

Skye Reinforcement Project

Appendix 5: Landscape and Visual Appraisal of Baseline OHL Alignment in Section 2 – Glen Varragill Forest (North of Sligachan) to Broadford Substation

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1.1 This report presents the findings of a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) of the proposed 132 kV steel lattice tower Baseline Alignment¹ between Glen Varragill Forest (North of Sligachan) and Broadford Substation on Skye (the Proposed Development). The Proposed Development would form part of the Skye Reinforcement Project comprising the upgrading of the existing grid connection between Ardmore on Waternish Peninsula, Skye to Fort Augustus. The purpose of the LVA is to identify the potential for 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 the wider landscape resource.
- 1.1.2 The LVA does not comprise an assessment and therefore does not identify and describe the degree of effects, but rather is limited to the identification of potential effects and the likelihood for these to be significant.
- 1.1.3 The LVA has been undertaken by ASH design + assessment Ltd, Chartered Landscape Architects, on behalf of Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission (SSEN Transmission).

1.2 The Proposed Development

Overview of the Skye Reinforcement Project

- 1.2.1 The Skye Reinforcement Project comprises a new double circuit steel structure 132 kV transmission connection between Fort Augustus Substation and Edinbane Substation, and a new 132 kV double trident H wood pole (H pole) overhead line (OHL) between Edinbane Substation and Ardmore Substation. The existing 132 kV OHL between Fort Augustus Substation and Ardmore Substation would be removed upon completion of the new connection.
- 1.2.2 For assessment purposes the project has been divided into seven separate sections, numbered 0 to 6, commencing at Ardmore Substation at the western end of the route. This LVA covers Section 2 which is situated between Glen Varragill Forest (North of Sligachan) and Broadford Substation.

Section 2: Glen Varragill Forest (North of Sligachan) to Broadford Substation

- 1.2.3 The Baseline Alignment within Section 2 would involve the construction of 87 steel lattice towers of approximately 28 m in height located at approximate 250 m intervals, strung with insulators and conductors. The existing OHL which would be removed in this section comprises a 132 kV trident wood pole line.
- 1.2.4 The Baseline Alignment for Section 2 would broadly follow the alignment of the A87 trunk road. From Glen Varragill Forest, it would descend to Sligachan, crossing the River Sligachan, outwith the tidal area of Loch Sligachan. It would then cross the A87 to traverse the hill slopes on the north side of the road toward Sconser and would continue to follow the western side of the A87 southwards through Gleann Torra-mhichaig towards Loch Ainort. At Loch Ainort, it would cross the A87 and drop down close around the head of the loch, before crossing back to the landward side of the A87 again along the southern side of Loch Ainort toward Luib. The alignment would briefly move away from the road and inland at Luib passing to the landward side of Am Meall to Strollamus, and would thereafter continue to Broadford Substation, passing to the landward side of Creag Strollamus.

¹ As identified within the Skye Reinforcement Project Consultation Document (Alignment Selection), September 2021, SSEN Transmission.

Anticipated Construction Activities

- 1.2.5 Temporary access tracks would be required for the construction of the steel lattice towers, likely to comprise a mix of cut or floating stone access tracks and temporary solutions such as trackway. Whilst the access proposals have not yet been fixed, it is envisaged that this would include a number of new or upgraded bellmouths / junctions on the A87 and potential upgrading of existing tracks.
- 1.2.6 Further construction activities including establishment of tower foundations, construction of towers and stringing of conductors are anticipated, requiring a range of construction plant including excavators, cranes, and pile drivers and the establishment of working areas.
- 1.2.7 As the exact locations and activities associated with access and construction are not confirmed these have been considered in a general sense only, with the emphasis of the LVA on the likely continued, long term effects of the permanent features of the Proposed Development (see Section 1.3, below).

1.3 Scope of Assessment

- 1.3.1 This LVA considers the potential for significant effects to both the landscape and visual resource as a result of the Proposed Development. The appraisal gives consideration to both temporary construction period effects and longer term operational effects. However, given the unconfirmed nature of what would be involved during the construction period and the temporary nature of such effects, the emphasis of the LVA is on the potential longer term effects.
- 1.3.2 The LVA does not comprise an assessment and therefore does not identify and describe the degree of effects, but is limited to the identification of potential effects and the likelihood for these to be significant.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 1.3.3 As an aid to establishing the scope for the LVA, ZTVs have been produced for the Proposed Development and are presented in Figures 1 and 2. The ZTV is a computer generated diagram which uses a terrain model to indicate areas from which the Proposed Development would be theoretically visible. The ZTV for the Proposed Development has been generated using ESRI ArcGIS software based on a terrain modelled using Ordnance Survey (OS) Terrain 5 DTM data. The ZTV has been produced using a tower height of 28 m and a viewer height of 2 m. Two ZTVs have been produced for the Proposed Development, taking account of the predicted perceptibility of the towers at different distances. Figure 1, shows the theoretical visibility of towers at a distance of 5 km and Figure 2 shows the theoretical visibility of towers at a distance of 2.5 km.
- 1.3.4 It should be noted that, whilst the ZTV is illustrative of potential visibility of towers, it is not indicative of a visual effect. The ZTV has been produced using a bare ground model and does not take account of the screening effects of trees, local landform, buildings or other obstructions. It also does not take into account the receding scale and perceptibility of features with distance.

Study Area

- 1.3.5 A study area of 2.5 km from the proposed towers has been adopted for this LVA, taking account of the prominence and perceptibility of existing similar lattice towers in similar landscapes and the containing qualities of the topography surrounding the Proposed Development, as illustrated by the 5 km ZTV (see Figure 1). This study area is considered suitable for the identification of all potentially significant landscape and visual effects.

1.4 Planning Context

- 1.4.1 The LVA has taken account of national, regional and local policy and guidance relating to landscape character and visual amenity relevant to the proposal. The following have been referred to in carrying out the appraisal:

National

- The Third National Planning Framework for Scotland (NPF3);
- Scottish Planning Policy (SPP);
- Planning Advice Note 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (PAN 60), 2000;
- Wildness in Scotland’s Countryside, SNH Policy Statement 02/03.

Regional

- The Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP), 2012; and
- The West Highlands and Islands Local Development Plan (WestPlan), 2019.

- 1.4.2 The HwLDP forms the key element of spatial planning policy for the Proposed Development. Policy 61 of the HwLDP concerns the protection of landscape qualities. This states that:

“New developments should be designed to reflect the landscape characteristics and special qualities identified in the Landscape Character Assessment of the area in which they are proposed. This will include consideration of the appropriate scale, form, pattern and construction materials, as well as the potential cumulative effect of developments where this may be an issue. The Council would wish to encourage those undertaking development to include measures to enhance the landscape characteristics of the area. This will apply particularly where the condition of the landscape characteristics has deteriorated to such an extent that there has been a loss of landscape quality or distinctive sense of place. In the assessment of new developments, the Council will take account of Landscape Character Assessments, Landscape Capacity Studies and its supplementary guidance on Siting and Design and Sustainable Design, together with any other relevant design guidance.”

- 1.4.3 Policy 57 concerning the protection of Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage is also of relevant in relation to the protection of designated areas. With respect to areas of local/regional importance (e.g. Special Landscape Area) Part 1 of this policy states:

“...we will allow developments if it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that they will not have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment, amenity and heritage resource.”

- 1.4.4 With respect to areas of national importance (such as National Scenic Areas or Wild Land Areas), Part 2 of the policy states:

“...we will allow developments that can be shown not to compromise the natural environment, amenity and heritage resource. Where there may be any significant adverse effects, these must be clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance. It must also be shown that the development will support communities in fragile areas who are having difficulties in keeping their population and services”.

1.5 Mitigation Measures

- 1.5.1 Recommendations for landscape and visual mitigation are described in Section 5 of this report.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Assessment Guidance

- 2.1.1 The LVA has been prepared with reference to the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition), 2013, published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (GLVIA3).

