual amenity. Retained deciduous woodland, that follows the Allt na Criche watercourse, and intervening undulating landform would help to limit the impact of the cleared corridor of forestry when seen from the northwest, particularly from the A862. However, the Proposed Development would remain prominent on hill slopes within the large areas of OC and management felling on western lower slopes of The Aird. On the lower slopes of Cnoc na Moine and Craig Leach on the eastern slopes of The Aird within LCT 222, substantial felling within coniferous forestry would be noticeable from within LCT 228 and impact the perception of the landscape, its tranquillity and rural remoteness. The Proposed Development would be prominent traversing the River Ness valley, crossing the A82, Caledonian Canal, River Ness and B862 within the LCT itself before rising onto higher ground to the north of the Drumashie Plantation and Essich. A single tower of 96.57m height would be introduced to the south of the Caledonian Canal and River Ness and a tower of 69.57 m in height immediately north of the Caledonian Canal (refer to Figure 7.3A Zone of Theoretical Visibility The Highland Council, Caledonian Canal Crossing - Bare Earth and Figure 7.3B Zone of Theoretical Visibility The Highland Council, Caledonian Canal Crossing – Screening for an indication of visibility of the towers). Whilst these would be seen locally by recreational users of the Caledonian Canal, Caledonian Way and from the A82, they are not anticipated to be read within the landscape as being significant higher or more prominent than other towers due to being set within low river plain terrain and surrounded by blocks of retained woodland and forestry. One angle tower to the south of the A82 would also not stand out prominently in the landscape, being surrounded by woodland and not in proximity to recreational routes. The Proposed Development would be more pronounced and appear within the skyline through the surrounding flat valley terrain and open areas to the east of the River Ness, although to some degree it would be experienced and perceived within the context of the existing 275 kV OHL, busy A road and residential development resulting in it not being entirely incongruous to the landscape. The removal of the 132 kV OHL between the A862 corridor and Essich would slightly offset the impact of the introduction of new taller towers through this section of the landscape, where the Proposed Development would be perceived in relatively close proximity to the existing retained 275 kV OHL. A diamond tower crossing in proximity to Knocknagael Substation would result in a clutter of OHLs and towers, albeit in a relatively discreet location within the local landscape due to surrounding woodland. A section of the Proposed Development would be perceived from Culloden Battlefield, in the distance on hills to the south as it passes through LCTs 221 & 291. This would be seen beyond the existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs and partially against the skyline. This would not change the perception within the LCT or important panoramic views afforded to the surrounding landscape.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 228: Negligible to Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect on the setting of the western slopes of The Aird and on the River Ness valley to the east of The Aird: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 228: Minor Adverse (non-significant)

NATURESCOT LCT 228 - ROLLING FARMLAND AND WOODLAND (Within The Highland Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
In terms of the wider landscape, new development of this type would not represent a substantial change in terms of perceptual or physical qualities due to the existing presence of detracting features such as OHLs, towns and A roads. The Proposed Development is anticipated to be relatively well contained by intervening topography and woodland cover, particularly along the roads and the peripheries of residential areas but would remain visible above intervening tree lines. The Proposed Development encompasses a small area within the southeastern sections of the LCT, and it is not anticipated to substantially affect the wider character of a landscape that already contains detracting infrastructure. However, the addition of taller towers into the landscape would still result in further erosion of the rural, attractive setting of the wider landscape of LCT 228. Local Impact on the setting of the western slopes of The Aird and on the River Ness valley to the east of The Aird – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 228 – Negligible to Low.			
<i>Summer</i> There would only be a minor change in terms of perception of the Proposed Development in summer months due to the additional screening provided by deciduous vegetation within the surrounding landscape including roadside and field boundary vegetation. The Proposed Development would remain a prominent new vertical feature within the landscape on both sides of The Aird and east of the River Ness. Local Impact on the setting of the western slopes of The Aird and on the River Ness valley to the east of The Aird – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 228 – Negligible to Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 228: Negligible to Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect on the setting of the western slopes of The Aird and on the River Ness valley to the east of The Aird: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 228: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Management felling planting back to the edge of the OC and forest edge fringe planting within the OC on both sides of The Aird (refer to Appendix 7.6 Forestry Landscape Mitigation Principles) is likely to have established in this time. The management felling planting and forest edge fringe planting on the eastern and western slopes of The Aird is anticipated to partially screen the lower to mid-portions of towers and reduce the prominence of the Proposed Development within views from the landscape around Easter Moniack and within the valley of the River Ness. Forest edge fringe planting would soften the appearance of the artificially straight tract of open forestry by making the edges more organic and natural looking on both sides of The Aird. However, while impacts are expected to reduce in association with land cover, visual amenity and perception of The Aird, the Proposed Development would remain highly prominent through the landscape. Local Impact on the setting of the western slopes of The Aird and on the River Ness valley to the east of The Aird – Low to Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 228 – Negligible to Low.		<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 228: Negligible to Low	<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local effect on the setting of the western slopes of The Aird and on the River Ness valley to the east of The Aird: Moderate Adverse (non-significant) This would become non-significant due to the planting growth slightly reducing prominence of the Proposed Development in the landscape. Overall effect on LCT 228: Minor Adverse

Table 7 - Naturescot LCT 225 Broad Steep – Sided Glen (The Highland Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 225 BROAD STEEP – SIDED GLEN (Within The Highland Council)					
Representative viewpoints 14 & 55 are located within or view the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ page 4 for viewpoint locations). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 10, 11 & 12 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“Broad, linear, steep sided, v-shaped glen providing enclosure”</i> <i>“Large-scale conifer forests with small areas of open moorland covering most of the glen sides, particularly the lower slopes.”</i> <i>“Contrast between smaller scale landscapes of settled, lower slopes and large scale moorland and forested backdrop”</i>	Enclosure to the east and west provided by the long, linear, steep sided glen merging with the Rolling Farmlands and Woodlands character type to the north varying scale depending on elevation and land use			▪
Landform	<i>“A clearly defined, broad, linear, steep sided, v-shaped glen and deep loch cutting through mountains and hills, with limited areas of flatter ground.”</i>	Dramatic, undulating, rugged, complex landscape			▪
Land cover	<i>“Large-scale conifer forests with small areas of open moorland covering most of the glen sides, particularly the lower slopes.”</i> <i>“Agricultural land on less steep slopes, glen intersections and alluvial plains.”</i> <i>“Larger farms are located on the alluvial plains at the north and south ends of the loch.”</i>	Diverse mix of landcover and fairly even balance of open agricultural land and woodlands		▪	▪
Texture	<i>“Small patches of broad leaved woodlands, mostly in side glens and close to the shore.”</i> <i>“Contrast between the visual and seasonal diversity of broadleaf woodland and bright, open pockets of farmland and the forested and moorland surroundings.”</i> <i>“A simple linear and enclosed visual composition of bands of land, water and sky, with long skylines of even height, and the glen and loch as unifying features.”</i>	Contrast between the smaller scale landscapes of settled, lower slopes and the large-scale moorland and forested backdrop		▪	▪
Built Environment	<i>“A few settlements, with a well-defined core, located at glen intersections and on gentler slopes, separated by long stretches of relatively uninhabited land.”</i> <i>“Contrast between the busy trunk road and larger settlements on the west side and the quiet minor road on east side which has fewer settlements separated by large undeveloped areas.”</i> <i>“Strong evidence of past settlement in the number and diversity of archaeological and historic sites from prehistoric times to the 20th Century.”</i>	Occurrence and extent of settlements is restricted to a few places where there is the intersection of a side glen or a local area of gentler slope		▪	▪
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>“On the west side of the glen, the road is the main built visual element and organising feature, dominating adjacent landscape elements such as coastlines, watercourses and lower valley slopes.”</i> <i>“Provision for tourists includes elements such as signs, telephone boxes, litter bins, street lighting and parking areas. The urban image of these elements conflicts with the underlying rural character of these areas and undermines their sense of place.”</i> <i>“The A82 runs through the centre of the LCT from north to south and existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs can be perceived to the north crossing the A82 onto The Aird.”</i>	The A82 is a prominent feature on the west coast of Loch Ness. Otherwise, this is a well wooded and relatively unspoilt landscape			▪
Perceptual aspects	<i>“This landscape type has a simple linear and enclosed visual composition of bands of lochside land, water and hillside backdrop leading up to the skyline and sky. The settled lower slopes and contrast with their moorland and woodland backdrop.”</i> <i>“As the glen and the loch are strong unifying features, this landscape is often perceived as a continuum along its entire length. The experience of travelling along the glen tends to be sequential, with relatively long stretches of little activity, punctuated occasionally by settlements and / or isolated grand houses, monuments and forts.”</i> <i>“The busy trunk road, A82 and tourism-orientated settlements contrast strongly with the quiet, minor roads and sparse, small settlements on the east side.”</i>	A mix between enclosure and tranquillity in some areas and busier when in proximity to settlements and roads		▪	▪

NATURESCOT LCT 225 BROAD STEEP – SIDED GLEN (Within The Highland Council)

Representative viewpoints 14 & 55 are located within or view the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ page 4 for viewpoint locations).

Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 10, 11 & 12 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.

SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
Visual Amenity	<i>“A simple linear and enclosed visual composition of bands of land, water and sky, with long skylines of even height, and the glen and loch as unifying features. Visual focus directed along the linear route of the glen or across the water to the opposite shore and up to the skyline.”</i> <i>“The busy trunk road and tourism-orientated settlements contrast strongly with the quiet, minor roads and sparse, small settlements on the east side.”</i>	On the west side of the glen, the A82 is the main built visual element and organising feature, dominating adjacent landscape elements such as coastlines, watercourses and lower valley slopes. Although there are glimpses of the loch and glen sides from the road, its busy nature means that concentration is often focused on the road corridor rather than the surroundings, restricting appreciation of the landscape		▪	▪
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	The Proposed Development would intersect the LCT for approximately 1.5 km, of which the predominant characteristic is a steep-sided V-shaped glen with a deep loch, featuring conifer forests and scattered settlements at intersections and gentler slopes. Detracting features are of small scale and are therefore not widely perceptible across the landscape. The area is unspoilt with a strong sense of place and would be highly susceptible to the type of development proposed.	Susceptibility to Change is High			▪
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following designations and highly valued assets: - Loch Ness and Duntelchaig Special Landscape Area (SLA); - Dochfour garden and designed landscape; ‘Great Glen’ Canoe Trail (Fly over tour) and The Caledonia Way (Route 78) Scotland Great Trails; - The Caledonian Canal and River Ness are both highly valued resources; - National Cycle Network (Route 78) follows the B862; - the A82 is valued as a major tourist route; - Torvean Landform SSSI; - frequent small to large areas of ancient woodland across the LCT; - the LCT comprises of few small-scale scheduled monuments. The most notable monument comprises of a stretch of inland waterway known as the Caledonian Canal running north-eastward from Loch Ness as far as Dochgarroch Lock; and - LCT 225 features strong cultural associations due to the presence of Loch Ness, famously known for the mythical creature said to inhabit its waters. This folklore occupies a unique place in art, literature, and popular culture, due to the fascination with the Loch Ness Monster.	Despite the high tourism and recreational value of the landscape, the area includes man-made elements which interfere with the character of the area		▪	▪
Features	<i>“Strong evidence of past settlement in the number and diversity of archaeological and historic sites from prehistoric times to the 20th Century.”</i> <i>“The policies and buildings of long-established estates are also present including large residences with ranges of associated buildings such as stables and steadings. The Caledonian canal also runs through the Great Glen.”</i> <i>“Compared to the eastern side of the glen, the western side has a greater proportion of human artefacts, notably the busy trunk road.”</i>	Strong sense of place, with features worthy of conservation		▪	▪
Quality / Condition	<i>“The glen’s steep linear sides, and long even skylines create a very strong sense of linear enclosure and a distinct corridor.”</i> <i>“This landscape type has a simple linear and enclosed visual composition of bands of lochside land, water and hillside backdrop leading up to the skyline and sky.”</i> <i>“The busy trunk road and tourism-orientated settlements contrast strongly with the quiet, minor roads and sparse, small settlements on the east side.”</i>	A good quality Landscape but with some potential for substitution		▪	

NATURESCOT LCT 225 BROAD STEEP – SIDED GLEN (Within The Highland Council)					
Representative viewpoints 14 & 55 are located within or view the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ page 4 for viewpoint locations). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 10, 11 & 12 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
VALUE SUMMARY	LCT 225, designated landscape with ecology and heritage features and recreational trails. The LCT features strong cultural associations due to the presence of Loch Ness, famously known for the mythical creature said to inhabit its waters. This folklore occupies a unique place in art, literature, and popular culture, due to the fascination with the Loch Ness Monster. The associated tourism and dramatic topography of the landscape reflects notable value. High recreational value and tourist interest associated with Loch Ness.	Value is High			▪
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	LCT 225 OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value		High		

NATURESCOT LCT 225 BROAD STEEP – SIDED GLEN (Within The Highland Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction activity would be perceived through alluvial, wooded plains at the very northern extent of the LCT where the Proposed Development intersects for approximately 1.5 km. Intermittent small areas of felling within the OC within the LCT would be noticeable at the local level on either side of the A82. Indirect perceptual impacts would occur as a result of OC and management felling to the west of the A82, where it would be seen within the adjoining LCT 222 over the lower slopes of The Aird, mostly from the A82 and Caledonian Canal. The formation of access tracks through woodland and open fields would be noticeable locally and through the adjacent LCT 222 but is not anticipated to result in further felling or changes to land cover. The progressive installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes would be highly visible crossing the A82 but only transiently perceived locally, being more broadly contained by the landform of The Aird to the west and extensive woodland to the south. The removal of the existing 132 kV OHL to the north would also be perceived. There would likely be localised impacts on visual amenity within a highly scenic landscape through the River Ness valley and in proximity to the Caledonian Canal with the movement and additional height of construction also impacting local tranquillity for recreational users. As construction of the Proposed Development would only be perceived in the northern extremity of the LCT over a relatively short length, it is not anticipated to result in a high degree of change to the key characteristics of the wider landscape which is dominated by Loch Ness and the steep sided glen to the south. Local Impact on the setting and visual amenity of the River Ness valley between The Aird and the River Ness – Medium to High. Overall Impact on LCT 225 – Negligible.	High	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall magnitude of change on LCT 225: Negligible	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect on the setting and visual amenity of the River Ness valley between The Aird and the River Ness: Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 225: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall impact on LCT 225: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect on the setting and visual amenity of the River Ness valley between The Aird and the River Ness: Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 225: Minor Adverse (non-significant)

NATURESCOT LCT 225 BROAD STEEP – SIDED GLEN (Within The Highland Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<i>Summer</i> There would be a minor change in terms of perception of the Proposed Development in summer months due to the additional screening provided by deciduous vegetation through the River Ness valley and alongside key recreational routes. The Proposed Development would, however, remain a prominent new vertical feature within the landscape above tree lines and within open fields to the southeast of the river. Local Impact on the setting and visual amenity of the River Ness valley between The Aird and the River Ness – Medium to High. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 225 – Negligible.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall impact on LCT 225: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect on the setting and visual amenity of the River Ness valley between The Aird and the River Ness: Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 225: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Management felling planting back to the edge of the OC and forest edge fringe planting within the OC on the eastern lower slopes of The Aird (refer to Appendix 7.6 Forestry Landscape Mitigation Principles) are likely to have established in this time. The management felling planting and forest edge fringe planting are anticipated to partially screen and soften the appearance of the lower to mid-portions of individual towers. Forest edge fringe planting would soften the appearance of the artificially straight tract of open forestry by making the edges more organic and natural looking on The Aird within LCT 222 and make the Proposed Development slightly less prominent within the local landscape, in particular when viewed from the A82, Caledonian Canal and Caledonian Way. Local Impact on the setting and visual amenity of the River Ness valley between The Aird and the River Ness – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 225 – Negligible.		<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 225: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local effect on the setting and visual amenity of the River Ness valley between The Aird and the River Ness: Moderate to Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 225: Minor Adverse (non-significant)

Table 8 - Naturescot LCT 222 Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness (The Highland Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 222 ROCKY MOORLAND PLATEAU – INVERNESS (The Highland Council)					
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos : Photos 13 & 14 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“Within the plateau distance and scale are generally difficult to perceive due to the lack of elements of known size.”</i>	Large scale landscape on a high rocky plateau and forested slopes		▪	
Landform	<i>“Open, gently rolling moorland plateaux with distinct edges descending to adjoining straths and glens or rising to merge with Rugged Massif.”</i>	Dramatic, undulating, rugged, complex landscape		▪	▪
Land cover	<i>“Hilltops and upper slopes dominated by rocky heather moorland, except in the north east where extensive, contrasting conifer forests dominate.”</i> <i>“Strong contrast in landcover and settlement between the plateau and adjoining straths and glens.”</i> <i>“Regenerating trees and scrub in glens with rivers and sheltered lower hillsides”</i> <i>“Orientation is difficult due to the lack of hierarchy, pattern and foci in the landform and landcover.”</i>	Hilltops and upper slopes dominated by rocky heather moorland, forestry on hillsides and over The Aird		▪	▪
Texture	<i>“Plateau with a patchy texture of small rocky outcrop hills, bogs and lochans in no clear hierarchy or discernible pattern.”</i> <i>“Regenerating trees and scrub in glens with rivers and sheltered lower hillsides.”</i>	Contrast between the smaller scale landscapes of settled, lower slopes and the large-scale moorland and forested backdrop		▪	▪
Built Environment	<i>“Sparsely inhabited and little evidence of active land use. A few historic sites indicating past settlement and land use.”</i>	Sparsely inhabited and little evidence of active land use		▪	▪
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>“The major plateau areas often act as a buffer between areas of greater land use intensity.”</i> <i>“The majority of this landscape does not possess any active land use, other than extensive sheep or deer grazing and forestry in the east.”</i> <i>“In some areas, mainly on the periphery, roads cross the landscape, winding and twisting over the undulating landform and linking the landscape to adjacent areas.”</i> <i>“Existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs cross the northern extent of the LCT, parallel to each other.”</i> <i>“Windfarm development is limited to two individual turbines.”</i>	Very few within the LCT and over The Aird			▪
Perceptual aspects	<i>“Within the plateau distance and scale are generally difficult to perceive due to the lack of elements of known size. Distinct edges isolate the plateau from adjacent areas and give the sense of a vast, remote, upland moor.”</i> <i>“At the plateau edges, expansive views over inhabited straths and glens create surprise. Perception of remoteness on the open plateau, from the rugged patchy texture and absence of obvious human artefacts.”</i> <i>“Orientation is difficult due to the lack of hierarchy, pattern and foci in the landform and landcover.”</i>	There is an overall feeling of openness and exposure within most of this landscape although there is a contrast of experience between the small hills and plateau, and the forested areas		▪	▪
Visual Amenity	<i>“Eastern areas have a semi-exposed character with occasional views of distant hills framed by the distinct edges of conifer forests.”</i> <i>“At the plateau edges, expansive views over inhabited straths and glens create surprise.”</i>	The skyline is punctuated by mountains, rolling hills and blocks of woodland. Visual enclosure over The Aird through dense forestry		▪	▪
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	The Proposed Development intersects the LCT for approximately 4.8 km and includes The Aird, within which the predominant characteristic of LCT 222 is an expansive, rugged moorland plateau with distinct edges, characterised by rocky outcrops, heather moorland, sparse settlement, and regenerating trees in glens. Detracting features are sparse. There are areas of high scenic value, and the landscape is occasionally enclosed by commercial forestry and topography, which would help integrate a development of this type into the landscape slightly.		Susceptibility to Change is Medium to High	▪	▪

NATURESCOT LCT 222 ROCKY MOORLAND PLATEAU – INVERNESS (The Highland Council)					
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos : Photos 13 & 14 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following designations and highly valued assets: - Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA lies 4-5 km to the south of the Proposed Development; - Moniack Gorge SSSI, Loch Battan SSSI, North Inverness Lochs SPA and Balnagrantach SSSI; ‘Great Glen Way’ Scotland Great Trail ‘ intersects the Proposed Development; - large areas of ancient woodland to the northern boundary of the LCT; - two scheduled monuments. One is castle broch remains approx. 2.3 km from the Proposed Development and Lochlait settlement which consists of eleven round houses within a field system, approx. 6.7 km from the Proposed Development; and - LCT 225 features strong cultural associations due to the presence of Loch Ness, famously known for the mythical creature said to inhabit its waters. This folklore occupies a unique place in art, literature, and popular culture, due to the fascination with the Loch Ness Monster.	LCT 222 is valued for its rugged open exposed landscape with occasional perception of remoteness. The LCT is valued for its recreational opportunities		▪	▪
Features	<i>“There are few archaeological sites on the main plateau, although the circular stone foundations of prehistoric hut circles and prehistoric burial sites occur in some places, together with some abandoned 19th Century settlements and a few rural industrial sites.”</i>	Strong sense of place, with features worthy of conservation		▪	▪
Quality / Condition	<i>“Used for extensive sheep or deer grazing and forestry, some areas are fenced to facilitate regeneration of natural habitat”</i> <i>“Regenerating trees and scrub in glens with rivers and sheltered lower hillsides.”</i> <i>“From the plateau, small hills formed by rocky outcrops rise to around 650 metres, with no clear hierarchy.”</i>	A high-quality Landscape		▪	▪
VALUE SUMMARY	LCT 22 Rocky Mountain Plateau is designated landscape containing ecology and heritage features. Few detracting features. High recreational value and tourist interest associated with Loch Ness. The dramatic topography of the landscape reflects notable value.	Value is Medium to High		▪	▪
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	LCT 222 OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value		Medium to High		

NATURESCOT LCT 222- ROCKY MOORLAND PLATEAU – INVERNESS (Within The Highland Council)

LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> There would be direct impacts as a result of construction activity and substantial areas of OC and management felling over approximately 4.8 km of The Aird, in the northern extent of the LCT, through large areas of commercial forestry. OC and management felling, access track formations and progressive installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes would be perceived over The Aird from fire tracks, local roads and the ‘Great Glen Way’. The removal of approximately 1.0 km of the existing 132 kV OHL from Beauly to Knocknagael substations would be perceived in the northern extents and slightly offset the introduction of a new, detracting, built feature. Construction activity and felling would also be perceived from the wider landscape within adjoining LCTs 225 & 228 to the east and west. There would be a local impact on the perceptual qualities, visual amenity and land cover over The Aird, noticeable, albeit intermittently, from highly valued public routes. The formation of access tracks is not anticipated to exacerbate these impacts or result in any additional permanent change to vegetation cover. Access tracks are sited through the OC or use existing forest fire tracks and minimal additional vegetation clearance beyond the OC is anticipated. Within the LCT itself, perception of construction activity would only be afforded in the northern extremity of the large LCT, being well contained broadly by landform and retained surrounding woodland and is not anticipated to result in a noticeable change to the key characteristics of the wider landscape and the more open rocky plateau. Local Impact on land cover, visual amenity and perception of the Aird – Medium to High. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 222 – Negligible to Low.	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall impact on LCT 222: Negligible to Low	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect on The Aird: Moderate to Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 222: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development intersects the LCT for approximately 4.8 km over The Aird and would introduce new, detracting, built features into the northernmost landscape of LCT 222. The Proposed Development traverses the northern extent of The Aird, on higher ground associated with Mam Mor, Cnoc an Moine and Craig Leach, passing through large areas of commercial coniferous forestry. The Proposed Development would intersect the ‘Great Glen Way’ and Core Path IN23.02 ‘Newtonhill to Blackfold’, from which large tracts of OC and management felling would be highly noticeable in combination with the new OHL and towers, resulting in an impact on land cover. Publicly accessible locations from which to view the landscape over The Aird are otherwise limited. The perception of the LCT from adjacent landscapes and from the A82 to the east would be impacted as a result of OC and management felling and the introduction of new, detracting, built features over the broad hill. Felling would result in a noticeable corridor of cleared forestry on the eastern and western slopes of The Aird. This would be particularly perceptible, but brief in terms of a transient experience, from the A82 and the River Ness valley within LCTs 225 & 228 to the east and from the landscape and A862 around Easter Moniack to the northwest. This would result in a local impact on the perceptual qualities including remoteness and tranquillity when experience within the LCT and when perceived from adjoining landscape to the east and west. There would also be substantial local impacts on visual amenity and land cover over The Aird. At the wider scale of the LCT, the Proposed Development is anticipated to be broadly contained by the surrounding retained forestry and landform including rocky plateau outcrops to the south. The impact on land cover and increased prominence of the Proposed Development resulting from loss of forestry would be relatively localised within the context of the wider landscape, and extensive surrounding forestry would serve to limit any perceptual effects on the wider landscape character. The removal of a section of the existing 132 kV OHL from Beauly to Knocknagael substations, adjacent to the existing 275 kV OHL would slightly benefit the perception of the LCT but only across a short section on the northern periphery. Local Impact on land cover, visual amenity and perception of the Aird – Medium to High. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 222 – Negligible.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall impact on LCT 222: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect on The Aird: Moderate to Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 222: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> There would only be a slight change in perception of the Proposed Development in summer months as a result of deciduous vegetation within the landscapes to the east and west offering a small degree of visual screening. There would be no change over The Aird due to the lack of deciduous vegetation, with the Proposed Development remaining a prominent new detracting built feature locally above tree lines and within cleared areas of forestry. Local Impact on land cover, visual amenity and perception of the Aird – Medium to High. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 222 – Negligible.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall magnitude of change on LCT 222: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect on The Aird: Moderate to Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 222: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Management felling planting back to the edge of the OC and forest edge fringe planting (refer to Appendix 7.6 Forestry Landscape Mitigation Principles) within the OC through the eastern and western slopes of The Aird would have established in this time. The management felling planting and forest edge forest edge fringe planting would partially screen the lower to mid-portions of individual towers when viewed from Core Path IN23.02 ‘Newtonhill to Blackfold’, the ‘Great Glen Way’ and from the landscapes to the east and west. Land cover would also be largely restored to its original state. Forest edge fringe planting would soften the appearance of the artificially straight tract of open forestry by making the edges more organic		<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 222:	<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local effect on The Aird: Moderate Adverse (significant)

NATURESCOT LCT 222- ROCKY MOORLAND PLATEAU – INVERNESS (Within The Highland Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
and natural looking in the landscape, when perceived from LCTs 225 & 228 to the east and west. Impacts are therefore anticipated to reduce slightly both on the local and wider landscape of LCT 222. Local Impact on land cover, visual amenity and perception of the Aird – Medium . Overall Impact on LCT 222 – Negligible .		Negligible	Overall effect on LCT 222: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)

Table 9 - Naturescot LCT 223 Flat Moorland Plateau With Woodland (The Highland Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 223 FLAT MOORLAND PLATEAU WITH WOODLAND (Within The Highland Council)					
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos : Photo 15 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“Flat to gently undulating and inclined, large-scale plateau with a predominantly horizontal landform and skyline.”</i> <i>“Vast and very exposed plateau top with unrestricted panoramic distant views, away from forests.”</i>	Large scale landscape with broad valleys, gentle undulations, large scale field pattern and large-scale forestry			
Landform	<i>“Flat to gently undulating and inclined, large-scale plateau with a predominantly horizontal landform and skyline.”</i>	Dramatic upland landscape			
Land cover	<i>“Landcover of either heather moorland and gorse scrub or large-scale conifer forests, with occasional trees and fragments of broad leaved woodlands.”</i> <i>“Uniform ground cover and simple landscape with little diversity and few structures, making orientation and determination of distance and scale often difficult.”</i>	Extensive areas of simple regular uniform land cover			
Texture	<i>“Conifer forests create defined edges, enclosures and shapes contrasting with the openness and uniformity of their moorland surroundings.”</i>	Simple and sweeping lines, linear features and patterns			
Built Environment	<i>“Largely uninhabited, with settlements in no distinct pattern, mainly along outer edges. Man-made structures including pylons and poles are highly visible in the open landscape.”</i> <i>“A few historic landscape features from prehistoric to 19th Century periods.”</i>	Sparsely inhabited and little evidence of active land use			
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>“A few minor roads traverse the landscape, as do some service elements, including power lines, poles and pylons. There is a small single wind turbine at Easterton of Duntelchaig which is visible in cross-loch views.”</i> - Man-made structures including communication tower, pylons and poles are highly visible in the open landscape. - An existing 275 kV OHL runs in close proximity to the Proposed Development and two more 275 kV OHLs to the south connecting with Knocknagael Substation form prominent features. - There is an asphalt plant at Daviot, located to the northeast of the LCT.	Very few within the LCT apart from the existing, highly exposed OHLs			
Perceptual aspects	<i>“The general lack of activity, artefacts and land management, and restricted views of adjoining settled lowlands, combines to create an unexpected perception of remoteness in central parts of this type.”</i> <i>“The uniform colour and texture of groundcover emphasises the simple gently rolling character of the plateau landform.”</i>	Wild and tranquil			
Visual Amenity	<i>“The plateau top is vast and very exposed, with a sense of unrestricted openness, allowing panoramic and uninterrupted views to the horizon of distant hills. However, the plateau side slopes restrict visibility from the plateau top of adjacent lower areas and their settlements.”</i> <i>“Where service elements occur, these tend to be highly visible on account of the open surroundings and simple skylines, and they introduce strong visual foci into the landscape, dividing spaces and indicating scale.”</i>	Expansive landscape with panoramic views when not within forestry			
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	LCT 223 is characterised by an open plateau with moorland, forests, sparse settlements, historic features, and expansive views, presenting challenges in orientation and a perception of remoteness despite proximity to settled areas. The landscape is punctuated by OHLs which traverse much of the landscape, adjacent and to the south of the Proposed Development.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium to High			
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following designations and highly valued assets: Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA (4 km to the south of the Proposed Development);	LCT 223 offers a level of high scenic value and perceptual qualities of remoteness and			

NATURESCOT LCT 223 FLAT MOORLAND PLATEAU WITH WOODLAND (Within The Highland Council)					
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photo 15 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
	- Loch Ashie SPA & SSSI (not intersected by the Proposed Development); - Relative lack of recreational opportunities; - some areas of medium to large areas of ancient woodland; and - frequent scheduled monuments including stone circle and cairns, hut circles. Daviot and Dunlichity fort approx. 1.3 km from the Proposed Development.	tranquillity over Drummossie Muir, and particular at Loch Ashie			
Features	<i>“A few historic landscape features from prehistoric to 19th Century periods.”</i> <i>“Conifer forests create defined edges, enclosures and shapes contrasting with the openness and uniformity of their moorland surroundings.”</i> <i>“There is a limited range of archaeological sites in this landscape, some of which are covered by forestry, others are in open moorland but often not discernible.”</i>	Strong sense of place, with features worthy of conservation		▪	▪
Quality / Condition	<i>“Uniform ground cover and simple landscape with little diversity and few structures, making orientation and determination of distance and scale often difficult.”</i> <i>“From the plateau, small hills formed by rocky outcrops rise to around 650 metres, with no clear hierarchy.”</i>	A high-quality Landscape but with little potential for substitution apart from coniferous forestry		▪	▪
VALUE SUMMARY	LCT 223 Flat Moorland Plateau contains designated landscape containing ecology and heritage features. Some detracting features. The dramatic topography of the landscape reflects notable the value.	Value is Medium to High		▪	▪
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	LCT 223 OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value		Medium to High		

NATURESCOT LCT 223 – FLAT MOORLAND PLATEAU WITH WOODLAND (Within The Highland Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction activity, including the progressive installation of towers and cable stringing via crane or helicopter and OC and management felling would be noticeable through Drummossie Muir to the west of the A9 and result in a noticeable change to vegetation cover on the northeastern boundary of the LCT, particularly from a network of Core Paths west of the A9, and from the A9 itself. Access tracks are not anticipated to result in any additional permanent change to vegetation cover. Although construction activity would be perceived parallel to the existing 275 kV OHL, the additional height and movement would be out of character through Drummossie Muir, resulting in impacts on the perceived remoteness, openness and visual amenity through the introduction of an additional detracting built feature through the exposed landscape. There would also be indirect impacts associated with the perception of the Drummossie Muir from the adjacent LCT 228 to the north, although recreational viewing opportunities are limited. Given the scale of the LCT and construction being sited adjacent to the existing 275 kV OHL, key characteristics of the wider landscape would be less impacted. Local Impacts on openness, visual amenity and remoteness through Drummossie Muir – Medium. Overall Impact on LCT 223 – Negligible to Low.	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 223: Negligible to Low	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect on openness, visual amenity and remoteness through Drummossie Muir: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 223: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development intersects the LCT for approximately 6.1 km through the northeastern limits of LCT 223, over the plateau moorland landscape associated with Drummossie Muir, on the boundary of LCT 228. The new detracting built feature would be highly perceptible through the open section of Drummossie Muir and at the eastern extents would result in impacts on land cover through a relatively large area of OC and management felling immediately west of the A9 and Clava Mains, visible from surrounding Core Paths and by users of the A9 which includes a high proportion of tourists. The Proposed Development would traverse the upland landscape of the Drummossie Muir, predominantly through areas of open moorland along the northeastern boundary of the LCT where open views into and from the surrounding landscape are afforded and valued. The Proposed Development would disturb forestry cover at the eastern extent of the LCT, for approximately 2.5 km to the west of the A9 and Clava Mains, where the linear corridor of clearance would be transiently appreciated from the A9 and slightly increase prominence of the new OHL, impacting local land cover and immediate perception of the landscape. One angle tower would be prominent to the east of Knocknagael Substation on the edge of the LCT. The new OHL would be seen parallel to the existing 275 kV OHL to the east of Knocknagael Substation up to and slightly beyond the A9, resulting in the OHL not being entirely incongruous in the landscape. However, there would be an impact on the perceived remoteness, openness, and visual amenity through the introduction of a new, detracting, built feature through the moorland plateau landscape. At a wider scale, the large-scale and expansive landscape of the LCT is able to accommodate the type of development and serves to limit its perceived scale. Distant views through the wider landscape from the north within LCT 228 and south through the remainder of LCT 223 towards the Proposed Development would be intermittent and limited due to appreciable distance, topography, and intervening vegetation as well as a relative lack of recreational opportunities. The loss of forestry would not affect the wider landscape, which is predominantly characterised by open heather moorland. The Proposed Development is limited to the northernmost inner periphery of LCT 223 and would be experienced within the context of an existing adjacent 275 kV OHL. Local Impact on openness, visual amenity, and remoteness through Drummossie Muir – Medium. Overall Impact on LCT 223 – Negligible.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 223: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect on openness, visual amenity, and remoteness through Drummossie Muir: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 223: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> There would be no change in perception of the Proposed Development in summer months due to the lack of deciduous vegetation through the open plateau moorland landscape. Vegetation on either side of the A9 is of coniferous forestry. The Proposed Development would remain a prominent new vertical feature within the landscape, seen in conjunction with an existing 275 kV OHL. Local Impact on openness, visual amenity, and remoteness through Drummossie Muir – Medium. Overall Impact on LCT 223 – Negligible.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 223: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect on openness, visual amenity, and remoteness through Drummossie Muir: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 223: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Management felling planting up to the edge of the OC and forest edge fringe planting within the OC (refer to Appendix 7.6 Forestry Landscape Mitigation Principles) is likely to have established in this time. The management felling planting and forest edge fringe planting would partially screen the lower to mid-portions of individual towers locally, softening the appearance of the linear corridor of clearance within the OC and make the Proposed Development slightly less prominent, when viewed from the A9 and nearby Core Paths. Forest edge fringe planting would soften the appearance of the artificially straight tract of open forestry by making the edges more organic and natural looking in the landscape. Whilst locally, impacts on perception and land cover would be expected, the Proposed Development would remain highly visible through the open moorland, in conjunction with the existing smaller 275 kV OHL and impacts on openness and perceived remoteness expected to remain. Local Impact on openness, visual amenity, and remoteness through Drummossie Muir – Low to Medium. Overall Impact on LCT 223 – Negligible.		<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 223: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local effect on openness, visual amenity, and remoteness through Drummossie Muir: Moderate Adverse (non-significant) This would become non-significant due to planting screening the lower to mid-portions of towers locally and

NATURESCOT LCT 223 – FLAT MOORLAND PLATEAU WITH WOODLAND (Within The Highland Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
			softening the appearance of the linear corridor. Overall effect on LCT 223: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)

Table 10 - Naturescot LCT 227 Farmed Strath - Inverness (The Highland Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 227 FARMED STRATH - INVERNESS (Within The Highland Council)					
Representative viewpoint 16 is located within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' pages 5 & 6 for viewpoint location). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 16 & 17 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“Open farmed valley floors with central meandering river contained within steep, mainly forested and wooded slopes. Flat or gently undulating strath floor, edged by steep rocky side slopes”</i> <i>“Pronounced and dynamic river meanders of Strathglass, emphasised by riparian trees, oxbow lakes and curved wetland features.”</i> <i>“Small scale broadleaf woodlands and small blocks of conifer forest within Strathnairn / Stratherrick strath floor which do not override openness of the strath.”</i>	Enclosed river landscape		▪	
Landform	<i>“Linear to sinuous channels cut through uplands, with a central meandering river located in a flat or gently undulating strath floor, edged by the steep, rocky, side slopes.”</i>	Larger areas of farmland contrast with the dynamic river corridor and wooded side slopes, creating variation in landform		▪	▪
Land cover	<i>“Contrast between the open, inhabited and agricultural landscape of the straths, the side slopes cloaked in alternating broadleaf woodlands, conifer forests and heather moorland, and the setting of adjacent rugged, remote uplands.”</i> <i>“Mainly open farmed valley floors and a central meandering river contained within steep, mainly forested and wooded slopes.”</i>	More extensive areas of farmland contrast with the river corridor, wooded side slopes and settlements creating areas with a more complex mosaic of land cover		▪	
Texture	<i>“Small scale broadleaf woodlands and small blocks of conifer forest within Strathnairn / Stratherrick strath floor which do not override openness of the strath.”</i> <i>“Diversity of colour and texture added by river meanders, wetlands, damp pastures and thin bands of woodland.”</i>	Linear farmland contrasts with the more irregular pattern of the river corridor and woodlands to create varied texture		▪	▪
Built Environment	<i>“A few small settlements located on the strath floor or sides and infrequent small farms, crofts, estate buildings or groups of houses.”</i> <i>“Some farms and isolated houses are also situated at the base of the strath side slopes, where they are able to utilise, shelter afforded by adjacent slopes, avoiding the greater exposure of the upper slopes.”</i> <i>“Roads which generally relate well to landform, with a limited number of river crossing points.”</i>	Settlements fewer but more concentrated in Strathglass area but have typically evolved gradually with evidence of a long history of human settlement		▪	
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>“There are several extensive pylon runs which are aligned with the valley floor or sides, or cross the valley and ascend to the skyline, forming prominent man-made features.”</i> - A major road, the A9, traverses the central part of the LCT. - Existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs cross the LCT to the southwest of Beauly and the 275 kV OHL runs parallel to the Proposed Development, crossing the LCT to the south of Castletown (Castleton). - Midlairgs Quarry is located to the south of Scatraig, although views are well contained within the LCT. - There is an asphalt plant at Daviot, although the majority of the site is located within LCT 225.	Numerous detracting features are present	▪		
Perceptual aspects	<i>“In both straths, and particularly in Strathglass, there is a strong sense of enclosure. Along the sides of the river, the darker colours and rougher textures of associated wetlands, damp pastures and thin bands of woodland add diversity to the otherwise relatively uniform pattern of surrounding vegetation.”</i> <i>“A particularly distinctive feature of the landscape pattern within Strathnairn is the close relationship between settlement and small sheltering woodlands. These woodlands highlight the clusters of buildings as a series of scattered point features along the strath floor. In both straths, the bright green colour and smooth texture of these fields contrasts with the more muted colours and rougher textures of the open heather moorlands and conifers which cover the side slopes.”</i>	The sense of enclosure creates a degree of tranquillity, whilst the long-distance views of flanking hills allow some sense of wildness to be perceived		▪	

NATURESCOT LCT 227 FARMED STRATH - INVERNESS (Within The Highland Council)

Representative viewpoint 16 is located within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ pages 5 & 6 for viewpoint location).
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 16 & 17 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.

SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
Visual Amenity	<i>“The consistency of the strath sides, combined with the flatness of the strath floor, creates a sense of linear enclosure, which directs distant views along the strath and allows uninterrupted views of the flanking hill slopes. The meandering river forms a visual focus and leads the eye along the strath floor.”</i>	Views are focussed along the strath through the valley floor to the wooded slopes on either side. Existing OHL forms a man-made focal point in the skyline		▪	▪
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	Despite the presence of several detracting features including visible OHLs, an asphalt plant, a major road and a quarry, this LCT is characterised by strong enclosure of the landscape with pronounced river meanders, small-scale woodlands, sparse settlements, aligned roads, and archaeological sites.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium to High		▪	▪
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following designations and highly valued assets: - Dalroy and Clava Landforms SSSI and Littlemill Fluvioglacial Landforms SSSI; - Cawdor, Culloden Muir Conservation Area; - Battlefields (Battle of Culloden); - National Cycle Network (Route 0,1, 7); - tourist routes (Highland Tourist Route); - frequent areas of small sized ancient woodland; and - frequent small scale schedule monuments e.g. Motte, Clava Cairns. Stone circle, ring cairn and mains of Daviot farm are close to proposed, approx. 120 m.	Undesignated landscape The Battle of Culloden was fought in Strathnairn and the adjacent coastal lowlands in 1746. As one of the most emotive battles fought in the UK, it has a strong cultural resonance for Scotland. The battlefield is one of the most popular heritage destinations of the Highlands and is associated with both physical features (archaeological remains, buildings, landmarks and monuments), together with less tangible elements including placenames, openness and sense of place		▪	
Features	<i>“Prehistoric settlements are fairly commonly found in Strathnairn, including the circular, often turf-covered stone foundations of prehistoric hut circles, with associated evidence of arable fields and pastures. Burial monuments also occur, most notably at Clava Cairns where groupings of Bronze Age passage graves, cairns and standing stones aligned on a terrace above the River Nairn form a coherent funerary and ritual landscape.”</i> <i>“Many archaeological sites in Strathnairn dating from a range of periods.”</i>	Principally rural, the LCT is characterised by open farmed valley floors and a central meandering river enclosed by the forested and wooded slopes. Settlement is largely limited to the valley floor. Contains features worthy of conservation alongside some detracting features		▪	▪
Quality / Condition	<i>“The landscape pattern of farmsteads and occasional crofts has evolved gradually, and reflects the variation in soils, drainage and aspect across the glen.”</i> <i>“Diversity of colour and texture added by river meanders, wetlands, damp pastures and thin bands of woodland.”</i>	A good quality landscape with distinctive features but with some urban detractors present within Strathglass including an existing power station, major roads and existing overhead lines		▪	
VALUE SUMMARY	Undesignated landscape. Despite the strong cultural heritage of the LCT recreational value is relatively limited. The landscape is marked by several extensive pylons which form prominent man-made features.	Value is Medium		▪	
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	LCT 227 OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value		Medium to High		

NATURESCOT LCT 227 – FARMED STRATH - INVERNESS (Within The Highland Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction activity is unlikely to be perceived or impact the characteristics of the section of the LCT to the southwest of Beauly and no indirect construction impacts are anticipated. Construction activity, including the installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes, the formation of access tracks through predominantly open fields and relatively small areas of felling to accommodate the OC would be prominent through the River Nairn valley. Further OC and management felling on the northern lower slopes of Meall Mor would result in a noticeable change to land cover and increased prominence of construction activity on higher ground to the east of the valley. The movement and additional height of construction would be out of character with the contained, relatively tranquil feeling strath, introducing impacts on the perception, setting and visual amenity of the river valley. At the wider scale of the long, narrow LCT, construction activity would be in proximity to the existing 275 kV OHL, crossing a relatively short section of the LCT and viewed mostly transiently from linear routes following the path of the river, including the B851 and National Cycle Route 7. Key characteristics of the LCT are not anticipated to be substantially impacted but the new detracting built feature would result in a change to land cover and visual amenity through the enclosed landscape locally. Local Impact on setting, visual amenity, and land cover of the Strathnairn – Medium to High. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 227 – Negligible to Low.	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall magnitude of change on LCT 227: Negligible to Low	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect on setting and land cover of the Strathnairn: Moderate to Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 227: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development is unlikely to be perceived or impact the characteristics of the section of the LCT to the southwest of Beauly and no indirect operational impacts are anticipated. The Proposed Development intersects the LCT through the valley of the River Nairn for approximately 3.8 km, introducing tall new detracting built features into an enclosed, scenic valley over a short section of the central area of the LCT to the east of the A9. The Proposed Development would traverse the Strathnairn, across the River Nairn valley and would parallel and be seen against the existing 275 kV OHL, rising prominently onto higher landform of Meall Mor to the east. OC and management felling on Meall Mor would increase the prominence of towers on elevated landform and a linear corridor of felling would be noticeable to the south of Castleton from the B851 and National Cycle Route 7. The existing 275 kV OHL provides a context within which similar development would not be entirely incongruous. However, the impact of the Proposed Development would be more pronounced through the river valley and across open fields and moorland with limited screening. Loss of vegetation over Meall Mor may be perceptible from the elevated sides of the strath and from the adjacent LCT 221. At a local level the removal of native broadleaf woodland, coniferous forestry and the introduction of new detracting built features would result in a noticeable impact on land cover, visual amenity and setting of the strath, although seen in the context of an existing 275 kV OHL. At a wider scale the Proposed Development is anticipated to be contained by surrounding topography and extensive woodland associated with the River Nairn and linear areas woodland along the sides of the strath. Where the Proposed Development is perceptible, it would be mostly transiently experienced within the context and proximity of existing similar structures and would not be perceived across a wide area of the LCT. Local Impact on setting, visual amenity, and land cover of the Strathnairn – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 227 – Negligible.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 227: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect on setting and land cover of the Strathnairn: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 227: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Summer</u> There would be a minor change in terms of perception of the Proposed Development in summer months due to the additional screening provided by localised deciduous vegetation on strath sides or adjacent to roads. The Proposed Development would remain a prominent new vertical feature within the narrow landscape, particularly on the higher landform on the northern slopes of Meall Mor. Local Impact on setting, visual amenity, and land cover of the Strathnairn – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 227 – Negligible.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 227: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect on setting and land cover of the Strathnairn: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 227: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Management felling planting back to the edge of the OC and forest edge fringe planting within the OC (refer to Appendix 7.6 Forestry Landscape Mitigation Principles) is likely to have established in this time. The management felling planting and forest edge fringe planting on the lower slopes of Meall Mor is anticipated to partially screen the lower to mid-portions of towers and reduce the prominence of the Proposed Development within views through the strath and from the surrounding landscape to the north and west. Forest edge fringe planting would soften the appearance of the artificially straight tract of open forestry by making the edges more organic and natural looking over Meall Mor. However, while impacts are expected to reduce in association with land cover and visual amenity, the Proposed Development would remain highly prominent through the enclosed landscape and over the higher ground of Meall Mor, over a short section through this intimate landscape at the local level of the Strathnairn. Local Impact on setting and visual amenity of the Strathnairn – Low to Medium.		<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 227: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local effect on setting and land cover of the Strathnairn: Moderate Adverse (significant)

NATURESCOT LCT 227 – FARMED STRATH - INVERNESS (Within The Highland Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
Overall magnitude of change on LCT 227 – Negligible .			Overall effect on LCT 227: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)

Table 11 - Naturescot LCT 221 Rolling Uplands – Inverness (The Highland Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 221 ROLLING UPLANDS – INVERNESS (Within The Highland Council)					
Representative viewpoint 16 views the LCT from within LCT 227 (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ pages 5 & 6 for viewpoint location). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photo 18 for key features and characteristics of this LCT					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“A series of large scale, smooth, rounded hills with summits of similar height forming broad, undulating upland plateaux containing occasional steep-sided straths.”</i>	Large scale featureless landscape, broad valleys, gently undulating topography		▪	
Landform	<i>“A series of large scale, smooth, rounded hills with summits of similar height forming broad, undulating upland plateaux containing occasional steep-sided straths.”</i> <i>“Hill tops or plateaux are spaced apart of even height”</i>	Smooth regular flowing, flat, uniform landscape		▪	▪
Land cover	<i>“Open heather moorland dominates, the uniform colour and texture accentuating the landform.”</i> <i>“Uninhabited interior, largely inaccessible to vehicles.”</i> <i>“Conifer forests, which are usually fenced, tend to occur mainly on the edges of this landscape type, although occasional small forests are found in sheltered straths.”</i>	Extensive areas of simple regular uniform land cover with forestry on the edges		▪	
Texture	<i>“The colour, texture and shape of the forest blocks contrasts with the moorland surroundings and some are particularly noticeable on account of their linear edges, which contrast with the flowing forms of the rolling uplands.”</i> <i>“Striking colour and textural contrast between strath floors and moorland vegetation above.”</i>	Simple and sweeping lines, linear features and patterns		▪	
Built Environment	<i>“Settlement limited to a few isolated farms in remote straths.”</i> <i>“A few mainly single-track roads, integrated within the landform.”</i> <i>“Archaeological evidence of settlement and farming from prehistoric times to the 19th century.”</i>	Settlements tend be located in the few remote, steep-sided straths which run through this landscape type			▪
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>“A few power lines cross this landscape, introducing strong lines, dividing spaces and indicating scale. There have been a number of large windfarm developments within this LCT, in the southern and western margins of the Monadhliath mountains above Loch Ness and near Moy and Farr. These form prominent features in this landscape, highly visible in the open surroundings and create a focus in the landscape. Developments include Moy Wind Farm, Farr Wind Farm and Glen Kyllachy Wind Farm.”</i> - Few roads cross this landscape, those which do are single track and tend to be integrated with the landform. - An existing 275 kV OHL crosses the very northern extent of the LCT in proximity to the Site but to the north of Saddle Hill.	An existing OHL lies immediately to the north. Otherwise, no detracting features in proximity	▪	▪	
Perceptual aspects	<i>“Views from hill tops and plateau areas are expansive, creating a strong feeling of openness and exposure. Between the hills and within the straths and glens there is a greater sense of containment.”</i> <i>“Where there is a general lack of artefacts and few signs of active management in the interior, this evokes a strong perception of remoteness. However, the presence of windfarms alters and, in some cases, undermines this.”</i>	Wild and tranquil		▪	
Visual Amenity	<i>“Elevated views reveal the interlocking arrangement of the moorland and hill landform. Enclosed, mountainous skyline punctuated by woodland areas.”</i>	Strong upland features with expansive views		▪	▪
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	LCT 221 is characterised by a landscape of smooth hills and plateaux with heather moorland and sparse settlements. There are few detracting features across the upland landscape but include a major road, windfarms, and an existing 275 kV OHL, which have slightly reduced the sense of remoteness and isolation. The landscape is largely elevated and open, making it highly susceptible to the type of development proposed.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium to High		▪	▪
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following designations and highly valued assets:	Regional landscape designation		▪	▪

NATURESCOT LCT 221 ROLLING UPLANDS – INVERNESS (Within The Highland Council)

Representative viewpoint 16 views the LCT from within LCT 227 (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ pages 5 & 6 for viewpoint location).

Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photo 18 for key features and characteristics of this LCT

SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
	- Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA located to the southeast of the Proposed Development; - Carn nan Tri-tighearnan SSSI & SAC; - National Cycle Network (Route 7); ‘Old Road to Forres’ Heritage Path; and - small to medium sized areas of ancient woodland, concentrated to the centre of the LCT and along the border of Farmed Strath - Inverness, to the west.	Some ecology and heritage features Recreational interest with national trails and routes			
Features	<i>“Archaeological evidence of settlement and farming from prehistoric times to the 19th century.”</i> <i>“The circular stone foundations of prehistoric hut circles with associated evidence of arable fields and pastures are relatively common in sheltered straths.”</i>	Features worthy of conservation		▪	▪
Quality / Condition	<i>“The uplands act as a sheltering edge to the Farmed Strath landscape type, from which they rise.”</i> <i>“Overall, the vastness of the plateau is such that, outwith these developments areas there is a general absence of elements which indicate scale so that it is difficult to judge distance and size in this landscape.”</i>	A high-quality landscape with many features not substitutable		▪	▪
VALUE SUMMARY	LCT 221 is a remote, open upland landscape. Perceived remoteness is reduced slightly by the presence of windfarm developments. Open panoramic views are of high importance. Designated landscape.	Value is Medium to High		▪	▪
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	LCT 221 OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value		Medium to High		

NATURESCOT LCT 221 – ROLLING UPLANDS – INVERNESS (Within The Highland Council)

LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction activity, including the progressive installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes or helicopters, OC and management felling on the slopes of Meall Mor and lower slopes of Beinn Bhuidhe Mhor and the formation of access tracks leading from the landscape to the north would be highly prominent through the upland landscape to the east of the Aberdeen to Inverness railway line, south of Castleton. There would be a wider perception of construction over the uplands from the landscapes of LCT 227 & 228 to the north, including from Culloden Battlefield, seen above and beyond the existing 275 kV OHL. Relatively large areas of OC and management felling on Meall Mor and either side of the local valley of the Allt Carn a’ Ghranndaich watercourse would cause a local, widely noticeable impact on land cover and increased prominence of construction activity, particularly from the landscapes to the north. There would be a wider impact on the perception of the LCT from the landscape to the north but the key physical characteristics of the large LCT would not change with construction sited at the very northern extents. Local Impact on land cover, remoteness, tranquillity, and visual amenity through the open moorland southeast of Saddle Hill – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 221 – Negligible.	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall impact on LCT 221: Negligible	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect on the open moorland southeast of Saddle Hill: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 221: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development intersects the LCT for approximately 2.6 km, resulting in direct and indirect impacts into the northernmost extents of the upland landscape. The Proposed Development would traverse the lower northern elevation of Meall Mor then a local shallow valley between Saddle Hill and Beinn Bhuidhe Mhor to the northeast, crossing a mix of commercial forestry to the west and open heather moorland on undulating upland terrain to the east. Two relatively large areas of OC and management felling would result in local impacts on land cover and increased prominence of towers but would be more widely contained by topography and retained surrounding forestry. The Proposed Development would be backclothed by Beinn a Bhuchanaich and Beinn Bhuidhe Mhor when viewed from the north, including distant views from Culloden Battlefield within LCT 227, and seen above and beyond the existing 275 kV OHL, which provides a context within which similar development would not be entirely incongruous. This would very slightly degrade the perception of the open upland landscape from the landscapes of LCT 227 & 228 to the north. At the local level, the introduction of new detracting-built features on the slopes of Meall Mor and Beinn Bhuidhe Mhor would result in degradation of remoteness, tranquillity and visual amenity through the upland landscape. Within the wider landscape of the large LCT 221, the Proposed Development would be barely perceptible across most of the landscape to the south, sited at the very northern extent of the LCT, contained by upland topography to the south. Local Impact on land cover, remoteness, tranquillity, and visual amenity through the open moorland southeast of Saddle Hill – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 221 – Negligible.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall impact on LCT 221: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect on the open moorland southeast of Saddle Hill: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 221: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> There would be no change in perception of the Proposed Development in summer months due to the lack of deciduous vegetation through the open upland landscape and felling taking place within coniferous forestry. Perception within views from the landscapes to the north would also not noticeably change. Local Impact on land cover, remoteness, tranquillity, and visual amenity through the open moorland southeast of Saddle Hill – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 221 – Negligible.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall impact on LCT 221: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect on the open moorland southeast of Saddle Hill: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 221: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Management felling planting back to the edge of the OC and deciduous vegetation of scrub and small trees being allowed to regenerate through the OC over the slopes of Meall Mor, through careful management, are likely to have re-established in this time. The management felling planting and establishing deciduous OC vegetation would partially screen the lower to mid-portions of individual towers locally and slightly reduce the prominence of the Proposed Development. However, the Proposed Development would remain highly visible over the open upland landscape to the southeast of Saddle Hill. Local Impact on the open moorland southeast of Saddle Hill – Low to Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 221 – Negligible.		<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall impact on LCT 221: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local effect on the open moorland southeast of Saddle Hill: Moderate Adverse (non-significant) This would become non-significant due to planting restoring some characteristic land cover and providing low-level screening.

NATURESCOT LCT 221 – ROLLING UPLANDS – INVERNESS (Within The Highland Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
			Overall effect on LCT 221: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)

Table 12 - Naturescot LCT 291 Open Rolling Upland – Moray (The Highland Council and Moray Council Planning Authorities)

NATURESCOT LCT 291 OPEN ROLLING UPLAND – MORAY (Within The Highland Council and Moray Council)					
Representative viewpoint 18 views the LCT from within LCT 285, viewpoint 22 views the LCT from within LCT 290 and viewpoints 19, 21 & 59 lie within this LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ pages 8, 11 & 12 for viewpoint locations).					
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 19, 20 & 21 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“Expansive, undulating plateau of rolling moorland with series of rounded broad, gently sloping hills”</i>	Large scale featureless landscape, broad valleys, gently undulating topography		▪	
Landform	<i>“Narrow band of broad rounded hills, interspersed with shallow valleys and low lying moss.”</i> <i>“High, rolling moorland with gentle gradients and limited relief in the west becomes hillier in the eastern reaches.”</i> <i>“Distinctive hill of Knock of Braemoray to the east.”</i>	Smooth regular flowing, flat, uniform landscape		▪	▪
Land cover	<i>“Simple, rolling landscape of heather moorland and grassland, with few plantations or structures, and the contrasting setting it provides for the occasional farmed valleys at the margins and close to roads.”</i>	Extensive areas of simple regular uniform land cover with forestry on the edges		▪	▪
Texture	<i>“Large tracts of bog, heather moorland and grasslands accentuate the smooth roundness of the landform. Patchy and stunted pockets of native pine and large tracts of muir-burning create a distinctive pattern on many of the open slopes. The character type is demarcated to the north and east by the often straight upper edge of forest plantations and farmland on lower slopes, outwith the type.”</i>	Simple and sweeping lines, linear features and patterns		▪	▪
Built Environment	- The majority of the area is unsettled, limited to scattered, infrequent farms and small holdings, generally limited to lower margins of the hills and the few narrow, weakly defined valleys. <i>“Major roads are limited to three north-south routes crossing the central area, generally following the line of 18th Century military roads.”</i> <i>“General lack of modern structures (pylons, wind turbines, masts and houses), particularly in the central area close to roads and The Dava Way, from where most people experience the area. However, due to the openness of this landscape there are views to commercial wind energy development in neighbouring areas to the east.”</i>	Settlements tend be located in the few remote, steep-sided straths which run through this landscape type to the south of the Proposed Development		▪	▪
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>“There are views to commercial wind energy development in neighbouring areas to the east.”</i> <i>“Pylons tend to be on the periphery of the area, some distance from roads. Windfarms signify the exposed nature of this landscape and developments include Paul’s Hill and Berry Burn. When they feature in views they can be prominent due to their large scale and the contrast of vertical, built structures with the smooth, open landscape.”</i> - Two long sections of 275 kV OHL adjacent to the Proposed Development between Saddle Hill and Clunas and the A939 and ‘The Dava Way’. - A939 and A940 corridors to the east, otherwise few roads.	An existing 275 kV OHL and two major road corridors would intersect the Proposed Development . Otherwise, no detracting features in proximity		▪	▪
Perceptual aspects	<i>“Sense of remoteness from lack of roads and built development, coupled with abandoned buildings, rail lines and historic roads.”</i> <i>“The elevated openness and sense of remoteness in these hills forms a marked contrast to the densely wooded lower rolling hills and valleys of Moray, and the farmed straths to the north, both of which feature in glimpses between hills, or in more expansive views when at the edge of the plateau.”</i>	Wild and tranquil			▪
Visual Amenity	- Elevated, open and expansive views across the landscape, and long-distance views from the edge of the plateau to the north and south. Difference in extent and focus of views between east and west. - The Knock of Braemoray is a key feature in rare views from the Narrow Wooded Valley of the River Findhorn and is highly visible on the western edge of this character type seen from the A940, a key approach to Moray The skyline is characterised by hills and vast moorlands. - Distant views across the Moray Basin and to the coast are afforded from the open moorland.	Strong upland features with expansive views		▪	▪

NATURESCOT LCT 291 OPEN ROLLING UPLAND – MORAY (Within The Highland Council and Moray Council)

Representative viewpoint 18 views the LCT from within LCT 285, viewpoint 22 views the LCT from within LCT 290 and viewpoints 19, 21 & 59 lie within this LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ pages 8, 11 & 12 for viewpoint locations).

Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 19, 20 & 21 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.

SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	This LCT is principally characterised by an open upland landscape with limited settlement, infrastructure or woodland cover. The area contains large windfarm developments (Berry Burn and Paul’s Hill) that are highly visible, detracting features within the skyline of views, otherwise the landscape is relatively unspoilt with a strong sense of place. The open relatively unspoilt nature of the LCT means it has a low capacity to accommodate the type of development proposed and therefore would be highly susceptible.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium to High		▪	▪
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following designations and highly valued assets: - Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA approximately 1 km to the south of the Proposed Development; - Moidach More SAC & SSSI, Carn nan Tri-tighearnan SAC & SSSI, Findhorn Terraces SSSI, Carn nan Tri-tighearnan SAC & SSSI, Allt a’ Choire SSSI and Moidach More SAC & SSSI; ‘The Dava Way’ Scotland Great Trail traverses the mid slopes of Cairn Eney and ‘Via Regia’ Heritage Path follows the local valley of the River Divie, both would cross the Proposed Development to the east of the A940; - Lochindorb Castle historical landmark; and - tourist routes (Highland Tourist Route passes through Ferness on the A939).	Regional landscape designation Several recreational and tourist routes Designated ecology and heritage features present			▪
Features	<i>“Interest provided by occasional natural and built point features in the simple landscape, such as lochans, summits, small farms, stone bridges, crofts and abandoned shielings.”</i> <i>“Prehistoric settlement and agriculture sites are found in scattered groups mainly nearer to the outer margins of the area.”</i> ‘The Dava Way’ Scotland Great Trail traverses the area north to south, following the line of the long-disused Forres to Grantown railway. - The Knock of Braemoray is a key landform feature.	Strong sense of place, with features worthy of conservation			▪
Quality / Condition	<i>“The character type is demarcated to the north and east by the often straight upper edge of forest plantations and farmland on lower slopes, outwith the type. Large forest plantations tend not to have been established in the poorly draining substrate and exposed landscapes of the interior, however, some areas support extensive natural regeneration of native pine and birch.”</i> <i>“Extensive tract of open uplands in the southwest of Moray cut through by the River Findhorn to form two areas, located on the northern part of Dava Moor and the foothills of the Strathdearn Hills to the south. It forms a relatively narrow band of broad rounded hills, interspersed with shallow valleys and low-lying moss adjacent to the generally lower Upland Moorland and Forestry.”</i>	A high-quality landscape with many features not substitutable but contained some detracting features prominent through the local landscape		▪	▪
VALUE SUMMARY	Contains a regional landscape designation, several recreational and tourist routes and ecological and heritage features are present The LCT provides key recreational routes for visitors and residents to experience the open upland landscape and river valley, that afford attractive views with few detracting features.	Value is High			▪
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	LCT 291 OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value		Medium to High		

Table 13 - Naturescot LCT 291 Open Rolling Upland – Moray (The Highland Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 291 OPEN ROLLING UPLAND– MORAY (Within The Highland Council)			
This section only assesses the intersected area of LCT between Saddle Hill and Clunas Reservoir, as a distinctly separate landscape over 10 km to the west of a further intersected area of LCT 291. Impacts within Moray Council on the LCT have been assessed in a separate table below (refer to Table 14).			
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos : Photos 19, 20 & 21 for key features and characteristics of this LCT			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> There would be construction activity, including the progressive installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes or helicopter, across the LCT’s open heathland, watercourses and lower to mid slopes of the immediate hills of Saddle Hill, Beinn Bhuidhe Bheag, Creag an Daimh and Carn Maol and a short section to the south of Ferness, totalling approximately 9.2 km through the LCT within THC. At the western extent of the LCT, construction of the Proposed Development would be to the south of Saddle Hill, which would limit its visibility from the landscape to the north. To the east of Saddle Hill, the Proposed Development parallels the existing 275 kV OHL to the south of the broad Assich Forest, crossing numerous small watercourses, the Riereach Burn and passes to the north of Clunas Reservoir. There is a relatively small amount of felling required to accommodate the OC or access track formation through the open landscape, resulting in minimal changes to land cover. Saddle Hill and Assich Forest limit wider visibility and there are limited recreational opportunities through the landscape, resulting in construction being kept fairly discreet from wider visibility, limiting a change in perception of the landscape. Impacts are also alleviated slightly by being located mostly adjacent to an existing OHL. However, the additional height, movement and introduction of taller, detracting, built features would be out of character through the open, remote and tranquil landscape between Saddle Hill and Clunas Reservoir. Works associated with a temporary diversion and realignment of a 2.6 km section of the existing 275 kV OHL to the south of Ferness would require removal of blocks of coniferous woodland on both sides of the A939 and would be seen on the boundary of LCT 291 and LCT 286. Surrounding landform and retained vegetation would limit wider perception of activity to the south of Ferness. Impacts would be limited on the wider landscape of the LCT with construction affecting a relatively small and discreet section in the northern extent of the LCT through an expansive, undulating landscape. Local Impact on the open moorland between Saddle Hill and Clunas Reservoir – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within THC – Negligible to Low. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 (taking into account the combined effects within Moray Council) - Negligible.	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within THC: Negligible to Low Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within THC & Moray: Negligible	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect on the open moorland between Saddle Hill and Clunas Reservoir: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 291 within THC: Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 291 within THC & Moray: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development intersects the LCT for approximately 9.2 km across the northern extents of the open, upland landscape of LCT 291 between Saddle Hill and Clunas. A short section would traverse the valley in between Saddle Hill and Beinn Bhuidhe Bheag and represent an entirely new, detracting, built feature, while to the east of Saddle Hill it would parallel and be perceived in conjunction with the existing 275 kV OHL to the south of Assich Forest. Saddle Hill would limit visibility from the north and potential impacts on perception from the wider landscape. The Proposed Development traverses open heathland, numerous small watercourses including the Riereach Burn and traverses the lower to mid slopes of Saddle Hill, Beinn Bhuidhe Bheag, Creag an Daimh and Carn Maol and although introducing a conspicuous new, detracting, built feature through the open landscape it would not be entirely incongruous due to the presence of the existing adjacent 275 kV OHL. Within views from the landscape to the north (LCT 227), the Proposed Development would be mostly backclothed by landform, although some towers would likely be skylined on higher ground to the southwest of Saddle Hill, before travelling south and behind Assich Forest, which would limit its wider perception. Minor felling to accommodate the OC would not represent a noticeable change to land cover. The new OHL with taller towers would represent a further degradation of the open, wild, and remote landscape between Saddle Hill and Clunas Reservoir, and a slight degradation in terms of its perceived openness and remoteness when viewed from adjoining landscapes to the north. The setting of Clunas Reservoir would also be impacted with the Proposed Development prominent to the north. The realignment of the existing 275 kV OHL to the south of Ferness over a length of 2.6 km immediately north of the Proposed Development would be barely noticeable and not change the landscape apart from additional felling to accommodate a wider OC with two OHLs. This local change in relation to the overall LCT 291 would be negligible, being relatively well contained by retained surrounding forestry and landform. In terms of the wider landscape, impacts are considered in conjunction with the additional 7.6 km of intersected landscape of LCT 291 to the east and within Moray Council (refer to further assessment of LCT 291 within Moray Council below). The Proposed Development runs predominantly parallel to the existing 275 kV OHL, through landscape of LCT 291 for a total of approximately 16.8 km and is not anticipated to substantially change the overall character of the large area of LCT 291, although it would introduce a new detracting and highly prominent built feature and would result in a slight degradation in terms of visual amenity, and perceptual qualities of remoteness and wildness. Local Impact on the open moorland between Saddle Hill and Clunas Reservoir – Low to Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within THC – Negligible.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within THC: Negligible Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within THC & Moray: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect on the open moorland between Saddle Hill and Clunas Reservoir: Moderate Adverse (non-significant) This would become non-significant due to removal of construction works, and presence of existing OHL infrastructure in close proximity. Overall effect on LCT 291 within THC: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 291 within THC & Moray: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)

NATURESCOT LCT 291 OPEN ROLLING UPLAND– MORAY (Within The Highland Council)			
This section only assesses the intersected area of LCT between Saddle Hill and Clunas Reservoir, as a distinctly separate landscape over 10 km to the west of a further intersected area of LCT 291. Impacts within Moray Council on the LCT have been assessed in a separate table below (refer to Table 14).			
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 19, 20 & 21 for key features and characteristics of this LCT			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 (taking into account the combined effects within Moray Council) - Negligible .			
<i>Summer</i> There would be no change in perception of the Proposed Development in summer months due to the lack of deciduous vegetation through the open upland landscape. Local level impact on the open moorland between Saddle Hill and Clunas Reservoir – Low to Medium . Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within THC - Negligible . Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 (taking into account the combined effects within Moray Council) - Negligible .		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within THC: Negligible Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within THC & Moray: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect on the open moorland between Saddle Hill and Clunas Reservoir: Moderate Adverse (non-significant) This would remain non-significant due to the lack of deciduous vegetation creating changes between winter and summer. Overall effect on LCT 291 within THC: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 291 within THC & Moray: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> There would be a small area of management felling planting back to the edge of the OC alongside the realigned section of the existing 275 kV OHL to the south of Ferness. However, this would barely be perceptible and therefore there would be no change to the LCT from the year of opening due to the open nature of the landscape and relative lack of felling and replanting required. Local level impact on the open moorland between Saddle Hill and Clunas Reservoir – Low to Medium . Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within THC - Negligible . Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 (taking into account the combined effects within Moray Council) - Negligible .		<u>Operational Phase - Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within THC: Negligible Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within THC & Moray: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase - Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local effect on the open moorland between Saddle Hill and Clunas Reservoir: Moderate Adverse (non-significant) This would remain non-significant due to limited visibility of planting. Overall effect on LCT 291 within THC: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 291 within THC & Moray: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)

