

VOLUME 6: CHAPTER 3 – LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL (ALTERNATIVE ALIGNMENT)

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3. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

3.1 Executive Summary

Introduction

- 3.1.1 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken for the Alternative Alignment within a study area of 2.5 km from the proposed OHL steel lattice towers. The LVIA has been undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects at ASH design + assessment Ltd (ASH), a registered practice with the Landscape Institute, in accordance with best practice guidance, the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA)¹.
- 3.1.2 The LVIA considers the two separate subjects of landscape and visual amenity as follows:
- The landscape assessment has considered the potential effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character, designated and protected landscapes.
 - The visual assessment has considered the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the visual amenity of those present within the landscape, including established views from residential areas, routes and other outdoor locations where appreciation of the view is considered important.
- 3.1.3 The LVIA also gives consideration to the potential for cumulative effects between the Alternative Alignment and Sections 2 and 4 of the wider Proposed Development, along with the related proposed substation extension at Broadford which would be the subject of a separate planning application. Further consideration of cumulative effects with other unrelated, proposed electrical infrastructure developments (including wind farm proposals and other proposed OHL and substation developments) falling within 1 km of the LVIA study area was also considered but no such sites were identified.
- 3.1.4 The LVIA takes account of embedded mitigation measures developed when establishing the preferred alternative alignment. It also takes into account the likely benefits of general mitigation measures concerning the use of best practice construction and restoration techniques which would be applied during the construction and reinstatement phases of the Proposed Development. Recommendations for specific mitigation measures are also provided where these could help to minimise and improve landscape and visual effects where possible.

Summary of Effects

Landscape Effects

- 3.1.5 The landscape assessment for the Alternative Alignment has identified that significant effects would be likely to occur within the Glen Arroch and Kyle Rhea Glen areas during construction and operation. During construction, the Alternative Alignment is predicted to appear prominent and distracting, likely to affect the sense of remoteness through the elevated pass of Bealach Udal and disrupt valued views through Kyle Rhea Glen, and the setting of crofting landscapes at the base of the glen. During operation, proposed steel lattice towers would form a new characteristic within these valued landscapes, likely to appear distracting and, with the addition of a permanent access track, leading to a greater sense of accessibility and development.
- 3.1.6 A temporary significant landscape effect would also occur along the shore of Kyle Rhea, between Kylerhea and the existing OHL due to the effects of felling works, construction of towers and temporary access tracks. However, given the forested character of this area, the presence of the existing tall sea-crossing towers and the positive effect of removal of towers to the north of the crossing point, the longer-term operational effect would not be significant.

¹ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition.

3.1.7 No significant effects are predicted to the landscape around Broadford Bay, where the Proposed Development would appear very similar to the OHL it would replace, and the landscape is considered capable of accommodating construction activities without a noticeable change in character.

3.1.8 No designated or protected landscapes would be affected by the Proposed Development although it is recognised that the landscape of Kylerhea Glen is valued locally and by visitors.

Visual Effects

3.1.9 The visual assessment has identified that the majority of visual receptors would not be significantly affected by the Proposed Development. However, significant effects have been identified for receptors within the Glen Arroch and Kyle Rhea area affecting those at residential areas, using routes, and present at outdoor locations.

3.1.10 During construction, this would include visual receptors at the following locations:

- Residents and visitors at Kylerhea village, where the OHL would be prominent in rear views, although it would not affect valued coastal views;
- Travellers on the narrow minor road leading to Kylerhea village through Glen Arroch and Kylerhea Glen;
- Individuals engaged in appreciating the view from the Bealach Udal viewpoint;
- Visitors to a carpark / picnic area and using a recreational route to wildlife hides at the RSPB Otter Haven reserve; and
- Walkers accessing hill routes to the north of Kylerhea Glen (ascending Beinn na Caillich and Sgùrr na Còinnich) and to the south of Kylerhea Glen (ascending Ben Aslak).

3.1.11 During the operation of the Proposed Development, some of these effects would be reduced after 10 years post construction with the cessation of construction works and re-establishment of vegetation. However, longer term significant visual effects are predicted to continue for residents of Kylerhea village, where the Alternative Alignment would be prominent within the rear setting, and for users of the minor Glen Arroch / Kyle Rhea Glen Road, and Bealach Udal viewpoint where towers and a permanent access track are likely to appear distracting and interrupt the easterly views.

3.1.12 Elsewhere within the study area, for receptors within Broadford and outlying areas including residential areas and routes, and for receptors on the east side of the Kyle Rhea strait, although there may be views of the Proposed Development, the visual effect would be not significant during construction or operation.

Cumulative Effects

3.1.13 When considering the Proposed Development in addition to Section 2 and Section 4 of the wider Skye Reinforcement project, and the related proposed Broadford Substation Extension (subject of a separate application), the LVIA has established that significant cumulative landscape would occur during the construction of the Alternative Alignment as follows:

- Cumulative landscape and visual effects within the area around Kyle Rhea, due to the additional intensity and focus of works on the western side of the Kyle, in addition to works within a smaller area on the eastern coast.
- Cumulative visual effects for recreational users of the Otter Haven recreational path through the forest, due to the closer proximity of the works in addition to those for Section 4; and
- Cumulative visual effects for walkers ascending the Kylerhea Hills on the northern side of Kylerhea Glen due to the closer proximity of the works in addition to those for Section 4.

3.1.14 No significant cumulative effects are predicted during operation.

3.2 Introduction

3.2.1 This Chapter presents the findings of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for the Alternative Alignment within Section 3 of the project through Glen Arroch and Kylerhea Glen. The purpose of the LVIA is to identify and describe potential significant effects which may occur as a result of the Proposed Development to views obtained by those living, working and visiting in the area, and to the wider landscape resource, and, the residual predicted significance of effects after mitigation.

3.2.2 The LVIA has been undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects at ASH design + assessment Ltd (ASH), a registered practice with the Landscape Institute, in accordance with best practice guidance, the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA)². A table presenting relevant qualifications and experience of key staff involved in the preparation of this Chapter is included in **Appendix V1-5.1: EIA Team**, contained within **Volume 5** of this EIA Report.

3.3 Scope of Assessment and Methodology

Scope of Assessment

3.3.1 Detailed explanation of the process and rationale for scoping the LVIA is contained within **Appendix V2-3.1**. In summary, the following scope has been agreed for the Proposed Development within Section 3 of the project (comprising both the Proposed Alignment and Alternative Alignment) through Scoping and subsequent consultation with NatureScot and the Highland Council (THC):

- A study area of 2.5 km from the Proposed Development (132 kV steel lattice tower overhead line (OHL));
- Landscape character assessment identifying the potential for the Proposed Development to influence the key characteristics of identified Local Character Zones (LCZs) within the study area whilst taking cognisance of Landscape Character Types (LCTs) from the NatureScot *National Landscape Character Assessment*³ (c.f **Table 3 of Appendix V2-3.1**);
- Visual assessment giving consideration to views obtained by those living, working and travelling and undertaking recreation within the study area including settlement areas, transport and recreational routes and other identified valued viewing locations. **Tables 4 to 6 of Appendix V2-3.1** identify Building, Route and Outdoor based receptors included in the detailed assessment for the Alternative Alignment; and
- Cumulative assessment giving consideration to the combined effects with other proposed OHL infrastructure works, related to the Proposed Development, within the study area, as summarised in **Table 7 of Appendix V2-3.1**. Within this Section, this includes:
 - Effects associated with Section 2 and Section 4 of the Proposed Development; and
 - The proposed Broadford Substation Extension (the subject of a separate application).

Visualisations

3.3.2 Five visualisations have been produced to support the LVIA work for the Alternative Alignment. These show the predicted appearance of the Alternative Alignment during operation, once landscape reinstatement of disturbed areas has been assumed to be fully established. Visualisations have been included from the following locations of relevance to the Alternative Alignment within Section 3:

- Visualisation Location 3-1: A851 near Market Stance (OS Grid Reference NG 67280 22092);
- Visualisation Location 3-4: Bealach Udal (OS Grid Reference NG 75560 20650);

² Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition.

³ NatureScot (2019) Scottish Landscape Character Types – Map and Descriptions [online]. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-character-assessment/scottish-landscape-character-types-map-and-descriptions>

- Visualisation Location 3-5: RSPB Otter Ferry Car Park (OS Grid Reference NG 78671 21149);
- Visualisation Location 3-6: Kylerhea Village (OS Grid Reference NG 78665 20525); and
- Visualisation Location 3-7: Glenelg Ferry Crossing (OS Grid Reference NG 79481 21290).

3.3.3 The visualisations have been produced to support the LVIA and are intended to show the appearance of the Alternative Alignment within the landscape setting. Visualisation Locations do not comprise representative viewpoints for visual assessment and have therefore not been assessed as viewpoints, because the visual assessment is a receptor-based assessment (giving consideration to all potential visual receptors) rather than a viewpoint-based assessment.