Professional Judgement

- 2.1.2 GLVIA3 places a strong emphasis on the importance of professional judgement in identifying and designing the significance of landscape and visual effects. As part of this appraisal, professional judgement has been used in combination with structured methods and criteria to evaluate value, sensitivity and potential for effects to be significant.

2.2 Structure of the Appraisal

- 2.2.1 GLVIA3 discerns an important difference between landscape effects, and visual effects. These can be described as follows:

Landscape Effects

- 2.2.2 The character of the landscape relates to the natural processes and human activities that have been at work over time to shape the land to its present form. Factors contributing to landscape character include topography, vegetation cover, sense of space or enclosure and past and present land use. Landscape character and resources are considered to have an importance in their own right and are valued for their intrinsic qualities.
- 2.2.3 Landscape effects may occur when elements of the landscape which contribute to its key characteristics are changed.

Visual Effects

- 2.2.4 Visual amenity relates to the way in which people visually experience the surrounding landscape.
- 2.2.5 Visual effects may occur through the introduction into established views of new features which modify the existing structure, scale and composition of the view. Visual effects may also occur where existing features in the view are removed or altered.

Key Stages of the Assessment

- 2.2.6 The GLVIA methodology involves an appreciation of the existing landscape and visual resource and the ability of its key components to accept potential change. An understanding of the proposed changes which could occur and the degree to which they could alter these key components is required. The appraisal considers the potential for changes to result in significant effects and potential opportunities to mitigate these effects. There are six key stages to the appraisal process:
- Establishment of the baseline;
 - Appreciation of the development proposed;
 - Identification of key landscape and visual receptors;
 - Evaluation of receptor sensitivity to change;
 - Identification of potential effects and mitigation measures; and
 - Consideration of potential for effects to be significant.

Establishment of the Baseline

2.2.7 Establishment of the baseline conditions has been undertaken through a combination of desk study. A specific site visit has not been undertaken for this appraisal but site visits undertaken in 2016, 2017 and 2019 are considered to provide a good understanding of the study area for this level of appraisal. The following desk based resources have been reviewed:

- The HwLDP, WestPlan and relevant Supplementary Guidance;
- Digital Datasets obtained from NatureScot Natural Spaces website (<https://gateway.snh.gov.uk/natural-spaces/index.jsp>);
- The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas, SNH (now NatureScot) (2010);
- THC Special Landscape Areas and citations included in the document ‘Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas’ (Horner+Maclennan with Mike Wood, Landscape Architect);
- Description of Wild Land Area 23. Cuillin (NatureScot, 2017);
- Landscape Character Types and descriptions from the NatureScot National Landscape Character Assessment;
- Mapping and aerial photography resources including Ordnance Survey 1:25000 Explorer series, GoogleEarth and National Library of Scotland mapping services; and
- Previously obtained photographic record of the study area.

Landscape Value

2.2.8 Establishment of the baseline includes the consideration of the baseline landscape value. Landscape value concerns the perceived importance of the landscape when considered as a whole, and within the context of the study area and is established through consideration of the following factors:

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

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

2.2.10 Criteria for the allocation of perceived landscape value are outlined in Table 2.1:

Table 2.1: Landscape Value Criteria

Landscape Value	Criteria
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The landscape is closely associated with features of international or national importance which are rare within the wider context; • The landscape is of high scenic quality and forms a key part of an important designated landscape or planning constraint; and/or • The landscape is an example of a scarce resource within the local context and is of considerable local importance for its, scenic quality, recreational opportunities or cultural heritage associations.

Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The landscape is associated with features of national or regional importance which are relatively common within the wider context; • The landscape forms part of a designated landscape or is associated with other features of importance but is not rare or distinctive within the local context; and/or • The landscape is one of a number within the local context appreciated for its scenic quality, recreational opportunities or cultural heritage associations.
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The landscape characteristics are common within the local and regional context and the landscape is not associated with any particular features or attributes considered to be important; and/or • The landscape is of poor scenic quality and is not appreciated for any recreational or cultural associations.

Appreciation of the Development Proposed

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

Identification of Key Landscape and Visual Receptors

2.2.12 The identification of landscape and visual receptors is the first step in the analysis of the potential for significant effects to occur. Landscape and visual receptors can be described as follows:

- **Landscape receptors** comprise key characteristics or individual features which contribute to the value of the landscape and have the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development. Landscape receptors are identified through analysis of baseline characteristics when considered in relation to the impacts which might result from a development of the type proposed.
- **Visual receptors** comprise individuals experiencing views from locations such as buildings, recognised routes and popular viewpoints used by the public. Potential visual receptors are identified through analysis of desk resources, mapping and field survey, as described under 'Establishment of the Baseline' above.

Evaluation of Receptor Sensitivity to Change

2.2.13 Sensitivity considers the nature of the landscape or view and its ability to accommodate development of the type proposed without compromising its key characteristics and components. There are two aspects which are considered when establishing the landscape or visual sensitivity:

- **Value:** the baseline value of the landscape as detailed in Table 2.1 and the contributory value of individual landscape receptors to the landscape as a whole; or, the value of the overall view and particularly, the affected part of the view, to the visual receptor. This includes consideration of the type of activity in which the visual receptor may be engaged.
- **Susceptibility to change:** the ability of the landscape receptors or existing visual composition to accommodate development of the type proposed without changing the intrinsic qualities of the landscape or view.

2.2.14 It is important to note that the judgement of visual sensitivity is considered in relation to an understanding of both the existing view obtained by the visual receptor and the development proposed and therefore the perceived value of the potential area of change as a part of the viewing experience as a whole contributes to the sensitivity evaluation.

2.2.15 Criteria for sensitivity are presented in Table 2.2 below:

Table 2.2: Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Criteria

Sensitivity Rating	Landscape Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity
High	A highly valued landscape of particularly distinctive character susceptible to relatively small changes of the type proposed.	Visual receptors occupying or using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dwellings, publicly accessible buildings and surrounds where the changed aspect is an important element in the view and there are no detracting features present; and • Recreational routes and locations where the changed aspect is an important element in the view and there are no detracting features present.
Medium	Dwellings, publicly accessible buildings and surrounds where the changed aspect is an important element in the view and there are no detracting features present; and	Visual receptors occupying or using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dwellings and publicly accessible buildings where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present; • Recreational routes and locations where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present; • Roads and transport routes where the changed aspect is an important element in the view and there are no detracting features present; and • Workplaces where the changed aspect is an important element of the view and there are no detracting features present.
Low	Recreational routes and locations where the changed aspect is an important element in the view and there are no detracting features present.	Visual receptors occupying or using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dwellings and publicly accessible buildings where the changed aspect is an unimportant element in the view and / or numerous detracting features are present; • Recreational routes and locations where the changed aspect is an unimportant element in the view and / or where numerous detracting features are present; • Roads and transport routes where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present; and • Workplaces where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present.

Identification of Potential Effects and Mitigation Measures

2.2.16 Potential effects may occur as a result of the interaction of the Proposed Development with the identified landscape and visual receptors.

2.2.17 The appraisal takes into account direct effects upon existing views, landscape elements, features and key characteristics and also indirect effects which may occur secondary to changes affecting another landscape component or area. The identification of potential effects is a two-fold process, giving consideration to how these effects may arise from aspects of the Proposed Development and how they may be accommodated by the existing baseline features. Where it is established that potential effects could be limited by mitigation measures, these are also given consideration.

Consideration of Potential for Effects to be Significant

2.2.18 Where the potential for effects to occur has been identified, a judgement has been made on the likelihood for these to be significant. Significant effects may be described as those which would be of considerable detriment to the receptor: either leading to a noticeable change to valued landscape characteristics of a particular area; or notable deterioration of the visual amenity of a particular view. The appraisal of potential for effects to be significant is made using professional judgement, taking in consideration of the identified receptor sensitivity and the degree to which the Proposed Development may potentially influence the view or landscape.