Table 14- Naturescot LCT 291 Open Rolling Upland – Moray (Moray Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 291- OPEN ROLLING UPLAND (Within Moray Council)			
This section only assesses the intersected area of LCT between the Dorback Burn to the southeast of Ferness and the River Divie, as a distinctly separate landscape, over 10 km apart, to that between Saddle Hill and Clunas Reservoir. Impacts solely within The Highland Council on the LCT have been assessed in a separate table above (refer to Table 13)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> There would be construction activity, including the progressive installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes or helicopter, across the LCT’s open heathland, watercourses, and lower slopes of the immediate hills of Cairn Duhie and Cairn Eney on either side of the A940. Construction would be seen parallel to the existing 275 kV OHL on the lower slopes of Cairn Duhie and Cairn Eney as the Proposed Development crosses from west to east; the Dorback Burn, A940, ‘The Dava Way’ and ‘Via Regia’ and the River Divie and Berry Burn, resulting in a high degree of visibility through this section of the landscape, including from the northern slopes and summit of the distinctive landform of Knock of Braemoray to the south. To the northeast of the River Divie the new OHL deviates away from the existing 275 kV OHL slightly before entering LCT 290. There is a relatively small amount of felling required to accommodate the OC or access track formation through the open landscape, resulting in minimal changes to land cover at the crossings of the Dorback Burn, The Dava Way and within the valley of River Divie, where there would be a locally heightened perception of construction activity and a local change to the setting of the watercourses. Despite the presence of the A940 and existing 275 kV OHL, the additional height, movement and introduction of taller, detracting, built features would be out of character through the open, remote and relatively tranquil landscape and result in a local degradation to visual amenity and perceptual qualities associated with the local landscape between the two watercourses. Impacts would be limited on the wider landscape of the large LCT with construction affecting a relatively small and discreet section in the northern extent of the LCT, being contained by surrounding hills. Local Impact on the open moorland between the Dorback Burn and the River Divie – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within Moray - Negligible to Low. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 (taking into account the combined effects within The Highland Council) - Negligible.		<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within Moray: Negligible to Low Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within Moray & THC: Negligible	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect on the open moorland between Ferness and the River Divie: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 291 within Moray: Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 291 within Moray & THC: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development intersects the predominantly open moorland of the LCT within Moray for approximately 5 km as it crosses the exposed A940 immediately north of Tomdow through the broad Dorback Burn valley, up to the River Divie and Berry Burn to the north of Bantrach. The Proposed Development traverses and would be prominent on the northern lower slopes of Cairn Duhie and Cairn Eney and upon crossing the highly valued trails of ‘The Dava Way’ and ‘Via Regia’ whilst parallelling the existing 275 kV OHL up to the River Divie, within a small proportion of the northern extent of the LCT. A large area of woodland associated with Glenernerney Wood limits visibility from the north and Cairn Duhie, Cairn Eney, Knock of Braemoray and Cairn Kitty limit exposure of changes to the landscape more broadly from the south. When viewed from the north the Proposed Development would be intermittently backclothed by Cairn Duhie and Cairn Eney and when viewed from the south, forestry on the lower northern slopes of Cairn Eney would backcloth the lower to mid-portions of towers, albeit over a relatively over a short section. Towers would remain openly visible on the skyline. Given the scale of the Proposed Development within the open landscape, despite parallelling the existing 275 kV OHL, it would result in a local degradation to visual amenity and perceptual qualities of the local landscape through the introduction of an additional detracting built feature in proximity to a number of highly valued publicly accessible routes from which to experience the landscape of LCT 291 between the Dorback Burn and River Divie. At a broader scale, the overall perception and characteristics of the Open Rolling Upland would not be anticipated to noticeably change. The Proposed Development would be aligned predominantly parallel to the existing 275 kV OHL and be broadly contained within the context of the large LCT, although the addition of detracting built features would still introduce a slight additional degradation of its wider perception and remoteness within the northern section of the LCT. Local Impact on the open moorland between the Dorback Burn and the River Divie - Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within Moray - Negligible. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 (taking into account the combined effects within The Highland Council) - Negligible.	Medium to High	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within Moray: Negligible Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within Moray & THC: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect on the open moorland between Ferness and the River Divie: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 291 within Moray: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 291 within Moray & THC: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)

NATURESCOT LCT 291- OPEN ROLLING UPLAND (Within Moray Council)

This section only assesses the intersected area of LCT between the Dorback Burn to the southeast of Ferness and the River Divie, as a distinctly separate landscape, over 10 km apart, to that between Saddle Hill and Clunas Reservoir. Impacts solely within The Highland Council on the LCT have been assessed in a separate table above (refer to Table 13)

LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<i>Summer</i> There would be a barely perceived change in perception of the Proposed Development in summer months due to the relative lack of deciduous vegetation through the open upland landscape, apart from narrow belts alongside watercourses. Local level impact on the open moorland between the Dorback Burn and the River Divie – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within Moray - Negligible. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 (taking into account the combined effects within The Highland Council) - Negligible.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within Moray: Negligible Overall magnitude of change on LCT 291 within Moray & THC: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect on the open moorland between Ferness and the River Divie: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 291 within Moray: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 291 within Moray & THC: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)

Table 15 - Naturescot LCT 285 Rolling Farmland and Forests - Moray & Nairn (The Highland Council and Moray Council Planning Authorities)

NATURESCOT LCT 285 ROLLING FARMLAND AND FORESTS - MORAY & NAIRN (Within The Highland Council and Moray Council)					
Representative viewpoints 18, 23 & 24 are located within the LCT and viewpoint 26 looks into the LCT from within LCT 284 to the north (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' pages 8 & 14 for viewpoint locations). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 22, 23 & 24 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment		LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>"Rivers and small burns meander through between hills, often associated with narrow, sinuous broad-leaved woodlands the smaller scale of which impart an intimacy in experience and sense of seclusion."</i> <i>"The predominant land use is mixed pasture and arable farming in 18th-20th Century field systems, with forestry and occasional small scale rock and gravel quarries."</i> <i>"At a smaller scale, many fields are defined by stone walls, often coupled with earth banks, gorse hedges, or stock fences."</i>	Moderately sized, undulating landscape with more intimate areas of enclosure in valleys and areas of woodland and forestry		▪	
Landform	<i>"Low to mid elevation, undulating landform with rolling, gently rounded, sometimes steep-sided hills, and broad and narrow valleys containing mainly natural, meandering courses of rivers and burns and associated ribbons of broad leaved woodland."</i> <i>"Prominent major hills and their forested tops and slopes, and occasionally steep sides, combined with farmed, wooded and intimate valleys."</i> <i>"Winding rural roads that respond to the landform and winding river valleys and numerous tributaries which run down and through this landscape from the elevated plateau to the south."</i>	Undulating landscape with a complex of river valleys and forested hills		▪	▪
Land cover	<i>"Mix of pasture and arable in irregular shaped fields, often edged with banks and stone walls, gorse and remnant trees."</i> <i>"Frequent presence of gorse and broom providing seasonal interest from yellow flower displays."</i> <i>"Conifer plantations can be large, often dominating the poorer soils on hill tops."</i> <i>"Broad valleys are farmed and settled lower down, with diverse patterns of interlocking pastures, native woodlands, and heath and scrub occurring on middle slopes and fringing denser coniferous forests, located on rounded hills and ridges."</i>	There is a high proportion of tree cover, more than is found on the coastal plain. Woodland vegetation is usually well-connected to form a network within the landscape, which joins with tree cover in the adjacent coastal farmlands and upland areas		▪	▪
Texture	<i>"Rich and varied texture of the landscape as a result of the rolling landform, mosaic of farmland and tree cover, mixed with historic buildings and ruins, vernacular estate and farm buildings."</i> <i>"The mix of conifer forests and native woodlands, often edged by scrub and dotted with small irregularly shaped rolling pastures, creates a rich-textured and diverse landscape."</i> <i>"High proportion of connected tree cover, consisting of mixed conifers and broadleaves, in small to large plantations, woodlands, road side trees and tree belts, with many large and ancient trees associated with older forests and policy plantings."</i>	Several southwest to northeast aligned broad and narrow incised valleys cut through the area. Formed by glacial processes and river erosion, the valley sides often display smooth, stepped ridges		▪	▪
Built Environment	<i>"Historical and cultural diversity provided by estate buildings, Pluscarden Abbey, castles, ruins and many traditional farm buildings and cottages, with their hill side or valley setting, and associated woodlands and many large and ancient trees."</i> <i>"Today's well-settled pattern reflects the area's long history of farming and land management."</i>	Settlements tend to be located in the few remote, steep-sided straths which run through this landscape type		▪	
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>"Main routes including the A941, A940 and A939 cross the area perpendicular to the east-west orientation, running between the coast and uplands."</i> <i>"An existing 275 kV OHL is on the southern extent over the majority of the LCT and a 132 kV can be perceived to the north."</i>	The existing 275 kV OHL runs through the southern extent of the LCT in proximity to the Proposed Development. Together with major roads they detract slightly from the otherwise attractive landscape		▪	
Perceptual aspects	<i>"Views to the south occasionally feature wind turbines, although generally this is a small-scale landscape of intimate views within a mosaic of fields, hills, valleys and woodland."</i> <i>"Rivers and small burns meander through between hills, often associated with narrow, sinuous broad-leaved woodlands the smaller scale of which impart an intimacy in experience and sense of seclusion."</i>	Relatively tranquil		▪	

NATURESCOT LCT 285 ROLLING FARMLAND AND FORESTS - MORAY & NAIRN (Within The Highland Council and Moray Council)

Representative viewpoints 18, 23 & 24 are located within the LCT and viewpoint 26 looks into the LCT from within LCT 284 to the north (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' pages 8 & 14 for viewpoint locations). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 22, 23 & 24 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.

SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
Visual Amenity	<i>"Within this landscape, high points, tracks and roads descending from higher ground provide panoramic views of the coastal plain, sea, and mountains to the north and west."</i> <i>"Consistent views of high coastal dunes and sea, giving a strong coastal context."</i> - Far distance views across the Firth, to the coasts and mountains of the north, and occasionally to the south, afforded from high points and roads descending from higher ground. <i>"The skyline is characterised by rolling hills and large woodland blocks."</i>	A mix of long distant views to surrounding hills and more intimate and contained views by topography and vegetation cover		▪	▪
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	This LCT is principally characterised by a mosaic of fields, hills, valleys, forestry, and woodland with predominantly well contained views within discreet valleys, framed by surrounding trees. The landscape is in a good condition with few detracting features resulting in regular opportunities for users of the landscape to gain a moderate degree of remoteness and tranquillity when not in proximity to minor or major roads. The narrow valley with surrounding hills and large proportion of forestry and woodland means the landscape could partially accommodate the type of development proposed as the existing vegetation cover would provide a degree of screening and surrounding topography would provide some backclothing for the Proposed Development and prevent it appearing within the skyline. However, the occasional views to hills to the south and high proportion of ancient woodland are highly susceptible.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium to High		▪	▪
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following designations and highly valued assets: - the Spey Valley, Pluscarden Valley, Quarrelwood and Findhorn Valley & the Wooded Estates SLAs; - Blackhills House, Pluscarden Abbey, Darnaway Castle and Cawdor Castle gardens and designed landscapes; - Cawdor Conservation Area; - Teindland Quarry SSSI, Buinach and Glenlatterach SSSI, Kellas Oakwood SSSI, Lethenhill SSSI, Quarry Wood SSSI, Cawdor Wood SAC & SSSI and Boghole, Muckle Burn SSSI; - Darnaway and Lethen Forest SPA; - Rait Castle Scheduled Monument; 'The Dava Way' Scottish Scotland Great Trail borders the western extent of the LCT providing key recreational resource for visitors and residents; - National Cycle Network (Route 1) within 1 km of the Proposed Development; - Unnamed Scotland Heritage Path between Elgin and Bardon where views are concentrated to the north and south; - tourist routes (The Highland Tourist Route follows the A939 and would traverse the Proposed Development); and - small to large areas of ancient woodland throughout the LCT.	The landscape is recognised nationally, and recreational access and tourist routes would be highly valued within it			▪
Features	<i>"Historical and cultural diversity provided by estate buildings, Pluscarden Abbey, castles, ruins and many traditional farm buildings and cottages, with their hill side or valley setting, and associated woodlands and many large and ancient trees."</i> <i>"Historic stone buildings, including, medieval abbeys, castles and ruins, and 17th-19th Century estate buildings and designed landscapes are a characteristic feature of the landscape, with stone walls, beech and holly hedges, parkland and wooded policies being particularly evident."</i>	Strong sense of place, with features worthy of conservation			▪
Quality / Condition	<i>"Rich and varied texture of the landscape as a result of the rolling landform, mosaic of farmland and tree cover, mixed with historic buildings and ruins, vernacular estate and farm buildings."</i>	A high-quality Landscape with many features not substitutable but containing some detracting features which are prominent through the local landscape		▪	▪
VALUE SUMMARY	Although there are tourist destinations across the LCT, there is limited evidence of recreational activity. The landscape features are relatively common but there are numerous designated landscapes (SLAs), national trails and a strong sense of place with few detracting features.	Value is High			▪

NATURESCOT LCT 285 ROLLING FARMLAND AND FORESTS - MORAY & NAIRN (Within The Highland Council and Moray Council)					
Representative viewpoints 18, 23 & 24 are located within the LCT and viewpoint 26 looks into the LCT from within LCT 284 to the north (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' pages 8 & 14 for viewpoint locations). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 22, 23 & 24 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	LCT 285 OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value		Medium to High		

Table 16 - Naturescot LCT 285 Rolling Farmland and Forests - Moray & Nairn (The Highland Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 285 ROLLING FARMLAND AND FORESTS - MORAY & NAIRN (Within The Highland Council)			
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos : Photos 22, 23 & 24 for key features and characteristics of this LCT			
This section only assesses the intersected area of LCT and immediate landscape between Clunas Reservoir and the A939 within THC. Impacts within Moray Council on the LCT have been assessed in Table 17 below			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction activity would result in direct impacts on the edge of the LCT, over a short length of approximately 1 km, on the boundaries of LCT 291 and LCT 290 to the southwest of Urchany where a small amount of felling and short lengths of temporary access track formations would be required through the southern extent of Ancheim Wood to accommodate the OC. Perception of substantial OC and management felling and progressive installation of towers via cranes on higher ground within LCT 290 would result in indirect impacts on the perception and tranquillity of LCT 285, due to the uncharacteristic additional height and movement of construction activity and perception of changes to vegetation cover within the forested landscape to the south. Local magnitude of change on LCT 285 (southern extents) within THC – Negligible. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within THC – No Change. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 (taking into account the combined effects within Moray Council) – Negligible to Low.	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Negligible Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within THC: No Change Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within THC & Moray: Negligible to Low	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 285 within THC: Neutral (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 285 within THC & Moray: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development intersects the edge of LCT 285 for approximately 1 km through the southern extent of Ancheim Wood, where the new OHL would be seen in conjunction with and parallel to the existing 275 kV OHL, adding an additional detracting built feature through and adjacent to the landscape. The Proposed Development traverses the lower slopes of Carn Maol, to the northeast of Clunas Reservoir and deviates from the existing 275 kV OHL to the south at Clunas Moss on the edge of the LCT, which therefore provides a context within which similar development would not be entirely incongruous to the local landscape, although introducing substantially taller structures and resulting in a wirescaping effect and impacting visual amenity. The Proposed Development would result in a relatively small loss of native broadleaf woodland cover on the southernmost edge of the LCT to accommodate the OC, and the change to vegetation cover would not be widely perceived as a result of surrounding retained woodland and rising topography to the south. The surrounding landscape, particularly to the north, is heavily screened by woodland and the Proposed Development would be well contained, encompassing a very small, discreet and enclosed area within the LCT. Beyond LCT 285, the Proposed Development would be perceived within the adjoining LCT 290 to the south where substantial areas of OC and management felling would result in increased visibility to towers on higher landform. This would, however, be seen beyond the existing 275 kV and therefore any indirect impacts would be minimal and very localised. It is anticipated that there would be minimal direct or indirect impacts on the features of LCT 285 and the key characteristic pattern of mixed and broadleaved woodlands and open spaces would not change. There are no direct impacts on The Spey SLA, any gardens and designed landscapes or ancient woodland. Local magnitude of change on LCT 285 (southern extents) within THC – Negligible. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within THC – No change. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 (taking into account the combined effects within Moray Council) – Negligible to Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Negligible Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within THC: No Change Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within THC & Moray: Negligible to Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 285 within THC: Neutral (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 285 within THC & Moray: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> There would only be a minor change in terms of perception of the Proposed Development in summer months due to the additional screening provided by deciduous roadside and field boundary vegetation. The Proposed Development would remain a noticeable new vertical feature, seen parallel to the existing 275 kV OHL. Local magnitude of change on LCT 285 (southern extents) within THC – Negligible. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within THC – No change. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 (taking into account the combined effects within Moray Council) – Negligible to Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Negligible Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within THC: No Change	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 285 within THC: Neutral (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 285 within THC & Moray:

NATURESCOT LCT 285 ROLLING FARMLAND AND FORESTS - MORAY & NAIRN (Within The Highland Council)

Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 22, 23 & 24 for key features and characteristics of this LCT

This section only assesses the intersected area of LCT and immediate landscape between Clunas Reservoir and the A939 within THC. Impacts within Moray Council on the LCT have been assessed in Table 17 below

LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
		Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within THC & Moray: Negligible to Low	Minor Adverse (non-significant)

Table 17 - Naturescot LCT 285 Rolling Farmland and Forests - Moray & Nairn (Moray Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 285 ROLLING FARMLAND AND FORESTS (Within Moray Council)			
This section only assesses the LCT within Moray Council, being a distinctly separate landscape to that falling within The Highland Council. Impacts solely within The Highland Council on the LCT have been assessed in a separate table above (refer to Table 16)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> There would be no direct impacts for the vast majority of the LCT within Moray Council, which lies to the north of the Proposed Development between the Moray Council boundary to the west, up to the A941, south of Elgin to the east. Indirect impacts are limited to a distant appreciation of construction activity within adjoining landscapes to the south where the perception of tower installation via cranes or helicopters may temporarily affect the rural qualities and tranquillity but would not change any key characteristics or change people's experience through the landscape. Within the directly impacted section of LCT 285, over a length of approximately 4.5 km between the A941 at Coleburn to the west and the B9103 to the east, construction activity, including OC and management felling would be noticeable. A relatively large area of OC and management felling within Badentinan Wood around Altonside, on either side of the B9103 would change vegetation cover locally and result in more open appreciation of tower installation around Altonside and Orbliston, particularly for road users of the B9103 as they pass through the landscape. The installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes or helicopter would also be seen openly on the lower northern slopes of Brown Muir on the southern boundary of the LCT. Local magnitude of change on visual amenity, perception, presence of detracting features and land cover between Coleburn and the B9103 – Low to Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within Moray – Low. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 (taking into account the combined effects within THC) - Negligible to Low.	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within Moray: Low Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within Moray & THC: Negligible to Low	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect between Coleburn and the B9103: Moderate Adverse (non-significant). This would be non-significant due to general containment by coniferous vegetation and topography. Overall effect on LCT 285 within Moray: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 285 within Moray & THC: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development would result in direct impacts on a relatively short length of the overall LCT. To the northwest of Coleburn and the lower slopes of Brown Muir the Proposed Development enters the LCT and intersects for approximately 4.5 km up to and just beyond the B9103 towards Orbliston, passing through pastoral farmland, belts of deciduous woodland, crossing local roads and through a large block of coniferous forestry, Badentinan Wood, on either side of the B9103. To the west, where the Proposed Development runs to the south of the LCT between Logie and Fogwatt, it would be perceived in the mid to far-distance as it traverses the upland moorland landscape of LCT 290, seen beyond the existing 275 kV OHL as a new, detracting, built feature in the background. Visual amenity within the rolling farmland and forests are an important feature and contribute to the experience of the landscape and an additional, detracting, built feature would slightly deteriorate the experience for people. In the eastern extent of the LCT and where the Proposed Development intersects, it would be seen in conjunction with the existing smaller 275 kV OHL where a wirescaping effect would impact the local setting and perception of the farmed landscape and felling within Badentinan Wood within and beyond the OC on either side of the B9103 would locally change land cover. The felled area, while well-contained within the surrounding wooded landscape, would locally open up views to a cluster of diamond towers (OHL Crossings 2 & 3), an angle tower and existing 275 kV OHL immediately east of the B9103 within LCT 284 around Orbliston, particularly for road users of the B9103 transiently experiencing the landscape. The introduction of additional, detracting, built features would impact visual amenity and exacerbate the feeling of intrusive development on the local landscape. There would be localised impacts between Coleburn and the B9103 as a result of wirescaping on the lower slopes of Brown Muir and a change to vegetation cover on either side of the B9103. The impacts are relatively well contained however by surrounding wooded and topography and would be seen in the context of an existing 275 kV OHL. Therefore, the perception and structure of the wider LCT would not change greatly. There are no direct impacts on The Spey SLA, any gardens and designed landscapes or ancient woodland. Local magnitude of change on visual amenity, perception, presence of detracting features and land cover between Coleburn and the B9103 - Low to Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within Moray – Negligible to Low. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 (taking into account the combined effects within THC) – Negligible to Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within Moray: Negligible to Low Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within Moray & THC: Negligible to Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect between Coleburn and the B9103: Moderate Adverse (non-significant). This would be non-significant due to containment by coniferous vegetation and topography. Overall effect on LCT 285 within Moray: Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 285 within Moray & THC: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> There would be no change in perception of the LCT as a result of additional screening from deciduous vegetation in summer months as the Proposed Development would remain openly visible on the open moorland to the south and between areas of coniferous woodland within the LCT between Coleburn and the B9103. Local magnitude of change on visual amenity, perception, presence of detracting features and land cover between Coleburn and the B9103 - Low to Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within Moray – Negligible to Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect between Coleburn and the B9103: Moderate Adverse (non-significant).

NATURESCOT LCT 285 ROLLING FARMLAND AND FORESTS (Within Moray Council)			
This section only assesses the LCT within Moray Council, being a distinctly separate landscape to that falling within The Highland Council. Impacts solely within The Highland Council on the LCT have been assessed in a separate table above (refer to Table 16)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 (taking into account the combined effects within THC) – Negligible to Low .		Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within Moray: Negligible to Low Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within Moray & THC: Negligible to Low	This would remain non-significant due to limited change between winter and summer. Overall effect on LCT 285 within Moray: Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 285 within Moray & THC Minor Adverse (non-significant):
<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Management felling planting back to the edge of the OC and forest edge fringe planting is likely to have re-established in this time (refer to Appendix 7.6 Forestry Landscape Mitigation Principles). The management felling planting and forest edge fringe planting within the OC would partially screen and integrate the lower to mid-portions of towers on either side of the B9103 and reduce views to the east of B9103 towards the diamond crossings around Orbliston. Natural regeneration of deciduous vegetation through the OC on Brown Muir would also be noticeable to the south, slightly softening the appearance of the Proposed Development on higher ground to the south. This would reduce the impact of the introduction of a new, detracting, built feature and restore some of the original condition and vegetation cover of the local landscape but the Proposed Development would remain a prominent new feature, seen above intervening tree lines against the existing 275 kV OHL. Local magnitude of change on visual amenity, perception, presence of detracting features and land cover between Coleburn and the B9103 is assessed to reduce slightly - Low . Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within Moray – Negligible . Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 (taking into account the combined effects within The Highland Council) - Negligible .		<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Low Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within Moray: Negligible Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within Moray & THC: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local effect between Coleburn and the B9103: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 285 within Moray: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 285 within Moray & THC: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Kellas Alternative Alignment During Construction</u> There would be no direct impacts as a result of the Kellas alternative alignment (refer to Figure 3.1 Site Layout Overview Page 14) as it runs through LCT 290 to the south of Kellas. However, it would be much more perceptible for road users through the valley floor between Dallas and Buinach Hill / Glenlatterach as it would be located and seen in closer proximity to the south, skirting around the summit of Mill Buie, before crossing down on to lower ground to parallel the existing 275 kV OHL at Bodnastalker. It would appear prominently above the local hill ridgeline and impact on the perception of intimate valley views. Local magnitude of change on visual amenity and perception during construction between Dallas and Buinach Hill – Medium . Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within Moray – Negligible to Low . Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 - Negligible to Low . <u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <u>Winter</u> Perception would be interrupted by intervening vegetation at Leanoch Burn and the River Lossie, but despite the Kellas alternative alignment crossing slightly lower ground, its much closer proximity to the attractive valley of the River Lossie would make it much more discernible, impinging into the skyline and introducing an additional detracting built feature, seen in combination with the existing 275 kV OHL and wind turbines on Cairn Uish, that would impact the visual amenity and perceptual qualities of the adjacent landscape. <u>Summer</u> No change in impact is anticipated in summer months. The overall impact on the wider landscape of LCT 285 is not anticipated to change. Local magnitude of change on visual amenity, perception and presence of detracting built features between Dallas and Buinach Hill – Medium .		<u>Kellas Alternative Alignment During Construction</u> Local level impact between Dallas and Buinach Hill: Medium Overall magnitude on LCT 285 within Moray: Negligible to Low Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285: Negligible to Low <u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter and Summer)</u>	<u>Kellas Alternative Alignment During Construction</u> Local effect: Moderate Adverse (significant). Overall effect on LCT 285 within Moray: Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 285 within Moray & THC: Minor Adverse (non-significant) <u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter and Summer)</u> Local effect: Moderate Adverse (significant). Overall effect on LCT 285 within Moray only: Minor Adverse (non-significant)

NATURESCOT LCT 285 ROLLING FARMLAND AND FORESTS (Within Moray Council)

This section only assesses the LCT within Moray Council, being a distinctly separate landscape to that falling within The Highland Council. Impacts solely within The Highland Council on the LCT have been assessed in a separate table above (refer to Table 16)

LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within Moray – Negligible to Low . Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 - Negligible to Low .		Local level impact between Dallas and Buinach Hill: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 285 within Moray only: Negligible to Low Overall effect on LCT 285 within Moray & THC: Negligible to Low	Overall effect on LCT 285 within Moray & THC: Minor Adverse (non-significant)

Table 18 - Naturescot LCT 290 Upland Moorland and Forestry (The Highland Council and Moray Council Planning Authorities)

NATURESCOT LCT 290 UPLAND MOORLAND AND FORESTRY (Within The Highland Council and Moray Council)					
Representative viewpoint 18 views the LCT from within the adjacent LCT 285. Viewpoints 22, 25, 27 and 61 and 65 are within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ page 8 for viewpoint location). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 27, 28 & 29 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment		LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“Generally simple, large-scale landscape with expansive scale of interior plateau area.”</i> <i>“More defined, higher hills on edge of the interior plateau, forming landmark features from the adjacent lower lying landscapes to the north and south and providing a backdrop to these.”</i> <i>“Large scale commercial forestry blankets much of the mid and upper slopes, many of which are undergoing deforestation and restocking.”</i>	Generally simple, large-scale landscape with expansive scale of interior plateau area		▪	▪
Landform	<i>“Gently undulating plateau-like landform with smooth even slopes, including broad, rounded hills situated at the northern and eastern edges of higher land to the south.”</i> <i>“There are more defined and higher hills found on the edge of the low-lying interior and basins, such as Brown Muir, Mill Buie and Carn na Caillache.”</i> <i>“The Upland Moorland and Forestry defines the courses of the middle reaches of the Rivers Findhorn and Spey.”</i>	Widely spaced, broad, rounded hills and upland plateaux with smooth, even, gentle slopes		▪	▪
Land cover	<i>“Vegetation cover is an almost equal balance of heather and grass moorland and large-scale conifer forests which form smooth, simple, large scale patterns in the landscape.”</i> <i>“Lone native pines and pockets of regeneration occur in heather moorland.”</i>	Predominantly simple landcover of extensive, geometric conifer forests and heather moorland		▪	▪
Texture	<i>“Large scale commercial forestry blankets much of the mid and upper slopes, many of which are undergoing deforestation and restocking.”</i> <i>“The differing tree heights and open areas of landcover disturbance are prominent on the simple broad slopes, reinforced by the wider resurfaced forest roads upgraded for timber extraction.”</i> <i>“Regenerating native trees and lone pine trees in moorland areas.”</i>	Simple pattern with linear features associated with commercial forestry and existing OHLs		▪	▪
Built Environment	<i>“Although crossed by several roads, and numerous tracks extend into forests and across moorlands, the core of this landscape appears largely inaccessible”</i> <i>“Settlement is sparse and tends to be scattered”</i> <i>“More intimate farmed landscapes at the margins and close to burns and roads, with farms, small holdings and marginal pastures.”</i>	Largely unspoilt and sparsely settled		▪	▪
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>“Pylons cross the area, which are prominent in open areas of moorland. Being windy and exposed, with a network of forestry tracks, this landscape has experienced wind turbine development, with several windfarms located in this LCT. These form prominent, sometimes large scale, moving features in many views from elevated roads and settlements, giving a measure of scale and distance and signifying the exposed nature of this landscape.”</i> - An existing 275 kV OHL would lie in close proximity to the Proposed Development within The Highland Council and another 275 kV OHL would lie to the north of the Proposed Development within Moray Council.	Apart from the occasional presence of major and minor roads and an existing 275 kV OHL, the landscape is largely absent of detracting features			▪
Perceptual aspects	<i>“This large-scale upland landscape forms the backdrop to the coastal LCTs and provides extensive views out to the north between the gaps in dense forest cover. There are longer distance views to this area from the Coastal Farmlands – Moray & Nairn.”</i>	Unsettled landscape with a wild and tranquil characteristic afforded in many places		▪	▪
Visual Amenity	<i>“Large areas, particularly the extensive plateau landforms, are not visible from public roads, settlements or surrounding areas.”</i> <i>“Prominent hills at the edges of this character type provide a backdrop to the smaller scale valleys, form the immediate skylines to adjacent, lower-lying, well-settled valley character types and are the focus of views from these.”</i> <i>“The hills are also landmark features in views from the north and the coastal plain.”</i>	A mix of far distant views to surrounding hills and more intimate and contained views by topography and vegetation cover		▪	▪

NATURESCOT LCT 290 UPLAND MOORLAND AND FORESTRY (Within The Highland Council and Moray Council)

Representative viewpoint 18 views the LCT from within the adjacent LCT 285. Viewpoints 22, 25, 27 and 61 and 65 are within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' page 8 for viewpoint location). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 27, 28 & 29 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.

SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
	<i>"Small number of built features which are generally visually separated by distance, and do not coalesce to create visual confusion."</i>	Expansive views afforded from landmark hills such as Brown Muir, Mill Buie and Carn na Caillach.			
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	LCT 290 is characterised by a mix of extensive commercial conifer forestry and large scale, open hills and plateaus. The landscape is generally enclosed with extensive views limited to occasional gaps in vegetation cover and hill summits. Detracting features include an existing line of pylons and occasional roads. The forested landscape has the capacity to accommodate development to a certain degree but the more open unspoilt areas are more susceptible.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium to High		▪	▪
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following designations and highly valued assets: - Spey Valley Special Landscape Area within the eastern extent of the LCT and approximately 800 m south of the Proposed Development and Findhorn Valley & the Wooded Estates SLA to the north of Tomdow approximately 400 m from the Proposed Development); - Gull Nest SSSI, Coleburn Pasture SSSI, Buinach and Glenlatterach SSSI, Allt a' Choire SSSI and Muckle Burn, Clunas SSSI; - Darnaway and Lethen Forest SPA; 'The Dava Way' Scotland Great Trail; - Two unnamed Heritage Paths (Lone Road between Tomdow and Dallas and the Mannoch Road between Elgin and Knockando); and - ancient woodlands.	Nationally recognised landscape designation, ecology and heritage features. Recreational Heritage Paths.			▪
Features	<i>"Whilst the area is not notably popular for recreation the popular Dava Way crosses the west of the area running south to north."</i> <i>"The two areas of Upland Moorland and Forestry LCT, which are separated by the Narrow Wooded Valley - Moray & Nairn of the River Findhorn, form a transition zone between the higher Open Upland to the south, and Rolling Farmland and Forests to the north. The transition to these rolling hills is often indefinite, reflecting the gradually falling elevation and merging patterns of land cover."</i>	Strong sense of place, with features worthy of conservation			▪
Quality / Condition	<i>"Small, isolated stone farm buildings located on the lower slopes and near roads, surrounded by irregular fields of semi-improved, marginal pasture which is often enclosed by rough stone dykes."</i> <i>"Natural regeneration of native pine and birch in some areas has resulted in a softening of the edges between upland pasture, moor and commercial plantations, forming a transition zone, where the vegetation is more open and diverse."</i>	A moderate to high-quality landscape with substitutable features but few detracting features. The landscape is marked by productive forests which diminish its overall quality		▪	▪
VALUE SUMMARY	The LCT contains a regional landscape designation and ecological and cultural heritage features worthy of conservation. This an extensive plateau upland, remote landscape valued for recreation, with several long-distance trails present.	Value is Medium to High		▪	▪
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	LCT 290 OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value		Medium to High		

Table 19 - Naturescot LCT 290 Upland Moorland and Forestry (The Highland Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 290 -UPLAND MOORLAND AND FORESTRY (Within The Highland Council)			
The impacts reported below on LCT 290 are within The Highland Council only between Clunas and Ardclach. Impacts within Moray Council are in Table 20 below.			
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 27, 28 & 29 for key features and characteristics of this LCT			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction activity, including the installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes and OC and management felling would be noticeable above intervening tree lines and through Clunas Wood, Newlands of Fleenas Wood and over Carn Achadh Gaibhre. The upland, well forested landscape is not widely perceived from publicly accessible locations and construction activity would be reasonably well contained through large areas of commercial coniferous forestry although the additional height and movement associated with construction would be out of character for the fairly remote setting. The changes would be relatively restricted and well contained and as a result are not anticipated to greatly impact the wider landscape of LCT 290. Local impact on visual amenity, tranquillity and land cover on the forested moorland through Boath Wood, Clunas Wood and Newlands of Fleenas Wood - Low to Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 within THC - Negligible to Low. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 (taking into account the combined effects within Moray Council) - Medium.	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 within THC: Negligible to Low Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 within THC & Moray: Medium	<u>During Construction</u> Local level effect on land cover on the forested moorland through Boath Wood, Clunas Wood and Newlands of Fleenas Wood: Moderate Adverse (non-significant) This would be non-significant as despite loss of characteristic land cover, the extent of coniferous forestry would screen much of the activity in the local landscape with limited change in character. Overall effect on LCT 290 within THC: Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 290 within THC & Moray: Moderate Adverse (significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development intersects the LCT for approximately 7.3 km through large areas of commercial coniferous forestry within the upland moorland landscape associated with the lower slopes of Carn Maol and Carn na Caillich. The Proposed Development traverses, and to a large degree would be contained by retained forestry within, Loch of Boath Wood, Clunas Wood and Newlands of Fleenas Wood. The Proposed Development be seen mostly above surrounding tree lines and separate to but broadly parallel with the existing 275 kV OHL to the north and would therefore not be entirely incongruous to the landscape. The impacts on setting, perceptual qualities and visual amenity are anticipated to be greater through open areas of moorland although any perception would be brief with long-distance views through the landscape limited by being broadly contained by surrounding forestry and landform. OC and management felling would result in localised areas where towers would be more perceptible, mostly in proximity to minor local roads, and land cover changes would be noticeable only locally and would not be broadly perceived from publicly accessible locations. Impacts resulting from the introduction of the Proposed Development through the upland moorland and forestry are limited to a local change to vegetation cover and visual amenity through an appreciation of new towers, taller than those associated with the existing 275 kV OHL, seen above intervening tree lines. At the wider level, the Proposed Development would be relatively well contained by forestry and be perceived in the context of an existing 275 kV OHL. There are no direct impacts on the Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates SLA or ancient woodland. Local impact on land cover on the forested moorland through Boath Wood, Clunas Wood and Newlands of Fleenas Wood - Low. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 within THC - Negligible to Low. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 (taking into account the combined effects within Moray Council) – Medium.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Low Overall impact on LCT 290 within THC: Negligible to Low Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 within THC & Moray: Medium	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level effect on land cover on the forested moorland through Boath Wood, Clunas Wood and Newlands of Fleenas Wood: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 290 within THC: Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 290 within THC & Moray: Moderate Adverse (significant)

NATURESCOT LCT 290 -UPLAND MOORLAND AND FORESTRY (Within The Highland Council)

The impacts reported below on LCT 290 are within The Highland Council only between Clunas and Ardclach. Impacts within Moray Council are in Table 20 below.

Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 27, 28 & 29 for key features and characteristics of this LCT

LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<i>Summer</i> Vegetation through the LCT is predominantly coniferous forest and as a result there would be no change in the perception of the Proposed Development in summer months through the upland landscape. Local impact on visual amenity and land cover on the forested moorland through Boath Wood, Clunas Wood and Newlands of Fleenas Wood - Low. Overall Impact on LCT 290 within THC - Negligible to Low. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 (taking into account the combined effects within Moray Council) – Medium.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Low Overall impact on LCT 290 within THC: Negligible to Low Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 within THC & Moray: Medium	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level effect on land cover on the forested moorland through Boath Wood, Clunas Wood and Newlands of Fleenas Wood: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 290 within THC: Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 290 within THC & Moray: Moderate Adverse (significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Management felling planting back to the edge of the OC on the slopes of Carn Maol and Carn na Caillich is likely to have re-established in this time. The management felling planting would further integrate lower to mid-portions of towers locally; however, the Proposed Development would remain perceptible above tree lines and the impacts on local visual amenity and land cover would remain. Local impact on visual amenity and land cover on the forested moorland through Boath Wood, Clunas Wood and Newlands of Fleenas Wood - Low. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 within THC – Negligible to Low. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 (taking into account the combined effects within Moray Council) – Medium.		<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Low Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 within THC: Negligible to Low Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 within THC & Moray: Medium	<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local level effect on land cover on the forested moorland through Boath Wood, Clunas Wood and Newlands of Fleenas Wood: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 290 within THC: Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 290 within THC & Moray: Moderate Adverse (significant)

Table 20 - Naturescot LCT 290 Upland Moorland and Forestry (Moray Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 290 -UPLAND MOORLAND AND FORESTRY (Within Moray Council)			
The impacts reported below on LCT 290 are within Moray Council only between Clunas and Ardclach. Impacts within The Highland Council are in Table 19 above.			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> The landscape is not widely perceived from publicly accessible locations and construction activity would be reasonably well contained through large areas of commercial forestry and remote upland moorland between Cairn Eney and ‘The Dava Way’ on the western edge of the LCT and the A941, Coleburn to the east. However, there are a number of highly valued routes that pass through the landscape where construction would be prominent and appear largely out of character. Construction activity, including the installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes or helicopter would be in proximity to the existing 275 kV OHL to the east of the Hill of Glaschyle and Logie Wind Farm. The Proposed Development turns east, running to the south of Hill of Tomechole, Lone Hill and Mill Buie through extensive forestry, and would not be seen in combination with the 275 kV OHL for the remainder of the LCT to the east due to appreciable distance and landform. There would be large areas of intermittent OC and management felling to the south of Hill of Tomechole, through the Moss of Bednawinny, through a large area of forestry to the northwest of Cairn Uish and Rothés Wind Farm and in the eastern extents, through forestry on Hart Hill to the west of Coleburn and on Brown Muir to the east of Coleburn. Whilst felling would result in a change to land cover it would not be widely perceived and changeable coniferous forestry coverage through the landscape is an existing characteristic. Construction activity, including the formation of access tracks, would mostly be imperceptible through the remote upland landscape apart from distant views from lower lying settled valleys within LCT 285 to the north and from public access routes within the LCT. Users of ‘The Dava Way’ would be perceive construction to the west from the edge of the LCT. Users of the Dallas to Upper Knockando minor road would perceive activity in the distance to south and upon crossing the Proposed Development where felling would be seen to the east and west. Users of the ‘Mannoch Road’ Heritage Path would see construction and the progressive installation of towers through the open landscape within broad open views in both close proximity and in the distance to the west where it would be seen to the fore of Rothés Wind Farm on Cairn Uish. Users of footpaths around Glenlatterach Reservoir would perceive activity to the south of the reservoir and users of the A941 at Coleburn would see construction in close proximity crossing the Glen of Rothés valley with associated felling on Hart Hill and Brown Muir on either side. The movement and additional height associated with the installation of the towers would be out of character with the landscape and introduce detrimental built features into the remote upland landscape of high scenic value resulting in impacts on visual amenity and perceptual qualities. Construction through the Glen of Rothés valley would be particularly intrusive and would likely result in a greater localised impact than for the remainder of the landscape to the west. Local impacts on the setting, visual amenity and perceptual qualities through the Glen of Rothés valley and on Brown Muir, Coleburn - High. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 (Moray) – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 (taking into account the combined effects within The Highland Council) - Medium.	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: High Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 within Moray: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 within Moray & THC: Medium	<u>During Construction</u> Local effects through Glen of Rothés valley and on Brown Muir, Coleburn: Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 290 within Moray: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 290 within Moray & THC: Moderate Adverse (significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development intersects the LCT for approximately 27 km between Cairn Eney and ‘The Dava Way’ on the western edge of the LCT and the A941, Coleburn to the east. From west to east, the Proposed Development would initially be sited in proximity to the existing 275 kV OHL and Logie Wind Farm before deviating from the existing OHL to the east of the Hill of Glaschyle and traversing the southern mid slopes of the Hill of Tomechole and Lone Hill where there would be a large area of felling. It then passes to the north of Loch Dallas and through the Moss of Bedwinny, with further large areas of felling before crossing the Glen Lossie watercourse and Dallas to Upper Knockando minor road. Turning north, the Proposed Development would cross the lower, open slopes of Cross of Knockando and further small watercourses before passing to the north of Rothés Wind Farm and Cairn Uish, where it would be visible from the north and the ‘Mannoch Road’ Heritage Path. The Proposed Development then passes the southern tip of Glenlatterach Reservoir, traverses a local high point on Mill Our and then travels through intermittent forestry over Hart Hill before crossing the Glen of Rothés valley and the A941 before turning northeast onto the northern mid slopes of Brown Muir. For the majority of the alignment, the Proposed Development would represent a new, detracting, built feature within an open moorland landscape and would be intermittently perceived through the landscape, as it passes in and out of coniferous forestry, resulting in impacts on visual amenity, land cover and perceptual qualities of the landscape. The areas of felling would not be highly perceived from public access routes or result in greatly increasing the prominence of the Proposed Development and would not be largely out of character with an ever-changing forestry coverage. The new OHL would also be perceived mostly in relatively close proximity to or crossing existing detracting features for the most part, in conjunction with the existing 275 kV OHL, Logie Wind Farm, Rothés Wind Farm and minor or major roads. Whilst this reduces the perceived degree of change to the landscape, towers would remain openly visible above retained forestry tree lines and throughout the upland landscape. There would likely be a higher degree of change locally within the Glen of Rothés valley where the Proposed Development traverses Hart Hill, the A941 and the lower slopes of Brown Muir with a corridor of felling over Hart Hill highly, but briefly, noticeable from Coleburn and the A941. On the northern slopes of Brown Muir, the Proposed Development would realign with the existing 275 kV OHL to the east but would appear as a prominent new detracting feature on Brown Muir through the local valley. The Proposed Development would impact and degrade the key characteristics of openness, visual amenity, tranquillity and remoteness of LCT 290 through the introduction of new OHL across a large proportion of relatively unspoilt, although commercially worked landscape. There would be no direct impacts on the Findhorn Valley and The Spey Valley SLA or ancient woodland within the LCT.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 within Moray: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 within Moray & THC: Medium	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effects through Glen of Rothés and on Brown Muir, Coleburn: Moderate to Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 290 within Moray: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 290 within Moray & THC: Moderate Adverse (significant)

NATURESCOT LCT 290 -UPLAND MOORLAND AND FORESTRY (Within Moray Council)

The impacts reported below on LCT 290 are within Moray Council only between Clunas and Ardclach. Impacts within The Highland Council are in Table 19 above.

LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
Local impacts on the setting, visual amenity and perceptual qualities through the Glen of Rothes valley and on Brown Muir, Coleburn – Medium to High . Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 (Moray) – Medium . Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 (taking into account the combined effects within The Highland Council) - Medium .			
<i>Summer</i> There would be no change in perception of the Proposed Development in summer months due to the lack of deciduous vegetation through the upland moorland and forested landscape with the Proposed Development remaining perceptible above retained tree lines or through the open moorland. Local impacts on the setting, visual amenity and perceptual qualities through the Glen of Rothes valley and on Brown Muir, Coleburn – Medium to High . Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 (Moray) – Medium . Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 (taking into account the combined effects within The Highland Council) - Medium .		<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 within Moray: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 within Moray & THC: Medium	<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effects: Moderate to Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 290 within Moray: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 290 within Moray & THC: Moderate Adverse (significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Management felling planting back to the edge of the OC and natural regeneration on the slopes of Brown Muir is likely to have established in this time. Management felling planting throughout the upland landscape would slightly improve the impact on localised land cover but would not alleviate associated impacts resulting from the introduction of new detracting, highly prominent built features through a wide portion of the open upland landscape. Deciduous vegetation, of scrub and small trees, being allowed to naturally regenerate through careful management within the OC on the slopes of Brown Muir would slightly reduce the local prominence of towers over Brown Muir and soften the appearance of the Proposed Development from Coleburn and the A941. Local impacts on the setting, visual amenity and perceptual qualities through the Glen of Rothes valley and on Brown Muir, Coleburn - Medium . Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 (Moray) – Medium . Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 (taking into account the combined effects within The Highland Council) - Medium .		<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 within Moray: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 within Moray & THC: Medium	<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local effects: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 290 within Moray: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 290 within Moray & THC: Moderate Adverse (significant)
<u>Kellas Alternative Alignment – Summer Year of Opening</u> The Kellas alternative alignment (refer to Figure 3.1 Site Layout Overview Page 14) skirts around the summit of Mill Buie, before crossing down on to lower ground to parallel the existing 275 kV OHL at Bodnastalker for approximately 2.3 km. The Kellas alternative alignment would then pass to the southeast to connect up with the Proposed Development, crossing north of the Dam of Glenlatterach Reservoir, gaining height to meet up with the Proposed Development by traversing the north facing slope of Caira Moss. The Kellas alternative alignment would impact the local setting of Glenlatterach Reservoir with new vertical infrastructure highly apparent to the north with a short length of felling in close proximity, reducing tranquillity and the rural feel. The Proposed Development would also be more widely perceived within the River Lossie valley and landscape of LCT 285 to the north, particularly for road users through the valley floor between Dallas and Buinach Hill. The Kellas alternative alignment would result in more towers in total and a greater prominence within the River Lossie valley and long sections of the OHL travelling from higher to lower ground being seen more as new features away from both Rothes Wind Farm and the existing 275 kV OHL and being more visible from the both the adjoining landscape to the north and from the reservoir. The Kellas alternative alignment would locally impact the perception and visual amenity of the River Lossie valley and Glenlatterach reservoir but there would be no noticeable change in impacts on the wider landscape with the Proposed Development already being highly prominent through the upland moorland. The magnitude of change is anticipated to be higher on the local landscape but remain the same for the overall LCT. Local impacts on perception and visual amenity of the River Lossie valley and Glenlatterach reservoir - Medium to High .		<u>Kellas Alternative Alignment During construction</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 within Moray only: Medium <u>Operational Phase Year of Opening (Winter and Summer)</u>	<u>Kellas Alternative Alignment During construction</u> Local effect (River Lossie valley and Glenlatterach reservoir): Moderate to Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 290 within Moray only: Moderate Adverse (significant)

NATURESCOT LCT 290 -UPLAND MOORLAND AND FORESTRY (Within Moray Council)

The impacts reported below on LCT 290 are within Moray Council only between Clunas and Ardclach. Impacts within The Highland Council are in Table 19 above.

LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 (Moray) – Medium . Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 (taking into account the combined effects within The Highland Council) – Medium .		Local level impact: Medium to High Overall magnitude of change on LCT 290 within Moray only: Medium	<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening (Winter and Summer)</u> Local effect: Moderate to Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 290 within Moray only: Moderate Adverse (significant)

Table 21 - Naturescot LCT 286 Narrow Wooded Valley – Moray and Nairn (The Highland Council and Moray Council Planning Authorities)

NATURESCOT LCT 286 NARROW WOODED VALLEY – MORAY AND NAIRN (Within The Highland Council and Moray Council)					
Representative viewpoint 20 is located within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ page 11 for viewpoint location). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 25 & 26 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment		LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“Enclosure provided by mixed landform and vegetation cover contributes to the intricate scale of the landscape.”</i>	Small scale, relatively intimate landscape			▪
Landform	<i>“Variety of natural geological features in and around the course of the river, the narrow gorges, coupled with the fast-moving, natural flow, pools, falls and occasional inaccessible gravel and sand beaches.”</i> <i>“The River Findhorn is a distinctive focus within this narrow enclosed valley, with a deeply incised land form of rocky gorges, a variety of falls, pools, gravel beaches and fast-flowing channels”</i>	Dramatic, undulating, rugged, complex landscape		▪	▪
Land cover	<i>“Strong sense of history provided by the continuation of farming and forest management practices by estates, the presence of historic buildings and relicts, the many large, ancient trees, and the lack of major new developments or detracting structures.”</i> <i>“The main land uses are forestry, farming, and low key recreational activities on the river and in surrounding forests and woods.”</i>	Complex, intimate or mosaic		▪	▪
Texture	<i>“Diversity of species and ages of woodland, forest cover and trees, mixed with pockets of pasture.”</i>	Complex or irregular pattern		▪	▪
Built Environment	<i>“The scattered settlement pattern consists mainly of estate buildings, farms and cottages.”</i> <i>“Winding, often narrow roads, following the land form, and crossing the river in enclosed niches over historic, small-scale stone bridges.”</i> <i>“The Findhorn and Divie Rivers are the focus for a number of historic estates with designed landscapes. Most notable of these are Darnaway Castle and Relugas.”</i>	Largely unspoilt and sparsely settled although crossed by several roads.		▪	
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	- An existing 275 kV OHL would intersect the Proposed Development, seen crossing the River Findhorn and A939. - The A939 traverses north to south through the landscape, and the A940 (Old Military Road) is located to the east, representing highly prominent local detracting features within an otherwise attractive and remote river valley.	The A940, A939 and several B roads cross the LCT as well as an existing 275 kV OHL			▪
Perceptual aspects	<i>“The enclosed landform and dramatic, winding river gorges of the lower slopes provide intimate and ever-changing glimpses of the river with the tangible experience of seclusion.”</i> <i>“The delicate balance of differing land uses is an essential characteristic of the landscape.”</i>	Wild and tranquil characteristic often afforded away from major road corridors and scattered settlement			▪
Visual Amenity	<i>“Occasional glimpses from roads, infrequent bridges and tracks at higher levels, through trees and between woodlands, display the grandeur and setting of the valley.”</i> <i>“There are some instances where there are long views, for example to the Knock of Braemoray, from the A940 and the “gateway” to Moray on arrival from the south over Dava Moor.”</i> <i>“Intimate and transient glimpses of the river.”</i>	A mix of far distant views to surrounding hills and more intimate and contained views by topography and vegetation cover		▪	▪
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	This LCT is principally characterised by an intimate, well wooded farmed river valley with limited settlement and contained views, diverse geological formations, varied woodland, winding roads, and secluded areas enclosed by topography and vegetation which combine to create a rich historical ambiance. The landscape is in good condition with few detracting features resulting in a feeling of remoteness and tranquillity when not in proximity to local roads. The narrow valley with surrounding hills and large proportion of forestry and woodland means the landscape could partially accommodate the type of development proposed as the existing vegetation cover would provide a degree of screening. Surrounding topography would serve to backcloth for the proposed OHL and prevent it appearing within the skyline. An existing 275 kV OHL and the A939 would intersect the Proposed Development.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium to High		▪	▪

NATURESCOT LCT 286 NARROW WOODED VALLEY – MORAY AND NAIRN (Within The Highland Council and Moray Council)

Representative viewpoint 20 is located within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' page 11 for viewpoint location).

Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 25 & 26 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.

SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following designations and highly valued assets: - Findhorn and the Woodland Estates SLA incorporates the majority of the LCT within the Moray boundary between Mundole to the north and Edinkillie Church adjacent to the Proposed Development. Drynachan Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA is situated over 2 km to the south of the Proposed Development; - Relugus (to the west of Dunphail) and Darnaway Castle (to the southwest of Forres) gardens and designed landscapes; ‘The Dava Way’ Scotland Great Trail on the periphery of the LCT); ‘Old Road to Forres’ Heritage Path lies to the south of the Proposed Development; - Highland Tourist Route follows the A939; - Lower Findhorn Woods SAC & SSSI; - Darnaway and Lethen Forest SPA; - frequent small to large areas of ancient woodland; and - Ardclach Bell Tower - historical landmark.	Regional landscape designation The LCT can be experienced from ‘The Dava Way’ long distance trail, on the eastern edge of the LCT between Presley and Edinkillie Church, providing a key recreational route for visitors and residents. Recreational opportunities are otherwise limited, although there is some activity along the River Findhorn and surrounding woodland. The landscape is mostly experienced by road users and residents. The landscape features are relatively common within the wider attractive, remote river valley landscape			▪
Features	<i>“Estate policies exert strong influences on the pattern and nature of land use. Fields are irregular shapes, mainly unchanged from 18th-19th Centuries, and are often edged by scrub woodland and rough grassland and enclosed by stone dykes. The variety of vegetation within the valley results in a richly diverse and colourful landscape.”</i> <i>“Scattered settlement pattern consists mainly of estate buildings, farms and cottages, and with little new building over the last century, although some abandoned buildings have been renovated as residences or for tourism accommodation. The Findhorn and Divie Rivers are the focus for a number of historic estates with designed landscapes. Most notable of these are Darnaway Castle and Relugas but smaller estate policies are to be found in sheltered locations at Logie, Dunphail, and Glenferness.”</i>	Intimate valley landscape with strong influences from estate building and policies shaping the land cover and providing historic features and character throughout the landscape			▪
Quality / Condition	<i>“Diversity of species and ages of woodland, forest cover and trees, mixed with pockets of pasture.”</i> <i>“Strong sense of history provided by the continuation of farming and forest management practices by estates, the presence of historic buildings and relicts, the many large, ancient trees, and the lack of major new developments or detracting structures.”</i> - The enclosed and intimate character of the landscape, with the winding river and occasional glimpses of the wider valley from key routes create both a grand and dramatic character whilst providing areas of seclusion and intimacy within the landscape.	A good quality landscape with a predominately enclosed and intimate character, a delicate pattern of mixed land uses and numerous historic influences		▪	▪
VALUE SUMMARY	Designated landscape with several ecology and heritage features throughout LCT 286 (within the 10 km Study Area). The enclosed character of the landscape with occasional wider views offers high levels of scenic quality, Contains popular tourist routes of recreational value.	Value is High			▪
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	LCT 286 OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value		Medium to High		

NATURESCOT LCT 286 – NARROW WOODED VALLEY – MORAY AND NAIRN (Within The Highland Council and Moray Council)

LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> The Proposed Development intersects the LCT within The Highland Council for approximately 2.6 km, introducing direct impacts. Construction activity, including substantial areas of OC and management felling, access track formations and the installation of towers and cable stringing via crane would be highly noticeable locally in proximity to Ardcloch and the River Findhorn, but would be more widely contained by surrounding forestry and topography. The realignment of the existing 275 kV OHL south of Ferness and removal of redundant towers would be perceived on the edge of the LCT and increase the prominence of construction activity. Felling on either side of the River Findhorn, B9007 and A939 would noticeably change local vegetation cover and result in an increased prominence of the new detracting built features through the highly valued river valley, impacting its local perception, quality and condition. However, the landscape is not widely perceived from publicly accessible locations and topography and large areas of woodland and commercial forestry would contain construction activity in the wider landscape, which would be seen locally in the context of the existing 275 kV OHL. To the east and within Moray Council, around Edinkillie, construction works associated with the Proposed Development would be narrowly perceptible in the mid-distance to the south of the LCT beyond Glenernerney Wood from the A940 corridor but would not result in indirect impacts or a perceivable change to this section of the well wooded landscape. Local Impact on perception, quality, land cover and setting of the Findhorn valley and Ardcloch landscape - Medium to High. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 286 – Low to Medium.	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall magnitude of change on LCT 286: Low to Medium	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect on the Findhorn valley and Ardcloch landscape: Moderate to Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 286: Moderate Adverse (non-significant) This would be non-significant as construction activity is not anticipated to result in a perceivable change to the well wooded landscape character.
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development intersects the LCT within The Highland Council for approximately 2.6 km through the central area of LCT 286, crossing the River Findhorn and A939. The Proposed Development enters the Findhorn valley from the higher ground of Dulsie Wood to the west, traverses Dalnaheiglish Wood and crosses the narrow valley, running broadly parallel to and would be seen in conjunction with the existing 275 kV OHL which lies immediately north within the wooded, undulating landscape. The existing 275 kV OHL provides a context in which similar development would not be entirely incongruous although the introduction of taller towers and felling would exacerbate the impact of detracting built features through the otherwise attractive local landscape of high scenic value. The Proposed Development is anticipated to be broadly contained by the well wooded valley and surrounding topography, being largely enclosed by intricate landform and pockets of woodland and commercial forestry. Long-distance views are occasional and limited to surrounding higher elevations or from the B9007 and A939 and the landscape is not widely perceived. The most notable impacts are anticipated to result from localised, substantial areas of OC and management felling, resulting in towers being more prominent locally. The impact on visual amenity and changes to land cover would be most noticeable from users of the B9007 and A939 when passing through the landscape at speed. Where the Proposed Development can be experienced, it would be perceived within the context of the existing 275 kV OHL. At a local level the loss of woodland and introduction of taller towers through an attractive valley landscape is anticipated to reduce the condition of the local landscape and its perceptual, and land cover characteristics. Within Moray Council, the Proposed Development would be sited approximately 1 km to the south of the LCT on the mid slopes of Cairn Eney and beyond the Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates SLA. Visibility is limited by intervening woodland and topography and is likely to only be perceived by users of the A940 travelling at speed. The Proposed Development would be seen in combination with the existing parallel 275 kV OHL and is not anticipated to detract from the experience of the river valley landscape or Findhorn and the Woodland Estates SLA. The perception and setting of the wider landscape of LCT 286 would not substantially change as the Proposed Development intersects only a relatively short section of the LCT, parallel to the existing 275 kV OHL and would not be widely perceived due to landform and vegetation. Local Impact on perception, quality, land cover and setting of the Findhorn valley and Ardcloch landscape – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 286 – Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 286: Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect on the Findhorn valley and Ardcloch landscape: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 286: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> There would only be a minor change in terms of perception of the Proposed Development in summer months due to the additional screening provided by deciduous vegetation within the river valley and alongside the B9007 and A939. The Proposed Development would remain a new detracting built feature with areas of felling increasing its local prominence. Local Impact on perception, quality, land cover and setting of the Findhorn valley and Ardcloch landscape – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 286 – Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 286: Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect on the Findhorn valley and Ardcloch landscape: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 286: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Management felling planting back to the edge of the OC is likely to have re-established in this time through the Findhorn valley, reducing the prominence of the Proposed Development. Although the management felling planting would partially integrate the Proposed Development into the local landscape, towers would remain prominent above tree lines in proximity to the River Findhorn and Ardcloch.		<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local level impact:	<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local effect on the Findhorn valley and Ardcloch landscape:

NATURESCOT LCT 286 – NARROW WOODED VALLEY – MORAY AND NAIRN (Within The Highland Council and Moray Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
Local Impact on perception, quality, land cover and setting of the Findhorn valley and Ardclach landscape – Low to Medium . Overall magnitude of change on LCT 286 – Negligible to Low .		Low to Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 286: Negligible to Low	Moderate Adverse (non-significant) This would become non-significant due to growth of planting reducing the prominence of the Proposed Development in the local landscape. Overall effect on LCT 286: Minor Adverse (non-significant)

Table 22 - Naturescot LCT 287 Broad Farmed Valley (Moray Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 287 BROAD FARMED VALLEY (Within Moray Council)					
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos : Photos 30 & 31 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment		LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“Enclosed river valley with descending side valleys with undulating valley floors, and sinuous tributary rivers and burns.”</i>	A varied landscape incorporating both larger scale farming and woodlands with pockets of more intimate, smaller scale landscapes			▪
Landform	<i>“The River Spey and its setting, which is a combination of the main, well-defined, sinuous channel consisting of a low, wide and flat valley bottom with meandering Central River, and flanks of interlocking spurs of adjacent mainly forested hills, often rising steeply from the valley floor and with prominent, round, forested or open summits.”</i>	Dramatic, undulating and fairly complex landscape			▪
Land cover	<i>“Farmed valley floor, and mainly traditional scattered buildings, farms, and rural estates with their policy plantings, extending up gentler slopes and interspersed with woodland and small forests.”</i> <i>“Natural course of the meandering river and associated ribbons and patches of native broad-leaved woodland and scrub, gravel banks and wetlands.”</i> <i>“The valley floor is dominated by farmland with shelterbelts and woodlands, while scattered, sinuous pockets of native woodland and soft textured willow and birch scrub are located along the banks and gravel terraces of the Spey.”</i>	A varied and distinctive mosaic of landscape cover, with areas of larger and more regular agricultural fields and forests balanced with woodlands, meandering river and varied field boundaries		▪	▪
Texture	<i>“Natural course of the meandering river and associated ribbons and patches of native broad-leaved woodland and scrub, gravel banks and wetlands.”</i>	A fairly complex landscape with irregular pattern		▪	▪
Built Environment	<i>“Well settled, occasional but prominent historic towns, villages, distilleries and bridges, connected by winding roads which follow the river valley landform and impart a strong cultural identity of Speyside.”</i> <i>“Roads are located above the flood plain on the lower valley flanks and are generally linear and parallel to the course of the river.”</i>	The valley is well-settled, containing a number of distinctive settlements		▪	
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>“The chimneys, industrial buildings of mills and distilleries, and the urban expansion of Rothes, create occasional dominant. horizontal and vertical elements within the open valley floor.”</i> - Windfarms are visible in the hills above the valley, such as Hill of Towie, seen from broader sections of the valley between Aberlour and Knockando, and Pauls Hill and Rothes visible above Knockando. - The B9015 is the primary road through the valley and is openly visible. 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs prominent at the northern extent of the LCT.	Roads are located above the floodplain, windfarms are visible on elevated land above the valley. Existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs dominate at the northern tip of the LCT, detracting from the Spey valley		▪	
Perceptual aspects	<i>“The tangible historic character of the strath imparts the perception of a well-managed and productive landscape, which is rich and diverse and which has a distinct sense of place.”</i> <i>“The eye is also drawn up to the surrounding containing hill slopes and summits within upland areas (such as Ben Rinnes, Roys Hill, Carn na Caillaiche, Meikle Conval and Ben Aigen), often with steep sides, which form a dominant skyline. Views from the immediate river side and in particular river crossings give classic framed views along Speyside. The detailed mosaic of farmland, trees, historic settlements and structures of the valley contrasts with the simple, largely undeveloped landscape of forested valley sides and moorland summits. Views from the valley sides are more extensive, displaying the scale of the valley and its wider setting.”</i>	Sense of enclosure and visual containment between blocks of woodland on the valley floors creates intimacy and intrigue, adding to the strength of the rural character		▪	▪
Visual Amenity	<i>“Ever-changing views within the valley, and the dominance of surrounding hill sides, hill tops and skylines, both from within the valley floor and from elevated view points on the valley sides.”</i> <i>“Within the valley, the eye is drawn to the river, and the ever-changing views resulting from the complex interplay of landforms, pastures, tree cover, bridges and historic settlements.”</i>	Views from the immediate river side and in particular river crossings give classic framed views along Speyside		▪	▪

NATURESCOT LCT 287 BROAD FARMED VALLEY (Within Moray Council)					
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 30 & 31 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
	<i>“Views from the valley sides are more extensive, displaying the scale of the valley and its wider setting.”</i>				
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	This LCT is principally characterised by an enclosed river valley with undulating valley floors, and the sinuous River Spey through the farmed valley floor. The landscape is in a good condition with few detracting features resulting in regular opportunities for users of the landscape to experience a degree of remoteness and tranquillity when not in proximity to the B9015 or existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs. The broad valley with open fields and well wooded river corridor allows for a variety of views with surrounding hills dominating in the background. This landscape is likely to be highly susceptible to the type of development proposed, which could appear prominently on the skyline and within the setting of the attractive river corridor, although the presence of existing OHLs increase its capacity to accommodate the type of development proposed.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium to High		▪	▪
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following designations and highly valued assets: - the Spey Valley SLA; - River Spey SAC & SSSI; - the ‘Speyside Way’ Scotland Great Trail; - the B9015 provides attractive views and would be well used by tourists; and - small to large areas of ancient woodland. Approx one quarter of the LCT is covered by ancient woodland.	Regional landscape designation The LCT contains national walking trails and designated ecology sites		▪	▪
Features	<i>“Occasional but prominent historic towns, villages, distilleries and bridges, connected by winding roads which follow the river valley landform and impart a strong cultural identity of Speyside.”</i> <i>“The river itself is important for fishing and recreation, and supplies water for local whisky distilleries.”</i> <i>“The detailed mosaic of farmland, trees, historic settlements and structures of the valley contrasts with the simple, largely undeveloped landscape of forested valley sides and moorland summits.”</i>	The river valley provides a strong sense of place with features worthy of conservation		▪	▪
Quality / Condition	<i>“The Broad Farmed Valley LCT is dominated by the broad, sinuous central River Spey, and its distinctive wide, flat floodplain.”</i> <i>“The valley has a visually diverse vegetation cover. Extensive areas of dark, conifer forests and open heather moorland generally occur on the upper valley sides, such as the forest on the slopes of Ben Aigan.”</i>	A good quality landscape with historic sites and traditional houses, the quality of the landscape has deteriorated slightly due to development of new housing sites and some elements are substitutable		▪	
VALUE SUMMARY	The LCT can be experienced from the “Speyside Way’ through the entire valley, the B9015 would be used by tourists on the Whisky Trail through Speyside to visit the distilleries and is also used as part of the North Coast 250 tourist route, providing key recreational resource for visitors and residents. Visitors to Earth Pillars viewpoint in Ordiequish also look out across the landscape.	Value is Medium to High		▪	▪
				SENSITIVITY	
SENSITIVITY	LCT 287 OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value			Medium to High	

NATURESCOT LCT 287 - BROAD FARMED VALLEY (Within Moray Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> The Proposed Development is not located within LCT 287 and therefore would only introduce indirect impacts. Construction activity, including felling on the Hill of Ordiequish, the progressive installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes, or potentially via helicopters, through the River Spey valley and on the Hill of Ordiequish would be perceptible from the northern extent of the LCT, around Inchberry. The well-wooded valley to the south and surrounding topography restricts any more distant perception. While there would be no direct impact, the additional height and movement of construction activity immediately to the north would be out of character in the local landscape and introduce indirect impacts to tranquillity and visual amenity through the introduction of new detracting built features. While there would be no direct impact on the wider landscape, the perception of construction across the northern extent of the LCT would slightly reduce the overall perception and experience of the landscape. Local Impact on the River Spey valley - Low to Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 287 – Negligible to Low.	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 287: Negligible to Low	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect on the River Spey valley: Moderate Adverse (non-significant) This would be non-significant as despite construction works being perceptible, there would be no direct impacts on the landscape. Overall effect on LCT 287: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development would pass within 500 m to the north of the LCT through the Spey Valley SLA, within the adjacent LCT 284 Coastal Farmlands, and would be perceived over a length of approximately 3.5 km from within the northern extents of the LCT. The well wooded valley to the south quickly contains views and perception of the development, being barely perceptible beyond Inchberry and indirect impacts would be localised. The Proposed Development would be seen in conjunction with and just beyond existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs from the B9015 and ‘Speyside Way’ looking north, exacerbating an existing wirescaping effect in the skyline with the introduction of additional taller towers through the valley and on the Hill of Ordiequish. A large area of felling on Ordiequish Hill would make towers more prominent on the steep hillside to the northeast. The landscape is transiently experienced on footpaths and on the B9015 and more minor roads and the introduction of an additional detrimental built feature in the context of the highly scenic river valley would introduce indirect impacts on perceived tranquillity, its rural setting and visual amenity. The Proposed Development would also slightly deteriorate the experience and interaction for users and how they perceive the landscapes as they travel between them. Likewise, there would be no impact on the SLA within this LCT or impact relating to the perception of the local landscape. Potential impacts are recorded within LCT 284. Local Impact on the River Spey valley - Low. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 287 – Negligible.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Low Overall magnitude of change on LCT 287: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect on the River Spey valley: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 287: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> There would be a minor change in terms of perception of the Proposed Development in summer months due to the additional screening provided by deciduous vegetation through the valley floor and alongside the B9015 and ‘Speyside Way’. The Proposed Development would remain a prominent new vertical feature within the landscape to the north where gaps in vegetation allows views northwards. Local Impact on the River Spey valley – Negligible to Low. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 287 - No Change.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Negligible to Low Overall magnitude of change on LCT 287: No Change	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect on the River Spey valley: Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 287: Neutral (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Management felling planting back to the edge of the OC and forest edge fringe planting within the OC is likely to have established in this time (refer to Appendix 7.6 Forestry Landscape Mitigation Principles). The management felling planting and forest edge fringe planting on Ordiequish Hill is anticipated to partially screen the lower to mid-portions of individual towers on the steep hillside to the northeast of the LCT when viewed from the River Spey valley, slightly improving the impression and perception of the local and adjoining landscape. Forest edge fringe planting would soften the appearance of the artificially straight tract of open forestry by making the edges more organic and natural looking in the landscape. However, the Proposed Development would remain visible through the River Spey valley in proximity to Ordiequish. Local Impact on the River Spey valley - Negligible to Low. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 287 – No Change.		<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Negligible to Low Overall magnitude of change on LCT 287: No Change	<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local effect on the River Spey valley: Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 287: Neutral (non-significant)

Table 23 - Naturescot LCT 284 Coastal Farmland - Moray & Nairn (Moray Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 284 COASTAL FARMLAND - MORAY & NAIRN (Within Moray Council)					
Representative viewpoints 17, 26, 28, 60 & 65 are located within the LCT 284. Viewpoints 29 and 62 are located within adjacent LCTs and look into this LCT. (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ pages 8, 13 & 16 for viewpoint locations).					
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos : Photos 32, 33 & 34 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment		LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“Expansive, open, flat to undulating coastal plain”</i> <i>“Large scale open landscape. Large scale field pattern.”</i>	Landscape is open in character comprised of predominantly agricultural landform		■	
Landform	<i>“Expansive, open, flat to undulating coastal plain landscape with frequent, small landforms of fluvio-glacial sands and gravels, often topped with forests, gorse or rougher grasslands.”</i> <i>“Broadly meandering burns and the lower reaches of rivers, often associated with native woodland and wetlands, providing relatively natural features in a highly, modified landscape.”</i>	Landscape is of smooth regular flowing topography with some rising hills to the south		■	
Land cover	<i>“Predominantly simple agricultural landscape, punctuated by stone built farms and villages which are connected by an extensive network of rural roads.”</i> <i>“Farming is a mix of arable with some pasture, although in many areas arable is dominant and these land holdings tend to be large scale and associated with grain silos.”</i> <i>“Broadleaf woodlands and shelterbelts associated with gardens and designed landscapes.”</i>	Landscape is principally comprised of open coastal plain used for agriculture with some long strands of coniferous woodland		■	
Texture	<i>“Variation in field pattern, forms of enclosure, tree cover, settlement, road patterns and water bodies which illustrate distinctive differences between the flat former wetland and the more undulating, drier soils.”</i> <i>“Patchwork of mixed arable and pasture fields, yellow flowering gorse and broom, with shelter belts and plantations on drier land.”</i> <i>“Conifer plantations which coalesce to create elongated bands of dark colour contrasting strongly with the paler colours of arable land.”</i> <i>“The poorer soils and well-drained slopes of glacial deposits support plantation forests and woodlands, and broad leaved woodlands are often associated with policy plantings, farms and settlements.”</i>	Simple and sweeping lines, linear features and patterns		■	
Built Environment	<i>“This is a relatively well settled landscape, and the most densely populated area outside of Inverness, with several large established towns, numerous historic planned towns, villages, farms and rural houses.”</i> <i>“Predominantly simple agricultural landscape, punctuated by stone built farms and villages which are connected by an extensive network of rural roads.”</i> <i>“Localised areas of broadleaf woodland and shelterbelts tend to be associated with the designed landscape of historic estates. The larger of these include the Brodie Castle, Darnaway Castle, Gordonstoun House, Innes House, Gordon Castle and Cullen House estates.”</i> <i>“Established main communication routes of rail and trunk roads linking the larger settlements, off which run the network of minor rural roads.”</i>	Well settled landscape, predominantly rural		■	
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>“The rising hills immediately to the south can be dominant in views providing a simple backdrop of upland moorland and contain at intervals windfarms and telecom masts. Pylon lines sit to the immediate foreground and are backclothed by the hills, wind turbines at Findhorn, grain silos, modern farm buildings, aircraft buildings and towers, out-of-town business parks, industrial buildings, traditional and modern distilleries, and pylons.”</i> - A 132 kV OHL runs through the majority of the LCT and in proximity to the Proposed Development, joins and runs closely with a 275 kV OHL through the River Spey valley and upon crossing the River Spey. <i>“The A96 is a dominant feature through the landscape to the east and west of Elgin and to the north of the Proposed Development and the Spey valley.”</i>	Two existing OHL routes lie within the LCT crossing the River Spey. Additional urbanising influences associated with the prominent A96 to the north and telecom and windfarms through the LCT also form detracting features		■	

NATURESCOT LCT 284 COASTAL FARMLAND - MORAY & NAIRN (Within Moray Council)

Representative viewpoints 17, 26, 28, 60 & 65 are located within the LCT 284. Viewpoints 29 and 62 are located within adjacent LCTs and look into this LCT. (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' pages 8, 13 & 16 for viewpoint locations).

Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 32, 33 & 34 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.

SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
Perceptual aspects	<i>"There are occasional panoramic views across the plain, out to sea and across the Moray Firth from higher land. In the foreground of views, scattered but prominent natural and built features punctuate the horizontal grain of the agricultural landscape. These include sand and gravel hills, castle towers, wind turbines at Findhorn, grain silos, modern farm buildings, aircraft buildings and towers, out-of-town business parks, industrial buildings, traditional and modern distilleries, and pylons."</i>	Relatively tranquil with some urbanising influences		■	
Visual Amenity	<i>"The expansive, open landscape is generally one of wide horizons, with views only foreshortened by low, folding landforms, occasional small hills, and forests. There is great intervisibility with other LCTs."</i> <i>"The rising hills immediately to the south can be dominant in views providing a simple backdrop of upland moorland and contain at intervals windfarms and telecom masts."</i>	An expansive and open landscape with some panoramic views. Some rising slopes to the south however contain views to a degree		■	
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	This LCT is principally characterised by a patchwork of mixed arable and pasture fields in an open, expansive landscape with occasional small hills and forests. The Proposed Development would cross the southeast corner of the LCT, with the well wooded River Spey on the eastern boundary. Existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs are prominent within the broad river valley, climbing up the forested slopes of Ordiequish Hill within the adjacent landscape (LCT 293) to the east. The landscape is generally in a good condition, although heavily farmed, and feels slightly more developed than the more elevated landscapes to the south. The openness and broad views occasionally afforded with intermittent blocks of woodland and well wooded river corridor means that the wider landscape is likely to be moderately susceptible to the type of development proposed, which could appear prominently on the skyline.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium		■	

VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR

Recognition	The LCT contains the following designations and features considered to be of high value: - Spey Valley SLA within the southeastern extent of the LCT; 'Moray Coast' trail and 'Speyside Way' Scotland Great Trails, National Cycle Network (Route 1), the Whisky Trail and North East 250 Tourist Route; - Gordan Castle (Bog of Gight), Innes House gardens and designed landscapes, 2 km north of the Proposed Development; - RAMSAR (Moray and Nairn Coast) and RAMSAR, SPA (Loch Spynie); - Moray and Nairn Coast SPA; - Lower River Spey - Spey Bay & River Spey SAC; - Spey Bay SSSI and Spynie Quarry SSSI; - Berryhillock, Fochabers and Garmouth, Kingston Conservation Areas; - a key public viewpoint (Earth Pillars); and - frequent small to large areas of ancient woodland.	Local landscape designation Numerous national and regional recreational trails and tourist routes Ecology and heritage features in addition to key viewpoints			■
Features	<i>"Historic features include early medieval castles and earthworks, 17th-19th Century designed landscapes, and remnants of the 19th Century rail network"</i> <i>"Localised areas of broadleaf woodland and shelterbelts tend to be associated with the designed landscape of historic estates. The larger of these include the Brodie Castle, Darnaway Castle, Gordonstoun House, Innes House, Gordon Castle and Cullen House estates."</i> <i>"More open parts of coastal farmland around Elgin and to its west are also punctuated by a number of more modest designed landscapes associated with a string of smaller 18th and early 19th Century country houses including Boath House, Dalvey, Moy, Invererne, Grange Hall, Milton Brodie, Inverugie and Pitgaveny House."</i>	Ordinary landscape, with features worthy of conservation		■	

NATURESCOT LCT 284 COASTAL FARMLAND - MORAY & NAIRN (Within Moray Council)					
Representative viewpoints 17, 26, 28, 60 & 65 are located within the LCT 284. Viewpoints 29 and 62 are located within adjacent LCTs and look into this LCT. (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' pages 8, 13 & 16 for viewpoint locations).					
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 32, 33 & 34 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment		LOW	MED	HIGH
	<i>"The more exposed landscape to the east of Fochabers contains the 18th Century designed landscapes of Cairnfield House and Letterfourie House are enclosed in more sheltered folds in the landscape."</i>				
Quality / Condition	An expansive landscape with panoramic views. Landform is predominantly flat albeit with some rising hills punctuated by masts and windfarms.	A quality landscape with many features not substitutable containing some detracting urban features		▪	
VALUE SUMMARY	Landscape designation occurs in the southeastern section of the LCT only although there are numerous ecology and heritage features across the landscape. The area is relatively well settled with several established towns. Good recreational value with trails and scenic trails and notable tourist attractions. The overall susceptibility of this area is therefore considered to be Medium beyond the River Spey valley and High within the Spey Valley SLA.	Value is Medium to High		▪	▪
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	LCT 284 OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value		Medium		

NATURESCOT LCT 284 – COASTAL FARMLAND - MORAY & NAIRN (Within Moray Council)

Note: LCT 284 has been scoped out of assessment within The Highland Council due to appreciable distance from the Proposed Development and the low likelihood of significant effects.

LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS

During Construction

For the majority of the LCT there would be no direct impacts as the Proposed Development runs in the mid to far-distance to south and is only distantly perceived from more open or slightly elevated areas of the landscape. Direct impacts would only occur at the easternmost extent of the LCT, to the south of Fochabers within the Spey Valley SLA between Teindland Wood at the B9103 and the lower slopes of Ordiequish Hill and would be experienced by people using the ‘Speyside Way’, local roads and visitors to the Earth Pillars viewpoint. Construction activity, including the installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes and the introduction of two diamonds crossings (OHL Crossings 2 & 3) around Orbliston would be openly perceived within the Spey valley, although seen in proximity to the existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs. The additional height and movement of construction would be out of character within the landscape of high scenic value, impacting its setting and sense of tranquillity. Felling within LCT 284 is minimal, however there would be substantial areas of felling and progressive installation of towers on Ordiequish Hill, within LCT 293, to the east of the River Spey which would be highly prominent and indirectly impact the perception and experience for people within the River Spey valley. Proposed access tracks are not anticipated to result in any additional permanent change to vegetation cover within the LCT as they would be within the OC.

Local impact on tranquillity, visual amenity and the setting of the River Spey valley – **Medium to High**.

Overall magnitude of change on LCT 284 – **Negligible**.

Operational Phase Year of Opening

Winter

The Proposed Development traverses the southeastern extent of the LCT for approximately 4.3 km between Teindland Wood at the B9103 around Orbliston and the lower slopes of Ordiequish Hill immediately east of the River Spey. The development would be sited parallel and in close proximity to the existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs through the low-lying farmed landscape of the River Spey valley, rising onto higher ground beyond the River Spey onto Ordiequish Hill and into the Wood of Ordiequish within LCT 293. Whilst the existing OHLs provide a context in which the Proposed Development would not be entirely incongruous within the landscape, there would be an increase in wirescaping as a result of three OHLs crossing the River Spey valley in close proximity to each other, with the new OHL noticeably taller. Felling to within and beyond the OC within the Wood of Ordiequish, in LCT 293, would be prominent to the east of the River Spey, increasing the perception of towers on the hill slope and result in a noticeable gap through the forestry on the hillside. This would result in indirect impacts on LCT 284 in terms of the perception of the local landscape and visual amenity experienced by people. In proximity to Orbliston, to the east of the B9103, two diamond crossings (OHL Crossings 2 & 3) and angle towers would be highly prominent, seen in conjunction with the existing OHLs and Proposed Development, resulting in a cluster of detracting built features and wirescaping.

The landscape between the B9103 and Wood of Ordiequish is both transiently and statically experienced by residents, visitors and users of important tourist routes and long-distance paths as well as from the Earth Pillars public viewpoint on Ordiequish Hill immediately east of the river. While there are existing detracting features through the landscape including local roads and the existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs, the addition of another OHL with noticeably taller towers would further deteriorate the perception, setting and scenic value of the local landscape. While the characteristic features of the landscape would not substantially change, with minimal change to vegetation cover or landscape structure, it is considered that at a local level, in proximity to Orbliston and within the River Spey valley and Spey Valley SLA the magnitude of change is considered to be Medium due to further deterioration of the scenic value of the landscape through additional detracting vertical infrastructure.

At a wider level of the LCT, the Proposed Development in the easternmost extents would not change the perception of the remaining landscape to the north, being broadly well contained by large areas of coniferous plantation. Therefore, when considering the LCT at the broader scale the magnitude of change would be Low, given the Proposed Development intersects a small proportion of the LCT in the lower southeastern corner and in proximity to existing OHLs.

Local impact on tranquillity, visual amenity and the setting of the River Spey valley – **Medium**.

Overall magnitude of change on LCT 284 – **Negligible**.

Summer

There would only be a minor change in terms of perception of the Proposed Development in summer months due to the additional screening provided by intermittent deciduous roadside, riverside and field boundary vegetation, although most of the surrounding vegetation is coniferous forestry, in particular on Ordiequish Hill. The Proposed Development would remain a prominent new vertical feature within the landscape.

Local impact on tranquillity, visual amenity and the setting of the River Spey valley – **Medium**.

Overall magnitude of change on LCT 284 – **Negligible**.

SENSITIVITY OF
LCT

Medium

MAGNITUDE OF
CHANGE (IMPACT)

During Construction

Local level impact:

Medium to High

Overall magnitude of
change on LCT 284:

Negligible

Operational Phase - Year
of Opening (Winter)

Local level impact:

Medium

Overall magnitude of
change on LCT 284:

Negligible

Operational Phase - Year
of Opening (Summer)

Local level impact:

Medium

Overall magnitude of
change on LCT 284:

Negligible

SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT
SENSITIVITY + IMPACT

During Construction

Local effect on tranquillity, visual
amenity and the setting of the
River Spey valley:

Moderate Adverse (significant)

Overall effect on LCT 284:

Negligible Adverse (non-
significant)

Operational Phase - Year of
Opening (Winter)

Local effect on tranquillity, visual
amenity and the setting of the
River Spey valley:

Moderate Adverse (significant)

Overall effect on LCT 284:

Negligible Adverse (non-
significant)

Operational Phase - Year of
Opening (Summer)

Local effect on tranquillity, visual
amenity and the setting of the
River Spey valley:

Moderate (significant)

Overall effect on LCT 284:

Negligible Adverse (non-
significant)

NATURESCOT LCT 284 – COASTAL FARMLAND - MORAY & NAIRN (Within Moray Council)

Note: LCT 284 has been scoped out of assessment within The Highland Council due to appreciable distance from the Proposed Development and the low likelihood of significant effects.

LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Management felling planting back to the edge of the OC and forest edge fringe planting within the OC is likely to have established in this time (refer to Appendix 7.6 Forestry Landscape Mitigation Principles). The management felling planting and forest edge fringe planting is anticipated to partially screen the lower to mid-portions of individual towers on the steep hillside of Ordiequish Hill when viewed from the River Spey valley, slightly improving the impression and perception of the local and adjoining landscape. Forest edge fringe planting would soften the appearance of the artificially straight tract of open forestry by making the edges more organic and natural looking in the landscape. However, the Proposed Development would remain highly visible through the River Spey valley and in proximity to Ordiequish. Local impact on tranquillity, visual amenity and the setting of the River Spey valley – Low to Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 284 – Negligible.		<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 284: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local effect on Orbliston and the River Spey valley: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 284: Negligible Adverse (non-significant)

Table 24 - Naturescot LCT 293 Low Forested Hills (Moray Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 293 LOW FORESTED HILLS (Within Moray Council)					
Representative viewpoint 29 is located at Earth Pillars on the edge of the LCT and viewpoints 28 & 30 are located within the adjacent LCT 284 Coastal Farmlands and look back to this LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' page 16 for viewpoint locations).					
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos : Photos 35, 36 & 37 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“The hills form a gentle arc, aligned roughly west–east. The land rises relatively steeply in the north and west up to about 300 metres, from the coastal plain and Spey Valley. Further east the height of hills gradually decreases as it merges with lower agricultural land in Banff and Buchan and is punctuated by distinctive conical hills such as the Bin of Cullen and Knock Hill.”</i> <i>“On their south and east sides, the hills have very gentle slopes and indistinct, broadly curving tops which, when viewed from within the elevated interior, form a sweeping, barely undulating skyline.”</i>	Landscape is sloped with land falling away to coastal planes to the north		▪	
Landform	<i>“A ridge of higher ground between the coastal farmland to the north and the upland farmland basin to the south.”</i> <i>“Steeper slopes to the north descend from about 300 metres to the coastal plain; gentler southern slopes descend to the upland farmland of 100-150 metres.”</i> <i>“Several short, high level, valleys are formed in the shallow saddles between the hills and include small burns.”</i>	Landscape is elevated with steeper slopes to the north and shallower to the south		▪	▪
Land cover	<i>“Pastoral fields, mostly divided by fences, adjoin the lower edges of the forestry. Extensive woodland, mostly coniferous, caps the higher ground. It also occurs to lower levels on the sharper north and western slopes.”</i>	Landscape is principally comprised of coniferous forestry		▪	
Texture	<i>“The ridge forms a simple, generally wooded, skyline to the surrounding lower farmed land, coast and valleys.”</i> - Extensive woodland, mostly coniferous, caps the higher ground. It also occurs to lower levels on the sharper north and western slopes.	Predominantly elevated landscape forming a ridgeline with extensive areas of coniferous woodland planting		▪	
Built Environment	<i>“Settlement is very sparse, consisting of scattered farmsteads and cottages served by a network of minor roads that reach uphill from the shallow valleys and villages of adjacent character types.”</i> <i>“Few roads traverse the ridge; they usually end at a high farmstead. Roads are absent in forested areas; however, an extensive network of forest tracks is used for recreation.”</i>	Settlement is very sparse			▪
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	- The A96 is a prominent detracting feature between Fochabers and Forgie. - Existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs pass through the Wood of Ordiequish with an associated corridor of forestry clearance. Otherwise, there are few detracting features in a predominantly rural, forested landscape.	A96 road corridor and existing OHLs form detracting features within the landscape, although not broadly perceived		▪	
Perceptual aspects	<i>“Occasional broader views are extensive from this higher ground which feels relatively remote and contrasts with the neighbouring busier areas to the north and south.”</i> - This area contrasts with the busier, more intensively farmed areas that surround it. The lack of through-routes means it can feel relatively remote.	Relatively tranquil through extensive areas of forestry		▪	▪
Visual Amenity	<i>“On the elevated northern and western periphery there are far-reaching views from passes to the coastal plain and Moray Firth. Southwards, views are extensive across the adjacent farmland with its planned villages and towns, to the Speyside hills and the Cairngorms area.”</i> - Views afforded from the Heritage Path 'Buckie Fishwives' between Buckle and Newmill.	Occasional long-distance views available from the elevated landscape. Otherwise views very contained by extensive forestry and woodland		▪	
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	The landscape of the LCT surrounding the Proposed Development is principally characterised by large areas of woodland and coniferous forestry, capping the higher ground to the east of the River Spey. Settlement is sparse and the landscape is predominantly experienced from a network of twisting local lanes through the forestry. Existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs and the A96 are the main detracting features in an otherwise unspoilt landscape. Due to extensive woodland and forestry coverage and lack of vantage points from which to experience the landscape, it is relatively capable of accommodating the type of development proposed. The overall susceptibility of this aspect area is therefore considered to be Medium.		Susceptibility to Change is Medium		

NATURESCOT LCT 293 LOW FORESTED HILLS (Within Moray Council)					
Representative viewpoint 29 is located at Earth Pillars on the edge of the LCT and viewpoints 28 & 30 are located within the adjacent LCT 284 Coastal Farmlands and look back to this LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ page 16 for viewpoint locations).					
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 35, 36 & 37 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following features and designations considered to be of high value: - the Spey Valley SLA on the western extent of the LCT and intersecting the Proposed Development over the lower to mid slopes of Ordiequish Hill; - the ‘Speyside Way’ on the western edge of the LCT; ‘Buckie Fishwives’ Heritage Path; - Gordan Castle (Bog of Gight) garden and designed landscape immediately north of Fochabers and 2 km from the Proposed Development; - key public viewpoints – Earth Pillars on Ordiequish Hill on the western edge of the LCT, looking west over the River Spey and Peeps View looking northwest at Gordon Castle; and - large areas of ancient woodland surrounding the Proposed Development within the LCT.	Regional landscape designation A number of valued features in addition to key views. Views afforded from the ‘Buckie Fishwives’ Heritage Path between Buckle and Newmill.		▪	▪
Features	<i>“The southern parts of the designed landscape of Cullen House take advantage of these characteristics in its 18th Century informal design. The long, sinuous valleys of the Rivers Isla and Deveron, with their alluvial soils, occur beyond the southern perimeter of the area.”</i> <i>“The remains of historic settlement are not extensive, with some prehistoric funerary cairns and a fort around the Bin of Cullen in the east. Agriculture in the valleys, and peat cutting on the high ground, has existed since mediaeval times. The rectilinear field pattern dates from the 17th or 18th Centuries.”</i>	Historic features are limited across the area, rarity therefore suggested a degree of conservation for those remaining.	▪	▪	
Quality / Condition	The elevated nature of the landscape affords expansive views from the ridgeline towards the wider landscape. Few detracting features across the landscape also allow for relatively clear and uninterrupted views.	A reasonable quality landscape with few detracting features and occasional clear elevated views.		▪	
VALUE SUMMARY	The LCT can be openly experienced from ‘Buckie Fishwives’ Heritage Path between Buckie and Newmill and while the ‘Speyside Way’ borders the western edge of the LCT, views into the adjoining forested landscape are well screened on lower lying landform. The overall value of the landscape is considered to be Medium to High due to the presence of the Spey Valley SLA.	Value is Medium to High		▪	▪
	SENSITIVITY				
SENSITIVITY	LCT 293 OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value				
	Medium to High				

NATURESCOT LCT 293 - LOW FORESTED HILLS (Within Moray Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> There would be substantial felling through the Wood of Ordiequish and the Spey Valley SLA within and beyond the OC, resulting in a broad, cleared corridor in which construction activity would be locally more prominent, particularly from the ‘Speyside Way’ to the west and A96 to the east. Construction activity, including felling and progressive installation of towers via cranes would be highly prominent on Ordiequish Hill from the Spey valley and ‘Speyside Way’ to the west, resulting in a local change to visual amenity and perceptual qualities as well as a noticeable change to land cover and introduction of a new, prominent, detracting, built feature within a highly scenic, designated landscape. The impacts are limited by the presence of extensive surrounding forestry which act to broadly contain changes to the local landscape, and by the presence of existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs provide a context in which the Proposed Development would not be entirely incongruous to the landscape. Local impact on Ordiequish Hill and through the Wood of Ordiequish – Medium to High. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 293 – Negligible to Low.	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall magnitude of change on LCT 293: Negligible to Low	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect on Ordiequish Hill and through the Wood of Ordiequish: Moderate to Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 293: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development intersects the LCT for approximately 5.6 km, traversing steep slopes of Ordiequish Hill immediately east of the River Spey and through the Wood of Ordiequish. A large corridor of felling would result in the new OHL being more prominent from the ‘Speyside Way’ to the west and A96 to the east with towers visible through the cleared area locally. A clearing through forestry on the western slopes of Ordiequish Hill would result in a highly noticeable change in landcover from the Spey valley and towers being more prominent and a degradation in terms of visual amenity and the perception of the low forested Ordiequish Hill from within the adjoining LCTs 284 & 287. There are two OHLs in relatively close proximity, 350 m and 1 km to the south which would be seen together briefly in a large area of clearing to the south of Ordiequish. The Proposed Development crosses mostly through woodland apart from a small area of small-scale pastoral fields to the east of the A96. At a local level, despite the presence of existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs, the Proposed Development would result in a deterioration in terms of the perception and visual amenity of Ordiequish Hill and the additional, detracting, built feature from the adjoining landscapes to the east and west and from highly valued tourist routes of the ‘Speyside Way’ and A96. At the wider level, extensive surrounding forestry broadly contains and limits perception of the local changes to the landscape associated with felling and introduction of a new OHL, which would not be anticipated to result in a substantial change to the key characteristics of LCT 293. Local impact on Ordiequish Hill and through the Wood of Ordiequish – Medium to High. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 293 – Negligible to Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall impact on LCT 293: Negligible to Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect on Ordiequish Hill and through the Wood of Ordiequish: Moderate to Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 293: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> Vegetation throughout the LCT is predominantly coniferous forestry and there is not anticipated to be a change in terms of the impacts on visual amenity and perceptual qualities during summer months with the Proposed Development and felled areas on the slopes of Ordiequish Hill remaining prominent. Local impact on Ordiequish Hill and through the Wood of Ordiequish – Medium to High. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 293 – Negligible to Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall magnitude of change on LCT 293: Negligible to Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect on Ordiequish Hill and through the Wood of Ordiequish: Moderate to Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 293: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Management felling planting up to the edge of the OC and forest edge fringe planting within the OC on the western slopes of Ordiequish Hill is likely to have sufficiently established during this time to partially integrate and soften the appearance of the Proposed Development. Deciduous forest edge fringe planting (refer to Appendix 7.6 Forestry Landscape Mitigation Principles) would slightly soften the appearance of the artificially straight tract of open forestry by making the edges more organic and natural looking in the landscape within views from the Spey valley and ‘Speyside Way’ on the very western edge of the LCT. The management felling planting and forest edge fringe planting would partially screen the lower to mid-portions of some towers and restore a large area of forestry land cover, slightly improving impacts associated with visual amenity, land cover and the perceptual qualities of the local landscape, particularly through its perception from adjacent landscapes to the east and west. However, the Proposed Development would remain prominent above the tree line crossing the Wood of Ordiequish and a noticeable change in land cover would be permanent locally. Local impact on Ordiequish Hill and through the Wood of Ordiequish – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 293 – Negligible to Low.		<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 293: Negligible to Low	<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local effect on Ordiequish Hill and through the Wood of Ordiequish: Moderate Adverse (non-significant) This would reduce to non-significant due to additional characteristic vegetation softening impacts on visual

NATURESCOT LCT 293 - LOW FORESTED HILLS (Within Moray Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
			amenity, land cover and perceptual qualities locally. Overall effect on LCT 293: Minor Adverse (non-significant)

Table 25 - Naturescot LCT 288 Upland Farmland (Moray Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 288 UPLAND FARMLAND (Within Moray Council)					
Representative viewpoints 31, 32, 33, 37 and 63 are present within this LCT. Viewpoints 34, 35 and 64 lie within the LCT 27 Farmed Moorland Edge to the south (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ pages 17, 18 & 20 for viewpoint locations).					
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 38, 39 & 40 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“Large scale, open landscape with a simple vegetation pattern.”</i>	Large scale with gentle undulation and medium to large scale fields		▪	
Landform	<i>“Broad shallow short valleys, lower areas of the low, broad, gently undulating and widely spaced Low Forested Hills, which are the far northern and eastern margins of a large upland landmass descending from the Cairngorms.”</i> <i>“Gentle rounded hills and valleys show little obvious sign of glacial activity.”</i>	Undulating landscape containing some broad valleys		▪	
Land cover	<i>“The farming area encompasses the broad shallow valleys largely lying to the north of the River Isla, draining to the east via this river.”</i> <i>“Predominance of farming in valleys and the central basin.”</i> <i>“Improved pasture is mixed with large areas of arable land, often in large scale, recently amalgamated, rectilinear fields.”</i> <i>“Relatively small pockets of native woodland exist, usually associated with settlement. On higher slopes, in pockets between forests, are small areas of heather moorland, and peaty soils and bog occur in poorer drained land.”</i>	Landscape is principally comprised of large-scale agricultural farmland of mixed use. Small woodland parcels and areas of heather moorland	▪	▪	
Texture	<i>“In some areas there is a patchwork of small rectangular and irregular fields of mainly pasture and rough grass, associated with older, smaller farms and small holdings.”</i> <i>“Broad, sweeping, rectilinear fields of the central farmland, interspersed with patches of smaller fields, peaty soils, marginal pastures and small plantations.”</i>	Open landscape of predominantly agricultural land, with small areas of woodland, peat soils and moorland		▪	
Built Environment	<i>“A network of local and major roads is concentrated around Keith, the only town, and roads typically radiate outwards in all direction to passes between hill tops.”</i> <i>“Keith retains its historic, intimate, planned core, distilleries and bonded warehouses. New development on the edge of the town is relatively prominent in this open landscape.”</i> <i>“Relatively well settled farmland area, with an even distribution of farms accessed by a network of rural roads. Small farmsteads often partially enclosed by isolated woodland pockets.”</i>	Well settled with farmsteads connect by rural road networks. Major roads radiating from Keith	▪	▪	
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>“Similar to the road network, pylon lines are concentrated within this area, focussing centrally on Blackhillock Substation (currently expanding) the number of which can be regular features in views. Wind turbines, modern farm structures and houses are occasional but prominent features.”</i> - Existing OHLs are concentrated in the area around Keith and radiate from Blackhillock Substation, which is a detracting feature to the south of Keith, together with Keith substation. - The A96 runs from the northwest of the LCT, through Keith then to the south and the A95 travels east to west through the LCT and Keith, both forming prominent detracting features with moving traffic.	A96 and A95 major road corridors and numerous existing 275 kV and 400 kV OHLs within farmland around Keith form dominant detracting features within the fairly open landscape	▪		
Perceptual aspects	<i>“Limited visual diversity.”</i> - Busier, less tranquil feeling landscape than surrounding LCTs with more major and minor roads, larger settlements and numerous OHLs.	Tranquillity infrequent with some large road corridors and frequent development and detracting features	▪		
Visual Amenity	<i>“There are expansive views across open farmland.”</i>	Open landscape with expansive and long-distance views towards elevated features against the skyline	▪	▪	

NATURESCOT LCT 288 UPLAND FARMLAND (Within Moray Council)					
Representative viewpoints 31, 32, 33, 37 and 63 are present within this LCT. Viewpoints 34, 35 and 64 lie within the LCT 27 Farmed Moorland Edge to the south (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' pages 17, 18 & 20 for viewpoint locations).					
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 38, 39 & 40 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
	<i>"The eye is drawn to the large scale, undulating form of the skyline to the north, with its occasional conical summits, conifer-clad hill tops, and valley passes, and landmark hills in adjoining landscapes, including the Bin of Cullen, Knock Hill and Meikle Balloch Hill, seen from settlement and roads."</i> - On the elevated western periphery of this area, there are far-reaching views from passes to the coastal plain to the east, as well as views to moorland edge and mountains to the south from higher areas.				
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	The landscape of the LCT surrounding the Proposed Development is principally characterised by well settled, expansive and rolling upland farmland with small pockets of woodland scattered throughout. Broad views are typically focussed on hills in adjoining landscapes including the Bin of Cullen, Knock Hill and Meikle Balloch Hill. The landscape around Keith consists of a network of major and minor roads, OHLs and urban development while Blackhillock Substation is a prominent detracting feature to the south of Keith. The landscape is moderately capable of accommodating the type of development proposed due to the number of existing detracting built features including numerous OHLs.	Susceptibility to Change is Low to Medium	▪	▪	
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following designations considered to be of high value: - Den of Pitlurg SSSI, Mill Wood SSSI, Shiel Wood Pastures SSSI and Moss of Crombie SSSI; - Conservation Area (Keith Fife Keith & Keith Mid Street); - some small to medium sized areas of ancient woodland; and - Heritage Path: ('Buckie Fishwives' which runs from Buckie to Newmill and an unnamed path between Keith and Tullich).	Undesignated landscape Ecology and heritage features present The landscape contains a number of valued features in addition to key views. Views afforded from the Heritage Paths across the LCT. Lack of recreational trails		▪	
Features	<i>"Mills and distilleries provide an occasional reminder of the rural economy of the area in the later 19th Century"</i> <i>"Keith retains its historic, intimate, planned core, distilleries and bonded warehouses."</i>	Some evidence of ecology and historic features	▪	▪	
Quality / Condition	The open nature of the landscape affords expansive views, notably from top areas towards the Cairngorms and higher moorland edges to the south and east across Buchan plain. The landscape contains many detracting features and views of industrial features (suchas Blackhillock Substation) but broadly comprises open farmland.	A reasonable quality landscape with detracting features and expansive views towards wider LCTs such as coastal plains	▪	▪	
VALUE SUMMARY	Undesignated landscape with ecology and heritage features present. Ordinary quality landscape. Limited recreational value. Detracting features present.	Value is Low To Medium	▪	▪	
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	LCT 288 OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value		Low To Medium		

NATURESCOT LCT 288 – UPLAND FARMLAND (Within Moray Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> There would be limited felling required through the fairly open agricultural landscape within and beyond the OC, the most noticeable being through a large block of woodland to the north of Aultmore and within the Wood of Ordiequish on the northwestern edge of the LCT in proximity to the A96. The installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes, introduction of a diamond crossings (OHL Crossings 4 & 5) and numerous angle towers as well as the formation of access tracks through open fields would all contribute to construction activity being highly prominent and detracting through a large proportion of the LCT within the open farmland between the Wood of Ordiequish and Meikle Balloch Hill. The setting of the broad valley of the River Isla to the east of Keith would be particularly impacted with construction being prominently seen on either side of the river from local Core Paths, the A96 and ‘Buckie Fishwives’ Heritage Path, impacting the local visual amenity and views to surrounding forested hills such as Meikle Balloch Hill and, Knock Hill. Felling of woodland and tree groups would be required to accommodate the OC through and on the edge of the adjacent LCT 27 which would also be noticeable from footpaths and roads around Keith, together with the progressive installation of towers on Meikle Balloch Hill. Local impact on the visual amenity, perceptual qualities and setting of the River Isla – Medium to High. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 288 – Medium.	Low to Medium	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Medium to High Overall magnitude of change on LCT 288: Medium	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect on the setting of the River Isla: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 288: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development traverses the LCT for approximately 11.9 km from the Wood of Ordiequish to the northwest to Meikle Balloch Hill to the southeast, passing to the north of Keith. At the northwestern end the new OHL would pass to the north of Forgie, crossing the A96 where it would appear more prominently as a result of a wide corridor of felling within the Wood of Ordiequish. The Proposed Development then runs through open, slightly elevated farmland on the mid slopes of Millstone Hill and over 1 km to the north of existing OHLs. A relatively large area of felling within woodland to the north of Aultmore would represent a noticeable change in land cover locally and the Proposed Development passes to the north of Newmill on higher landform above Keith, then turns south and crosses lower ground to the east of Keith into the attractive local valley of the River Isla. Views within the setting of the River Isla, from surrounding roads including the A95, Core Paths and the ‘Buckie Fishwives’ Heritage Path are backdropped by surrounding forested hills including Meikle Balloch Hill to the south and Knock Hill to the east. To the southeast of Keith, the Proposed Development would be perceived across the lower slopes of Meikle Balloch Hill although seen in the context of the A96 corridor, Blackhillock Substation and existing OHLs on all sides and backclothed by landform and forestry within The Balloch. The Proposed Development with associated angle towers and diamond crossings (OHL Crossings 4 & 5) would be prominent through the River Isla valley and upon crossing the A95 on lower ground, resulting in a change on visual amenity through an increase of wirescaping and introduction of new towers on all sides and further impacts on the quality and perceptual characteristics of the local landscape. There would be a noticeable increase in detracting built features including more prominent angle towers and a cluster of towers associated with the diamond crossings. Within the wider landscape, while the structure and land cover of the landscape wont noticeably change, the Proposed Development would be highly visible through the open, farmed landscape surrounding Keith and would predominantly be seen in the context of existing OHLs and major roads that radiate from the town. The presence of existing detracting features reduces the likely magnitude of change, but impacts on visual amenity, quality and perceptual characteristics on the wider landscape would still occur a result of the increase of detracting built features and increased wirescaping through the open landscape. Local impact on the visual amenity, perceptual qualities and setting of the River Isla – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 288 – Low to Medium.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 288: Low to Medium	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect on the setting of the River Isla: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 288: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> There would be no anticipated change to landscape impacts in summer months due to the relative lack of deciduous vegetation through the open farmland. The Proposed Development and impacts associated with visual amenity, additional, detracting, built features and perceptual qualities are anticipated to remain. Local impact on the visual amenity, perceptual qualities and setting of the River Isla – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 288 – Low to Medium.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 288: Low to Medium	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect on the setting of the River Isla: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 288: Minor Adverse (non-significant)

Table 26 - Naturescot LCT 27 Farmed Moorland Edge – Aberdeenshire (Moray and Aberdeenshire Council Planning Authorities)

NATURESCOT LCT 27 FARMED MOORLAND EDGE – ABERDEENSHIRE (Within Moray Council and Aberdeenshire Council)					
Representative viewpoints 34, 35, 56 & 64 are located within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ page 18 for viewpoint locations). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 41, 42 & 43 for key features and characteristics of this LCT					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“Generally small to medium scale landscape.”</i> <i>“Small, enclosed fields predominate.”</i>	Meikle Balloch Hill is a dominant hill feature within the LCT			▪
Landform	<i>“Low rolling hills and valleys with some rocky ridges on higher slopes.”</i> <i>“Intricate pattern of fields and woods and a tightly undulating relief often including areas of hummocky landform at the foot of steep slopes but also narrow flat-bottomed valleys.”</i>	Undulating landscape with ridges and occasional narrow valleys		▪	
Land cover	<i>“Agricultural landscape, livestock farming with small enclosed fields with more intensive mixed farmland occur at the core of the Cromar Uplands.”</i> <i>“Dark heather-clad and forested hills often form the backdrop to these upland fringe areas.”</i> <i>“Marginal upland farming, sheep grazing and patches of gorse scrub, birch and willow occurs at the transition with the uplands”</i> <i>“Areas of moorland are interspersed with farmland on higher slopes.”</i> <i>“More intensive farmland is present on softly rolling ground”</i> <i>“Areas of waterlogged ground and small bogs in places, particularly at the transition with moorland or in wetter valley bottoms”</i> <i>“Clumps of broadleaf trees and shelterbelts pattern farmed lower slopes”</i>	An agricultural landscape, livestock farming with small, enclosed fields predominates with extensive forestry on higher slopes		▪	
Texture	<i>“Small fields, woodland cover of broadleaf clumps and shelterbelts”</i> <i>“Scrubby patches of birch, willow and Scots pine occur in more marginal areas.”</i> <i>“Mixed policy-influenced plantings more common in some areas”</i>	Undulating agricultural landscape interspersed by areas of broadleaf woodland and conifer plantation. Enclosed field pattern			▪
Built Environment	<i>“Farm buildings of grey / brown stone are often marked by clumps of trees.”</i> <i>“Derelict buildings are particularly evident on marginal upland areas.”</i> <i>“Prehistoric monuments and artefacts, including stone circles, carved stone balls and souterrains.”</i>	Spare settlement pattern, with several historic features		▪	
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	- Detracting features include the A96 to the south of the Proposed Development and existing 275 kV OHL further south, which traverse the centre of the LCT. There is also a perception of the New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV overhead line in the northwestern extents. Otherwise, there are few detracting features in an otherwise attractive landscape. - There is a network of minor roads across the area. Occasional wind turbines are located in farmland, especially in the more southern reaches of this LCT.	Major road corridor in proximity to the Proposed Development, otherwise few detracting features		▪	
Perceptual aspects	<i>“Strong sense of history and culture, giving the landscape a timeless character.”</i> <i>“Marked by the contrast between bright smooth pasture in one and dark heather and forest in the other.”</i>	Tranquil landscape with a historic character			▪
Visual Amenity	<i>“Views focus on more pronounced hills in the Outlying Hills and Ridges, such as Tap o’Noth and The Buck, that lie within the surrounding Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire which backdrops these fringing landscapes.”</i>	The area has high scenic quality, and a rich and diverse character although with the presence of some detracting features associated with turbines and road corridors		▪	

NATURESCOT LCT 27 FARMED MOORLAND EDGE – ABERDEENSHIRE (Within Moray Council and Aberdeenshire Council)

Representative viewpoints 34, 35, 56 & 64 are located within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ page 18 for viewpoint locations).

Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 41, 42 & 43 for key features and characteristics of this LCT

SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	This LCT is predominantly agricultural and is characterised by rolling hills and valleys with rocky ridges and forests. The landscape is well wooded and largely contained by rolling topography and large areas of forestry. Detracting features include a major road and an existing OHL. The landscape within Moray is characterised by the mid to higher wooded slopes and exposed summit of Meikle Balloch Hill. Balloch Wood covers the majority of the hill with the broadly rounded summit open and affording the possibility of long-range panoramic views into the landscape to the west. Views from here would therefore be a highly valued perceptual quality of the landscape. Given the attractive qualities of Meikle Balloch Hill, which forms an important landmark in the area, it would not be highly capable of accommodating the type of development proposed.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium to High		▪	▪
VALUE					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following features and designations considered to be of high value: - Deveron Valley SLA covers the southern part of the LCT; - Tom Mor SSSI, Bin Quarry SSSI, Mortlach Moss SAC and SSSI, Whitehill SSSI and Den of Pitlurg SSSI; - Tips of Corsemaul SPA; and - medium to large areas of ancient woodland that cover approximately a quarter of the LCT.	Designated Landscape A number of national and locally recognised designations with large areas of ancient woodland across the LCT		▪	▪
Features	<i>“Strong sense of history and culture, giving the landscape a timeless character.”</i> <i>“Prehistoric monuments and artefacts, including stone circles, carved stone balls and souterrains.”</i> - Meikle Balloch Hill is a dominant feature.	Strong historic and cultural character			▪
Quality / Condition	The landscape is considered to have a high scenic character, undulating landform with a diverse character.	High quality landscape with some detracting features including the A96		▪	▪
VALUE SUMMARY	Designated landscape with a rich historical character with prehistoric monuments. Landscape character is diverse, enclosed, varied in vegetation pattern and topography with small scale field pattern providing interest. The LCT can be experienced from the Malt Whisky Trail and well-used informal footpaths on Meikle Balloch Hill and views afforded into LCT 288 Upland Farmland to the west would be highly valued together with the relative remoteness and tranquillity afforded within Balloch Wood and on the hill summits to the east of the larger settlement of Keith. The area is characterised by a backdrop of surrounding summits which indicates a high level of scenic quality.	Value is Medium to high		▪	▪
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	LCT 27 FARMED MOORLAND EDGE OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value		Medium to High		

Table 27 - Naturescot LCT 27 Farmed Moorland Edge – Aberdeenshire (Aberdeenshire Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 27 FARMED MOORLAND EDGE – ABERDEENSHIRE (Within Aberdeenshire Council)			
This section assesses the intersected area of LCT between Hill of Greenwood / Coachford and The Bin, as a distinctly separate landscape to that within Moray Council to the west of Meikle Balloch Hill. Impacts within Moray Council on the LCT have been assessed in a separate table below (refer to Table 28)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> The Proposed Development would intersect the LCT over a length of approximately 8.4 km, predominantly through arable farmland and occasional heather moorland, passing between deciduous and coniferous woodland on higher ground to the north of the A96. There would be relatively small areas of felling within the OC noticeable on the lower slopes of Meikle Balloch Hill and larger areas within and beyond the OC to the north of The Bin through Brownhill Plantation and Cumrie Plantation, which would result in a noticeable change to land cover but contained by surrounding landform and large areas of forestry. Construction activity including installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes, and access track formations through open fields and blocks of woodland, where existing tracks would be utilised, through slightly more elevated sections of the LCT would be highly prominent through the landscape, seen to the north of the A96 and The Bin. There would be a noticeable impact on the perception and visual amenity of the distinctive hill form of Meikle Balloch Hill. Besides the A96, recreational opportunities are limited, and construction would be relatively well contained by landform and woodland. However, there would be an impact on the perception and visual amenity of the wider landscape of LCT 27 through the introduction of detracting construction activity. Local impact on the perception of Meikle Balloch Hill – Low to Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 27 within Aberdeenshire – Low. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 27 (taking into account the combined effects within Moray Council) – Low.	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 27 within Aberdeenshire: Low Overall magnitude of change on LCT 27 within Aberdeenshire & Moray: Low	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect on the perception of Meikle Balloch Hill: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 27 within Aberdeenshire: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 27 within Aberdeenshire & Moray: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development would intersect the LCT over a length of approximately 8.4 km, intersecting predominantly arable farmland and occasional heather moorland and passing between large areas of deciduous and coniferous woodland on higher ground to the north of the A96. The new OHL enters the LCT from Hill of Greenwood / Coachford to the west and travels across the lower to mid slopes of Meikle Balloch Hill (approximately 200-250m AOD). To the east of Meikle Balloch Hill the Proposed Development traverses slightly higher, rolling landform to the west of the River Deveron valley that includes local tributaries of the River Isla (Burn of Cairnie, Burn of Hogston), the Hill of Greenwood, Ord Hill and Little Balloch before intersecting both the Brownhill Plantation to the north of The Bin Forest and Cumrie Plantation immediately west of the Hill of Cormalet. Within the central area, open areas of farmland contrast against surrounding elevated ridges capped by blocks of forestry and woodland. The Proposed Development would occasionally appear prominent on the skyline and from other perspectives be backclothed by Meikle Balloch Hill and forestry within The Balloch through the varied topography. While the undulating landform surrounding the Proposed Development would be anticipated to largely contain its broader perception through the landscape, within these areas of open and undeveloped land, the impact of the introduction of new detracting vertical built features would be more pronounced. From the south, the Proposed Development would be viewed in the context of the A96 and occasional wind turbines and from the Ardonal area, would be perceived together with the existing 400 kV OHL. The distinctive form of Meikle Balloch Hill would be impacted in terms of its perception and visual amenity by the introduction of tall towers on its lower southern slopes. At the wider landscape level, highly valued views through an attractive landscape would only be impacted at a local level, being limited by elevated undulating topography and areas of woodland. Woodland loss in the eastern part of the LCT would result in a noticeable local change to land cover and a locally increased perception of the Proposed Development. The pattern of extensive woodland cover would however remain intact and the key characteristics of the LCT are not anticipated to substantially change, particularly with the existing presence of a 400 kV OHL. Overall, the introduction of a new, detracting, built feature through the landscape would slightly reduce the perceptual quality and visual amenity of the landscape. Local impact on the perception of Meikle Balloch Hill – Low to Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 27 within Aberdeenshire – Low. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 27 (taking into account the combined effects within Moray Council) – Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall impact on LCT 27 within Aberdeenshire: Low Overall impact on LCT 27 within Aberdeenshire & Moray: Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect on the perception of Meikle Balloch Hill: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 27 within Aberdeenshire: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 27 within Aberdeenshire & Moray: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant)

NATURESCOT LCT 27 FARMED MOORLAND EDGE – ABERDEENSHIRE (Within Aberdeenshire Council)

This section assesses the intersected area of LCT between Hill of Greenwood / Coachford and The Bin, as a distinctly separate landscape to that within Moray Council to the west of Meikle Balloch Hill. Impacts within Moray Council on the LCT have been assessed in a separate table below (refer to Table 28)

LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<i>Summer</i> There would only be a negligible change in summer months due to the additional screening provided by deciduous vegetation on the lower slopes of Meikle Balloch Hill and within the landscape to the west, slightly reducing the perception of the Proposed Development through the wider landscape. However, it would remain prominent on the lower to mid slopes of Meikle Balloch Hill. Local impact on the perception of Meikle Balloch Hill – Low to Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 27 within Aberdeenshire – Low. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 27 (taking into account the combined effects within Moray Council) – Low. <u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Year 15 has not been assessed as there would be no substantial change to the LCT from the year of opening due to the relative lack of felling and replanting required, whereby the Proposed Development would remain highly visible on the lower slopes of Meikle Balloch Hill and within more open areas of farmland to the west of the River Deveron. Forestry within Brownhill Plantation and Cumrie Plantation would have established back to the OC but it would not change the local or wider impacts.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall impact on LCT 27 within Aberdeenshire: Low Overall impact on LCT 27 within Aberdeenshire & Moray: Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect on the perception of Meikle Balloch Hill: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 27 within Aberdeenshire: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 27 within Aberdeenshire & Moray: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant)

Table 28 - Naturescot LCT 27 Farmed Moorland Edge – Aberdeenshire (Moray Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 27 FARMED MOORLAND EDGE – ABERDEENSHIRE (Within Moray Council)			
This section only assesses the direct impacts associated with the northern and western slopes of Meikle Balloch Hill, as a distinctly separate landscape associated with the adjoining LCT 288 Upland Farmland that incorporates Keith and Blackhillock Substation. Impacts within Aberdeenshire Council in the LCT have been assessed in a separate table above (refer to Table 27)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction activity for the Proposed Development would occur for approximately 700 m crossing fields and through existing woodland on the lower slopes of Meikle Balloch Hill within Moray Council. To construct the OC, a swathe of approximately 500 m of coniferous trees would require felling on the Hill of Greenwood and approximately 3 km of coniferous forestry would require felling on the western edge of Balloch Wood. The Proposed Development would be noticeable to the north of Hill of Greenwood on the lower slopes of Meikle Balloch Hill. Construction activity including installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes or helicopters, and access track formations which would utilised existing forestry tracks, would be highly noticeable from Core Paths on the lower slopes of the hill, from the landscape around Keith to the west and from the A96 to the south, resulting in an impact on the perception and important views to Meikle Balloch Hill. The wider landscape of the LCT within Moray incorporates both Meikle Balloch Hill and Little Balloch but construction activity would be broadly contained by existing retained forestry. Some impacts on the perception of tranquillity through new detracting activity and on transient visual amenity would be experienced through the forested landscape. Local impact on the perception of Meikle Balloch Hill – Low to Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 27 within Moray – Low. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 27 (taking into account the combined effects within Aberdeenshire Council) – Low.	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall impact on LCT 27 within Moray: Low Overall impact on LCT 27 within Moray & Aberdeenshire: Low	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect on the perception of Meikle Balloch Hill: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 27 within Moray: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 27 within Moray & Aberdeenshire: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development traverses the LCT for approximately 700 m in the northwestern extent of the wider LCT. Crossing the lower slopes of Meikle Balloch Hill to the north of Hill of Greenwood, the Proposed Development would run broadly parallel to the A96 corridor to the southeast of Keith and would result in a noticeable area of woodland loss on the western lower slopes of the distinctive hill, albeit mostly only to accommodate the OC. Towers associated with the Proposed Development would be clearly visible from Core Paths around the lower slopes of Meikle Balloch Hill, together with a long corridor of felling to accommodate the OC. The Proposed Development would be noticeable within the LCT within glimpsed transient views for users of the A96 and would be visible from the summit of Meikle Balloch Hill as it passes through the adjoining landscape to the west (LCT 288), albeit in the distance and in the context of already visible existing OHLs and Blackhillock and Keith Substations. The perception and visual amenity associated with Meikle Balloch Hill would be indirectly impacted as a result of a change in perception when viewed from landscape within LCT 288 Upland Farmland around Keith to the west. Although only a small proportion of the LCT would be directly impacted within Moray, the change to vegetation cover through the western extents of The Balloch as a result of felling and the indirectly impacted perception of Meikle Balloch Hill from the adjoining landscape, would result in a slight deterioration of the setting of the lower slopes of Meikle Balloch Hill, to the southeast of Keith and an impact on perceived tranquillity for recreational users of the hill. In terms of the wider landscape, impacts are considered in conjunction with the additional 8.4 km of intersected landscape of LCT 27 to the east within Aberdeenshire Council (refer to Table 27 above). The Proposed Development would run on higher ground to the west and north of the A96 corridor and would be seen mostly on its own as a new OHL and detracting built feature. The total intersected landscape of LCT 27 within Moray would be approximately 9.1 km and is not anticipated to substantially change the overall characteristics of the LCT, as it would introduce only a slight degradation of land cover, visual amenity, remoteness and perception qualities. Local impact on the perception of Meikle Balloch Hill – Low to Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 27 within Moray – Low. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 27 (taking into account the combined effects within Aberdeenshire Council) – Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall impact on LCT 27 within Moray: Low Overall impact on LCT 27 within Moray & Aberdeenshire: Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect on the perception of Meikle Balloch Hill: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 27 within Moray: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 27 within Moray & Aberdeenshire: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> There would only be a negligible change in summer months due to the additional screening provided by deciduous vegetation within the landscape to the west, slightly reducing the perception from within the landscape around Keith. However, the lower slopes of Meikle Balloch Hill are predominantly coniferous forestry, and the Proposed Development would remain a prominent new, detracting, built feature. Local impact on the perception of Meikle Balloch Hill – Low to Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 27 within Moray – Low. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 27 (taking into account the combined effects within Aberdeenshire Council) – Low.		<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall impact on LCT 27 within Moray: Low	<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect on the perception of Meikle Balloch Hill: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 27 within Moray:

NATURESCOT LCT 27 FARMED MOORLAND EDGE – ABERDEENSHIRE (Within Moray Council)

This section only assesses the direct impacts associated with the northern and western slopes of Meikle Balloch Hill, as a distinctly separate landscape associated with the adjoining LCT 288 Upland Farmland that incorporates Keith and Blackhillock Substation. Impacts within Aberdeenshire Council in the LCT have been assessed in a separate table above (refer to Table 27)

LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Year 15 has not been assessed as there would be no change to the LCT from the year of opening due to the relative lack of felling and replanting, whereby the Proposed Development would remain highly visible on the lower slopes of Meikle Balloch Hill.		Overall impact on LCT 27 within Moray & Aberdeenshire: Low	Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 27 within Moray & Aberdeenshire: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant)

Table 29 - Naturescot LCT 32 Farmed and Wooded River Valleys (Aberdeenshire Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 32 – FARMED AND WOODED RIVER VALLEYS (Within Aberdeenshire Council)					
Representative viewpoints 36, 38, 39, 42 and 43 are located within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ pages 20, 21, 24 & 25 for viewpoint locations). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 44, 45 & 46 for key features and characteristics of this LCT					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“Small to medium.”</i>	Small to medium scale landscape with several narrow valleys		▪	▪
Landform	<i>“Rivers predominantly meander through relatively shallow valleys bounded by broad rolling hills.”</i> <i>“The River Deveron, aligned through a relatively broad valley strongly contained by rolling hills.”</i> <i>“The upper Deveron west of Turriff passes thorough harder schist geology and consequently is also accommodated within a deeper valley.”</i>	Undulating valley landscape with occasional hills		▪	▪
Land cover	<i>“Little marginal or wetland vegetation on the floodplains, with farmland abutting both rivers except where semi-natural woodland comes down to the river banks in more inaccessible, steep-sided areas.”</i> <i>“Straths are largely farmed with mixed pastures and arable fields set out on the flat floodplain and gently rolling sides.”</i> <i>“Farmland is interspersed with mixed woodlands on valley sides, many of these comprising policy woodlands associated with the estates which are a key characteristic of this landscape.”</i>	Predominantly pastoral farmland with areas of mixed agriculture. Enclosed field pattern		▪	▪
Texture	<i>“Mixed woodlands contribute to the rich diversity of these valleys with the policies of designed landscapes extending onto rolling hill tops.”</i> <i>“Within the Deveron valley, well-managed woodland and belts of beech often cover steeper river scarps and are planted on natural terraces on lower valley terraces. Woodland is more mixed on higher slopes and on hill tops comprising spruce, pine and larch. Knolly river deposits are often planted with Scots pine and beech.”</i>	Undulating agricultural landscape with mix of irregular pattern and smoother river valley		▪	▪
Built Environment	<i>“Roads run alongside the rivers and small towns such as Fyvie, Turriff and Huntly are concentrated at confluences and key bridging points.”</i> <i>“Farms are evenly dispersed along these straths, usually sited on lower slopes and terraces raised above flat floodplains.”</i> <i>“Well-settled hill slopes overlooking the valleys with relatively large farms.”</i> <i>“Villages and large market towns.”</i>	Spare settlement pattern, with several historic features		▪	▪
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>“The area itself has attracted a small amount of wind turbine development, due to its small scale, valley landform and high landscape quality. Windfarms in neighbouring LCTs along the edges of the valleys are visible from this landscape.”</i> - An existing 275 kV OHL lies in the distance to the south of the Proposed Development and the New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV OHL in closer proximity to the north, around Cobairdy Redhill and Avochie. The A96 also runs through the LCT, to the south of Huntley and the Proposed Development. - The A947 would cross the Proposed Development to the south of Turriff, where there are no existing OHLs in proximity to the Proposed Development.	Few to no detracting features to the east or western extents		▪	▪
Perceptual aspects	<i>“Quiet roads and paths giving a sense of seclusion, contrasting with the busy A947 Aberdeen to Banff arterial route.”</i> <i>“Quiet roads and footpaths, particularly those along the Deveron valley, can provide a sense of seclusion and allow an appreciation of the rich scenic diversity of these valleys.”</i>	Tranquil landscape with a historic character in proximity to the Proposed Development		▪	▪
Visual Amenity	<i>“Distinctive river valleys bounded by broad rolling hills. Ythan flows through a narrow gorge.... the upper Deveron pass through a deeper valley.”</i> <i>“Varied landscape of farmland, river valley and different types of woodland.”</i> - The four large wind turbines a Hill of Skelmonae are prominent in the landscape in the northern part of this LCT.	Area of high scenic quality with undulating landform and river valleys		▪	▪

NATURESCOT LCT 32 – FARMED AND WOODED RIVER VALLEYS (Within Aberdeenshire Council)					
Representative viewpoints 36, 38, 39, 42 and 43 are located within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ pages 20, 21, 24 & 25 for viewpoint locations). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 44, 45 & 46 for key features and characteristics of this LCT					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	LCT 32 is characterised by two river valleys. The River Ythan flows through a broad, shallow valley and the River Deveron runs through a broad valley flanked by rolling hills and woodland. Detracting features include a major road, existing OHLs, which traverse the central and southern area of the LCT, and a small number of wind turbine developments.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium to High		▪	▪
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following features and designations considered to be of high value and are of relevance to the sensitivity of the LCT: - Deveron Valley SLA covers the majority of LCT 32; - Fyvie Castle, Huntly Castle, Towie Barclay Castle, Hatton Castle and Forglen garden and designed landscapes; - Huntly Conservation Area; - Battlefields (Battle of Fyvie); - National Cycle Network (Route 1); and - frequent small to large areas of ancient woodland.	Historic features and undulating landform form a strong sense of place and of national significance			▪
Features	<i>“Prehistoric monuments and artefacts, including stone circles, carved stone balls and souterrains.”</i> <i>“The wooded policies and areas of parkland of the Hatton and Fyvie Castle estates are distinctive features in the valley south of Turriff.”</i> <i>“Castles and mansion houses and historic built features such as follies, bridges, gate houses and boundary walls contribute to the architectural interest of these valleys.”</i>	Strong historic and cultural character		▪	▪
Quality / Condition	The area is considered to have a high scenic character, undulating landform with a diverse character.	High quality landscape		▪	▪
VALUE SUMMARY	LCT 32 is defined by a strong historical heritage and landscape value. Recreational value is established by the presence of several castles and estates across the landscape. This LCT contains the Deveron Valley SLA and offers areas of high scenic and landscape quality and is widely appreciated. Man made vertical elements are however a noticeable feature within open areas of the LCT.	Value is Medium to High		▪	▪
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	LCT 32 – FARMED AND WOODED RIVER VALLEYS OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value		Medium to High		

NATURESCOT LCT 32 – FARMED AND WOODED RIVER VALLEYS (Within Aberdeenshire Council)

Representative viewpoints 36 & 38 are located within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' pages 20, 21 & 23 for viewpoint locations)

LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS

SENSITIVITY OF
LCT

MAGNITUDE OF
CHANGE (IMPACT)

SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT
SENSITIVITY + IMPACT

During Construction

Construction activity, including the installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes, formation of access tracks through open fields and woodland, where existing tracks would be utilised, and localised felling would be highly prominent in two discreet sections of the LCT. The Proposed Development intersects the landscape of LCT 32 between the lower slopes of Ordiequhill and The Bin and the A97, Cobairdy and between Gask and Mill of Colp to the south of Turriff where it crosses the A947 and Burn of Turriff. There would be relatively small areas of OC and management felling within Longmoor Wood to the west and within the Wood of Darra, adjacent to the A947. Both of which would result in locally noticeable impacts on land cover but would not change the overall structure of vegetation cover in the wider landscape. Construction would be seen prominently and would detract from the experience of the local landscape through both the River Deveron corridor and either side of the A947 to the south of Turriff, resulting in local impacts on visual amenity and tranquillity with movement and additional height associated with construction and progressive installation of towers being out of character with the areas.

There is an existing perception of OHLs throughout the wider landscape of LCT 32 and with the relatively small changes to land cover and with landform and woodland containing perception more broadly, it would accommodate the Proposed Development without substantially changing its key characteristics. However, there would be an impact on visual amenity and perceptual qualities as a result of the introduction of detracting built features through two discreet sections of the landscape.

Local impacts on the River Deveron valley and A947 / Burn of Turriff corridor – **Medium**.

Overall magnitude of change on LCT 32 – **Negligible to Low**.

Operational Phase Year of Opening

Winter

The Proposed Development would intersect the LCT over a total length through two discreet sections of the landscape of approximately 8.8 km, intersecting predominantly arable farmland and occasional heather moorland and deciduous and coniferous woodland. The Proposed Development intersects the LCT for approximately 5.6 km either side of the River Deveron to the west, within the Deveron Valley SLA, and for approximately 3.2 km to the south of Turriff on either side of the A947 and Burn of Turriff.

The Proposed Development would be a prominent feature crossing the Deveron Valley SLA at the river crossing and when viewed from the B9022, the Aberdeen to Inverness railway and local roads as it passes to the north of The Bin Forest and Kinnair Wood. It would briefly be seen in combination with the existing New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV OHL to the southeast of Longmoor Wood as the existing line adjoins from the northwest, crossing the A97 and running parallel to the southeast through the adjoining LCT 19.

The Proposed Development would appear as a new, detracting, built feature against the skyline through the broad section of the Deveron valley, within open arable fields. Tree felling would occur within Longmoor Wood which would be locally noticeable but not change the structure or perception of the well wooded landscape, being contained by topography and further woodland beyond the Proposed Development. This section of the Proposed Development, immediately east of the Deveron valley would be relatively discreet and only viewed locally and result in local impacts on the setting, perception and visual amenity of the river valley.

Between Cruchie and Turriff, over 15 km to the east, the Proposed Development would also be relatively well contained broadly by landform, woodland and the town to the north. To the south of Turriff the Proposed Development would be viewed in the context of the A947 corridor and an area of felling within the Wood of Darra would be transiently experienced and perceived adjacent to the A947 and open further appreciation of towers to the southeast. The new OHL would appear as a new, detracting, built feature through an attractive local landscape, being slightly elevated to the southwest of A947, crossing and impacting the setting of the Burn of Turriff before passing prominently through open arable fields to the south of Keith. This would be result in local impacts on the setting, perception and visual amenity of the A947 and Burn of Turriff corridor.

At the broader scale of the large LCT, the Proposed Development would not substantially change any of its key physical or perceptual components with only a minor degradation in its perception and visual amenity associated with the addition of a new, taller OHL through two discreet sections of the landscape that would be seen mostly as separate features to the existing 400 kV and 275 kV OHLs.

Local impact on the River Deveron valley and A947 / Burn of Turriff corridor – **Medium**.

Overall magnitude of change on LCT 32 – **Negligible to Low**.

Summer

There would be limited change in summer months with the Proposed Development remaining highly visible through the Deveron valley and either side of the A947. Deciduous vegetation alongside roads and through fields would slightly reduce its prominence but impacts on local perceptual qualities and visual amenity.

Local impact on the River Deveron valley and A947 / Burn of Turriff corridor – **Medium**.

Overall magnitude of change on LCT 32 – **Negligible to Low**.

Medium to High

During Construction

Local level impact:

Medium

Overall impact on LCT 32:

Negligible to Low

During Construction

Local effect on the River Deveron valley and A947 / Burn of Turriff corridor:

Moderate Adverse
(significant)

Overall effect on LCT 32:
Minor Adverse (non-significant)

Operational Phase -
Year of Opening
(Winter)

Local level impact:

Medium

Overall impact on LCT 32:

Negligible to Low

Operational Phase - Year of
Opening (Winter)

Local effect on the River Deveron valley and A947 / Burn of Turriff corridor:

Moderate Adverse
(significant)

Overall effect on LCT 32:
Minor Adverse (non-significant)

Operational Phase -
Year of Opening
(Summer)

Local level impact:

Medium

Overall impact on LCT 32:

Negligible to Low

Operational Phase - Year of
Opening (Summer)

Local effect on the River Deveron valley and A947 / Burn of Turriff corridor:

Moderate Adverse
(significant)

NATURESCOT LCT 32 – FARMED AND WOODED RIVER VALLEYS (Within Aberdeenshire Council)			
Representative viewpoints 36 & 38 are located within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' pages 20, 21 & 23 for viewpoint locations)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
			Overall effect on LCT 32: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Management felling planting up to the edge of the OC would be likely to have sufficiently established in this time to soften the appearance of the Proposed Development over two short lengths within the LCT, within Longmoor Wood to the west and Wood of Darra to the east. This would improve impacts on land cover very slightly but in the scale of the landscape would be barely noticeable and would not change the overall local or wider impacts on the landscape. Local impact on the River Deveron valley and A947 / Burn of Turriff corridor – Medium . Overall magnitude of change on LCT 32 – Negligible to Low .		<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall impact on LCT 32: Negligible to Low	<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local effect on the River Deveron valley and A947 / Burn of Turriff corridor: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 32: Minor Adverse (non-significant)

Table 30 - Naturescot LCT 19 Farmed Rolling Ridges and Hills (Aberdeenshire Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 19 FARMED ROLLING RIDGES AND HILLS (Within Aberdeenshire Council)					
Representative viewpoints 39, 41 and 57 are located within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' pages 21, 22 & 23 for viewpoint locations)					
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 47 & 48 for key features and characteristics of this LCT					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“Simple pattern of medium large rectilinear arable fields and pasture.”</i>	Gently rolling landscape with medium to large scale field pattern		▪	
Landform	<i>“Softly rounded hills and ridges forming rolling topography with sweeping curves.”</i> <i>“Narrow valleys with small watercourses.”</i>	Rolling topography, hilly landscape, punctuated by higher ridges		▪	
Land cover	<i>“A broad swathe of gently rolling farmland lying between the Farmed and Wooded River Valleys to the west and the Farmed Basins LCTs to the south.”</i> <i>“Rolling topography which is overlaid by a bold simple pattern of medium large rectilinear arable fields and pasture predominantly enclosed by low fences giving a distinct openness to the landscape.”</i> <i>“Broadleaf woodland on lower valley sides and deeply incised dens.”</i>	Predominantly pastoral farmland with geometric field pattern, with sparse woodland concentrated in the west mainly geometric coniferous forests on hill sides		▪	
Texture	<i>“Softly rounded hills, with convex slopes and broad ridges form smooth sweeping curves.”</i> <i>“Simple pattern of medium large rectilinear arable fields and pasture”</i> <i>“Shelterbelts on ridge tops.”</i> <i>“Geometric forests on hill sides. Broadleaf woodland on lower valley sides and dens”</i>	Simple pattern of medium large rectilinear arable fields and pasture with sparse woodland concentrated in the west mainly geometric coniferous forests on hill sides		▪	
Built Environment	<i>“A regular scattering of farms, often with large outbuildings, nestles on lower hill slopes or in dips in valleys and are sheltered by small blocks of woodland.”</i>	No settlements of significant size		▪	
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>“Small groups of tall wind turbines are a recurring feature, sited on ridges and higher hills and include Glens of Found land Wind Farm and Gordonstown Hill Wind Farm.”</i> - An existing 400 kV OHL would be in close proximity to the Proposed Development while a 275 kV OHL lies further south. - A major road (A97) and a dense network of narrow roads cross this landscape.	Vertical detracting features occur within the open landscape	▪		
Perceptual aspects	<i>“Long distance views. A distinct sense of space and light can be experienced in this landscape heightened by the openness of farmland.”</i> <i>“The backdrop of hills to the south and southwest give a visual ‘edge’ to this character type, containing views. The uplands appear as a series of raised horizons, with the Foudland Ridge to the fore and the prominent profiles of Bennachie and Tap o’Noth rising up behind.”</i>	Sense of openness from elevated locations		▪	
Visual Amenity	<i>“Long views are possible from elevated roads where the smoothly rolling hills and ridges have a strong rhythmic quality, being seen as successive undulating layers.”</i> - The four large wind turbines at Hill of Skelmonae are prominent in the landscape in the northern part of this LCT. - The Prop of Ythsie forms a local landmark on the locally prominent Hill of Ythsie.	Area of ordinary quality with broad open views with vertical detracting features within the open farmland	▪	▪	
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	LCT 19 is characteristic of a rural, agricultural landscape with a mix of natural and managed elements. The landscape is characterised by rolling hills, with far distance views from elevated roads. Detracting features include OHLs, visible windfarms and a major road. The landscape is predominantly open, with far distance views available from some elevated roads.		Susceptibility to Change is Medium		

NATURESCOT LCT 19 FARMED ROLLING RIDGES AND HILLS (Within Aberdeenshire Council)					
Representative viewpoints 39, 41 and 57 are located within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' pages 21, 22 & 23 for viewpoint locations)					
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 47 & 48 for key features and characteristics of this LCT					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following features and designations considered to be of high value and are of relevance to the sensitivity of the LCT: - landscape designation: Deveron Valley SLA covers the northern part of the LCT; - Gight Woods SSSI; - some small to medium size areas of ancient woodland; - Ythan Wells / Glenmailen Roman military camp historical landmark; and - several scheduled monuments, including stone circle.	Regional landscape designation. Some interspersed features of national recognition, not a well perceived landscape recreationally		▪	
Features	- Notable historic features include numerous stone circles, including Upperthird, Mains of Hatton, North Pitglassie, Cairn Riv, Blackhill of Drachlaw, Yonder Bognie, Cairntree, Raich and Loanhead. - Abundance of stone circles. - Ruins of Gight Castle, east of Fyvie and the 17th Century Mounie Castle and garden.	Some features of note but not a strong sense of place		▪	
Quality / Condition	The area is considered to be of ordinary quality in good condition	Ordinary quality landscape		▪	
VALUE SUMMARY	Predominantly rural landscape intensively farmed and forested with recreational activity present more commonly within the Deveron Valley in the northern part of the LCT. Small scale manmade vertical structures are a recurring feature of the landscape.	Value is Medium		▪	
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	NATURESCOT LCT 19 FARMED ROLLING RIDGES AND HILLS OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value		Medium		

NATURESCOT LCT 19 FARMED ROLLING RIDGES AND HILLS (Within Aberdeenshire Council)

LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction activity, including progressive installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes, a diamond crossing (OHL Crossing 6), small areas of felling and access track formations through predominantly open fields would be prominent through a broad northern section of the open, rolling landscape of LCT 19. Construction would be seen against the existing New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV OHL between the A947 and Gallows Hill (approximately 3.5 km) and seen as entirely new detracting activity between Gallows Hill and the A947 to the south of Turriff. There would be relatively small areas of tree felling within Drumblair Wood and a larger area within forestry on the slopes of Hill of Denmoss within and beyond the OC. This would not be widely perceived and would be well contained by topography and retained blocks of woodland and forestry, resulting in minimal change to land cover. The landscape offers few recreational opportunities, and construction is only likely to be seen statically from residential properties and transiently from minor roads through the northern portion of the LCT and from the A97 on the western boundary and the A947 just beyond the eastern boundary. There would be impacts on the LCT as a whole in terms of visual amenity and perceived tranquillity as a result of construction activity and the introduction of new, detracting, built features through a relatively open landscape, but within the northern portion of the LCT only. Local impact on LCT 19 (northern section) – Low to Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 19 – Low.	Medium	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall impact on LCT 19: Low	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect (northern section): Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 19: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development would travel across a rolling landscape of low hills and valleys, intersecting the LCT for approximately 17.6 km in a northeastern direction. The Proposed Development would briefly be viewed in conjunction with the existing New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV OHL between the A97 to the Glendronach Burn. From the west, the Proposed Development would cross the A97 and the Burn of Drumblade, before climbing the elevated ridge of Gallows Hill where a diamond crossing (OHL Crossing 6) would appear prominently with an angle tower adjacent to the existing 400 kV OHL. At this point it deviates to the northeast from the existing 400 kV OHL and would be seen as a new, detracting, built feature through the remainder of the LCT up until just west of the A947 to the south of Turriff. East of Gallows Hill and the existing OHL, the new OHL would cross the Glendronach Burn and B9024, traverse the elevated Hill of Denmoss, where it would be seen against individual wind turbines, and the lower elevations of Hill of Carlinraig before heading towards Turriff through progressively less wooded and more gently undulating farmland. The most noticeable area of felling occurs through Drumblair Wood and forestry on the slopes of Hill of Denmoss, where an existing windfarm can be seen, and the hill would backcloth towers slightly when seen from the north. Forestry clearance would not be contained due to limited surrounding vegetation and further reduce the existing vegetation cover and result in towers being locally more prominent. The wider lack of recreational opportunities means the Proposed Development would not be widely perceived by recreational users and tourists and more statically by local residents and transiently by road users, in particular from the A97 and A947 on the western and eastern boundaries. At the western extent of the LCT, the Proposed Development is anticipated to be largely contained by surrounding ridges and increased woodland cover, whilst to the east of the Hill of Denmoss the LCT is more open, and the tall towers would appear more prominently in the skyline over a greater distance and therefore impacts are anticipated to be more pronounced in terms of visual amenity and perception of changes to the wider landscape. There is an established presence of man-made vertical structures across the landscape and although the Proposed Development would be briefly viewed in conjunction with the existing 400 kV OHL, the increase in vertical structures is anticipated to detract from and deteriorate the visual amenity and open, rural characteristic of the northern portion of the LCT. Local impact on LCT 19 (northern section) – Low to Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 19 – Low		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall impact on LCT 19: Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect (northern section): Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 19: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> There would be minimal change in summer months, with deciduous roadside and field boundary vegetation and small areas of deciduous woodland offering minimal change in terms of visual screening and integration of the Proposed Development, which would remain prominent and most visible through the eastern, gently undulating section of the LCT where woodland is less prevalent. Local impact on LCT 19 (northern section) – Low to Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 19 – Low <u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Year 15 has not been assessed as there would be no change to the LCT from the year of opening due to the limited amount of felling and replanting required within a broadly open landscape.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall impact on LCT 19: Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect (northern section): Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 19: Minor Adverse (non-significant)