Methodology

- 3.3.4 The detailed methodology for the LVIA is included in **Appendix V2-3.2**. The methodology has been developed using GLVIA3 and other best practice guidance as detailed in **Appendix V2-3.2**.
- 3.3.5 GLVIA3 advises that landscape and visual effects should be assessed from a clear understanding of the development proposed and any mitigation measures which are being adopted.
- 3.3.6 The GLVIA3 methodology for landscape assessment involves an appreciation of the existing landscape resource, the susceptibility of its key components to accept the change proposed, and an understanding of the potential effects which could occur and how these could affect these key components.
- 3.3.7 Familiarity with the site and the extent, nature and expectation of existing views by visual receptors is a key factor in establishing the visual sensitivity in terms of the development proposed. The guidelines require evaluation of magnitude of change to views experienced by sensitive receptors, comprising individuals living, working, travelling and carrying out other activities within the landscape, and the subsequent evaluation of the significance of effects.
- 3.3.8 The potential to mitigate adverse effects should also be considered for both landscape and visual assessment.
- 3.3.9 There are five key stages to the assessment:
- Establishment of the baseline (see **Part 1.3 of Appendix V2-3.2**);
 - Appreciation of the development proposed (see **Part 1.4 of Appendix V2-3.2**);
 - Identification of key landscape and visual receptors (see **Part 1.5 of Appendix V2-3.2**);
 - Identification of potential effects see **Part 1.6 of Appendix V2-3.2**); and
 - Assessment of significance of effects (see **Part 1.7 of Appendix V2-3.2**).
- 3.3.10 GLVIA3 places a strong emphasis on the importance of professional judgement in identifying and defining the significance of landscape and visual effects. As part of this assessment, professional judgement has been used in combination with structured methods and criteria to evaluate landscape value and landscape and visual sensitivity, magnitude and significance of effect. The assessment has been undertaken and verified by two Landscape Professionals (Chartered Landscape Architects) to provide a robust and consistent approach.
- 3.3.11 Given the nature of the Proposed Development which involves the replacement of existing infrastructure, the methodology gives consideration to the potential for effects to be both adverse and beneficial.

3.3.12 Significance of effect is presented on a seven point scale ranging from Negligible through Minor (Adverse / Beneficial), Moderate (Adverse / Beneficial) to Major (Adverse / Beneficial). Details on the criteria for these ratings are provided in **Table 4 of Appendix V2-3.2**. These ratings represent points on a continuum and therefore where relevant, interim ratings may be applied (i.e. Minor to Moderate) For the purposes of the *EIA Regulations*⁴, in this assessment an effect rating of Moderate or greater is considered to be significant.

3.3.13 Where relevant, effects ratings are provided for two stages of the Proposed Development:

- During construction; and
- During operation (assumed to be approximately 10 years after completion when landscape / habitat reinstatement and any mitigation planting (if proposed) has established).

3.3.14 A list of limitations and assumptions of relevance to the Proposed Development are detailed in paragraph 1.8.1 of **Appendix V2-3.2**.

3.4 Baseline Conditions: Landscape

Overview

3.4.1 The landscape of Section 3 and along the route of the Alternative Alignment differs in character between its eastern and western parts. The western part is characterised by the southern fringes of Broadford and associated crofting communities which make up its outskirts. These neighbour broad, open swathes of moorland and large-scale forestry plantation. To the east, the landscape is characterised by high rounded hills separated by remote glens and passes, contained by steep, rocky slopes, which isolate the remote coastline from the more open settled coastal fringe of Broadford. Towards the eastern edge of the study area, the sweeping bowl-shaped valley of Kylerhea Glen drops down to, the narrow Kyle Rhea strait which separates Skye from the mainland, and is characterised by a small scattered crofting settlement at its foot.

Designated Landscapes

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

3.4.3 The following designated or protected landscapes fall within the study area (see **Figure V6-3.2**):

- National Context:
 - The Cuillin Hills NSA.

3.4.4 As detailed in **Appendix V1-3.1**, The Cuillin Hills NSA has been scoped out of this assessment as it is very peripheral to the study area within this Section, and it is considered very unlikely that this area would be significantly affected.

Landscape Character

3.4.5 NatureScot has undertaken detailed review and classification of various landscape areas and types of Scotland (SNH, 2019 [online]). Seven individual Landscape Character Types (LCTs) are identified within the study area for the Alternative Alignment as follows (see **Figure V6-3.3**):

- LCT 357 – Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Skye & Lochalsh;
- LCT 358 – Low, Smooth Moorland;
- LCT 359 – Upland Sloping Moorland;
- LCT 363 – Rugged Coastal Hills – Skye and Lochalsh

⁴ The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017

- LCT 364 – Rocky Moorland – Skye and Lochalsh;
- LCT 365 – Rugged Massif – Skye and Lochalsh; and
- LCT 367 – Smooth Mountain Range.

3.4.6 Descriptions of these LCTs, including their key characteristics are included in **Appendix V2-3.4**.

Local Character Zones

3.4.7 In order to more closely reflect the local characteristics and qualities of the study area, Local Character Zones (LCZs) have been identified which linearly divide the study area into segments where it is considered that an over-riding uniformity of character is present. These LCZs form the basis of the landscape character assessment.

3.4.8 The study area for the Alternative Alignment has been divided into four LCZs as shown on **Figure V6-3.3**. These are described in detail in **Appendix V6-3.1** and summarised below as follows:

LCZ 3B-1: Broadford Outskirts

3.4.9 This LCZ covers the Alternative Alignment from Broadford substation eastwards through the outskirts of the small town of Broadford, overlooking Broadford Bay, and a series of conjoined linear crofting townships which are set on a low-lying indented north-facing bay which is visually contained to the north by offshore islands. Broadford and its adjoining settlements are linked by the busy A87 to the Skye Bridge, outwith the LCZ to the east. To the south, the settled, crofting landscape is enclosed by smooth moorland slopes, rising into a low, rounded, ridgeback of moorland, occasionally forming small rounded hills or crags, separated by small glens. Scattered lochans occupy flatter ground of the moorland plateau. Within the westerly context, beyond the study area the smooth mountain range of the Red Cuillins forms a striking landmark and contrast to this low-lying landscape.

LCZ 3B-2: Glen Arroch

3.4.10 This LCZ covers the Alternative Alignment from the linear settlements east of Broadford to the head of Glen Arroch. It is characterised by a large scale, simple structure of moorland and coniferous forest plantation. Glen Arroch cuts through the centre of the LCZ following a roughly south-east to north-west trajectory between moorland and forest areas. The lower section of the glen is formed by a shallowly defined incised cut within the moorland, more noticeably spatially contained to its north-east by the forest plantation. The dark green, upright form of the forest, contrasts with the openness and brown hues of the moorland on the opposite side of the glen, stretching to the west, with far-reaching views obtained across Broadford Bay and towards the Cuillin mountains. Moving further from the coast the glen becomes gradually more enclosed by rounded hills with more isolated and remote qualities. The Allt Mòr burn, becoming the Abhainn Lusa in its lower reaches, follows a winding course through the base of the glen, looping around small glacial depositional knolls with occasional clumps of native and riparian woodland or pine trees and scrub. A narrow single-track road follows the eastern side of the burn, connecting Kylerhea and the Glenelg ferry with the A87. The existing steel lattice OHL and a few distribution wood pole OHLs form locally distracting features, crossing through or following the length of the glen.

LCZ 3B-3: Bealach Udal and Kylerhea Glen

3.4.11 This LCZ covers the Alternative Alignment from the head of Glen Arroch, through the Kylerhea Glen to the shore of Kyle Rhea sea narrows and comprises a deep, bowl-shaped valley which drops dramatically between high, steep sided, craggy hills, from the Bealach Udal pass to a flat coastal crofting landscape at its mouth. A narrow, single track road winds down through the glen, cut into its steep, northern side slope, supported by drystone walls. Landcover of the upper glen is predominantly heather moorland with occasional rough grass, scrubby trees and areas of bracken near the road. Rocky areas of crag occupy the steeper side slopes and

there are areas of bare rock in exposed locations at the Bealach Udal. A block of coniferous forest mid-way down the glen forms a dark green contrast to the softer moorland colours and roughly marks the division between the upper and lower glen. The lower glen is characterised by the crofting township of Kylerhea with scattered cottages and houses set within areas of improved grassland and small pockets of scrub woodland around the mouth of the Kyle Rhea River which forms a delta of stony beach.

- 3.4.12 Striking framed views from the Bealach Udal and upper glen down to Kyle Rhea, and expansive open vistas across the narrow sea strait to the mainland coast and mountains from the lower glen strongly influence the local character of this LCZ to the east. In all other directions there is strong enclosure by the sky-lined, steep-sided, rugged moorland hills.