2.2.19 The potential for effects to be significant is presented as one of three options:

- **Likely** – significant effects are unlikely to be avoidable;
- **Possible** – there is the potential for significant effects to occur depending on the detailed design or mitigation; or
- **Unlikely** – the likelihood of significant effects occurring is considered low.

2.3 Assumptions and Limitations

2.3.1 The assessment of the Proposed Development is subject to the following limitations and assumptions:

- A specific site survey has not been undertaken for this appraisal but has been based on site visits undertaken by the writer in 2016, 2017 and 2019, supplemented by a photographic record from these sites visits and more recent visits undertaken by others. However, this is considered to be a sufficient basis on which to undertake this level of appraisal.

3. BASELINE

3.1 Landscape and Visual Context

3.1.1 The landscape context of Section 2 is characterised by the mountains of the Black and Red Cuillin ranges with their high summits and well-recognised silhouettes forming a prominent landscape and visual focus within the wider surrounding area. There is a contrast between the striking, rugged ridgeline of the black Cuillin which lies to the south-west of the study area, and the more simple structured steep, conical peaks of Red Cuillin, such as Glamaig and Marsco, which lie closer to or within the study area. Deep, sweeping, heather-clad valleys and corries separate the mountains, contrasting with the dramatic summits of crags and scree-slopes where the grey of stone predominates. The long, fjord-like sea-lochs of Loch Sligachan and Loch Ainort cut inshore to the feet of the mountains and, with the addition of off-shore islands, form a strong composition of land, and sea which emphasises the height and contrast of the mountains. Habitation and development is confined to the coastal edge, around the shores and at the heads of Loch Sligachan and Loch Ainort where the A87 trunk road winds around the bases of the mountains and the heads of the lochs. The proximity of the main, trunk road to the mountainous landscape results in notable popularity for tourists and visitors. Whilst the remote landscape away from the shore lacks roads or development, it is highly popular with recreational users and there are many tracks, paths and more challenging mountain walking routes present. Many of these routes commence at Sligachan, at the head of Loch Sligachan where there is a particular focus of visitor and tourist development.

3.2 Landscape Designations and Other Protected Landscapes

National Context

The Cuillin Hills National Scenic Area (NSA)

3.2.1 NSA is a national level designation applied to those landscapes considered to be of exceptional scenic value. NSAs are considered to represent Scotland's finest landscapes that must be conserved as part of the country's natural heritage. The special qualities which are considered to contribute to the value of each NSA are described in the SNH publication 'The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas' (SNH, 2010).

3.2.2 The Cuillin Hills NSA falls within the study area (see Figure 3) and covers all areas to the south-west of the A87 including the Black Cuillin and Red Cuillin mountains. The Special Qualities of the NSA are described as follows:

- Magnificent mountain scenery;
- The contrast and complement of the Black and Red Cuillin;
- The surrounding wild landscape, a fitting foil for the mountains;
- Iconic images of crofting townships with dramatic backdrops;
- The Cuillin Ridge, a landmark throughout the northwest;
- The ever-changing weather;
- A place of inspiration; and
- The most challenging mountains in Scotland.

Wild Land Area (WLA) 23: Cuillin

3.2.3 Although not a formal designation, WLAs have been defined by SNH as those areas comprising the greatest and most extensive areas of wild characteristics within Scotland and are given protection within the Planning System through Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). WLA 23 covers a similar area to The Cuillin Hills NSA with its boundary falling slightly further from the A87; typically 0.5 km to 1 km away (see Figure 3).

3.2.4 The presence of wildness is based on the presence and strength of four perceptual attributes identified in NatureScot Policy Statement 'Wildness in Scotland's Countryside' (SNH, 2002) as follows:

- A sense of sanctuary or solitude;

- Risk or, for some visitors, a sense of awe or anxiety, depending on the individual's emotional response to the setting;
- Perceptions that the landscape has arresting or inspiring qualities; and
- Fulfilment from the physical challenge required to penetrate into these places.

3.2.5 Because these responses are much dependant on an individual's perceptions, five physical attributes are identified as considered likely to lead to these perceptual responses being present. These are:

- A high degree of perceived naturalness in the setting, especially in its vegetation cover and wildlife, and in the natural processes affecting the land;
- The lack of any modern artefacts or structures;
- Little evidence of contemporary human uses of the land;
- Landform which is rugged, or otherwise physically challenging; and
- Remoteness and/or inaccessibility.

3.2.6 NatureScot has produced a description of each WLA identifying Key Qualities which are considered to contribute to their value. The Key Qualities of WLA 23 are identified as follows:

- Superlative high, steep, rocky mountains that are extremely rugged and contrast to the surrounding peatland and sea, emphasising a sense of awe;
- A circle of mountains that contain a remote and secluded interior and a strong sense of sanctuary, with contrasting outward-facing slopes where human elements are more influential;
- A strong contribution of the sea to remoteness and the sense of naturalness and awe, as well as influencing the perceived extent of the area; and
- A concentrated mountain area accessed by many different visitors to experience wild land qualities.

Regional / Local Context

Trotternish and Tianavaig Special Landscape Area (SLA)

3.2.7 A very small part of the Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA (see Figure 3), identified by THC falls within the northern part of the study area. This SLA covers the coastline northwards from Balmeanach Bay to the north of Peinachorrain, and extends to include the wider Trotternish ridge. As the portion of the SLA within the study area is extremely limited and over 2 km from the Proposed Development, it is considered that the potential for any of the Special Qualities or characteristics of the SLA to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development is Unlikely. The Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA has therefore not been considered further in this LVA.

3.3 Landscape Character

3.3.1 NatureScot has undertaken detailed review and classification of various landscape areas and types of Scotland dividing the country into a series of Landscape Character Types (LCTs) where there is considered to be a consistency of character. This has included identification of key characteristics which are considered important in the defining the character of each LCT. Within this context, 7 LCTs have been identified within the LVA study area (see Figure 4). These LCTs along with their identified key characteristics are detailed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Key Characteristics of LCTs within the Study Area

LCT	Key Characteristics
LCT 357 – Farmed and Settled Lowlands - Skye & Lochalsh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharp contrast between human activity and small-scale land use patterns, and the surrounding large scale, mainly uninhabited, landscapes. • Always found on low lying terrain - coastal shelves, narrow coastal strips, wide, level strath and glen floors and better drained estuarine flats.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In rocky moorland and mountainous areas, found on narrow shelves and slopes at the base of rocky or rugged coastal strips with an abrupt, steep and sometimes complex coastal edge. • On basalt bedrock on Skye, relief is level, inclined or terraced, incorporating vertical rock faces, tending to become broader and flatter at lower levels. • Dominance of improved grass land and relatively intense grazing. • Margins of broadleaf woodlands in good soils and sheltered areas mainly relating to estates or sheltered parts of coastal rocky moorland. • Mature parkland trees and small plantations provide shelter and enclosure and are associated with rural estates and better soils. • Settlements coalesce with each other and surrounding inbye to form ribbons or swathes of green pastures. • Green pasture contrasts with surrounding muted colours of rough grass land. • Land use is farming, crofting, tourism accommodation and activities, ferry terminals, and small plantations. • Larger settlements are active, bustling places, providing facilities for local services and tourism. • Variable pattern of settlement, governed largely by historical changes in tenure - the change from run-rig to crofting - landform and soils, and influenced by coastlines, water courses, roads, ferries and bridges. • Croft patterns are linear or scattered. • Crofts are usually coastal and exposed. • Modern settlement boundaries are well defined by fence and dyke lines which mark abrupt changes in grazing intensity. • Most settlements retain their historic patterns of development. • Clear evidence of historical human land-use in the abandoned field systems and archaeological sites. Many settlements on single track roads with a strong sense of isolation due to their distance from main settlements.
<p>LCT 358 – Low, Smooth Moorland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderately sized bands of peaty lowland of low relief, mainly below 50 metres elevation. • Simple composition with horizontal or gently sloping skyline. • Formed in depressions linked to the coast, in straths and glens between hills, and at the foot of landslide edges. • Mainly smooth terrain, rough grazing, usually in close proximity to settlement, with evidence of former or current drainage. • Sinuous burns, rivers, drainage channels, eroded peat banks and peat beds provide occasional detailed texture. • Evidence of intermittent prehistoric and historic settlement, with few modern built features. • Expansive and open, with views of mountains, islands and sea, channelled by adjacent hill slopes.
<p>LCT 359 – Upland Sloping Moorland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansive moorland with gentle slopes and broad undulations above 50 metres and sweeping, rounded summits up to 260 metres. • Mainly smooth, with small radiating burns cutting into lower slopes and weakly defined steps where peat is thinner overlying the stepped bedrock. • Occasional finer grain, ridge-like or hummocky undulations in surface deposits, found in places at the base of slopes. • Mainly used for grazing on rough grass land, and for forestry, which together form a large scale patchwork of contrasting colours and textures. • Little settlement – occasional isolated modern farms. • Distance and scale are difficult to judge, except where roads, power lines or occasional wind turbines introduce scale. • Simple overall composition. • Exposed and open, with extensive views to surrounding mountains, islands, coastlines and the sea.