Table 31 - Naturescot LCT 20 Undulating Agricultural Heartland (Aberdeenshire Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 20 UNDULATING AGRICULTURAL HEARTLAND (Within Aberdeenshire Council)					
Representative viewpoints 44, 45, 46, 47, 48 & 49 are located within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ pages 24 & 26 for viewpoint locations)					
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 49, 50 & 51 for key features and characteristics of this LCT					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	“Smoothly rounded terrain” “Large fields” “Subtly rolling and expansive farmland.”	Broad, rolling landscape with medium to large scale field pattern		▪	
Landform	“Open expansive character with views to landmark hills” “Gently undulating, rolling landform, forming part of a vast rolling plain, with low hills and ridges cut by broad shallow valleys.” “Relief generally ranges between 100 to 190 metres.”	Gently undulating, rolling landform of low hills and ridges		▪	
Land cover	“Large fields divided by fences or more rarely low walls...arable fields and closely grazed improved pasture” “Generally sparse woodland cover, with broadleaf trees concentrated in shelterbelts along ridges, and around farms. Larger coniferous forests occur in some areas, and estate policies and occasional beech shelterbelts also occur.”	Predominantly pastoral farmland with geometric and open fields		▪	
Texture	“Smoothly rounded terrain and large hills. Large arable and pasture fields with field boundaries.” “Generally sparse woodland cover, with broadleaf trees concentrated in shelterbelts along ridges, and around farms. Larger coniferous forests occur in some areas, and estate policies and occasional beech shelterbelts also occur.”	Simple pattern of medium large rectilinear arable fields and pasture		▪	
Built Environment	“There are no large towns. A number of small settlements and larger villages, many of these 18th Century planned fermtouns, include Strichen, New Deer, New Byth and Cuminestown.” “Farms are frequent, regularly dispersed and generally medium-sized, some with large barns and silos but also pockets of smaller farms and crofts occur on higher slopes and valleys to the west and most notably in the Greeness area.”	No settlements of significant size	▪	▪	
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	“Small single wind turbines are associated with many farms with single and small groups of commercial scale turbines infrequently located on low ridges and local hills.” - The existing New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV OHL lies to the south of the Proposed Development, otherwise there are few detracting features apart from occasional single wind turbines, low distribution transmission OHL poles and the A981 and A948 to the east of New Deer.	Few detracting features	▪	▪	
Perceptual aspects	“This landscape has an open and expansive character.” “The relatively limited relief and openness of this landscape give big skies and a notably strong sense of space and light.” “Movement of the clouds overhead forms patterns of light and shade across the fields.”	Sense of openness		▪	
Visual Amenity	“This landscape has an open and expansive character with long views across the surrounding landscape a key feature.” - Views to landmark hills within Aberdeenshire and Moray are also possible with Bennachie, Tap o’Noth, Knock Hill, Mormond Hill and Ben Rinnes visible in good weather.	Area of ordinary quality with broad open views		▪	
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	LCT 20 is predominantly characterised by gently undulating terrain with broad shallow valleys, featuring sparse woodland cover and scattered small settlements. Detracting features include small windfarms, overhead pylons, major roads, and an aggregate supplier. The landscape is large scale and very open, with vast skies and far-reaching views of the surrounding landscape. The skyline is non distinctive and cultivated landscapes, such as this, indicate reduced susceptibility. This results in a moderate ability to accommodate the type of development proposed.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium		▪	

NATURESCOT LCT 20 UNDULATING AGRICULTURAL HEARTLAND (Within Aberdeenshire Council)					
Representative viewpoints 44, 45, 46, 47, 48 & 49 are located within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ pages 24 & 26 for viewpoint locations)					
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 49, 50 & 51 for key features and characteristics of this LCT					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT does not contain a landscape designation. The LCT contains the following features and designations considered to be of high value and are of relevance to the sensitivity of the LCT: • Hatton Castle garden and designed landscape approximately 1 km south of the Proposed Development, to the south of Turriff; • Hill of Culsh and Culsh Monument viewpoint (located to the northwest of New Deer); • ‘Formartine and Buchan Way’ Scotland Great Trail crosses the eastern extent of the LCT and cross the Proposed Development to the south of Maud; and • National Cycle Network (Route 1) would follow broadly parallel to the Proposed Development to the north along local roads between Turriff and Maud.	Some interspersed features of national recognition, with regional/national recreation trails present crossing the LCT	▪		
Features	• <i>“The Culsh monument above New Deer is a key landmark feature and offers wide panoramic views over the subtly rolling and expansive farmland of this landscape.”</i> • <i>“Some mixed policy woodlands are present within the den of Craigston Castle in the north of this character area and around Cuminestown where a particularly strong framework of beech shelterbelts is a feature.”</i>	Some features of note but not a strong sense of place through the open farmed landscape		▪	
Quality / Condition	The area is considered to be of ordinary quality in good condition but heavily farmed.	Ordinary quality landscape		▪	
VALUE SUMMARY	LCT 20 offers a level of recreational activity, with tourist destinations including Craigston Castle, Gight Castle, Delgatie Castle Trust and New Deer Showground Museum. There are several monuments and castle ruins scattered across the landscape. The ‘Formartine and Buchan Way’ traverses the east of the LCT and National Cycle Network (Route 1) its entirety. The landscape features are however relatively common, and the simple landscape pattern offers limited perceptual qualities.	Value is Medium		▪	
				SENSITIVITY	
SENSITIVITY	NATURESCOT LCT 20 UNDULATING AGRICULTURAL HEARTLAND OVERALL SENSITIVITY – Susceptibility + Value			Medium	

NATURESCOT LCT 20 UNDULATING AGRICULTURAL HEARTLAND (Within Aberdeenshire Council)

LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction activity, including progressive installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes, small areas of felling and access track formations through predominantly open fields would be prominent and widely perceived through a broad section of the open, undulating landscape of LCT 20. Construction would be seen as a new detracting element within the landscape between the A947 to the west and B9106 to the south of Maud to the east. There would be very minor felling required, mostly where crossing minor roads, and access tracks would mostly utilise existing tracks and lanes resulting in minimal change to land cover. The landscape offers few recreational opportunities apart from National Cycle Route 1 to the north of the Proposed Development, the 'Formartine and Buchan Way' on the eastern boundary and Culsh Monument to the north of New Deer. Apart from these, construction is only likely to be seen statically from residential properties and transiently from minor roads throughout the LCT and from the A947 just beyond the western boundary but would slightly degrade the characteristic openness and sense of rural tranquillity across the wider LCT. A greater degree of change is likely to occur on attractive local landscapes to the south of Cuminestown, where construction would be seen over Waggle Hill and through a local valley against the skyline, and around Culsh Monument to the north of New Deer where construction would impact and disturb the setting of the immediate landscape where views and tranquillity on the outskirts of New Deer are important characteristics for visitors. Local magnitude of change on the setting of the local valley and Waggle Hill to the south of Cuminestown, and the setting and tranquillity of the landscape around Culsh Monument – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 20 – Low.	Medium	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall impact on LCT 20: Low	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect to the south of Cuminestown, and around Culsh Monument: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 20: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development traverses the centre of LCT 20 from west to east, between the A947 to the west and B9106 to the south of Maud to the east over a distance of approximately 19 km. To the west, the Proposed Development traverses the Idoch Water local valley and the B9170 (southeast of Turriff), before climbing onto higher ground to the northeast of Hatton Castle and passing over elevated ridges, including Waggle Hill, and local roads to the south of Cuminestown where it would be highly prominent over the hill and crossing an attractive local valley. The Proposed Development then travels northeast across the open and gently undulating landscape, traversing a broad shallow valley and crossing the B9170 (east of Cuminestown), before turning south and appearing prominently in highly valued views from Culsh Monument as a new vertical, detracting, built feature, where impacts on the setting and tranquillity of the local landscape are likely. The Proposed Development passes between Maud and New Deer where it would be viewed as it crosses the A981, B9029 and B9106. On the eastern extent of the LCT and bordering LCT 21 it crosses the Formartine and Buchan Way through open farmland. The Proposed Development would be perceived through the extent of the LCT as a prominent new feature against the skyline, intersecting large open arable fields with minimal tree loss and would not be perceived in conjunction with the existing New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV OHL which lies in the distance to the south. It would be seen within the landscape from key recreational routes of the A981, National Cycle Network (Route 1), the Formartine and Buchan Way and from Culsh Monument, from where broad views are important characteristics, resulting in more localised impacts on the setting and perception of the open agricultural landscape in proximity to these, and in particular on the local landscape to the south of Cuminestown and north of New Deer. Across the large LCT, the Proposed Development would be partially accommodated within the gently undulating agricultural landscape where vertical infrastructure, including occasional windfarms and low transmission lines, are relatively commonplace and notable features or landmarks are rare. Land cover would not be noticeably impacted with very little felling required but there would be an impact on visual amenity and perceived tranquillity as a result of a new, detracting, built feature seen on or above intervening landform against the skyline within broad views. Impacts are anticipated to be more pronounced within the eastern portion of the LCT, where the topography becomes flatter and long-distance views are more commonplace. The Proposed Development is also likely to be perceived to the north of the LCT over a length of approximately 9.5 km as it crosses through entirety of the adjacent LCT 21, between Drymuir and Clola to the east of the 'Formartine and Buchan Way'. Local magnitude of change on the setting of the local valley and Waggle Hill to the south of Cuminestown, and the setting and tranquillity of the landscape around Culsh Monument – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 20 – Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall impact on LCT 20: Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect to the south of Cuminestown, and around Culsh Monument: Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on LCT 20: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> There would be no change in the assessment findings during summer months due to the relative lack of vegetation cover or felling required through the open rolling landscape. The Proposed Development would remain a prominent feature within the LCT. Local magnitude of change on the setting of the local valley and Waggle Hill to the south of Cuminestown, and the setting and tranquillity of the landscape around Culsh Monument – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on LCT 20 – Low. <u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u>		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Medium Overall impact on LCT 20: Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect to the south of Cuminestown, and around Culsh Monument: Moderate Adverse (significant)

NATURESCOT LCT 20 UNDULATING AGRICULTURAL HEARTLAND (Within Aberdeenshire Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
Year 15 has not been assessed as there would be no change to the LCT from the year of opening due to the limited amount of felling and replanting required within a broadly open landscape.			Overall effect on LCT 20: Minor Adverse (non-significant)

Table 32 - Naturescot LCT 21 Farmland and Wooded Policies (Aberdeenshire Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 21 FARMLAND AND WOODED POLICIES (Within Aberdeenshire Council)					
Representative viewpoint 50 is located within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' page 27 for viewpoint location)					
Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 52 & 53 for key features and characteristics of this LCT					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“Medium scale fields, geometric in shape.”</i> <i>“More open, larger scale farmland on gentler slopes at Undulating Agricultural Heartlands transition.”</i>	Rolling landscape with medium to large scale field pattern		▪	
Landform	<i>“Gently rolling hills, the LCT is concentrated around the South Ugie Water Valley”</i> <i>“Rolling landscape with diverse woodland cover. Area cut through by South Ugie Water, with valley enclosed by soft rolling hills, with an open river floodplain and lower farmed slopes.”</i>	Gently undulating, rolling plain		▪	
Land cover	<i>“Diverse mixed farmland on lower hill slopes, with compact farms with beech shelterbelts and smaller woodlands; conifer forest in part of the area.”</i> <i>“More open larger scale farmland on gentler slopes at Undulating Agricultural Heartlands transition in the south.”</i> <i>“Distinct roundel and crescent shaped woodlands on small hill tops in parts of this area.”</i> <i>“Policy plantings trace ridge lines and curve around valley sides.”</i> - Woodland is concentrated to the north of the LCT and is less prevalent in proximity to the Proposed Development.	Predominantly pastoral farmland with geometric and open fields, occasional woodland blocks		▪	
Texture	<i>“Distinct roundel and crescent shaped woodlands on small hill tops in parts of the area.”</i> <i>“Farmland is more open with larger fields and less woodland on gentle slopes to the west at the transition with the Undulating Agricultural Heartlands.”</i>	Simple pattern of medium large rectilinear arable fields and pasture. Woodland is diverse in this LCT, an unusual feature in Aberdeenshire		▪	
Built Environment	<i>“Numerous remnant built features associated with former estates.”</i> <i>“This is a well settled area with a concentration of planned villages such as Stuartfield, Mintlaw and Fetterangus, numerous farmsteads and prosperous manses and farmhouses.”</i> <i>“The historic village of Old Deer nestles in a wooded dip within the South Ugie valley.”</i> <i>“Farms are compact and neat with beech shelterbelts and small woodlands providing shelter.”</i>	No settlements of significant size		▪	
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>“A tall single wind turbine dominates the scale of planted policy features near Drinnies Wood although in general this landscape is little affected by large built infrastructure and possesses a timeless quality.”</i> - Local B roads connect the towns of Stuartfield, Maud, Old Deer and Mintlaw. - The New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV OHL would cross the southern portion of the LCT in proximity to the Proposed Development.	Few detracting features		▪	▪
Perceptual aspects	<i>“This rolling landform and diverse woodland, together with well-managed farmland and many historic built features combine to create a richly scenic landscape.”</i> <i>“The old estates of Aden and Pitfour, and the remains of the 13th Century Deer Abbey on the valley floor add to the sense of a long history of settlement and prosperity.”</i> <i>“A timeless quality to the landscape.”</i>	Scenic but heavily farmed, open landscape		▪	
Visual Amenity	<i>“Views from roads and paths are generally contained due to the rolling nature of this landscape and the extent of woodland cover.”</i> - Contained views from roads and paths due to rolling landform and woodland cover.	Area of ordinary quality with broad open views from higher ground. Woodland and topography occasionally intervene views		▪	

NATURESCOT LCT 21 FARMLAND AND WOODED POLICIES (Within Aberdeenshire Council)

Representative viewpoint 50 is located within the LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' page 27 for viewpoint location)

Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 52 & 53 for key features and characteristics of this LCT

SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	LCT 21 is characterised by a pastoral landscape of rolling hills, diverse woodlands, mixed farmland, and well-settled areas with historic villages. Detracting features include the existing New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV OHL, low transmission lines, a small wind turbine development and local roads. The landscape is fairly enclosed but the southern extent of the LCT is more open with far distance views afforded across the agricultural landscape. The landscape has a moderate ability to accommodate the type of development proposed.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium		▪	
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following features and designations considered to be of relevance to the sensitivity of the LCT: - Aden Country Park; - Old Deer Conservation area; 'Formartine and Buchan Way' Scotland Great Trail traverses the central northern area of the LCT, from west to east and would intersect the Proposed Development at the western extent of the LCT to the south of Maud; - National Cycle Network (Route 1) follows a local road to the south of Maud at the western extent of the LCT and would cross the Proposed Development; and - frequent small to large areas of ancient woodland.	Some interspersed features of national recognition, not a well perceived landscape recreationally		▪	
Features	<i>"The landscape has been a focus of ecclesiastical attention since the 10th Century, when the oldest known surviving Scottish manuscript, the Book of Deer, was written and housed at an as-yet unlocated monastery."</i> <i>"Many of the hilltops and shoulders of hills contain prehistoric stone circles, their survival and preservation tied to the later use of these hilltops for tree roundels."</i> <i>"Many remnant-built features associated with former estates of Aden and Pitfour can be seen around Old Deer. These include gatehouses, bridges, high boundary walls and other estate buildings which contribute to the scenic diversity of the landscape."</i>	Some features of note but not a strong sense of place through the open farmed landscape		▪	
Quality / Condition	The area is considered to be of ordinary quality in good condition.	Ordinary quality landscape		▪	
VALUE SUMMARY	This landscape is defined by a strong cultural heritage with a rich scenic value, although less so in the southern extents. High value sites include Pitfour Estate and Aden Country Park, as well as historical landmarks, including Louden Wood Stone Circle. The LCT features some landscape elements of high quality but is not used widely for recreation, with only the Formartine and Buchan Way and National Cycle Network (Route 1) notable.	Value is Medium		▪	
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	NATURESCOT LCT 21 FARMLAND AND WOODED POLICIES OVERALL SENSITIVITY – Susceptibility + Value		Medium		

NATURESCOT LCT 21 FARMLAND AND WOODED POLICIES (Within Aberdeenshire Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction activity, including progressive installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes, small areas of felling and access track formations through predominantly open fields would be prominent and widely perceived across the southern section of the relatively open, undulating landscape of LCT 21. Construction would be seen as a new detracting element within the landscape between the B9106 to the south of Maud to the west and A952 to the east. There would be very minor OC and management felling required in isolated pockets of woodland and mostly where crossing minor roads, and access tracks would mostly utilise existing tracks and lanes resulting in minimal change to land cover. The landscape offers few recreational opportunities apart from National Cycle Route 1 to the north of the Proposed Development and the ‘Formartine and Buchan Way’ on the western boundary, where construction would be seen briefly crossing the landscapes of LCT 20 & 21 to the east and west of the trail. Apart from these, construction is only likely to be seen statically from residential properties and transiently from minor roads throughout the LCT and from the A952 on the eastern boundary but would slightly degrade the characteristic openness and sense of rural tranquillity across the wider farmland of LCT 21. Local level impacts on LCT 21 – Low to Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 21 – Low.	Medium	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 21: Low	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect (central and southern section): Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development traverses the southern extent of LCT 21, across a length of approximately 9.7 km between the B9106 to the south of Maud to the west and A952 to the east. At the western boundary of the LCT, the Proposed Development crosses and would be prominent through open arable fields for users of the Formartine and Buchan Way, a 26-mile route which follows a former railway line. The Proposed Development predominantly traverses open rolling farmland with only one notable area of felling resulting in a minor local impact on land cover with woodland cover across the LCT concentrated to the north. The rolling topography limits wider views slightly, particularly from the north, and the presence of the existing New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV OHL and other smaller vertical detracting features, including telephone lines, low transmission lines and occasional single wind turbines, would limit the magnitude of change perceived through the landscape. Although the Proposed Development would be more prominent within the eastern, flatter landscape of the LCT it would be seen alongside the existing 400 kV OHL to the east of the B9030, crossing local roads and small watercourses and resulting in an increase of wirescaping against the skyline. At the eastern extent of the LCT the Proposed Development crosses the A952 to the south of Clola and can be seen entering the landscape of LCT 17 briefly. The Proposed Development would mostly be seen statically from residential properties and transiently from minor roads throughout the LCT and from the A952 on the eastern boundary but would slightly degrade the characteristic openness and sense of rural tranquillity across the wider farmland of LCT 21, with other characteristics largely unaffected. Local level impacts on LCT 21 – Low to Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 21 – Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 21: Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect (central and southern section): Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> There would be no change in summer months due to the relative lack of vegetation cover or felling required through the open rolling farmed landscape. The Proposed Development would remain prominent against the skyline of views through the LCT but is not experienced widely from recreational resources and the character is not anticipated to change substantially as a result. Local level impacts on LCT 21 – Low to Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 21 – Low. <u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Year 15 has not been assessed as there would be no change to the LCT from the year of opening due to the limited amount of felling and replanting required within a broadly open, rolling landscape.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact: Low to Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 21: Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect (central and southern section): Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect: Minor Adverse (non-significant)

Table 33 - Naturescot LCT 17 Coastal Agricultural Plain (Aberdeenshire Council)

NATURESCOT LCT 17 COASTAL AGRICULTURAL PLAIN (Within Aberdeenshire Council)					
Representative viewpoint 52 & 53 are located within this LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features', pages 28 & 29 for viewpoint locations). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 54 & 55 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	Large, open, geometric fields.	Extensive LCT comprising a low lying and often very open sweep of exposed farmland in eastern Aberdeenshire	▪	▪	
Landform	<i>"Low-lying and very gently undulating landform, with a pattern of subtle ridges and valleys in the north-east."</i> <i>"The low-lying and very gently undulating landform of the Coastal Agricultural Plain generally lies below 60 metres."</i> <i>"Land gradually rises to the west."</i>	Low-lying and very gently undulating landform	▪	▪	
Land cover	<i>"Mainly arable farming, with fairly extensive areas of moss and wetland."</i> <i>"Broadleaf woodland and trees are scarce, largely restricted to rare shelterbelts, estate policies, occasional small groups around farms or more substantial plantings on the outskirts of settlements, for example around the village of Hatton. Where this woodland does occur, it is visually prominent."</i> <i>"Coniferous forest particularly extensive in southern part of the area. Limited broadleaf woodland, forming rare shelterbelts and small groups around farms."</i> <i>"Water courses occupy broad shallow valleys and basins with occasional more steeply cut scrub-covered banks."</i> <i>"Large open fields are mostly bounded by post and wire fences with dilapidated and overgrown stone walls becoming more prominent in the north of this area. Stubby beech, thorn and gorse hedges also occur in places."</i>	Predominantly arable farmland with extensive areas of moss, wetland and occasional, visually prominent blocks of woodland		▪	
Texture	<i>"Large, open, geometric fields."</i> <i>"Well settled landscape of diverse farms, new houses and number of settlements."</i> <i>"Low lying and often very open sweep of exposed farmland in eastern Aberdeenshire where the influence of the sea is particularly strong."</i>	Simple and sweeping lines		▪	
Built Environment	<i>"Well settled landscape of dispersed farms, many newer houses and a number of settlements, and occasional mansions in designed landscapes."</i> <i>"Occasional historic buildings, e.g. castles and old parish churches, cairn, motte."</i>	Well settled, pylons, wind turbines, occasional historic buildings	▪	▪	
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>"Communication structures and tall masts on some higher ground, and power transmission lines radiating from Peterhead power station, which itself is highly visible."</i> <i>"Small and occasional large wind turbines are a regular feature on farmland."</i> - A950 and A952 prominent features. - Existing OHLs common, with New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV OHL in close proximity to the Proposed Development and other 275 kV OHLs radiating from the substations at Peterhead. - Gas terminal at St Fergus. - Quartz figures on Mormond Hill.	Major roads, electricity infrastructure, renewables, industrial development all occasionally present but not dominating	▪	▪	
Perceptual aspects	<i>"The proximity of the coast is perceived in the strong sense of openness, lightness and space. The high coastal dunes and sea are consistent features within views, particularly from the eastern-most parts of this character type. These views, together with the windswept exposure of the landscape, give a strong sense of the coastal context of this landscape."</i>	Strong sense of openness, lightness and space		▪	

NATURESCOT LCT 17 COASTAL AGRICULTURAL PLAIN (Within Aberdeenshire Council)					
Representative viewpoint 52 & 53 are located within this LCT (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’, pages 28 & 29 for viewpoint locations). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: Photos 54 & 55 for key features and characteristics of this LCT.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LCT Quotes in italics are from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Visual Amenity	<i>“Consistent views of high coastal dunes and sea, giving a strong coastal context.”</i> - Open and flat nature of the landscape with intermittent woodland cover allows for broad views.	Area of ordinary quality with broad open views. Woodland and occasionally interrupt far distance views		▪	
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	LCT 17 is characterised by a gently undulating landscape with shallow valleys, mixed arable and livestock farming, occasional blocks of woodland and coniferous forests and dispersed farms and settlements. Prominent features include quartz figures on Mormond Hill. Detracting features include wind turbines, OHLs, major roads and a gas terminal at St Fergus. The landscape is large scale and open with a simple landscape pattern. The presence of an existing 275 kV OHL and wind turbines means the ability for the landscape to accommodate the type of development proposed is relatively high, although it would be prominent through the relatively flat open landscape.	Susceptibility to Change is Low to Medium	▪	▪	
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following features and designations considered to be of high value and are of relevance to the sensitivity of the LCT: - undesignated landscape. The North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA lies on the eastern boundary of this LCT, 5 km to 8 km distance from the Proposed Development; - Rora Moss SSSI, Moss of Cruden SSSI, Hill of Longhaven SSSI and Kirkhill SSSI; ‘Formartine and Buchan Way’ Heritage Path traverses the central part of the LCT from west to east, approximately 2 km north of the Proposed Development; - North East 250 Scenic Tourist Route on the A90, approximately 5 km to the east of the Proposed Development; - few small areas of ancient woodland; and Easterton of Lenabo and Airship station Scheduled monuments approx. 0.8 km from the Proposed Development.	Undesignated landscape with some features of ecology and heritage interest. Limited recreation sites and routes	▪	▪	
Features	<i>“Prominent landmark feature of Mormond Hill on the western edge of the area, which includes the White Horse and White Stag quartz hillside figures, the only such in Scotland. The hill rises to 230 metres and forms a prominent landmark feature which is seen extensively across much of north-eastern Aberdeenshire.”</i> <i>“Notable historic features include several grand mansions within designed landscapes.”</i> <i>“18th Century houses of Memsie and Auchries, ruinous medieval Inverallochy Castle, and old parish churches of St Ethrenan’s Rathen, Crimond, and Longside. In addition, there is a prehistoric cairn on Mormond Hill and a medieval motte at Trefor Hill.”</i>	Few features of note	▪		
Quality / Condition	The area is considered to be of ordinary quality in good condition, managed intensively for agriculture and forestry.	Ordinary quality landscape		▪	
VALUE SUMMARY	The features across the predominantly rural landscape are generally common and there is limited opportunity to experience the landscape in proximity to the Proposed Development from recreational resource.	Value is Low to Medium	▪	▪	
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	NATURESCOT LCT 17 COASTAL AGRICULTURAL PLAIN OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value		Low to Medium		

NATURESCOT LCT 17 COASTAL AGRICULTURAL PLAIN (Within Aberdeenshire Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction activity, including the progressive installation of towers and cable stringing via cranes, as well as access track formations through arable fields, would be widely perceived through the LCT between the A952 and Netherton, through the low lying and gently rolling farmland. Very limited felling of trees would be required, and construction would be parallel to the existing New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV OHL, apart from a section that deviates north from Nether Kinmundy and the Hill of Ludquharn to Netherton. There would be a noticeable change in visual amenity through part of the mid-section of the LCT due to the presence of construction activity within a predominantly rural area. Localised impacts on LCT 17 – Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 17 – Negligible	Low to Medium	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact on LCT 17 (Clola – Netherton): Medium Overall impact on LCT 17: Negligible	<u>During Construction</u> Local level impact on LCT 17: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 17: Negligible Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development intersects the centre of the LCT from west to east for approximately 6.6 km. The Proposed Development crosses the A952 and the Burn of Ludquharn to the west, before traversing the lower slopes of the Hill of Ludquharn, running parallel and seen in conjunction with the existing New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV OHL. The Proposed Development deviates north from the existing 400 kV OHL from the Hill of Ludquharn and heads northeast towards the village of Longside, traversing an area with intermittent blocks of woodland and forestry that broadly contain views towards it. The landscape surrounding the Proposed Development is expansive and flat with limited vegetation cover. Views of the Proposed Development from the north and east are backclothed by an extensive, forested ridge at Moss of Cruden and are intervened by gently undulating landform and occasional areas of woodland. The Proposed Development would result in a minor loss of vegetation in the centre of the LCT to accommodate the OC, but this would be barely perceptible and not represent a noticeable change to the wider landscape. The introduction of an additional OHL within the rural, open setting would further degrade both the visual amenity, perceptual qualities and openness of the landscape, however being located largely parallel to the existing 400 kV OHL means it would not be entirely incongruous to its setting. Overall, there would be a noticeable change to part of the area of the LCT 17. As the character of LCT 17 is fairly consistent across the area, there are no specific localised impacts to report within the landscape of LCT 17. Localised impacts on LCT 17 – Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 17 – Negligible		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact on LCT 17 (Clola – Netherton): Medium Overall impact on LCT 17: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local level impact on LCT 17: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 17: Negligible Adverse (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> There would be no change in summer months due to the relative lack of vegetation cover or felling required through the open farmed landscape. The Proposed Development would remain prominent in the skyline of views through the LCT but is not experienced widely from recreational resources and being sites parallel to the existing 275 kV OHL; the key characteristics are not anticipated to change substantially as a result. Localised impacts on LCT 17 – Medium Overall magnitude of change on LCT 17 – Negligible		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact on LCT 17 (Clola – Netherton): Medium Overall impact on LCT 17: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local level impact on LCT 17: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on LCT 17: Negligible Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Year 15 has not been assessed as there would be no change to the LCT from the year of opening due to the limited amount of felling and replanting required within a broadly open, rolling landscape.			

Table 34 - Special Landscape Area Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors (The Highland Council)

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors (Within The Highland Council)					
Representative viewpoint 19 is located on the edge of and looks into the SLA (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ page 12 for viewpoint location).					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SLA Quotes in italics are from The Highland Council, Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas, June 2011	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“High rolling moorland.”</i> <i>“Rounded slopes leading to summits of relatively uniform height with a large expanse of elevated, undulating blanket bog, and moorland smooth and heather clad.”</i>	Large scale, expansive landscape		▪	
Landform	<i>“High rolling moorland, gentle gradients, limited relief.”</i> <i>“Broad undulating glens interspersed with low, rounded ridges sloping to lower plains”</i>	High rolling moorland, which has a consistency of character derived from gentle gradients		▪	▪
Land cover	<i>“Open moorland much of which is managed as grouse moor.”</i> <i>“Woodland cover is limited in extent and there are few buildings or structures.”</i> <i>“There are isolated fragments of native pine-birch woodland scattered across the area.”</i> <i>“The moorland plateau is dissected by a series of incised river valleys, many of which are flanked by estate access tracks leading into the moorland core. Distinctive rocky outcrops occur and the more steep-sided valleys, such as that of the River Findhorn at Drynachan, offer enclosed and intimate relief from the surrounding expansive moorland.”</i>	The limited extent of tree cover and human habitation creates a simple yet powerful moorland		▪	▪
Texture	<i>“The heather moors are defined by distinctive, geometric muirburn patterns which create an abstract mosaic of colour and texture across the slopes, and identify this as partly a manmade landscape where land management for grouse shooting is the primary activity.”</i>	Predominantly a broad, open moorland landscape		▪	▪
Built Environment	<i>“Where buildings do exist, they are of a distinct estate architectural character.”</i> <i>“Limited network of public roads through the area.”</i> <i>“Elements of human intervention are evident within this landscape, most obviously in the form of tracks, fences, muirburn patterns and fencing.”</i>	Limited development through open moorland			▪
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>“The limited network of public roads through the area, lack of habitation and other built features and open character convey a sense of remoteness and isolation.”</i> - The A989 to the south of Ardclach and the B9007 are the only major roads within the Study Area. - There are no OHLs, but windfarms are visible within or on the edge of the SLA.	Few detracting features			▪
Perceptual aspects	<i>“Sense of spaciousness, wide views and sparse human presence.”</i> <i>“Elements of human intervention are evident within this landscape, most obviously in the form of tracks, fences, muirburn patterns and fencing. However, it retains a strong sense of tranquillity as well as some wildness qualities, which are emphasised by an almost complete absence of built structures.”</i> <i>“A sense of solitude, views over heather moorland, and big skies.”</i>	Retains a strong sense of tranquillity as well as some wildness qualities, which are emphasised by an almost complete absence of built structures			▪
Visual Amenity	<i>“Views across the undulating moorland offer wide, open horizons and broad panoramas in all directions, providing visual connectivity with the higher mountain ranges to the north, west and south.”</i> <i>“The strongly horizontal composition of elements is dominated by the sky and moorland, and a simple and prominent skyline in between. Occasional foci do exist, however, such as small craggy hills, lochans and lodges.”</i>	Expansive views and broad panoramas across open, rolling moorland and vast skies		▪	▪
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	The Proposed Development would pass within 700 m to the north of the SLA and would not intersect it. The hill summits of Bhuidhe Mhor, Beinn Bhuidhe Bheag and Carn a Choire Odhair are visible from the Study Area and lie on the northern edge of the SLA. The SLA then extends	Susceptibility to Change is Medium to High		▪	

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors (Within The Highland Council)

Representative viewpoint 19 is located on the edge of and looks into the SLA (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' page 12 for viewpoint location).

SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SLA Quotes in italics are from The Highland Council, Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas, June 2011	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
	further to the south and east. There would be potential views of the Proposed Development from elevated locations within the SLA. The SLA therefore has a moderate capacity to accommodate the type and scale of development proposed.				
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following highly valued assets: • Carn nan Tri-tighearnan SAC and SSSI; • the LCT is identified as a Key Area of Open Landscape and Habitat in the Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy (2006); • Lochindorb Castle Scheduled Monument; • Ruthven – Drynachan pathway through Streens valley; • 'The Dava Way' Scotland Great Trail; • 'Via Regia' Heritage Path; • 'Old Road to Forres' Heritage Path; and • Highland Tourist Route on the A989.	Regional landscape designation The SLA contains ecology and heritage designations. The wild remote landscape is recognised and valued for its open, tranquil landscape Few ecology and heritage features Recreational scenic routes and trails present			▪
Features	• <i>"The route of the B9007 and A940 are both largely faithful to the line of original military roads that crossed this area."</i> • <i>"Paul's Hill and the permitted Berryburn Windfarm lie adjacent to the eastern boundary of the SLA. Farr Windfarm lies to the west of the SLA."</i> • The SLA falls within LCTs 221, 286 & 291 within the Study Area.	Remote and isolated landscape with few man-made features			▪
Quality / Condition	A high-quality landscape with historic sites and traditional houses, the quality of the landscape has deteriorated slightly due to development of new housing sites. • <i>"Pronounced and dynamic river meanders of Strathglass."</i> • <i>"There are several extensive pylon runs which are aligned with the valley floor or sides, or cross the valley and ascend to the skyline, forming prominent man-made features."</i> • <i>"Roads which generally relate well to landform, with a limited number of river crossing points."</i>	A high-quality landscape with few to no detractors			▪
VALUE SUMMARY	Although this moorland is not as extensive as other moorlands further north, it is valuable for being located mid-way between a number of settlements and for being easily accessible via several roads which pass through the area. Key characteristics are the homogeneity of this area, its sense of spaciousness, wide views, and sparse human presence. The landscape has a regional designation, ecology and heritage features and has recreation interest, with trails present.	Value is High			▪
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	SLA DRYNACHAN, LOCHINDORB AND DAVA MOORS OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value The undifferentiated moorland landscape, characterised by expansive horizons and broad panoramas may be diminished by further features which break up the composition.		High		

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors (Within The Highland Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction activity would take place in the mid-distance to the north of the northern extent of the SLA, that includes the summits of Bhuidhe Mhor, Beinn Bhuidhe Bheag and Carn a Choire Odhair with no perception likely from any designated footpaths or long-distance trails. The nearest point of the Proposed Development would be in the local valley between Saddle Hill and Beinn Bhuidhe Bheag and a section that runs to the northeast in proximity to Assich Forest. There would be some intervisibility through local valleys to the west of Ardclach but the new OHL is unlikely to be perceived from the main linear routes through which the SLA is most experienced; The A989, B9007, 'The Dava Way' Scotland Great Trail or 'Via Regia' Heritage Path. Construction and the installation of towers via crane, or potentially via helicopter, would be visible and seen against the existing 275 kV OHL to the east of Saddle Hill, within broad views to the coastal farmland to the north and some felling through forestry on the slopes of Meall Mor to the west may also be perceived. The introduction of access tracks on the open moorland on lower ground to the north would be unlikely to be openly perceived. Indirect impacts on the SLA would only be associated with its perceptual qualities including tranquillity, which would be slightly affected by the uncharacteristic additional height and movement to the north of the SLA. There is also likely to be a slight impact on the nearest areas of the SLA in terms of its perceived openness and unspoilt nature with highly valued views from local hill summits, from the introduction of new, detracting, built features and construction activity to the north. Localised impacts on the SLA. (north-western edge only) – Low. Overall magnitude of change on SLA Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors – Negligible.	High	<u>During Construction</u> Local impact (north-western edge): Low Overall magnitude of change on SLA Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors: Negligible	<u>During Construction</u> Local impact (north-western edge): Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on SLA Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors: Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development would pass within 700 m to the north of the northern extents of the SLA which include the summits of Bhuidhe Mhor, Beinn Bhuidhe Bheag and Carn a Choire Odhair. It is unlikely to be visible to the east of Creag an Daimh due to intervening landform, forestry and appreciable distance as the Proposed Development comes no closer than 3 km for the remainder of the SLA to the east. The Proposed Development would be visible from local summits and higher ground within the SLA as it passes between Saddle Hill and Beinn Bhudhe Bheag and on the lower slopes of Carn a Choire Odhair. As the Proposed Development would be sited at a lower elevation is it would be backclothed by Saddle Hill, forestry and landscape to the north of the SLA with potentially only the upper portions of towers and the OHL perceived. The Proposed Development joins the alignment of the existing 275 kV OHL from the Allt na h-Athais watercourse and would be seen in conjunction from this point, if visible. Felling on the slopes of Meall Mor to accommodate the OC to the west would be slightly noticeable in the mid-distance but would not greatly impact the valued expansive views from higher ground. Impacts on the SLA would be associated with its perception and the value of broad, expansive views from local hill summits. However, the existing 275 kV OHL is likely to already be perceived and the change in perception would be negligible and through a relatively small area within the large SLA. Broad views to coastal farmlands to the north would not be greatly obstructed but there would be a slight change in terms of additional man-made structures perceptible from within the rural, remote and tranquil landscape of the SLA for those using it and visiting in particular, local hill summits within open access land. The majority of key characteristic features of the SLA would remain intact. There would be an alteration in perception and views due to the introduction of OHL at the northern western edge of the SLA. Localised impacts on the SLA. (north-western edge only) – Low. Overall magnitude of change on SLA Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors – No Change.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local impact (north-western edge): Low Overall magnitude of change on SLA Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors: No Change	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local impact (north-western edge): Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on SLA Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors: Neutral (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> There would be no change in the impact during summer months from the open upland moorland landscape due to the lack of deciduous vegetation. Localised impacts on the SLA. (north-western edge only) – Low. Overall magnitude of change on SLA Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors – No Change. <u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> There would be no perceived change in land cover through the open moorland landscape and no change to the impact potentially introduced by the Proposed Development.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local impact (north-western edge): Low Overall magnitude of change on SLA Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors: No Change	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local impact (north-western edge): Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on SLA Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors: Neutral (non-significant)

Table 35 - Special Landscape Area Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates (Moray Council)

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates (Within Moray Council)					
Representative viewpoint 20 is located within the SLA (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ page 11 for viewpoint location).					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SLA Quotes in italics are from the Moray Council: Moray Landscape Designation Review, July 2018	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“The River Findhorn and its tributary, the Divie, are accommodated within dramatic deeply cut valleys.”</i> <i>“Large scale estates and historic houses.”</i>	A varied landscape incorporating both larger scale farming, woodland and estates with pockets of more intimate, smaller scale landscapes		▪	▪
Landform	<i>“Richly wooded character of the western part of Moray which is influenced by the long-established estates which border the dramatically incised River Findhorn.”</i>	A mix of incised river valleys and flatter farmed plain		▪	▪
Land cover	<i>“The River Findhorn and its tributary, the Divie, are accommodated within dramatic deeply cut valleys.”</i> <i>“Tiny fields of pasture occupy shelves of land set above the river and between steep wooded slopes in the upper reaches of the valley.”</i> <i>“Broader areas of open farmland occur on flat floodplain areas downstream.”</i> <i>“The woodlands of the estate contribute to the distinctive approach to Moray when travelling on the A940.”</i>	Heavily wooded with designed estates and farmland in between		▪	
Texture	<i>“The valleys of the Findhorn and the Divie are particularly contorted close to their confluence.”</i> <i>“Open farmland and parkland lies at the centre of the designed landscape surrounding the Grade A listed 19th century Darnaway Castle.”</i>	Undulating landform, winding roads and natural woodland with no built edges		▪	
Built Environment	<i>“Designed landscapes with limited development beyond the estates apart from individual properties.”</i> - The A940 and B9007 are the only major roads. - An existing 275 kV OHL can be seen to the south.	Built form typically comprised of interspersed small farms, occasional individual properties and historic houses. The A940 is a dominant feature		▪	
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	- The A940 is a dominating and detracting feature running north to south through the SLA. There are few other roads apart from the B9007. - Views of an existing OHL are afforded through the A940 corridor and above intervening forestry. - No larger settlements in the estate landscape results in few detracting features.	Few detracting features in an attractive, well-wooded landscape apart from the A940 and presence of an existing OHL to the south		▪	
Perceptual aspects	<i>“Well-used footpaths are aligned along much of the Findhorn, many of these elevated above precipitous wooded slopes, and the valley has an intimate secluded quality.”</i>	Intimate, secluded quality when not in proximity to the A940		▪	▪
Visual Amenity	<i>“Woodlands within the river valleys merge into the neighbouring Altyre and Darnaway estates creating a strongly contained landscape where views focus on the detail of the landscape.”</i>	Strongly contained views, mostly glimpses through intervening woodland. Some appreciation of hills to the south, including Knock o’ Braemoray and Cairn Eney		▪	▪
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	The Proposed Development passes within 350 m to the south of the SLA at its nearest point and would not intersect it. The SLA extends to the north and would be susceptible to impacts on the visual effects, the perception and experience of the well wooded immediate landscape. The A940 is a detracting feature and an existing 275 kV OHL can be seen to the south. Woodland and topography limit views to the south towards the Proposed Development. The SLA therefore has a moderate capacity to accommodate the type and scale of development proposed.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium		▪	
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following highly valued assets: - Relugas garden and designed landscape; - Darnaway Castle garden and designed landscape including Grade A listed 19th century Darnaway Castle;	Regional landscape designation Ecology and heritage designations			▪

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates (Within Moray Council)					
Representative viewpoint 20 is located within the SLA (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ page 11 for viewpoint location).					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SLA Quotes in italics are from the Moray Council: Moray Landscape Designation Review, July 2018	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
	• ‘The Dava Way’ Scotland Great Trail on the eastern boundary. This route is popular with cyclists and walkers; • an extensive network of tracks and paths also provides access for walkers within the Darnaway Estate (with these linking to the Findhorn valley) and within the Altyre estate; • Estate lands of Dunphail House; and • Dallas Dhu distillery.	<i>“The landscape is additionally very well-used for recreation, forming a major attraction within Moray”</i>			
Features	• <i>“Meads of St Johns within the Darnaway estate, reputed to have been used for jousting during Mary Queen of Scot’s time.”</i> • <i>“Randolph’s Leap, a narrow rocky constriction of the Findhorn, is located in this area and is celebrated in folklore as well as for its geological interest.”</i> • <i>“To the south lies the estate lands of Dunphail House, designed by William Playfair in 1828.”</i> • <i>“The estate of Altyre in the north-east of this landscape is also extensively wooded and accommodates rare tree species and spectacularly tall Douglas Fir.”</i>	Numerous historic features of local and regional importance Cultural interest			▪
Quality / Condition	A high-quality landscape with historic sites and traditional houses. • <i>“The area has a distinctive heritage of estate buildings and structures including lodges, gatehouses, cottages and stone bridges crossing the Findhorn and Divie.”</i> • <i>“Edinkillie church which was built in 1741 and the early 19th century manse next to it form an attractive grouping of buildings set deep in the wooded valley of the Divie and encountered on the A940. The historic Dallas Dhu distillery also lies on the edge of the Altyre estate.”</i> • <i>“The woodlands and designed landscapes which lie either side of it, contribute to the richness of this landscape with built features associated with the estates further complementing the whole.”</i>	A high-quality landscape with few detractors			▪
VALUE SUMMARY	Regional landscape designation, ecology and heritage features, recreation and tourism interest.	Value is High			▪
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	SLA FINDHORN VALLEY AND THE WOODED ESTATES OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value This landscape would be sensitive to any built development located on the small areas of open ground lying close to the Findhorn Valley as these are rare and provide a focus within often dense woodland. Vertical infrastructure in adjacent uplands which may intrude on views from rare open areas within woodland and potentially affect the setting of the river, designed landscapes and valued buildings.		Medium to High		

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates (Within Moray Council)

LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction activity would be briefly perceptible in the mid-distance to the south as the Proposed Development crosses the A940 and traverses the lower slopes of Cairn Eney. Glenernerney Wood would largely screen views to construction works although the installation of towers via cranes may be seen above intervening tree lines and activity may also be seen to the southeast from 'The Dava Way' upon crossing the River Divie valley. Felling would be unlikely to be perceived, and views are likely to be limited to higher level activity and the top of towers, seen beyond the existing 275 kV OHL. Any views of construction activity in the adjoining landscape to the south would not change the overall perception of the well contained and wooded SLA and impacts would be limited to a slight change on visual amenity resulting from the introduction of additional detracting man-made features to the south of the well-wooded landscape, which would likely to be glimpsed from the A940 and 'The Dava Way' through the A940 corridor and River Divie valley. The temporary introduction of accommodation works and access tracks would be briefly noticeable from the southern and eastern extremities of the SLA and introduce a low impact. Localised impacts on SLA.Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates (southern and eastern extremities) – Negligible to Low. Overall magnitude of change on SLA – Negligible.	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Local impact on SLA (southern and eastern extremities): Negligible to Low Overall magnitude of change on SLA Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates: Negligible	<u>During Construction</u> Local effect on SLA (southern and eastern extents): Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on SLA Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development passes to the south of the SLA and is within 350 m at the closest point, from the A940 corridor and Glenernerney Wood. It is likely to be visible beyond and above the existing 275 kV OHL within narrow views as it crosses the A940 to the south and the River Divie to the southeast. Seen in conjunction with the existing 275 kV OHL, taller towers would be seen crossing the A940 and potentially above Glenernerney Wood on the lower slopes of Cairn Eney, and from 'The Dava Way' looking along the Divie valley where it may be seen above riverside vegetation. Perception of the Proposed Development is likely to be very limited within brief glimpsed views on the southern extents of the SLA and is not anticipated to change the character or perception of the historic, well-wooded and visually contained landscape but would result in a negligible impact on visual amenity. Localised impacts on SLA.Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates (southern extremities) – Negligible. Overall magnitude of change on SLA – Negligible.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local impact on SLA (southern and eastern extremities): Negligible Overall impact on SLA Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local effect on SLA (southern extents): Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on SLA Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> There would only be a slight change in summer months due to intervening deciduous vegetation providing slightly more screening within views towards the Proposed Development Localised impacts on SLA.Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates (southern extremities) – Negligible. Overall magnitude of change on SLA – Negligible. <u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> There would be no perceived change from the SLA in the long term and no change to the negligible impact potentially introduced by the Proposed Development.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local impact on SLA (southern extents): Negligible Overall impact on SLA Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates: Negligible	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local effect on SLA (southern extents): Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant) Overall effect on SLA Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates: Negligible to Minor Adverse (non-significant)

Table 36 - Special Landscape Area The Spey Valley (Moray Council)

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA The Spey Valley (Within Moray Council)					
Representative viewpoints 28, 29, 30 & 62 are located within the SLA (refer to Figure 7.4 ‘Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features’ page 16 for viewpoint locations). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: LCT 287 Photo 1 and LCT 293 Photos 1, 2 & 3 for key features and characteristics of the SLA.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SLA Quotes in italics are from the Moray Council: Moray Landscape Designation Review, July 2018	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	- Comprises the broad valley of the Spey extending south of Fochabers to the boundary of Moray with Highland Council in the west. <i>“Containment provided to the Spey valley by adjacent uplands and therefore include more pronounced steep-sided hills which lie close to the Spey such as Ben Aigan.”</i> <i>“The Spey is wide and occasionally braided forming banks of cobbles and vegetated islands.”</i>	Broad and open floodplain valley contained by surrounding steep sided hills		▪	▪
Landform	- The broad and open floodplain of the Spey south of Fochabers narrows further upstream where the valley is increasingly constrained by steep hillsides. <i>“The Spey is aligned close to a scarp on the lower slopes of Ordiequish Hill in the east where the bright orange red rainwater eroded sandstone Earth Pillars form an arresting natural feature.”</i> <i>“The middle section of the valley is strongly contained on both sides by steep wooded slopes including those of the prominent heather-capped hill of Ben Aigan which looms over the valley. The river forms tight loops defining arcs of floodplain arable fields and pasture.”</i>	Broad and open floodplain of the Spey south of Fochabers, increasingly constrained by steep hillsides		▪	▪
Land cover	<i>“Broad gently weaving river, floodplain farmland, wooded valley sides and distinctive settlements.”</i> <i>“The B9102 and minor roads are followed south of Rothes and around the Knockando area while the ridgeline of the twin wooded hills lying at the south-eastern foot of Roy’s Hill forms the boundary opposite Ballindalloch.”</i> <i>“Steep slopes and terraces, backed by extensive coniferous forest, accommodate small species-rich pastures and mixed woodlands fringed by ferns and gorse.”</i>	Floodplain farmland with wooded valley sides		▪	
Texture	<i>“Narrow shelves of farmland and the retained historic field patterns of small croft houses and farms are perched above the floodplain of the Spey to the north-east of Rothes although increasingly in the middle sections of the valley, the forested side slopes of hills dominate.”</i>	Broad winding river valley with forested side slopes of adjacent hills forming defined edges		▪	
Built Environment	<i>“Relatively large farms are present in the Inchberry to Fochabers area raised on slightly elevated ground above the floodplain west of the Spey.”</i> <i>“Smaller farms and houses are sited close to the minor road which forms the route for the ‘Speyside Way’ on the east side of the valley between Fochabers and Boat o’ Brig”.</i> <i>T”he B9102 and minor roads are followed south of Rothes and around the Knockando area”.</i>	Settled, farmed river plain with numerous roads and larger settlement of Fochabers and A96 forming detracting features. Less settled on hill slopes to the east and west of the river		▪	▪
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	<i>“This area has an intimate scale and more tranquil nature than the western side of the river in this area which is more intensively farmed and accommodates busy roads and the railway”.</i> - The A96 crosses the SLA to the north of Fochabers. - Two existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs immediately south of the Proposed Development are prominent features through the valley and over Ordiequish Hill.	Numerous detracting features through the broad valley but surrounding hills dominate the background of views within an attractive landscape despite the presence of existing OHLs	▪	▪	
Perceptual aspects	<i>“Romance associated with the Spey due to its connection with whisky distilling.”</i> <i>“This area has an intimate scale and more tranquil nature than the western side of the river in this area which is more intensively farmed and accommodates busy roads and the railway”.</i>	Relative lack of tranquillity through the broad river valley with numerous roads, farms and two existing OHLs. More remoteness and tranquillity found in forested hill slopes		▪	
Visual Amenity	<i>“Although Ben Rinnes forms the core of a separate candidate SLA this hill, with its steep heathery slopes and distinctive long tor-studded curving ridgelines, provides a dramatic backdrop to the Spey Valley.”</i> <i>“ Views are generally open in the north but become more confined upstream where the valley is contained by steep-sided hills”.</i>	Open views through the broad river valley with adjacent uplands forming landmarks and broadly containing views. Earth Pillars		▪	▪

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA The Spey Valley (Within Moray Council)					
Representative viewpoints 28, 29, 30 & 62 are located within the SLA (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' page 16 for viewpoint locations). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: LCT 287 Photo 1 and LCT 293 Photos 1, 2 & 3 for key features and characteristics of the SLA.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SLA	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	Quotes in italics are from the Moray Council: Moray Landscape Designation Review, July 2018		LOW	MED	HIGH
	<i>“Adjacent uplands, and particularly the high and distinctive heather-clad Ben Rinnes with its ridgeline tors, are highly visible in the section of the valley west of Craigellachie and form part of the wider setting.”</i>	viewpoint and forest walks provide elevated but filtered views over the valley			
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	The Proposed Development intersects the SLA for approximately 4.4 km to the north of Inchberry. The SLA has a low capacity to accommodate the type and scale of development proposed due to the open nature of the broad river valley, steep forest hill slopes that are highly visible to the east of the River Spey and vertical elements being highly visible on adjacent upland. However, there are two existing OHLs immediately south of the Proposed Development, meaning a Proposed Development of the same type would not be entirely incongruous through the SLA.	Susceptibility to Change is Medium to High		▪	▪
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The LCT contains the following highly valued assets: - Lower Spey and Gordon Castles Policies garden and designed landscape; - North East 250 tourist route on the B9015; ‘Speyside Way’ Scotland Great Trail to the east of the river alongside the Wood of Ordiequish; - Earth Pillars viewpoint and forest walks; - distilleries form a regular and very recognisable landscape feature with the area; and - Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings.	Regional landscape designation Ecology and heritage designated features Recreation trails and visitor attractions <i>“The association of the Spey valley with whisky distilling attracts visitors and conjures a romantic perception of the landscape and cultural heritage of the area”</i>			▪
Features	<i>“Interesting architectural features enrich this landscape and include traditional (and not so traditional) distilleries, the 16th Century Ballindalloch Castle, numerous estate lodges, Telford’s graceful high arched bridge spanning the Spey at Craigellachie, the planned settlements of Aberlour and Archiestown and the Victorian settlement of Craigellachie.”</i> <i>“Winding Walks close to Fochabers weave through majestic conifers including tall noble fir and western Red cedar.”</i> <i>“There are other forest walks at the Earth Pillars (viewpoint) close-by and the ‘Speyside Way’ follows minor roads, forest tracks and the banks of the river through this landscape.”</i>	The Spey Valley has a rich cultural heritage which complements the diversity of its woodlands and farmland			▪
Quality / Condition	<i>“A high-quality river valley landscape with historic sites”</i> <i>“Diverse and handsome landscape of broad gently weaving river, floodplain farmland, wooded valley sides and distinctive settlements together with the romance associated with the Spey due to its connection with whisky distilling.”</i>	A high-quality landscape but with detracting features through the valley		▪	▪
VALUE SUMMARY	Regional landscape designation, ecology and heritage features with recreation and tourism interest. The SLA is likely to be valued for its historic features, distilleries, attractive views, access to the River Spey and recreational opportunities.	Value is High			▪
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	SLA THE SPEY VALLEY OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value The SLA is sensitive to vertical development sited in adjacent upland areas and visible on prominent skylines which would affect the character and views from this well-settled and visited valley.		Medium to High		

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA The Spey Valley (Within Moray Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction activity, including installation of towers via cranes and felling on Ordiequish Hill would be openly visible from local roads including the North East 250 tourist route, the River Spey, and the ‘Speyside Way’ through the broad river valley to the north of Inchberry. Construction would be in proximity to two existing OHLs to the south of the Proposed Development and access tracks are not anticipated to result in any additional impacts as they would be sited mostly within the OC. Substantial OC and management felling through the Wood of Ordiequish would be highly prominent in views within the SLA locally, looking east towards Ordiequish Hill, together with the progressive installation of towers over the steep hillside to the east of the river. Extensive areas of retained forestry within the Wood of Ordiequish to the north and south broadly contain construction activity within the forestry and existing OHLs provide a context in which the Proposed Development would not be entirely incongruous to the landscape. However, the movement, additional height and introduction of new, detracting built features through a small portion of highly scenic and valued landscape would result in impacts on the setting of the River Spey, appreciation of the Earth Pillars, on visual amenity through the local section of the river valley, and on its perceptual qualities including tranquillity. Significant visual impacts would be largely contained to approximately 3 km north and 3 km south of the Proposed Development, resulting in localised impacts on the SLA only. Localised impacts within the SLA (around Orbliston, Dipple, Inchberry and Ordiquish) – High. No characteristic distilleries are located within this section of the SLA, and therefore there would be no impact on this key quality and reason for designation. The earth pillars, viewing point, and key walks in this portion (including the Speyside Way) would also not be physically impacted, with both the earth pillars and viewing point already crossed by existing OHLs. Overall magnitude of change on SLA The Spey Valley – Low.	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Localised impacts within the SLA (around Orbliston, Dipple, Inchberry and Ordiquish): High Overall magnitude of change on SLA The Spey Valley: Low	<u>During Construction</u> Localised effects: Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on SLA The Spey Valley: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development intersects the SLA for approximately 4.5 km between Orbliston and through the Wood of Ordiequish towards but not quite up to the A96. The Proposed Development would be sited parallel and in close proximity to existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs through the low-lying farmed landscape of the Spey valley and would cross the River Spey before rising onto the steep sided hill slopes of Ordiequish Hill and passing through the Wood of Ordiequish, which it exits and crosses the A96 just beyond the SLA. There would be an accumulated wirescaping effect as a result of three OHLs passing through the Spey valley and impacts on visual amenity on highly valued recreational routes through the landscape from the introduction of an additional detracting and highly prominent built feature. Felling through the Wood of Ordiequish within and beyond the OC would result in a prominent change to vegetation cover to the east of the River Spey on the forested hillside and from the ‘Speyside Way’ to the south of Ordiequish, where all three OHLs would be seen together through a large clear-fell area. The landscape between the B9103 and Wood of Ordiequish is both transiently and statically experienced by visitors and users of important tourist routes and long-distance paths as well as visitors to the Earth Pillars and to the public viewpoint on Ordiequish Hill. While there are existing detracting features through the SLA, the addition of another OHL with substantially taller towers would further deteriorate visual amenity, perceptual qualities and the setting of the River Spey locally, although the earth pillars and viewpoint are not physically impacted. Localised impacts within the SLA (around Orbliston, Dipple, Inchberry and Ordiquish) - Medium to High. Overall magnitude of change on SLA The Spey Valley – Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Localised impacts within the SLA (around Orbliston, Dipple, Inchberry and Ordiquish): Medium to High Overall magnitude of change on SLA The Spey Valley: Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Localised effects: Moderate to Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on SLA The Spey Valley: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> Vegetation within the SLA is predominantly coniferous forestry and therefore there would only be a minor change in terms of perception of the Proposed Development in summer months due to the additional screening provided by intermittent deciduous vegetation within fields or alongside local roads and the River Spey. The Proposed Development would remain a prominent new, detracting, built feature within the river valley landscape and through the Wood of Ordiequish. Localised impacts within the SLA (around Orbliston, Dipple, Inchberry and Ordiquish) - Medium to High. Overall magnitude of change on SLA The Spey Valley – Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Localised impacts within the SLA (around Orbliston, Dipple, Inchberry and Ordiquish): Medium to High Overall magnitude of change on SLA The Spey Valley: Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Localised effects: Moderate to Major Adverse (significant) Overall effect on SLA The Spey Valley: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Management felling planting back to the edge of the OC and forest edge fringe planting within the OC is likely to have established in this time (refer to Appendix 7.6 Forestry Landscape Mitigation Principles). The management felling planting and forest edge fringe planting is anticipated to partially screen the lower to mid-portions of towers on Ordiequish Hill and would soften the appearance of the artificially straight tract of open forestry by making the edges more organic and natural looking in the landscape within views from the River Spey valley. Management felling planting through the Wood of Ordiequish would also better integrate the Proposed Development and reduce its prominence to the south of Ordiequish from the ‘Speyside Way’ and mostly restore land cover to its original state. Although forest edge fringe planting would reduce the impact associated with Ordiequish Hill, the Proposed Development would remain highly prominent through The Spey Valley SLA and upon crossing the River Spey. Localised impacts within the SLA (around Orbliston, Dipple, Inchberry and Ordiquish) – Medium.		<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Localised impacts within the SLA (around Orbliston, Dipple, Inchberry and Ordiquish): Medium	<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Localised effects: Moderate Adverse (significant)

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA The Spey Valley (Within Moray Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
Overall Impact on SLA The Spey Valley – Low .		Overall impact on SLA The Spey Valley: Low	Overall effect on SLA The Spey Valley: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant)

Table 37 - Special Landscape Area Deveron Valley (Aberdeenshire Council)

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA Deveron Valley (Within Aberdeenshire Council)					
Representative viewpoints 36, 37 & 38 are located within the SLA (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' pages 20 & 21 for viewpoint locations). Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: LCT 32 Photos 1 & 2 for key features and characteristics of the SLA.					
SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SLA Quotes in italics are from the Aberdeenshire Council, Statement of Importance: Deveron Valley Special Landscape Area	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE					
Scale	<i>“A continuous valley landscape, from the hills to the sea.”</i> <i>“Some narrower and more incised sections of river valley contrast with the broader areas.”</i>	Predominantly farmed landscape with medium to large scale fields		▪	▪
Landform	<i>“Meandering river framed by rolling wooded hills and ridges, providing views into the valley.”</i> <i>“A continuous valley landscape, from the hills to the sea which forms a contained setting for the settlements, estates and houses found along its length.”</i>	Meandering river valley with undulating hills		▪	▪
Land cover	<i>“The Deveron Valley has a strong woodland structure comprising deciduous woodland associated with traditional estates, as well as forested hills, riverside trees and beech hedging.”</i> <i>“A variety of woodland types include coniferous plantations, deciduous hilltop copses, shelter belts and a wealth of roadside trees including beech and ash.”</i> <i>“There is strong network of woodland throughout the valley which provides landscape structure.”</i>	Predominantly a farmed river valley with interspersed woodland blocks and commercial forestry on higher slopes		▪	
Texture	<i>“The valley is unified by the meandering River Deveron, which flows from the hills of Moray into the Moray Firth at Banff Bay. The landscape is a harmonious composition of river, farmland, wooded estates and heather-clad / forested hills, forming the setting to numerous villages and historic buildings.”</i>	Flowing river valley with undulating and enclosed hill slopes. Linear features around Huntly and Turriff and with transport routes		▪	▪
Built Environment	<i>“Numerous small settlements and estates with distinctive local architecture.”</i> <i>“The valley landscape forms an important part of the setting of various settlements, including the planned town of Huntly and the market town of Turriff.”</i> <i>“Distinctive local architecture displayed in towns.”</i>	Sparsely settled through the valley apart from the larger settlements of Huntly and Turriff. Frequent transport routes		▪	
Presence of features which detract from the landscape	- The Aberdeen to Inverness railway line crosses the Deveron valley to the north of Huntly but is not prominent. - The A96 crosses the SLA to the south of Huntly. - The A97 borders the SLA to the east of Huntly. - Existing 275 kV OHL to the south of Rothiemay but not in proximity to the Proposed Development. - Detracting urban features associated with the settlements of Huntly and Turriff.	Urban features present throughout but do not detract greatly from the overall scenic value of the river valley		▪	
Perceptual aspects	<i>“Sense of place associated with historic estates including parkland around Duff House, Forglen and others, but more generally in the wooded landscape.”</i> - Tranquillity afforded through the valley although relatively few recreational opportunities to find it.	Sense of place and tranquillity afforded in places High scenic quality		▪	▪
Visual Amenity	<i>“Some of the hills enclosing the valley provide opportunities for panoramic views across the Deveron and beyond, including Fourman Hill, a Marilyn on the boundary with Moray, southeast of Milltown of Rothiemay. Views across the valley from the A97 are also available, e.g. south of Aberchirder.”</i> - Views are typically directed and focussed along the river and to the side slops and immediate skylines. - The Bin is a distinctive hill to the west within views from within the valley to the north of Huntly.	Attractive sections of winding river valley with landform generally containing views. Some detracting features. Surrounding hills often frame views		▪	▪
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE SUMMARY	The Proposed Development intersects the SLA for approximately 5.7 km to the north of Huntly. The SLA has a low capacity to accommodate the type and scale of development proposed due to the relative lack of detracting features, woodland and hill sides either side of the river where new	Susceptibility to Change is Medium to High		▪	▪

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA Deveron Valley (Within Aberdeenshire Council)

Representative viewpoints 36, 37 & 38 are located within the SLA (refer to Figure 7.4 'Landscape Character Types and Key Landscape Features' pages 20 & 21 for viewpoint locations).

Refer to Figure 7.5 Landscape Character Type Photos: LCT 32 Photos 1 & 2 for key features and characteristics of the SLA.

SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA Factors affecting Susceptibility & Value	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SLA Quotes in italics are from the Aberdeenshire Council, Statement of Importance: Deveron Valley Special Landscape Area	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE CRITERIA SUMMARY	SUSCEPTIBILITY / VALUE		
			LOW	MED	HIGH
	vertical elements would be highly prominent. The existing OHL would not be aligned with the Proposed Development and so the new OHL would be seen as a new detracting built element through the river valley landscape.				
VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR					
Recognition	The SLA contains the following highly valued assets: • Foreglen garden and designed landscape; • listed buildings, Scheduled Monument and Conservation Area in Huntly; and • the attractive landscape makes the Deveron a popular setting for a range of outdoor recreation including fishing, canoeing, walking and cycling, with the National Cycle Network Route 1 between Banff and Turriff.	Regional landscape designation Ecology and heritage features Recreation interest The importance of the area for connectivity, in terms of transport corridors, water catchments and woodland networks is recognised			▪
Features	• <i>"Woodland on the steep sided valleys are important for nature conservation and also contributes to the quality, richness and diversity of the SLA, as well as providing a mature and managed character."</i> • <i>"Ancient and historic structures, such as the Neolithic Stirling Cairn, and the Bridge of Alvah, are found along the length of the river valley."</i> • <i>"The presence of historic estates has a strong influence along the river, including parkland around Duff House, Forglen and others, but more generally in the wooded landscape."</i> • <i>"Fortified castles spread along the valley, including Huntly Castle."</i>	Interspersed ecology and heritage features through the river valley, mostly associated with settlements and accessed via roads rather than recreational rural routes Estates and castles present along the river valley			▪
Quality / Condition	• <i>"A high-quality, scenic river valley landscape with historic sites and settlements."</i> • <i>"High scenic quality resulting from its meandering river bounded by rolling wooded hills, which forms an important setting to settlements along the valley floor and sides, and backdrop to castles and estates."</i> • <i>"The interplay and harmonious balance between the features of this SLA means that no one feature particularly dominates the landscape over another but that they are all of equal significance in terms of their contribution to the special qualities of the area."</i>	A high-quality landscape but with some detracting features through the valley including frequent transport routes			▪
VALUE SUMMARY	Regional landscape designation, ecology and heritage features. Recreation and tourism value. The valley landscape forms an important part of the setting of various settlements, including the planned town of Huntly and the market town of Turriff.	Value is High			▪
			SENSITIVITY		
SENSITIVITY	SLA DEVERON VALLEY OVERALL SENSITIVITY - Susceptibility + Value The SLA would be sensitive to the Proposed Development from vistas along the valley and surrounding upland areas. The Proposed Development would break up the continuity of the continuous valley landscape.		Medium to High		

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA Deveron Valley (Within Aberdeenshire Council)			
LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS	SENSITIVITY OF LCT	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT SENSITIVITY + IMPACT
<u>During Construction</u> Construction activity to the north of The Bin and east to the A97 at Cruchie, including the progressive installation of towers via cranes (or potentially helicopters), access track formation through open fields, and intermittent areas of felling, would be openly visible within a moderate local portion of the SLA through the landscape from the B9022, River Deveron and briefly from the A97 between Huntly and Rothiemay. Areas of OC and management felling are small, given the scale of the SLA but would still represent a noticeable change to land cover. Felling would take place on the southern edge of Brownhill Plantation to the west, within Cumrie Plantation to the north of The Bin Forest and within Longmoor Wood to the east of the Hill of Kinnoir. Further felling would be noticeable just beyond the boundary of the SLA adjacent to the A97. Construction activity would be perceived locally through the SLA between areas of forestry and rolling landform, with the additional height, movement and introduction of new detracting built features largely out of character and resulting in impacts on the SLA through adverse changes to visual amenity land cover and perceptual qualities such as tranquillity. Wider impacts and visibility are limited, with significant visibility reducing beyond around 2.5 km north and south of the Proposed Development. Local impacts on the SLA closest to the Proposed Development (north of Huntly) – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on SLA Deveron Valley – Low.	Medium to High	<u>During Construction</u> Local Impact (north of Huntly): Medium Overall magnitude of change on SLA Deveron Valley: Low	<u>During Construction</u> Local Impact (north of Huntly): Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on SLA Deveron Valley: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year of Opening</u> <i>Winter</i> The Proposed Development would intersect the SLA for approximately 8 km from the north of The Bin to the A97 at Cruchie and would introduce prominent new, detracting, built features through predominantly open arable farmland within the SLA that would be perceived from important linear public routes of the B9022, River Deveron and A97. The new OHL would traverse the lower slopes of The Bin into the SLA from the west, through the Cumrie Plantation before crossing the B9022, River Deveron and Aberdeen to Inverness railway in quick succession before, passing to the north of the Hill of Kinnoir and through Longmoor Wood before approaching and crossing the A97 on the edge of the SLA. The Proposed Development would be seen as a new, detracting built feature through the landscape although surrounding undulating landform and large areas of forestry broadly contain its presence from the wider landscape of the SLA and changes to land cover are minimal. At the point the Proposed Development crosses the River Deveron, the setting of the river is not highly sensitive due to the presence of the B9022 and Aberdeen to Inverness railway line and being flanked by open arable fields with minimal riverside vegetation within a gently undulating section of the valley. This area of the landscape and the River Deveron is mostly transiently experienced by users of local roads, the railway and the A97 with limited recreational opportunities or static views for tourists. While there are existing detracting features present within the wider SLA including local and major road corridors and existing OHLs, an additional OHL with substantially taller towers would further deteriorate some of the perceptual qualities within the SLA and impact the transient visual experience for users of the landscape in this localised portion. Local impacts on the SLA (north of Huntly) – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on SLA Deveron Valley – Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local Impact (north of Huntly): Medium Overall magnitude of change on SLA Deveron Valley: Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Winter)</u> Local Impact (north of Huntly): Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on SLA Deveron Valley: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant)
<i>Summer</i> There would only be a minor change in terms of perception of the Proposed Development in summer months due to the additional screening provided by intermittent deciduous vegetation through the SLA, mostly associated with surrounding field boundaries or alongside local roads. The Proposed Development would remain a prominent new, detracting, built feature across a central portion of the SLA, but more widely contained by surrounding landform and forestry. Local impacts on the SLA (north of Huntly) – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on SLA Deveron Valley – Low.		<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local Impact (north of Huntly): Medium Overall magnitude of change on SLA Deveron Valley: Low	<u>Operational Phase - Year of Opening (Summer)</u> Local Impact (north of Huntly): Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on SLA Deveron Valley: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant)
<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Management felling planting back to the edge of the OC would likely have become established in this time within Brownhill Plantation, Cumrie Plantation and Longmoor Wood. The management felling planting would partially screen the lower to mid-portions of some individual towers and assist in slightly integrating the OHL into the local landscape and reinstating some of the original land cover in the long term. However, impacts associated with a change to visual amenity and perceptual qualities would remain with the Proposed Development continuing to be a prominent new, detracting, built feature through a moderate local portion the SLA. Local impacts on the SLA (north of Huntly) – Medium. Overall magnitude of change on SLA Deveron Valley – Low.		<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local Impact (north of Huntly): Medium Overall magnitude of change on SLA Deveron Valley: Low	<u>Operational Phase Year 15 (Summer)</u> Local Impact (north of Huntly): Moderate Adverse (significant) Overall effect on SLA Deveron Valley: Minor to Moderate Adverse (non-significant)