LCZ 3B-4: Kyle Rhea Coast

- 3.4.13 This LCZ covers the steep forested coastal hill slopes to the east and west of the Kyle Rhea narrows, and the part of the Alternative Alignment which traverses this coast, between Kylerhea village and the existing sea crossing point of the OHL, where the Isle is at its closest to the mainland. It is characterised by a narrow sea strait defined by steep, continuous hill slopes leading down from the high rounded summits of the Kyle Rhea Hills on the eastern side and lower hills to the west, both partially clothed by coniferous forest plantation across their lower slopes, interspersed with areas of bracken and scrub. Upper slopes are characterised by smooth rough grassland and heather, with occasional areas of crag and bare rock. A rugged shoreline of rocky outcrops and small stony bays is backed by natural growth of native woodland and scrub. Accessibility to this landscape is limited to tracks traversing the forest area with the coast itself being relatively isolated and remote, colonised by marine wildlife. A car park and wildlife hides are sited within the forest areas on the western shore, and are popular with visitors.
- 3.4.14 The sea narrows is very influential on this LCZ, allowing open extensive views where tree cover allows, but also creating an unusual combination of coastal influences, with enclosure by the hills on either side of the strait. This area forms a historic crossing point between Skye and the mainland and a small ferry still pilots back and forth at the southern extent of the narrows. Two existing very tall steel lattice towers form a prominent feature in this landscape, carrying the existing OHL across the sea narrows.

3.5 Baseline Conditions: Visual

Interpretation of the ZTV

- 3.5.1 The ZTV (**Figure V6-3.1**) indicates varying intervisibility with the Alternative Alignment along the 2.5 km wide study area as determined by the local topography, which can screen potential views to a greater or lesser extent. Theoretical visibility of greater numbers of towers is shown for most of the receptors in Broadford and the surrounding linear crofting communities along the A87. Visibility of smaller numbers of towers is indicated through the valleys. However, given more contained visibility within these areas, the views of towers are likely to be at relatively close proximity. The ZTV suggests that a moderate number of towers would be visible around Kylerhea, typically in the range of 10 to 15. Along the remote coast of Kyle Rhea sea narrows, greater number of towers are shown as being theoretically visible from the eastern shore, where these would be seen at greater distance, and potentially from the Glenelg Ferry crossing.

Visual Receptors

- 3.5.2 Visual receptors within the study area comprise residents or others present in and around buildings and settlement areas, those using routes (including transport and recreational routes) through the study area, and those obtaining views from outdoor locations where enjoyment of the view is one of principal reasons for being at the location.

Building-based Receptors

3.5.3 Building-based receptor locations are described in detail in **Appendix V6-3.2** and their locations are shown on **Figure V6-3.4**. These receptor locations within the study area can be broadly subdivided into three areas as detailed below:

- Old Corry (Receptor Location B3B-1)
 - Residents in and around isolated properties strung out along a minor single-track road to the south of Broadford Substation. Main views are easterly across the open low moorland towards the Broadford River, while rear views are towards the Cuillins.
- Broadford, outskirts and surrounding properties (Receptor Locations B3B-2 to B3B-4)
 - Residents and visitors of a linear cojoined settlement / small town following the A87, overlooking Broadford Bay. Views are mixed but mainly northerly / north-westerly overlooking Broadford Bay with some views featuring the Cuillins or Pabay and Scalpay.
- Properties around the shore of Kyle Rhea (Receptor Locations B3B-5 to B3B-8)
 - Residents and visitors to the cottages along the shore and near the Kylerhea and Glenelg ferry slipways. Main views are mostly across Kyle Rhea and the scattered properties on the opposite shore with forested hill slopes rising behind. The existing tall steel lattice towers crossing the sea narrows are visible in some views northward.

Route-based Receptors

3.5.4 Routes within the study area are described in detail in **Appendix V6-3.2** and shown on **Figure V6-3.4**. These can be classified into two different categories:

- Public transport routes (including public roads and ferry routes); and
- Recreational routes.

3.5.5 Public transport routes within the study area which have been included in the visual assessment include the following:

- A roads:
 - Route R3B-1 (A87) is a single carriageway coastal road and a main route between Broadford to the mainland. The main views, where available between buildings, are across Broadford Bay to the north; with the Cuillin Hills dominating views to the west in the background.
 - Route R3B-2 (A851) is a single carriageway road leading from the A87 to the Sleat peninsula. The main views from more elevated sections of the road are towards Broadford across the bay, with the Cuillins prominent in western views. The existing 132 kV OHL crosses this route.
- B roads:
 - Route R3B-3 (B8083) is a single-track road used by visitors and other travellers through Strath Suardal to the south of Broadford. Main views northbound are towards Broadford and across the bay with the Cuillins dominating western views. Southbound views are contained by local topography and by forestry and the edge of the Cuillins to the west. The existing 132 kV OHL crosses this route.
- Minor Roads:
 - Route R3B-4 (Old Corry Minor Road) is a minor single-track road leading off the A87 past Broadford substation used by residents and recreational users. At the northern end of the route views are contained by forestry. Further south, main easterly views are across open low moorland of the lower Broadford River valley and westerly views towards the Cuillins. The existing 132 kV OHL crosses this route.
 - Route R3B-5 (Broadford to Heasta Minor Road) is a single-track road used by residents and visitors between Broadford Bay and Loch Eishort. Main views are northbound, with elevated views towards

Broadford and across the bay with the Cuillins dominating western views. Southbound views are of predominantly open moorland. The existing 132 kV OHL crosses this route.

- Route R3B-6 (Glen Arroch / Kyle Rhea Minor Road) is a single-track road leading to Kyle Rhea used by local residents and visitors including those using the Kyle Rhea ferry crossing. Through Glen Arroch, forested hill slopes contain views eastward, with expansive views across open moorland obtained to the north-west. Views become more contained as the route approaches Bealach Udal, between the two glens, but elevated views to the east are revealed when travelling down Kyle Rhea. The existing 132 kV OHL crosses this route near its northern end.
- Ferry:
 - Route R3B-7 (Glenelg Ferry) is used by recreational users and residents crossing Kyle Rhea between Glenelg and Kylerhea during the summer months. Main views are in multiple directions across Kyle Rhea, although they are restricted in some directions by forested hill slopes.

3.5.6 Recreational routes considered within the visual assessment include Core Paths (The Highland Council, 2011)⁵, Scottish Hill Tacks (Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society, 2011)⁶, and other commonly used recorded walking or cycling routes. These include the following:

- Core Paths:
 - Route R3B-8 (Corry Core Paths) two recreational path / minor road routes to the western side of Broadford Bay including: Core Path SL03.07 (Broadford Bridge to Corry Lodge) and Core Path SL03.08 (Broadford Hospital to Pier). Views are mostly low-level, eastwards across Broadford Bay and Broadford, and north and south.
 - Route R3B-9 (Core Path SL03.06: Broadford to Camas na Sgianadin) is a recreational low-level footpath running north-west from the outskirts of Broadford alongside the A87 to a cove overlooking Scalpay. Main views northbound are across to Scalpay, while southbound views are more enclosed by semi-continuous roadside scrub.
 - Route R3B-10 (Core Paths to the South-west of Broadford) comprise two Core Paths in Strath Suardal: Core Path SL03.05 (Broadford to Coire-chat-acan); and Core Path SL03.04 (Broadford to Suardal (also Scottish Hill Track 294, Broadford to Kilbride by Boreraig and Suisnish)). Views from these routes are typically along Strath Suardal.
 - Route R3B-11 (Paths on the Arnish Peninsula), a recreational path across a low-lying peninsula to the north of Breakish including a shoreline path to Rubha Ardnish and the established Core Path SL03.09 (Waterloo to Lower Breakish). The route affords open and panoramic views across Broadford Bay featuring the surrounding shoreline, offshore islands and the Cuillins prominently in western views.
 - R3-12 (Core Path SL 12.05: Glen Bernera to Ardintoul to Ferry Circular Route) is a recreational route from Glen Bernera to the Glenelg-Kylerhea ferry crossing. Main views are across Kyle Rhea, filtered by forestry in the foreground.
- Scottish Hill Tracks:
 - Route R3B-13 (Scottish Hill Track 289: Kinloch to Kylerhea), is a coastal walking route along the west coast of Skye from Kylerhea with low-level to slightly elevated views with a main focus eastwards across Glenelg Bay;
- Other Routes:
 - Route R3B-14 (Ben Aslak Hill Walk) comprises an unmarked walking route up Ben Aslak from Kylerhea or Bealach Udal, with elevated views panoramic views, over Kyle Rhea to the Knoydart mountains to the east; towards the Kylerhea Hills to the north; and over Broadford bay to the Cuillin Hills to the west;

⁵ The Highland Council, Core Paths Interactive Map [online]. Available at: <https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2fd3fc9c72d545f7bcf1b43bf5c8445f> [accessed January 2022].

⁶ Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (2011). Scottish Hill Tracks. 5th edition. Scottish Mountaineering Trust.