<p>LCT 360 – Stepped Moorland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinctive stepped landform rising from the coast up to moderate elevation uplands. • Clearly defined, often sloping, terraces and steps which are sometimes inclined. • Hills tend to be asymmetrical with a horizontal emphasis and broad base. • Low stepped inclined shelves or low cliffs at the coast, often forming promontories and seen as repeated, low, horizontal headlands extending into the sea, and receding into the distance. • Stepped character varies depending on depth of deposits over terraces and height of vertical faces. • Repetitive pattern of vertical faces and gently sloping or slanting terraces. • Exposed basalt rock faces separating level or sloping terraces of grass or heather moorland. • Vertical steps may appear as low outcrops or walls of rock, and form steep cliffs along coastlines. • Isolated large to moderate scale forest blocks, usually found in more elevated areas masking and competing with the stepped profile form. • Trees and plantations largely absent on coastal lowlands. • Extensive grazed rough grassland, bog and heather, with more intensively grazed grassland at the coast, which is smoother and greener. • Mainly un-settled, with a few solitary farms, the type is interspersed with Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Skye & Lochalsh at the coast. • Main roads and single track roads traverse lower slopes and passes; occasional forest, farm and windfarm tracks extend up mid-slopes. • Mainly single track roads pass through coastal areas, connecting adjacent settlements. • Abandoned shielings and field patterns • Exposed and open, extensive visibility. • At the coast, high inter-visibility between promontories and rare views of inaccessible coastlines and mountains.
<p>LCT 364 – Rocky Moorland - Skye & Lochalsh</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate elevation, transitional moorland which descends to the coastal edge and adjoins Rugged Massif – Skye & Lochalsh. • High proportion of exposed rock arising from rock outcrops and deposited material. • Raw and rugged, showing minimal signs of post-glacial erosion. • Occurs on a wide range of bedrocks, which gives rise to variable texture and form. Exposed bedrock form is generally rounded, with a few areas of terraced and sloping landform. • Mainly occurs in large tracts. • Larger areas contain exposed, central undulating plateaux with lochans. • Deeply undulating land form often due to glacial erosion, in larger areas. • No overall hierarchy of peaks, except on outcrops and terraced variants. • Random pattern ground cover textures. • Little obvious land management. • Sparse habitation. • Roads mainly peripheral, some power lines and roads cross the larger scale types and introduce human scale. • Overall, scale and distance difficult to perceive, in larger areas. • General lack of landmarks. • Quiet atmosphere in central areas, with little evidence of peripheral settlement and roads in larger areas. • Rarely visited, giving a sense of isolation and remoteness in larger areas.
<p>LCT 367 – Smooth Mountain Range</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly conical mountains of convex to concave slopes and smooth rounded tops separated by wide glaciated straths and glens. • Contrasting form to the jagged Black Cuillin. • Peripheral, smooth rounded foothills.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hills are of a similar profile, often viewed collectively with each other and their smooth foothills. • Smooth texture and mottled pattern, the surface is broken by deep crevices formed by drainage channels which create a radial arrangement of lines. • Upper areas are dominated by pink, exposed granite rock. • Lower slopes of heather, grassland and peaty bogs, with rivers and lochans in straths and glens. • Simple, repetitive, smooth profile of the main hills imparts a sense of predictability. • Roads, conifer forests, quarries and power lines are located mainly within the edges of the foothills. • Uninhabited landscape, with the interior accessed by paths and tracks through intervening straths and glens. • Wild character derived from the remoteness, natural landform and lack of human activity, except around the margins of the area.
<p>LCT 368 – Angular Mountain Range - Skye & Lochalsh</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mountains of high elevation and massive scale. • Sharp, angular profile, steep mountain slopes and huge rocky cliffs, set in rugged and smooth foothills. • Arc of jagged gabbro peaks derived from volcanic origin, with no dominant focal point. • Extensive areas of exposed, coarse, hard, dark rock. • U-shaped glaciated valleys and corries forming vast open areas, with rivers and lochans. • Contrast with form of adjacent smooth red hills. • Contrasting lower slopes and foothills with glacial and peat deposits, heather and rough grassland. • Service facilities and accommodation concentrated at entrance points and service centres around the edge of the Landscape Character Type. • Historic land use evidence on the fringes with occasional relics, shielings, field systems, old droving routes and enclosures. • Largely uninhabited. • Prominent landmark set within relatively low seascapes and landscapes and visible from great distances. • Complex visual composition in close proximity, with immense vertical scale viewed from valleys and peaks. • Interior views change according to orientation of slopes and the influence of weather. • Wild character imparted due to lack of man-made structures, remoteness, mountainous scale, raw geology and exposure.

3.4 Landscape Value of the Study Area

3.4.1 The presence of the National level NSA designation across much of the study area, confers a generally High value on the LCTs which fall within it. This includes LCT 367 (Smooth Mountain Range), LCT 368 (Angular Mountain Range – Skye and Lochalsh) and a part of LCT 358 (Low, Smooth Moorland). However, the notable popularity of the Cuillin mountains, enhanced by their depiction on television and film productions, and their frequent portrayal internationally as an iconic feature of the Scottish landscape is considered to lead to a very particularly high value for these landscapes.

3.4.2 Although no landscape designation is present across the LCTs which lie outwith the NSA, which includes areas of LCT 357 (Farmed and Settled Lowlands - Skye & Lochalsh), LCT 358 (Low, Smooth Moorland), LCT 359 (Upland Sloping Moorland), LCT 360 (Stepped Moorland) and LCT 364 (Rocky Moorland - Skye & Lochalsh), these landscapes are also considered to convey considerable value due to their close relationship to the NSA, having a role both as a setting and context to the NSA in terms of the relationships between the coastal landscapes and the mountains and the viewing opportunities they afford to appreciate the iconic mountain landscape, and also as a popular and scenic landscape in its own right. As such, a High landscape value is accorded to all the LCTs within the study area, with the possible exception of areas where commercial forestry plantation comprises the principle landcover. Although these areas, which are largely focussed at either end of the alignment, affecting parts of LCT 358 (Low, Smooth Moorland) and LCT 359 (Upland Sloping Moorland), retain a visual connection with the more highly valued landscapes they are considered to have a generally lower scenic quality. The value in these areas is therefore considered to be Medium.

3.5 Visual Receptors

3.5.1 Potential visual receptors considered in the assessment include those obtaining views from settlements routes and recreational areas. This includes residents, visitors and tourists, travellers and those undertaking outdoor activities such as walkers, climbers and cyclists.

3.5.2 All receptor locations within the study area are listed and detailed in Annex 1 of this LVA and locations shown on Figure 4.

Views from Settlement Areas

3.5.3 Settlement within the study area is largely located close to the A87, strung along the narrow coastal strip below the mountains. Key settlement clusters within the study area include: Sligachan, Peinachorain, Sconser, Luib, Dunan, Strollamus and Broadford. There are also a number of smaller settlement groups or individual properties outwith these areas. Properties are almost entirely orientated to take advantage of coastal views. However, secondary views, particularly from garden areas and associated croft land are obtained towards the mountainous interior.

Views from Routes

Roads

3.5.4 The A87 is the principal road route within the study area, looping around the bases of the mountains and the southern shores and heads of the sea-lochs. The views obtained from this route to the mountain landscape result in it being highly popular with tourists and visitors, as well as being a main commuting route for commercial traffic and local people.

3.5.5 Other main roads within the study area include small parts of the A863 Sligachan to Dunvegan road, and B8083 Broadford to Elgol road. These routes have some views towards the mountain landscape on their approach into the study area but are largely beyond the edge of the study area and scope of the LVA. There is also a minor road around the coast between Loch Ainort and Loch Sligachan at Sconser, which has variable coastal views towards the offshore isles of Scalpay and Raasay and views towards the mountains at either end, particularly the section rounding the head of Loch Ainort.

Recreational Routes

3.5.6 The mountain and coastal areas are popular for outdoor recreation including mountain biking, walking and climbing. Sligachan comprises the main starting point for most routes including longer routes between the mountains such as Scottish Hill Track 292 (Elgol to Sligachan Hotel), and ascent routes of surrounding peaks. A coastal path from Sligachan also follows the northern shore of Loch Sligachan to Peinachorain.

- 3.5.7 Routes are also available from Loch Ainort, ascending the mountain Garbh-bheinn whilst linking tracks and paths between Luib, Strollamus and Torrin may be used individually or as a circular route published as Scottish Hill Track 290 (The Torrin Ring from Luib).
- 3.5.8 A mix of changing mountainous and coastal views are obtained from these recreational routes, often featuring the surrounding mountain peaks seen framed through valleys or across open water from the lower routes, and with wide ranging elevated and expansive views from higher ridges and peaks across the mountains and coastline.

4. APPRAISAL OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS

4.1 Landscape Character

- 4.1.1 The extent to which the Proposed Development would affect the existing landscape character varies depending on the individual components of the Proposed Development and the capacity of the existing landscape to accommodate these various components.
- 4.1.2 A detailed appraisal of the potential effects of the Proposed Development on LCTs during construction and operation is provided in Annex 2 of this LVA. A summary of the potential significance of effects is provided in Table 4.1 and the paragraphs which follow:

Table 4.1: Summary of Potential for Significant Effects to LCTs

LCT	Potential for Significant Effects	
	During Construction	During Operation
LCT 357 – Farmed and Settled Lowlands - Skye & Lochalsh	Likely	Likely
LCT 358 – Low, Smooth Moorland (Sligachan unit)	Likely	Likely
LCT 358 – Low, Smooth Moorland (Broadford unit)	Unlikely	Unlikely
LCT 359 – Upland Sloping Moorland	Possible	Possible
LCT 360 – Stepped Moorland	Possible	Possible
LCT 364 – Rocky Moorland - Skye & Lochalsh	Unlikely	Unlikely
LCT 367 – Smooth Mountain Range	Likely	Likely
LCT 368 – Angular Mountain Range - Skye & Lochalsh	Possible	Possible

- 4.1.3 As can be discerned from the above table, **Likely** significant effects are anticipated for three of the LCTs within the study area: LCT 357 (Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Skye and Lochalsh), LCT 358 (Low Smooth Moorland (Sligachan unit only) and LCT 367 (Smooth Mountain Range).
- 4.1.4 Whilst direct effects would be likely to occur within all of these areas either on a temporary basis as a result of construction activities, or on a permanent basis in relation to tower positions, the main contributor to significant effects is anticipated to be the introduction of the Proposed Development as a linear feature which would interrupt the relationship between the mountainous landscapes and the small scale settled coastal strip and seascape which is one of the uniquely valued elements of the landscape within the study area. Whilst existing features are already present along this coastal strip, including the A87 road and existing wood pole overhead lines (which would be replaced by the Proposed Development) the proposed steel lattice towers would be taller with a greater vertical spread of conductors and would be frequently located higher up the slope compared to existing development. This would result in towers often appearing prominent throughout the coastal landscapes, particularly around Loch Sligachan and Loch Ainort, and distracting within views towards the mountains, thereby negatively affecting the role of the mountains as a focus and backdrop.
- 4.1.5 Similar, related effects are anticipated to lead to **Possible** significant effects to LCT 359 (Upland Sloping Moorland), LCT 360 (Stepped Moorland) and LCT 368 (Angular Mountain Range - Skye & Lochalsh). These LCTs are typically further from the development but retain a close relationship between the mountainous and coastal landscape which is noted as one of their key characteristics. This is anticipated to lead to some negative effects on the landscape character, likely to be localised or indirect, but potentially sufficient to be significant during construction or operation. In the case of LCT 368, this is considered to be more in relation to indirect effects occurring due to the interruption to the role of the LCT as a landmark when viewed from surrounding coastal and lower lying areas.

- 4.1.6 The potential for significant effects to LCT 364 (Rocky Moorland - Skye & Lochalsh) and the Broadford unit of LCT 258 (Low, Smooth Moorland) is considered **Unlikely** due to their greater distance from the Proposed Development and likely more limited perceptibility.

Potential for Effects on The Cuillin Hills NSA

- 4.1.7 The alignment for the Proposed Development falls within the NSA boundary along the southern shore of Loch Sligachan and through Gleann Torra-mhichaig. It falls just outside the NSA boundary as it crosses the head of Loch Ainort, but then moves back within the boundary along the southern shore of Loch Ainort and for the remainder of the route to Broadford Substation. However, whilst sections crossing the heads of Loch Sligachan and Loch Ainort are outwith the NSA, these areas are considered equally sensitive with respect to the NSA, due to their proximity and context whereby views towards the inner mountains are seen through the valleys from the sea-lochs, and also due to their popularity as locations where members of the public appreciate the NSA.
- 4.1.8 Within the study area, the NSA covers parts of LCT 367 (Smooth Mountain Range), LCT 368 (Angular Mountain Range - Skye & Lochalsh) and partially LCT 358 (Low, Smooth Moorland) to the south of Sligachan. However, the remaining LCTs within the study area are also considered to have a close relationship with the NSA and are considered relevant in terms of its setting and the appreciation of its Special Qualities.
- 4.1.9 The Likely potential for significant effects to the landscape character of LCT 367 and LCT 358 and Possible significant effect to LCT 368 are also considered to be attributable to the NSA. The importance of the designated landscape as a focus of views and significance of its relationship with the seascape and settled coastal fringes also leads to the Likely significant effects of LCT 357 contributing an effect on the appreciation of the NSA and its association with the coastal landscape. Whilst these areas are all on the periphery of the NSA, with potential effects to the core areas unlikely, the importance of this edge as an area where the majority of people experience the NSA and appreciate its assets is anticipated to be adverse to the NSA designation overall.
- 4.1.10 A review of the Proposed Development in relation to the Special Qualities of the NSA is provided in Table 4.2 below. This concludes that the potential effects anticipated would lead to some Likely effects on the Special Quality of *“Magnificent mountain scenery”* and Possible significant effects, which would be localised or dependent on particular circumstances, to the Key Qualities: *“Iconic images of crofting townships with dramatic backdrops,” “The surrounding wild landscape, a fitting foil for the mountains,”* and *“A place of inspiration”*.
- 4.1.11 Taking into account anticipated likelihood of significant effects to both the landscape character and the Special Qualities of the NSA, the potential for significant effects is therefore considered to be **Likely**.