- Route R3B-15 (Ascent / Descent of Kylerhea Hills) is an unmarked walking route up Beinn na Caillich and Sgùrr na Còinnich from the Otter Haven car park or from Bealach Udal. Views are elevated and panoramic in all directions; and
- R3B-16 (Kylerhea Otter Hide Footpath) is a forestry track above Kyle Rhea leading to a wildlife hide used by walkers and visitors. The route affords predominantly easterly views through trees across the straits at Kyle Rhea towards the mainland.

Receptors at Outdoor Locations

3.5.7 The following Outdoor Viewing Locations have been considered where the view is considered to be a principal reason for being at the location⁷:

- O3B-1 (Bealach Udal), a roadside vantage point where elevated views eastward down Kylerhea Glen to the mainland are experienced;
- O3B-2 (Otter Hide, Car Park and Picnic Area), an RSPB car park and information area with wildlife hide and picnic tables, with elevated views over Kyle Rhea narrows; and
- O3B-3 (Otter Haven Lower Hide), a woodland hide set within the edge of the forest above Kyle Rhea for viewing marine wildlife on the shore and across the sea narrows.

3.5.8 These locations are described in detail in **Appendix V6-3.2** and are shown on **Figure V6-3.4**.

Future Baseline

3.5.9 The baseline landscape and visual resource of the study area is not anticipated to alter noticeably in future years. Whilst there may be some continued development or ongoing changes to forestry or tree cover, this is not anticipated to lead to any very noticeable change to the wider landscape characteristics of the study area or visual amenity.

3.6 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects: Landscape

3.6.1 This part of the Chapter provides an assessment of the effects that the Alternative Alignment would have on landscape character and designated and protected landscapes during the construction and operational phases, in accordance with the significance of effects criteria outlined in the methodology (**Table 1.4 of Appendix V2-3.2**). The assessment of landscape character is presented first, as this is used to feed into the assessment of effects on designated and protected landscapes.

3.6.2 The detailed assessment of effects for each LCZ is provided in **Appendix V6-3.1** with the key points being summarised in paragraphs 3.6.3 to 3.6.14 below.

Assessment of Effects on Landscape Character – Effects Likely to be Significant

3.6.3 The detailed assessment of landscape character has considered four separate LCZs. Of these, three have been identified as likely to be significantly affected by the Alternative Alignment during construction, with significant effects to two of these areas predicted to continue into the operational phase, as follows:

- LCZ 3B-2 – Glen Arroch (significant during construction and operation);
- LCZ 3B-3 – Bealach Udal and Kylerhea Glen (significant during construction and operation); and
- LCZ 3B-4 – Kyle Rhea Coast (significant during construction only).

3.6.4 These effects are summarised below:

⁷ Note: Where outdoor viewing locations comprise cultural heritage features, the visual assessment considered the effect on the visual amenity of the location only, and does not consider the cultural heritage values which are discussed in Volume 6, Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage

LCZ 3B-2: Glen Arroch

- 3.6.5 Glen Arroch can be roughly divided into two areas, a more open, lower glen, defined by forestry to its north-east and open moorland to the west, and a more contained and remote upper glen. During construction there would be limited and localised effects on the lower glen area, where the Alternative Alignment would cross at a similar location to the existing OHL and follow up the glen through a new wayleave to be created through forestry on its eastern side. However, the Alternative Alignment would cross the glen again on approach to the upper glen area where it would traverse the containing glen slope forming a prominent new feature. A permanent access track would also follow this part of the alignment. Construction activities within this upper part of the glen would reduce the sense of remoteness, due to increased movement and presence of people on the less accessible side of the glen and the creation of a new permanent access track which may remove focus from the existing narrow road.
- 3.6.6 During operation, there would be limited perceptible change within the lower part of the glen, but the new steel lattice towers and permanent access track through the upper part of the glen would form new, distracting features within this area and affect the perceived remote qualities due to a greater sense of built development and accessibility. The steel lattice towers would be likely to become a noticeable character defining feature through this part of the LCZ and therefore would reduce its remote sense of place.
- 3.6.7 This LCZ is considered to have a Low – Medium sensitivity to change. The notable degree of change within part of the landscape and perceptible change over the wider area is considered to lead to a Medium – High magnitude of change during construction and Medium magnitude of change during operation, after 10 years. The effect is predicted to be **Moderate Adverse** (significant), during construction and operation.

LCZ 3B-3: Bealach Udal and Kylerhea Glen

- 3.6.8 The Alternative Alignment would involve the construction of a new steel lattice tower OHL and permanent track through the majority of this glen, dropping steeply from the Bealach Udal, crossing to the undeveloped moorland to the south of the Kylerhea River, and to the rear of the small-scale settled landscapes at the foot of the glen. During construction, this would comprise a very noticeable change throughout the upper glen and a perceptible or noticeable change within the context of the settled lower glen areas. Construction works would form a distracting feature throughout the upper glen leading to an extensive level of movement and activity within undeveloped areas. The construction and use of the new access track by traffic, across the steep slopes of the Bealach Udal and down through the very simple structured glen, would draw focus away from the public road and the works would interrupt valued views from the upper glen and bealach, as well as forming distraction within the setting of the steep hill slopes for the lower, settled glen area.
- 3.6.9 During operation, although the level of activity would reduce, the permanent steel lattice towers would form a new characteristic of this landscape, leading to a greater sense of development within the upper glen, and likely to be particularly prominent at the Bealach Udal where towers would be likely to distract from the drama and scale of the steep pass and interrupt elevated easterly views (see Visualisation Location 3-4 (**Figures V4A-3.4a to d**)). The permanent access track, as a linear feature connecting the towers, would draw additional focus to the alignment of transparent tower structures and would increase the sense of accessibility through the landscape, which may reduce the impressive qualities of the precipitous narrow public road and affect the sense of historic remoteness.
- 3.6.10 Towers would have less direct effect, on the settled lower part of the glen and woodland within this area would help to soften their appearance from many areas. Although the existing forest plantation already provides some distinction between the upper and lower parts of the glen, the addition of the steel lattice OHL would further enhance this distinction with a strong line of vertical man-made structures (see Visualisation Location 3-6 (**Figures V4A-3.6a to d**)). However, the association with the dramatic backdrop would be likely to remain present, and there would be no change to the valued coastal aspects of this area.

3.6.11 This landscape is valued by the local community and sensitivity is considered to be Medium – High. Magnitude of change would also be Medium – High during construction, but reducing to Medium during operation. The landscape effect is therefore predicted to be **Moderate – Major Adverse** (significant) during construction and **Moderate Adverse** (significant) during operation.

LCZ 3B-4: Kyle Rhea Coast

3.6.12 The Alternative Alignment through this LCZ would involve the construction of a new steel lattice OHL along the forested slopes to the west of Kyle Rhea, to the existing OHL crossing point, and the removal of the existing steel lattice OHL to the north of this. Construction works, which would include felling to form a new wayleave, temporary tracks and minor upgrading and use of the existing forest track, would form a noticeable change in this part of the LCZ which would also be intervisible with west facing slopes on the easterly side of the strait.

Given the existing forested and wooded qualities of the wider LCZ where some similar forestry works might be expected to occur, this is considered unlikely to alter the overriding landscape character across the wider LCZ but is predicted to lead to a Medium magnitude of change during construction, on a landscape of Medium sensitivity leading to a temporary **Moderate Adverse** (significant) effect.

3.6.13 During operation, with the assumption that forest restructuring or natural growth of woodland and scrub which occurs elsewhere in the LCZ would help assimilate the new wayleave into this LCZ, the effect is predicted to reduce to a **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant) effect. Although the new steel lattice towers would be locally prominent, these would appear similar to existing features which are already present in the landscape, albeit within a different area. The adverse effect would be partially offset by the removal of towers from the more remote northern part of the LCZ and therefore, although steel lattice towers would form a new feature within a localised part of the landscape, this is unlikely to result in change to the intrinsic landscape qualities which are present. Visualisation Locations 3-5 (see **Figures V4A-3.5a to d**) and 3-6 (see **Figures V4A-3.6a to d**) provide a representative view of how the Proposed Development would appear within this LCZ.

Assessment of Effects on Landscape Character – Effects Likely to be Not Significant

3.6.14 During construction **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effects are predicted within LCZ 3-1 (Broadford Outskirts) as the movement, plant and activities associated with the works may be temporarily distracting within the open moorland landscape with the potential to form a new focus. However, this is not anticipated to alter the key characteristics or the role and value of the Cuillins as a focus of views and landscape setting. This would reduce to **Negligible** during operation because the Proposed Development, is anticipated to appear very similar to the existing steel lattice tower which it would replace (see Visualisation Location 3-1 (**Figures V4A-3.1a to d**)).

Summary of Landscape Effects

3.6.15 A summary of the effects on LLZs and designated and protected landscapes is outlined in **Table V6-3.1** during construction and **Table V6-3.2** during operation.