Table 4.2: Analysis of Potential Effects on the Special Qualities of The Cuillin Hills NSA

Special Quality	Analysis	Potential for Significant Effect
Magnificent mountain scenery	The NSA citation notes the iconic views of Scotland which are associated with the NSA. This cites views from Loch Sligachan and Loch Ainort, on the A87, and particularly at Sconser, <i>“where the road sits tight between the sea loch and the mountains”</i> . The potential for these views and landscape experiences to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development is considered likely (see Section 4.2) and this is therefore considered likely to affect this Special Quality.	Likely
The contrast and complement of the Black and Red Cuillin	The Proposed Development would affect the Red Cuillin area and indirectly affect the Black Cuillin through some views. The adverse effect on the Red Cuillin would largely influence its coastal side and the distinction of the two mountain groups would still therefore be able to be seen and	Unlikely

	appreciated and therefore the effect on this Special Quality is not anticipated to be significant.	
The surrounding wild landscape, a fitting foil for the mountains	The appraisal of WLA 23 (Cuillin) which covers a similar area to the NSA has identified that there may be Possible significant effects. Whilst other surrounding areas are not formally classified as wild land, many of the attributes of wild land are present, and would be potentially affected by the Proposed Development which would appear larger and more robust than existing wood pole lines as a feature in the landscape, and affect the continuity of views towards the wilder mountain landscapes in some areas; for example in the vicinity of Loch Ainort and Luib.	Possible
Iconic images of crofting townships with dramatic backdrops	The citation for this Special Quality refers specifically to the communities of Torrin and Elgol which lie outside of the study area. However, the similar relationship of crofting communities within the study area with the mountainous backdrop, such as Sconser and Luib are considered to be sensitive and would be affected by the Proposed Development. This may therefore be considered to comprise a significant effect to this Special Quality.	Possible
The Cuillin Ridge, a landmark throughout the northwest	The Proposed Development would potentially locally distract from the role of the Cuillin Ridge as a landmark, for example, around Sligachan, although the baseline alignment largely avoids crossing to the forefront of key views towards the Black Cuillin from popular locations.	Unlikely
The ever-changing weather	The Proposed Development would not affect the appreciation of weather conditions, although there is the potential that if cloud were low over the mountains, the towers of the Proposed Development may appear more prominent in views from the A87 and around Sligachan. This would not comprise a significant effect, however.	Unlikely
A place of inspiration	There could be potential influence on the inspirational aspects of the parts of the NSA affected for authors, artists or others, and as a distracting feature in some views the effect on the appreciation of the NSA for visitors could lead the connection to inspired works being adversely affected. This would depend on the specific elements of the NSA which have inspired the selected works and their relationship to the views and experiences affected.	Possible
The most challenging mountains in Scotland	This Special Quality relates specifically to the complexity of the Black Cuillin which would not be affected by the Proposed Development.	Unlikely

WLA 23. Cuillin

- 4.1.12 The WLA covers a broadly similar area to The Cuillin Hills NSA within the study area though slightly further back from the public road. Therefore, the majority of the baseline alignment would be outwith the WLA with only a small area between Luib and Strollamus just inside its edge. Therefore, the effects relating to LCT 367 (Smooth Mountain Range), LCT 368 (Angular Mountain Range - Skye & Lochalsh) and LCT 358 (Low, Smooth Moorland) to the south of Sligachan would be less directly attributable to the WLA. However, the importance of the relationship of the WLA with the surrounding seascape and the ability for members of the public to appreciate it from the A87 are both noted in the description for the WLA. As such, it is considered that whilst the core and central parts of the WLA would not be affected by the Proposed Development, some of its notable characteristics in relation to its setting, would be.

4.1.13 A review of the Proposed Development in relation to the WLA Key Qualities is provided in Table 4.3. This concludes that potential for significant effects for all the Key Qualities is Possible, within the localised area around the boundary of the WLA. This is largely based on the fact that the Proposed Development towers would be seen as larger and more robust than existing wood poles, and would usually be situated further uphill and closer to the WLA boundary. This which would contribute to an increased presence of built artefacts within this context and a more obvious boundary, leading to a greater sense of the limited extent of the WLA to the east. It would also lead to a possible diminished perceived sense of awe and naturalness and therefore perceived wildness in general on the slopes of the red Cuillin Hills, particularly Glamaig and in the vicinity of Loch Ainort. Although this part of the WLA displays lower levels of wildness, its proximity to the A87 which allows greater numbers of people, and particularly visitors, to appreciate those wild land attributes which are present is considered to add to the sensitivity of this area.

4.1.14 Taking the above aspects into account, the potential for significant effects on the WLA is considered to be **Possible**.

Table 4.3: Analysis of Potential Effects on the Key Qualities of WLA 23: Cuillin

Special Quality	Analysis	Potential for Significant Effect
Superlative high, steep, rocky mountains that are extremely rugged and contrast to the surrounding peatland and sea, emphasising a sense of awe;	The presence of the Proposed Development around the bases and lower slopes of the Red Cuillin mountains has the potential to affect the appreciation of the height and drama of these mountains when seen from outwith the WLA and within its edges. This is anticipated to be most noticeable around Sconser an in Gleann Torra-mhichaig where the baseline alignment is relatively high up the slope of Glamaig and sense of awe in relation to this steeply rising slope may be affected.	Possible
A circle of mountains that contain a remote and secluded interior and a strong sense of sanctuary, with contrasting outward-facing slopes where human elements are more influential;	The Proposed Development would not affect the inner area where the sense of seclusion is felt, although could, in places, affect transitional areas which approach the interior, such as at Luib where the Proposed Development towers would be more visible than existing wood poles. On the exterior outer slopes, whilst existing features already affect these areas the sense of proximity to the WLA is also felt. The Proposed Development would appear more robust and would typically be located higher up the mountainside than the existing wood poles which would be replaced, which are particularly referred to in the citation as drawing development up onto the mountainside. This has potential to further contribute to a sense of encroachment of development around the outer slopes of the WLA and to contribute to a more noticeably defined edge in some areas where there is lesser existing development, such as Gleann Torra-mhichaig or around Loch Ainort, which would give a greater understanding of the extent of the WLA.	Possible
A strong contribution of the sea to remoteness and the sense of naturalness and awe, as well as influencing the perceived extent of the area; and	This Key Quality more directly references areas in the south of the WLA where wild coastline is present. However, within the study area, the situation of the Proposed Development on the seaward side of the WLA gives potential to affect this relationship in the local area, particularly in areas around Loch Ainort where existing development is less influential, but also in other areas such as Loch Sligachan where proximity to the WLA is closely perceived.	Possible
A concentrated mountain area accessed by many	The Proposed Development would be located around the outside boundary of the WLA following the A87 where	Possible

different visitors to experience wild land qualities.	accessibility is most noticeably present. It is anticipated that new access routes for construction would be largely temporary, though some existing tracks may be more permanently upgraded. The Proposed Development would not affect accessibility or the busy nature of certain locations within the WLA which reduces sense of solitude locally but may affect the existing experience of less able visitors who appreciate the wild land characteristics from the A87, although the strength of attributes which can be experienced in these areas is inevitably already reduced.	
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4.2 Visual Amenity

4.2.1 This section provides an appraisal of the potential for significant effects to the visual amenity of visual receptors identified within the Study Area as described in Section 3.4.

4.2.2 The detailed appraisal of visual receptors is included in Annex 1. A summary of the key issues is provided in Table 4.4 and the paragraphs which follow.

Table 4.4: Summary of Potential for Significant Effects to Visual Receptors

LCT	Potential for Significant Effects	
	During Construction	During Operation
Settlement Areas		
S1 – Crossal	Unlikely	Unlikely
S2 – Sligachan	Likely	Likely
S3 – Peinachorrain	Possible	Possible
S4 – Sconser	Likely	Possible
S5 – Kinloch Ainort	Possible	Possible
S6 – Luib	Likely	Likely
S7 – Ard Dorch and Corran a' Chinn Uachdaraich	Unlikely	Unlikely
S8 – Dunan and Strollamus	Likely	Likely
S9 – Old Corry and Coire-chat-achan	Unlikely	Unlikely
S10 – Broadford and surrounding area	Unlikely	Unlikely
Roads		
R1 – A87	Likely	Likely
R2 – A863	Possible	Possible
R3 – B8083	Unlikely	Unlikely
R4 – Minor Road between Loch Ainort and Sconser via Moll	Likely	Likely
Recreational Routes		
RR1 – Mountain paths commencing at Sligachan	Possible	Possible
RR2 – Sligachan to Peinachorrain Path	Likely	Likely
RR3 – Mountain Routes from Loch Ainort	Possible	Possible
RR4 – The Torrin Ring from Luib	Likely	Likely
RR5 – Core Paths around Broadford	Unlikely	Unlikely

- 4.2.3 As can be discerned from the above table, **Likely** significant effects are anticipated for four Settlement areas (including interior and exterior views from gardens and public areas) during construction: S2 (Sligachan); S4 (Sconser); S6 (Luib); and S8 (Dunan and Strolamus). **Likely** significant effects would be anticipated to continue into the operational phase for all these areas other than S4 (Sconser) where **Possible** significant effects are anticipated during operation. In addition, **Possible** significant effects have been identified for two further settlement areas during construction and operation: S2 (Pienachorrain); and S5 (Kinloch Ainort).
- 4.2.4 All of these predicted significant effects would relate to the potential appearance of the Proposed Development within mountain and coastal views where construction activities or permanent towers would be anticipated to form a distracting new feature. Where significant effects are considered Likely, this is due to the closer proximity and prominence of the Proposed Development (such as in in views from Luib or Strollamus) or increased value or sensitivity to the viewer (such as popular views from tourist areas at Sligachan or Peinachorrain). Where significant effects are considered Possible, this concerns areas where there are more potentially mitigating factors, such as the Proposed Development being likely to be situated outwith the main view, or likely to be slightly more distant in the view.
- 4.2.5 Four settlement areas were identified where significant effects are considered to be **Unlikely** due to greater distance from the Proposed Development and intervening landform and vegetation which would screen or filter the view: S1 (Crossal); S7 (Ard Dorch and Corran a' Chinn Uachdaraich); S9 (Old Corry and Coire-chat-achan); and S10 (Broadford and surrounding area).
- 4.2.6 **Likely** significant effects were also identified for two road routes and two recreational paths during both construction and operation. From the roads: R1 (A87) and R4 (Minor Road between Loch Ainort and Sconser via Moll) the Proposed Development would be situated closeby and would intrude into views towards the mountain landscape, and in some areas the coast, which are particularly valued by visitors and tourists and associated with the NSA designation. The Proposed Development would also cross recreational routes RR2 (Sligachan to Peinachorrain Path) and RR4 (The Torrin Ring from Luib) and would therefore appear as a close feature in the view. It would also appear in more distantly, likely to distract from views towards the mountains and coast.
- 4.2.7 As a potentially distracting but less immediate feature in views towards both the mountains and across the coastal seascape the Proposed Development is anticipated to result in **Possible** significant effects to users of routes: R1 (A863); RR1 (Mountain paths commencing at Sligachan); and RR3 (Mountain Routes from Loch Ainort) although these effects may be more localised.
- 4.2.8 Significant effects to visual receptors on Routes R3 (B8083) and RR5 (Core Paths around Broadford) would be **Unlikely**, due to the distance of this route from the Proposed Development, screening effects of existing forest, and presence of existing, similar infrastructure in the view.

5. POTENTIAL FOR MITIGATION

- 5.1.1 The potential to reduce significant landscape and visual effects through mitigation has been considered. Possible mitigation measures considered have included primary mitigation (mitigation through design) and secondary mitigation (additional measures to offset significant effects).

Potential Primary Mitigation Opportunities

- 5.1.2 Opportunities for primary mitigation have considered alignment modifications, and alternative technology solutions. Those measures considered are outlined in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Primary Mitigation Measures Considered

Ref.	Mitigation Option Considered	Potential Residual Effects	Potential Benefits
M1	<p>Realignment of the Proposed Development to move it out of the NSA:</p> <p>For the majority of the baseline alignment it would be difficult to achieve an alignment outwith the NSA due to the constrained space between the NSA and the coast. The only possible change could be to realign through Gleann Torra-mhichaig to the eastern side of the road and Druim nan Cleochd.</p>	<p>There would be a reduced impact for travellers on one part of the A87 but continued effects elsewhere and the Proposed Development may be prominent in crossing the road near Sconser. Effects on users of the A87 and the NSA would continue to be Likely.</p>	<p>Potential limited, localised benefits</p>
M2	<p>Realignment of the Proposed Development to move it out of the WLA:</p> <p>Potential to move part of the baseline alignment between Luib and Strollamus out of the WLA in order to prevent direct effects.</p>	<p>The movement of the baseline alignment in this area would move towers closer to some parts of Strollamus. There would be little improvement to effects on the WLA which are considered more likely to occur in relation to indirect effects. Potential for significant effects to the WLA would be anticipated to continue to be Possible.</p>	<p>Unlikely to be beneficial</p>
M3	<p>Realignment of the Proposed Development to move it further from visual receptors. This has been considered in relation to visual receptors anticipated to have Likely operational significant visual effects as follows:</p>		
M3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S2 – Sligachan 	<p>Movement of the baseline alignment further from Sligachan would move it into the tidal zone of Loch Sligachan which is not preferred for technical reasons. Improvement to visual effects would be limited as the towers would still cross views down Loch Sligachan. Significant effects may still be Possible.</p>	<p>Unlikely to be beneficial</p>
M3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S6 – Luib 	<p>Movement of the baseline alignment further from properties would increase the altitude of towers. Towers would continue to be very prominent and there would be potentially increased landscape effects in relation to the NSA and</p>	<p>Unlikely to be beneficial</p>

M3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S8 – Dunan and Strollamus 	<p>WLA. Significant effects would continue to be Likely.</p> <p>Movement of the baseline alignment further from properties would increase the altitude of towers, potentially making this more prominent and increasing the effect on the NSA and WLA. Significant effects would continue to be Likely.</p>	Unlikely to be beneficial
M3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R1 – A87 	<p>As discussed under M1, there are few locations where the baseline alignment could be moved to the opposite side of the road, limited to Gleann Torra-mhichaig. Movement further from the road in other areas would lead to towers appearing higher up the slope, potentially increasing landscape effects and still interrupting views towards the mountains from the road. Therefore, potential for significant effects would continue to be Likely.</p>	Potential limited, localised benefits
M3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R4 – Minor Road between Loch Ainort and Sconser via Moll 	<p>Movement away from this route would require the baseline alignment to move either into the tidal zone of Loch Ainort or towards or the west of the A87, thereby affecting sensitive views into the mountain interior from this area. Whilst this would improve the view from the Minor Road, leading to significant effects being Unlikely, it would be likely to increase effects on A87 users and a sensitive part of the NSA.</p>	Unlikely to be beneficial
M3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RR2 – Sligachan to Peinachorrain Path 	<p>It would not be possible to move the baseline alignment away from this recreational route without moving it closer or to the west of Sligachan which would increase the visual effects on this area, and the appreciation of the NSA. There would be continued effects to views towards Glamaig and the NSA and significant effects would still be Possible.</p>	Unlikely to be beneficial
M3.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RR4 – The Torrin Ring from Luib 	<p>Movement of the baseline alignment to the north of the route between Luib and Dunan would improve the view towards the mountains and NSA as well as removing part of it from the WLA. However, towers would remain prominent from this route and would still cross parts of it. Therefore, potential for significant effects would be anticipated to remain Likely.</p>	Potential limited localised benefits
M4	Temporary solutions during construction to minimise permanent effects.	Use of temporary track and ground reinforcement solutions for access	Some benefit for

		and working areas and a high standard of reinstatement for other working areas would help to limit the long term footprint of the Proposed Development but Possible and Likely significant effects would still be anticipated in relation to towers.	reducing longer term effects
M5	Alternative technology – Buried cable:	The installation of buried cable would remove many of the longer term visual and landscape effects, in addition to the removal of the existing effects occurring in relation to the removal of the existing 132 kV wood pole OHL. However, significant effects during construction would remain and could be potentially greater due to the requirement to access and excavate the full alignment rather than just tower positions. There could be longer term visible changes to vegetation cover within cable corridors which could affect some of the characteristics of wild land but this would be a lesser effect than towers and Unlikely to be significant. The benefits of underground cabling would depend on the length of cable which could be achieved through the study area with a focus on the sensitive areas around Loch Sligachan and Loch Ainort likely to be most beneficial.	Likely to be beneficial for some sections of the alignment