Table V6-3.1: Summary of Landscape Effects During Construction

LCZ or Designated / Protected Landscape	Beneficial Effect					Adverse Effect					
	Major	Moderate - Major	Moderate	Minor – Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Minor	Minor – Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Major	Major
LCZ 3B-1: Broadford Outskirts							•				
LCZ 3B-2: Glen Arroch									•		
LCZ 3B-3: Bealach Udal and Kylerhea Glen										•	
LCZ 3B-4: Kyle Rhea Coast									•		

Table V6-3.2: Summary of Landscape Effects During Operation

LCZ or Designated / Protected Landscape	Beneficial Effect					Adverse Effect					
	Major	Moderate - Major	Moderate	Minor – Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Minor	Minor – Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Major	Major
LCZ 3B-1: Broadford Outskirts						•					
LCZ 3B-2: Glen Arroch									•		
LCZ 3B-3: Bealach Udal and Kylerhea Glen									•		
LCZ 3B-4: Kyle Rhea Coast								•			

3.7 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects: Visual

3.7.1 The detailed assessment of effects on the visual amenity of Building-based Receptors, Route-based Receptors and individuals at outdoor viewing locations is presented in **Appendix V6-3.2**. Predicted effects are summarised below with an emphasis on predicted significant effects.

Building Based Receptors

3.7.2 Eight building-based Receptor Locations were included in the visual assessment (see **Figure V6-3.4**), comprising individual buildings or groups of buildings and associated outdoor spaces where a view of the Alternative Alignment would potentially be obtained. The assessment has identified that the majority of effects to receptors would be not significant with significant effects being identified for one of these receptor locations, as summarised below:

Receptor Groups

Old Corry (Receptor Location B3B-1)

- 3.7.3 No significant effects were identified for this visual receptor location. **Negligible** effects would be experienced during construction as views of the works would be limited. During operation effects would remain **Negligible** (not significant) given the limited visibility and the similarity of the new towers south of the substation to the existing towers being removed.

Broadford, outskirts and surrounding properties (Receptor Locations B3B-2 to B3B-4)

- 3.7.4 No significant effects were identified for any visual receptor locations within this group. Construction works would range from perceptible to noticeable in the rear views. During operation, whilst the new lattice towers would be taller, they would be situated slightly further away and would look very similar to the existing OHL which would be removed. Although the change to the views southward may be perceptible, the main, northerly views would not be affected. A **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effect is predicted during construction for Receptor Locations B3B-2 and B3B-3, while a **Negligible** effect is predicted for B3B-4. This would reduce to **Negligible** for all three Receptor Locations during operation.

Properties around the shore of Kyle Rhea (Receptor Locations B3B-5 to B3B-8)

- 3.7.5 A significant visual effect during construction and operation was identified for receptors occupying one of the Receptor Locations within this group, Receptor Location B3B-5 (Kylarhea), comprising a small crofting settlement, at the mouth of Kylarhea Glen. The Alternative Alignment would be very noticeable at close proximity to these receptors, but mostly within the rear or side view and occasionally filtered by intervening woodland or scrub (see Visualisation Location 3-6 (**Figures V4A-3.6a to d**)). This is predicted to lead to a **Moderate Adverse** (significant) effect, during both construction and operation.
- 3.7.6 A **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant) effect was identified for receptors at Receptor Locations B3B-6 (House at Kylarhea Ferry Slipway) and B3B-7 (Properties at Glenelg Ferry Slipway) during construction. Construction works would be distracting in views from these properties including houses and small café / shop at the ferry slipways on either side of the Glenelg Ferry crossing, being at relatively close proximity within the rear view from B3B-6 and within the mid-ground of a wider main view from B3B-7 (see Visualisation Location 3-7 (**Figures V4A-3.7a to d**)). However, this is considered unlikely to lead to a noticeable deterioration to the view. The visual effect at B3B-6 would reduce to **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during operation but is predicted to remain **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant) at B3B-7.
- 3.7.7 The visual effect for Receptor Location B3B-8 (Bernera) would be **Negligible** during both construction and operation, because there would be limited perceptibility of the Proposed Development.

Route Based Receptors

- 3.7.8 Sixteen route-based receptor groups were included in the visual assessment comprising users of six roads, nine recreational routes and a ferry (see **Figure V6-3.4**). Significant effects were identified for four of these routes as summarised below:

A Roads

- 3.7.9 There would be no significant visual effects for users of A roads within the study area. A **Minor-Moderate Adverse** (not significant) effect was identified for receptors travelling on Route R3B-2 (A851) during construction, where construction works would be very noticeable from a localised section of the route where the Proposed Development would cross and perceptible from other parts of the route, seen within the context of the existing OHL. The works would be seen within the context of the existing OHL reducing sensitivity somewhat.

- 3.7.10 A **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effect was identified during construction for visual receptors travelling on R3B-1 (A87) where construction works would be perceptible within the inland view, but unlikely to be noticeably distracting from the wider valued views.
- 3.7.11 The effect for both A Roads would reduce to **Negligible** during operation because, although slightly taller, the Proposed Development would appear very similar to the OHL which would be removed, as illustrated by Visualisation Location 3-1 (see **Figures V4A-3.1a to d**), located close to the A851.

B Roads

- 3.7.12 No significant effects were identified for visual receptors using Route R3B-3 (B8083). During construction works would be very noticeable from a localised part of the road south of Broadford. However, this part of the road has locally reduced sensitivity due to the existing OHL and adjacent managed forestry areas, resulting in a **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effect during construction. During operation, this would reduce to **Negligible**, as given the very small section of road affected, the change would be barely perceptible in term of the visual amenity of the route overall.

Minor Roads

- 3.7.13 Three minor routes within the study area were considered in the assessment. Significant visual effects have been identified for users of one of these routes: R3B-6 (Glen Arroch / Kyle Rhea Minor Road), during construction and operation. The Alternative Alignment would appear prominent from this narrow, single track route leading through Glen Arroch and descending Kyle Rhea Glen, being at close proximity to the route through Glen Arroch and Bealach Udal, the narrow path between the two glens (see Visualisation Location 3-4 (**Figures V4A-3.4a to d**)), and likely to be distracting within close and longer distance views towards the coast and mainland mountains, particularly during construction. A permanent access track following the alignment would also be visible within elevated views and would potentially draw greater focus to the operational OHL by forming a continuous line through the landscape, visually connecting the more transparent tower structures. The effect is predicted to be **Moderate – Major Adverse** (significant) during construction, reducing slightly to **Moderate Adverse** (significant) during operation.
- 3.7.14 The effects to the remaining two minor roads falling within the study area would be not significant during construction and operation. Both routes would be crossed by the Proposed Development at a similar location to the existing OHL to be removed, leading to a localised area of visual effect during construction. The effect would be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) for Route R3B-4 (Old Corry Minor Road) and **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant) for Route R3B-5 (Broadford to Heasta Minor Road) where broader perceptibility along a greater length of the road would be experienced. During operation the new towers although slightly taller, would look very similar to the those which would be replaced, with the change barely perceptible in the view resulting in a **Negligible** effect for users of both routes.

Other Public Transport Routes

- 3.7.15 No significant effects were identified for visual receptors using Route R2-8 (Glenelg Ferry). The Alternative Alignment would be noticeable during construction, crossing the forested slope in the westerly view but with wider views in other directions being unaffected. In the longer term, it would remain a perceptible feature of the view but filtered by surrounding trees. The effect is predicted to be **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant) during construction and **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during operation.

Recreational Routes

- 3.7.16 Nine recreational routes were considered in the visual assessment including recognised coastal and moorland paths, and unmarked hill walking routes. During construction a significant visual effect for recreational users was identified for three of these routes, although for all routes, the effect during operation is predicted to be not significant.
- 3.7.17 A **Moderate – Major Adverse** (significant) effect was identified during construction for Route R3B-16 (Kylarhea Otter Hide Footpath) where felling works and construction of towers and temporary access tracks would occur directly adjacent to the route, which would also be used for access, although the coastal views obtained from parts of the route would not be interrupted. This effect would reduce to **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant) during operation, assumed that forest restocking or woodland edge regeneration would occur alongside this track which would soften the appearance of the permanent towers. Visualisation Location 3-5 (see **Figures V4A-3.5a to d**) provides an illustrative view of the Proposed Development in relation to this route.
- 3.7.18 **Moderate Adverse** (significant) effects during construction are predicted for walkers using two mountain routes ascending the hills to either side of Kylarhea Glen: R3B-14 (Ben Aslak Hill Walk) and R3B-15 (Ascent / Descent of Kylarhea Hills). Both routes would cross the construction corridor for the Alternative Alignment and works would be noticeable within Kylarhea Glen from the lower parts of the routes, and intermittently from higher sections. However, the wide expansive views of the surrounding hills would remain uninterrupted from the most elevated sections and mountain summits. During operation, the permanent features of the Alternative Alignment are anticipated to form a less distracting feature in the view, although would be noticeable from lower parts of the routes, and the effect would be **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant).
- 3.7.19 The visual effect for users of all other recreational routes has been identified as not significant during both construction and operation of the Proposed Development.
- 3.7.20 A **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant) effect to visual amenity of users was identified for Routes R3B-12 (Core Path SL 12.05; (Glen Bernera to Ardintoul to Ferry Circular Route)) and R3B-13 (Scottish Hill Track 289 (Kinloch to Kylarhea)), both comprising coastal routes along the easterly and westerly shore of Kyle Rhea respectively. Construction works would form a noticeable detracting feature within the view from a short section of these routes, but the wider experience of views over Kyle Rhea would remain present. The effect would reduce to **Minor Adverse** (not significant) for both routes during operation, where the Alternative Alignment would remain a perceptible, but not detracting feature of the view.
- 3.7.21 For Routes R3B-8 (Corry Core Paths), R3B-9 (Core Path SL03.06 (Broadford to Camas na Sgianadin)), R3B10 (Core Paths to the South-west of Broadford) and R3B-11 (Paths on the Arnish Peninsula), which comprise a range of Core Paths and other paths around Broadford, the visual effect would be **Negligible** during operation, because the Proposed Development is considered likely to form a barely discernible change in the view to the existing OHL it would replace. A **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effect was identified for one of these routes, during construction, Route R3B-10 (Core Paths to the South-west of Broadford) where the works may form a localised detracting feature during construction, but the construction based effect for all others would be **Negligible**, because the works would be barely perceptible and within a less important part of the view.

Outdoor Viewing Locations

- 3.7.22 Three outdoor viewing locations were identified for inclusion within the visual assessment, where appreciation of the view is considered to be a principal element for being at the location. The visual assessment identified a significant effect during construction at two of these locations, one of which is predicted to continue to be significant during operation, as follows

3.7.23 A **Moderate – Major Adverse** (significant) effect was identified for viewers at O3B-1 (Bealach Udal), a roadside viewing location overlooking Kylerhea Glen, and O3B-2 (Otter Hide, Car Park and Picnic Area), an RSPB recreational area where construction activities would be very close to the viewer and prominent. For receptors at both locations, this would reduce during operation, but at O3B-1, the effect would continue to be significant, being **Moderate Adverse** (significant), due to the appearance of permanent towers which would remain distracting within the close and mid-range of the main, valued view (see Visualisation Location 3-4 (**Figures V4A-3.4a to d**)). For O3B-2, the effect is predicted to reduce to **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant), because although towers would be close and continue to be prominent, it is assumed that future growth of forest and woodland, after 10 years, would help to soften the view and the main valued coastal views would be less affected (see Visualisation Location 3-5 (**Figures V4A-3.5a to d**)).

3.7.24 Visual effects for one further outdoor location considered within the assessment, O3B-3 (Otter Haven Lower Hide), have been assessed as **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction and **Negligible** during operation, because works would be largely screened by forest and the permanent features are unlikely to lead to any perceptible change to the view.

Summary of Visual Effects

3.7.25 A summary of the effects on visual receptors is outlined in **Table V6-3.3** and **Table V6-3.4** during construction and operation.

Table V6-3.3: Summary of Visual Effects During Construction

LCZ or Designated / Protected Landscape	Beneficial Effect					Adverse Effect					
	Major	Moderate - Major	Moderate	Minor – Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Minor	Minor – Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Major	Major
Buildings / Building Groups	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	2	1	-	-
Routes	-	-	-	-	-	3	4	5	2	2	-
Outdoor Viewing Locations	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-
Totals	-	-	-	-	-	6	7	7	3	4	-

Table V6-3.4: Summary of Visual Effects During Operation

LCZ or Designated / Protected Landscape	Beneficial Effect					Adverse Effect					
	Major	Moderate - Major	Moderate	Minor – Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Minor	Minor – Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Major	Major
Buildings / Building Groups	-	-	-	-	-	5	1	1	1	-	-
Routes	-	-	-	-	-	9	5	1	1	-	-
Outdoor Viewing Locations	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	-
Totals	-	-	-	-	-	15	6	3	3	-	-

3.8 Cumulative Effects

3.8.1 As this LVIA covers the Alternative Alignment within Section 3, consideration has also been given to potential combined effects with other Sections of the Proposed Development. In addition, this has also included consideration of other grid infrastructure or other energy projects currently proposed within 1km of the study area (3.5 km from the Proposed Development) as agreed with THC and NatureScot.

3.8.2 The cumulative assessment has been set out considering two different scenarios (see **Figure V6-3.5**):

- Scenario 1: Including other parts of the Proposed Development and other related development proposals. For the Alternative Alignment within Section 3, this includes:
 - Section 2 of the Proposed Development (steel lattice tower OHL replacing wood pole OHL);
 - Section 4 of the Proposed Development (steel lattice tower OHL replacing steel lattice tower OHL); and
 - Broadford Substation Extension (subject of a separate application).
- Scenario 2: Including, in addition, other unrelated development proposals (considered during the operation phase only). For Section 3, this includes:
 - In the case of Section 3, no additional, unrelated developments have been identified.

3.8.3 As no Scenario 2 developments have been identified in this Section, the cumulative assessment discusses only Scenario 1. As it is likely that Scenario 1 development would be constructed concurrently with the Proposed Development in Section 3, this scenario considers cumulative effects during both construction and operation.

Cumulative Scope: Scenario 1

3.8.4 LVIAs of Section 2 and Section 4 of the Proposed Development have been completed and are included in this EIA Report as **Appendix V2-3.8** and **Appendix V2-3.6**. These identified effects to the following receptors which have been identified within the study area relevant to the Alternative Alignment within Section 3.

- Landscape effects
 - LCZ 3B-1 – Broadford Outskirts; and
 - LCZ 3B-4 – Kyle Rhea Coast.
- Visual effects
 - B3B-1 – Old Corry;
 - B3B-2 – Broadford, Harrapool and Skulamus;

- B3B-5 – Kylerhea;
- B3B-6 – House at Kylerhea Ferry Slipway;
- B3B-7 – Properties at Glenelg Ferry Slipway;
- B3B-8 – Bernera;
- R3B-1 – A87;
- R3B-3 – B8083;
- R3B-4 – Old Corry Minor Road;
- R3B-6 – Glen Arroch / Kyle Rhea Minor Road;
- R3B-7 – Glenelg Ferry;
- R3B-8 – Corry Core Paths;
- R3B-9 – Core Path SL03.06 (Broadford to Camas na Sgianadin);
- R3B-10 – Core Paths to the South-west of Broadford;
- R3B-12 – Core Path SL12.05 (Glen Berera to Ardintoul to Ferry Circular Route);
- R3B-15 – Ascent / descent of Kylerhea Hills,.
- R3B-16 – Kylerhea Otter Hide Footpath.

3.8.5 Predicted effects identified within the Section 2 LVIA (**Appendix V2-3.7**) or Section 4 LVIA (**Appendix V2-3.9**) and the LVIA for the Alternative Alignment (this Chapter) are detailed in **Table V6-3.5**. As it is considered that a Negligible effect for one part of the development alone, could not lead to a significant cumulative effect, receptors where Negligible effects have been identified have not been included further in the cumulative assessment unless it is predicted that the effects of the Broadford Substation Extension would be greater than Negligible.

Table V6-3.5: Individual Effects on Cumulative Receptors

LCZ / Designated or Protected Areas	Alternative Alignment Effect Rating	Section 2 or 4 Effect Rating	Included in Cumulative
LCZ 3B-1 - Broadford Outskirts (Section 2 Reference: LCZ 2-5 (Broadford Forest Plantations))	Construction: Minor Adverse (not significant) Operation: Negligible	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	Yes
LCZ 3B-4 – Kyle Rhea Coast (Section 4 Reference: LCZ 4-1 (Glenelg to Gleann Beag))	Construction: Moderate Adverse (significant) Operation: Minor – Moderate Adverse	Construction: Minor Adverse (not significant) Operation: Negligible	Yes
Visual Receptor	Alternative Alignment Effect Rating	Section 2 or 4 Effect Rating	Inclusion in Cumulative
B3B-1 – Old Corry (Section 2 Reference: B2-11)	Construction and Operation: Negligible	Construction and Operation: Negligible	No
B3B-2 – Broadford, Harrapool and Skulamus (Section 2 Reference: B2-12 (Broadford and Corry))	Construction: Minor Adverse (not significant) Operation: Negligible	Construction and Operation: Negligible	No

B3B-5 – Kylerhea (Section 4 Reference: B4-1):	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant)	Construction and Operation: Negligible	No
B3B-6 – House at Kylerhea Ferry Slipway (Section 4 Reference B4-1)	Construction: Minor – Moderate Adverse (not significant) Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	Construction and Operation: Negligible	No
B3B-7 – Properties at Glenelg Ferry Slipway (Section 4 Reference: B4-2)	Construction: Minor – Moderate Adverse (not significant) Operation: Minor - Moderate Adverse (not significant)	Construction and Operation: Negligible	No
B3B-8 – Bernera (Section 4 Reference B4-3):	Construction and Operation: Negligible	Construction: Minor Adverse (not significant) Operation: Negligible	No
R3B-1 – A87 (Section 2 Reference: R2- 1B):	Construction: Minor Adverse (not significant) Operation: Negligible	Construction: Moderate Adverse (significant) Operation: Minor – Moderate Adverse (not significant)	Yes
R3B-3 – B8083 (Section 2 Reference: R2-4)	Construction: Minor Adverse (not significant) Operation: Negligible	Construction and Operation: Negligible	Yes
R3B-4 – Old Corry Minor Road (Section 2 Reference: R2-6)	Construction: Minor Adverse (not significant) Operation: Negligible	Construction: Minor Adverse (not significant) Operation: Negligible	Yes
R3B-6 – Glen Arroch / Kyle Rhea Minor Road (Section 4 Reference R4-1)	Construction: Moderate – Major Adverse (significant) Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant)	Construction and Operation: Negligible	No
R3B-7 – Glenelg Ferry (Section 4 Reference: R4-4)	Construction: Minor – Moderate Adverse (not significant) Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	Construction and Operation: Negligible	No
R3B-8 –Corry Core Paths (Section 2 Reference: R2- 10)	Construction and Operation: Negligible	Construction and Operation: Negligible	No
R3B-9 – Core Path SL03.06 (Broadford to Camas na Sgianadin) (Section 2 Reference: R2-9)	Construction and Operation: Negligible	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	No
R3B-10 – Core Paths to the South-west of Broadford (Section 2 Reference: R2- 11)	Construction: Minor Adverse (not significant) Operation: Negligible	Construction and Operation: Negligible	Yes (due to potential for substation effects).

R3B-12 – Core Path SL12.05 (Glen Berera to Ardintoul to Ferry Circular Route) (Section 4 Reference: R4-5)	Construction: Minor – Moderate Adverse (not significant) Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	Construction: Minor – Moderate Adverse (not significant) Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	Yes
R3B-15 – Ascent / descent of Kylerhea Hills (Section 4 Reference: R4-2)	Construction: Moderate Adverse (significant) Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	Construction: Minor Adverse (not significant) Operation: Negligible	Yes
R3B-16 – Kylerhea Otter Hide Footpath (Section 4 Reference: R4-3)	Construction: Moderate – Major Adverse (significant) Operation: Minor – Moderate Adverse (not significant)	Construction: Minor Adverse (not significant) Operation: Negligible	Yes

3.8.6 Given the location of the proposed Broadford Substation Extension at the transition of Section 2 and Section 3, the above receptors are also considered to comprise those potentially affected by the substation. As the LVIA for the Broadford Substation has not yet been undertaken, assumptions have been made regarding the likely effects of this development.

Cumulative Scope: Scenario 2

3.8.7 As no other, unrelated developments have been identified, Scenario 2 has not been assessed for this Section.

Assessment of Cumulative Effects

3.8.8 The cumulative assessment for the above receptors is presented below in **Table V6-3.6**. The description of effects should be read in conjunction with the baseline descriptions for these receptors in **Parts 3.3 and 3.4** of this Chapter.

Table V6-3.6: Cumulative Effects

Landscape Area / Visual Receptor Location	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
LCZ 3B-1: Broadford Outskirts	Scenario 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2 of the Proposed Development; and Broadford Substation Extension 	<p>Within this LCZ, Section 2 would involve the replacement of an existing wood pole OHL with steel lattice towers. However, works would appear not dissimilar to existing forestry works and would be unlikely to appear very out of place. This would be a similar scenario for the Broadford Substation, although the combination of these two developments would be likely to lead to a concentrated area of activity within the forest edges. The addition of works for Section 3 would extend this activity through the forest, although these works would still appear similar in nature to existing forestry management activities.</p> <p>During operation, the Negligible effect of the Proposed Development (Section 3) is unlikely to lead to any additional landscape change to that already occurring in relation to the baseline cumulative sites.</p>

Landscape Area / Visual Receptor Location	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
		The cumulative effect would be Minor Adverse (not significant) during construction, and Negligible during operation.
LCZ 3B-4: Loch Alsh and Kylerhea Coast	Scenario 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 4 of the Proposed Development 	Construction activities for Section 4 would lead to a localised area of activity to the east of Kyle Rhea narrows which would have a very limited effect on the LCZ. The works on the western side for the Alternative Alignment would be additional to this and would extend activities to both sides of the Kyle, with a much more noticeable level of activity relating to the Alternative Alignment, due to its route parallel to the shore, as opposed to the 'up-and-over' alignment of Section 4. Although works would take place in similarly forested landscapes, the increased activities of the Alternative Alignment and extending of works to both sides of the narrows, would lead to a noticeably increased effect on the setting of Kyle Rhea. In the longer term, with woodland and forest anticipated to re-establish around the Alternative Alignment, the effect would be less noticeable, although an increase presence of OHL development would be perceptible. The cumulative effect would be Moderate Adverse (significant) during construction and Minor – Moderate Adverse (not significant) during operation
B3B-2: Broadford, Harrapool and Skulamus	Scenario 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2 of the Proposed Development; and Broadford Substation Extension 	Both Section 2 of the Proposed Development and the Broadford Substation Extension would be expected to have a very limited effect on this settlement area due to the presence of intervening coniferous forestry which would limit available views. As such, these developments are not anticipated to alter the baseline and no cumulative effect is predicted to occur.
R3B-1: A87	Scenario 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2 of the Proposed Development; and Broadford Substation Extension 	There would be limited visibility of Section 2 of the Proposed Development from this route within the study area, although greater effects are predicted elsewhere. During construction, brief, passing views would be anticipated of the Broadford Substation works. The addition of occasional perceptibility of construction activities relating to the Proposed Development (Section 3) would extend a sense of on-going construction perceived within the landward views along a greater length of this route, but would be unlikely to result in works becoming a more prominent feature of the view, which is typically focussed more towards the coast through this section. During operation, the Negligible effect within Section 3 would lead to no discernible additional cumulative effect.

Landscape Area / Visual Receptor Location	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
		The cumulative effect would therefore be Minor Adverse (not significant) during construction and Negligible during operation.
R3B-3: B8083	Scenario 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2 of the Proposed Development; and Broadford Substation Extension 	<p>Visibility of the baseline cumulative developments during construction and operation from this route would be relatively distant and very limited, mostly contained within forest and only glimpsed from a small part of the route. The addition of the Proposed Development, which would cross this route, would therefore increase the perception of visible construction activity from this route but given the limited visibility of the baseline developments, would be unlikely to lead to any noticeably increased effect during operation.</p> <p>The cumulative effect would therefore be Minor Adverse (not significant), during construction, and Negligible during operation.</p>
R3B-4: Old Corry Minor Road	Scenario 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2 of the Proposed Development; and Broadford Substation Extension 	<p>Construction activities for the Broadford Substation would be very visible from a short part of this route to which they would be adjacent, with addition works for Section 2 of the Proposed Development likely to be fairly indistinguishable from these works if happening concurrently. Given the intensity of these works, the addition of the Proposed Development (Section 3) would be unlikely to noticeably increase the visual effect. During operation, as the Proposed Development (Section 3) would appear very similar to the existing steel lattice OHL it would replace, no noticeable cumulative effect is predicted.</p> <p>The cumulative effect would therefore be Negligible during construction and operation.</p>
R3B-10: Core Paths to the South-west of Broadford	Scenario 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2 of the Proposed Development; and Broadford Substation Extension 	Both Section 2 of the Proposed Development and the Broadford Substation Extension would be expected to have a very limited visibility from these recreational routes due to the presence of intervening coniferous forestry and landform. As such, these developments are not anticipated to alter the baseline and no cumulative effect is predicted to occur.
R3B-12: Core Path SL12.05 (Glen Bernera to Ardintoul to Ferry Circular Route)	Scenario 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 4 of the Proposed Development 	Section 4 of the Proposed Development would cross this route in two locations, leading to noticeable effects from some short sections during construction, and more limited effects during operation. The Alternative Alignment would lead to additional visibility of construction works on the opposite side of Kyle Rhea which would increase the appearance of this type of activity within the mid-ground landscape and to either side of the strait, affecting localised parts of the route already affected by Section 4 and some additional sections. However, given the

Landscape Area / Visual Receptor Location	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
		<p>relatively small section of the route affected, the additional effects are considered unlikely to be significant. In the longer term, there would be a greater perception of steel lattice towers from this section of the route, leading to some detracting in views across Kyle Rhea which would not occur with Section 4 alone.</p> <p>The cumulative effect would therefore be Minor – Moderate Adverse (not significant) during construction and Minor Adverse during operation.</p>
<p>R3B-15: Ascent / descent of Kylerhea Hills</p>	<p>Scenario 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 4 of the Proposed Development 	<p>Construction of Section 4 of the Proposed Development would be perceptible in distant elevated westerly views including some tree felling but would be anticipated to be indistinguishable from the existing OHL it would replace during operation. The addition of the Alternative Alignment would add closer activity to views from the section of the route ascending from the otter hide car park, which would be very noticeable during construction, and also additional effects to other parts of the route. Overall, this is anticipated to lead to a more noticeable influence of construction on this route, drawing activities much closer to the receptor, with a likely understanding of the association between the two areas of activity. However, during operation, as Section 4 of the Proposed Development is not predicted to lead to a perceptible change to the view, no cumulative effect would occur.</p> <p>The cumulative effect be Moderate Adverse (significant) during construction and Negligible during operation.</p>
<p>R3B-16: Kylerhea Otter Hide Footpath</p>	<p>Scenario 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 4 of the Proposed Development 	<p>Construction works for Section 4 of the Proposed Development would be perceptible through trees on the opposite side of Kyle Rhea to this path. The Alternative Alignment would add noticeably increased activities at close proximity to the viewer, leading to a potential presence of construction within all viewing directions. Typically concealed by trees from most of the route although the reconductoring of the existing sea crossing towers would be perceptible in the context of both sections. This would be a very noticeable increased effect on the viewer. However, during operation, as Section 4 of the Proposed Development is not predicted to lead to a perceptible change to the view, no cumulative effect would occur.</p> <p>The cumulative effect would be Moderate – Major Adverse (significant) during construction and Negligible during operation.</p>

3.9 Mitigation

3.9.1 Principal mitigation measures relevant to the Alternative Alignment have been embedded in the design process and relate to the identification of an alignment to reduce as far as possible, landscape and visual effects. Whilst significant longer-term landscape and visual effects are predicted in relation to the Alternative Alignment, no further specific mitigation measures have been identified which would effectively reduce these effects to non-significant levels. However, general mitigation measures would also be employed in order to ensure landscape and visual effects in relation to the Alternative Alignment are minimised where relevant. These measures are discussed in **Appendix V2-3.13**.

3.9.2 Further specific mitigation measures to minimise or compensate for individual effects where possible, are recommended for consideration and implementation where possible, as detailed in **Appendix V2-3.13**. These comprise the following in relation to the Alternative Alignment:

- Receptor Location B3B-5 (Kyle Rhea), and Route R3B-16 (Kyle Rhea Otter Hide footpath) and Outdoor Location O3B-2 (Otter Hide Car Park and Picnic Area): Targeted native woodland planting to mitigate visual effects of towers at close proximity; and
- Route R3B-6 (Glen Arroch / Kyle Rhea Minor Road) and Outdoor Location O3B-1 (Bealach Udal): Potential improvements to the Bealach Udal viewpoint location to help offset negative visual effects to visual receptors. This could involve improvements to parking, improvements to the viewing experience such as interpretation, and strategic planting or placement of rocks to soften views of individual towers from this location.

3.10 Residual Effects

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

3.10.2 Specific mitigation recommendations as outlined in **Appendix V2-3.13** and **paragraph 3.9.2** above, may lead to further small reductions in landscape and visual effects if applied, but have not been taken into account within the assessment as the implementation of these measures would be dependent upon other external factors including landowner agreements.

3.11 Summary and Conclusions

Landscape Effects

3.11.1 The landscape assessment for the Alternative Alignment has identified that significant effects would be likely to occur as a result of the Proposed Development within Glen Arroch and Kyle Rhea Glen, affecting LCT 365 (Rugged Massif – Skye and Lochalsh) and the setting of a small area of LCT 357 (Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Skye and Lochalsh), during its construction and operation. Construction of the Alternative Alignment would appear prominent and distracting throughout these areas, affecting the sense of remoteness through the elevated pass of Bealach Udal and disrupting valued views eastwards down Kyle Rhea Glen, towards the mountains of the mainland and the setting of settled crofting landscapes at the base of the glen. During operation, proposed steel lattice towers would form a new characteristic of these valued landscapes, leading to a greater sense of accessibility and development, and distracting from other elements of the landscape and within key views. The addition of a permanent access track would draw further focus to the Alternative Alignment and may detract from the impressive qualities of the historic and precipitous single-track road which leads through this glen.

- 3.11.2 A temporary significant landscape effect would also occur along the shore of Kyle Rhea, between Kylerhea and the existing OHL crossing point where felling works construction of towers and temporary access tracks would lead to a noticeably increased level of activity to the west of Kyle Rhea, also intervisible with west facing slopes on the eastern side of the strait. However, given the forested character of this area, the presence of the existing tall sea-crossing towers and the positive effect of removal of towers to the north of the crossing point, the longer-term operational effect would not be significant.
- 3.11.3 No significant effects are predicted to the landscape around Broadford Bay, where the Proposed Development would appear very similar to the OHL it would replace, and the landscape is considered capable of accommodating construction activities without and noticeable change in character.
- 3.11.4 No designated or protected landscapes would be affected by the Proposed Development although it is recognised that the landscape of Kylerhea Glen is valued locally and by visitors.

Visual Effects

- 3.11.5 The visual assessment has identified that the majority of visual receptors would not be significantly affected by the Proposed Development. However, significant effects have been identified for receptors within the Glen Arroch and Kyle Rhea area affecting those at residential areas, using routes and present at outdoor locations.
- 3.11.6 During construction, the works to construct the Alternative Alignment are predicted to lead to significant visual effects, for residents and visitors to Kylerhea village where the OHL would be prominent in rear views, although it would not affect valued coastal views. Significant effects are also predicted for travellers on the narrow minor road leading to Kylerhea village through Glen Arroch and Kylerhea Glen, which is also valued as the access route for visitors using the small Glenelg Ferry, where construction works would appear prominent along the majority of the road. A similar significant effect would occur for individuals at a popular viewpoint / stopping point on this route at Bealach Udal. Significant visual effects in this area would also affect visitors to a recreational route and car park / picnic area associated with Kyle Rhea / Otter Haven wildlife hides due to proximity to the Alternative Alignment, and for walkers accessing hill routes to the north of Kylerhea Glen (ascending Beinn na Caillich and Sgùrr na Còinnich) and to the south of Kylerhea Glen (ascending Ben Aslak).
- 3.11.7 During the operation of the Proposed Development, most effects would be reduced after 10 years post construction with the cessation of construction works and re-establishment of vegetation. However, longer term significant visual effects are predicted to continue for residents of Kylerhea village, where the Alternative Alignment would be prominent within the rear setting, and for users of the minor Glen Arroch / Kyle Rhea Glen Road, and Bealach Udal viewpoint where towers and a permanent access track are anticipated to appear distracting and interrupt the easterly views.
- 3.11.8 Elsewhere within the study area, for receptors within Broadford and outlying areas including residential areas and routes, and for receptors on the east side of the Kyle Rhea strait, although there may be views of the Proposed Development, the visual effect would be not significant during construction or operation.

Cumulative Effects

- 3.11.9 When considering the Proposed Development in addition to Section 2 and Section 4 of the wider Skye Reinforcement project, and the related proposed Broadford Substation Extension (subject of a separate application), the LVIA has established that significant adverse cumulative landscape and visual effects would also be likely to occur within the area around Kyle Rhea. A significant adverse landscape effect is predicted to the coastline within this area during construction due to the additional intensity and focus of works on the westerly side of the Kyle, in addition to works within a smaller area on the eastern coast. However, this would not be significant during operation of the Proposed Development, after 10 years.

3.11.10 Significant adverse cumulative visual effects are also predicted for a small number of recreational receptors in this area, including walkers ascending the Kylerhea Hills on the northern side of Kylerhea Glen and following a path to an otter hide through the forest. For these receptors, the Alternative Alignment would lead to construction activities being experienced at much closer proximity, in addition to effects already occurring in relation to Section 4 of the Proposed Development, on the eastern shore of Kyle Rhea. However, in both cases no cumulative effect is predicted in the longer term due to the limited operational visual effect of Section 4 of the Proposed Development on these receptors.

Conclusions

3.11.11 The LVIA has established that significant adverse landscape and visual effects and cumulative landscape and visual effects would occur as a result of the Alternative Alignment, within an area around Glen Arroch and Kyle Rhea where the OHL would form a noticeable feature within the landscape and views. Whilst some of these effects would reduce to non-significant levels during the operation of the Proposed Development, the presence of steel lattice towers and permanent new access tracks within this area is predicted to lead to on-going significant adverse landscape effects through Glen Arroch and Kylerhea Glen, which comprises a locally valued landscape, and significant adverse visual effects for residents and visitors accessing some parts of this area. Mitigation measures are proposed which may help to offset some of these effects.

3.11.12 Landscape and visual effects to the remaining parts of the study area including the Broadford area and east of Kyle Rhea strait would be not significant.