Secondary Mitigation

- 5.1.3 Opportunities for secondary mitigation have considered potential areas where planting or other features could be used to offset significant effects. These are detailed in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Primary Mitigation Measures Considered

Ref.	Mitigation Option Considered	Potential Residual Effects	Potential Benefits
M6	Opportunities for planting at Luib: Existing scattered trees and native woodland is present at Luib. There may be potential to build on these existing areas with strategic planting to help to screen specific views from properties or specific towers.	The potential to plant in this area may be dependant on other factors and may not conceal all views of towers. Mitigation could also result in other existing views being screened. It is considered that significant effects may still be Possible .	Possible limited benefits
M7	Opportunities for planting at Strollamus: Existing woodland areas are present along this section of coast and would already mitigate views of the Proposed Development from parts of Dunan and Strollamus. There is potential to build on these existing woodland	The potential to plant in this area may be dependant on other factors and may not conceal all views of towers. Mitigation could also result in other existing views being screened. It is considered that significant effects may still be Possible .	Possible limited benefits

	areas to help to mitigate views from other properties of the Proposed Development.		
M8	Promotion of alternative views: There may be some potential to compensate for the significant effects occurring at some parts of the route by the promotion of other views and viewing locations where the Proposed Development does not affect the view. For example promotion of coastal views in areas where the alignment is on the seaward side or promotion of mountain views in areas where the alignment is closer to the coast. This could involve re-use of working areas or establishment of new specifically designed viewing areas.	These measures may provide some compensation which would offset significant effects for tourists and travellers. However, they would not be expected to remove effects occurring in settlement areas or the NSA or WLA which would remain Likely or Possible.	Possible localised benefit for tourists and visitors

5.1.4 As detailed above, the benefits of primary mitigation opportunities would largely be offset by increased negative effects to other landscape or visual receptors. Potential improvements may be limited to possible minor realignments through Gleann Torra-mhichaig and between Strollamus and Luib. However, the viability of these measures would be dependent on other constraints and would lead to only limited improvement to potential for significant effects. Further opportunities for secondary mitigation would include potential for strategic woodland planting around Luib and Strollamus which may give localised benefits and offset some significant effects for individual receptors. In addition, the promotion of locations where alternative views to mountain and coastal areas could be enjoyed without visual effects from the Proposed Development may help to offset some visual effects for tourists and visitors. However, by and large all these measures would bring only small benefits and Likely visual effects would continue to be anticipated for the Cuillin Hills NSA and visual receptors at some settlement areas and using road and recreational areas.

5.1.5 The most viable mitigation for longer term significant effects is likely to comprise the use of buried cable as an alternative to an overhead line for some or all of this section. The implementation of underground cabling would still lead to significant effects during construction, but would be expected to lead to operational significant effects being Unlikely for most receptors. There would also be a net improvement by the removal of the existing 132 kV wood pole OHL, with only smaller distribution lines remaining above ground throughout Section 2. The installation of buried cable would lead to a requirement for above-ground sealing end compounds at either end of undergrounded sections which would lead to potential for significant landscape and visual effects depending on their location. It would therefore be most beneficial to implement as long a continuous section of underground cable as possible, in order to minimise the need to accommodate sealing ends.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1.1 The LVA undertaken for the Proposed Development has concluded that significant effects to the landscape and visual resource would be Likely, including **Likely** significant effects to the Cuillin Hills NSA, visual receptors at settlement and tourist areas throughout the study area using a number of road and recreational routes, including the popular A87 trunk road. Further significant effects to Wild Land Area 23. Cuillin, as well as other residential and recreational visual receptors within the study area are also considered **Possible**.
- 6.1.2 Primary and secondary mitigation has been considered to offset these anticipated effects. However, it is considered that significant effects would generally be difficult to offset and most Likely significant effects could not be easily mitigated by realignment or secondary mitigation such as planting. The most effective mitigation for the Proposed Development is anticipated to be partial or full undergrounding of the Proposed Development which, although would continue to result in **Likely** significant effects during construction and some possible changes during operation, would result in the potential for most long term significant effects being **Unlikely**.

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ANNEX 1: APPRAISAL OF POTENTIAL VISUAL RECEPTORS

Table 1: Settlement Areas

Receptor Description	Existing views	Sensitivity	Potential Effects	Potential for Effects to be Significant
<p>S1 – Crossal</p> <p>Residents and visitors to a group of properties, in slightly elevated position to the north side of the the A836.</p>	<p>Main orientation of views is south or south-west across the road and down Glen Drynoch towards forested slopes and mountain peaks in distance. Some views may be obtained towards the Cuillins to the south-east,</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>The Proposed Development is anticipated to be imperceptible in east-south-easterly views being over 2 km from the receptor location with existing commercial forest plantation also likely to conceal it in the view.</p>	<p>During construction: Unlikely</p> <p>During operation: Unlikely</p>
<p>S2 – Sligachan</p> <p>Residents, visitors and tourists in and around a hotel, campsite and lodge properties situated at the head of Loch Sligachan. This is a popular stopping point for the purpose of appreciating the view.</p>	<p>Views from in and around Sligachan are from low vantage or slightly elevated from campsite area, to the south and south east towards the Black and Red Cuillin and also to the east down Loch Sligachan.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would be very visible in easterly and south-easterly views crossing the head of Loch Sligachan and following the south site of the A87 towards Sconser. Although replacing existing wood poles the towers would be higher and more prominent and may give the impression of ringing the base of Glamaig and creating a visual barrier between the receptor location and the coastal waters of Loch Sligachan, thereby interrupting the relationship of the coastal and mountain landscape in views.</p>	<p>During construction: Likely</p> <p>During operation: Likely</p>
<p>S3 – Peinachorrain</p> <p>Residents and visitors at linear crofting settlement on north side of Loch Sligachan at its seaward end. Visitors to viewpoint and picnic area overlooking Loch Sligachan.</p>	<p>Predominant easterly orientation or south-east for southernmost properties across crofts and open water towards the offshore islands and obliquely towards Sconser and Glamaig.</p> <p>Views from the picnic area are predominantly to south across Loch Sligachan to Sconser and Glamaig.</p>	<p>Medium to High</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would be evident crossing the lower mountain slopes in southerly views across Loch Sligachan from the most southerly properties at around 1.2 km and the picnic area. This typically would be outwith the main focus of the view from properties though would form more of a focus in views from the picnic area and possibly gardens. This may lead to the more developed landscape appearing to extend further up the mountainside, away from the coastal fringe.</p>	<p>During construction: Possible</p> <p>During operation: Possible</p>



<p>S4 – Sconser Residents and visitors of linear crofting settlement, roadside houses and hotel. Passengers waiting at ferry terminal and bus stop and recreational users of golf course.</p>	<p>Views from Sconser are predominantly orientated towards the coast but views towards Glamaig, to the rear of the settlement are obtained from the rear of properties and garden areas, particularly from properties on the landward side of the A87.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would appear within rear views from properties and garden views crossing the mountain-side at distances of between 150 - 500 m. The Proposed Development would replace and be less frequent than existing wood poles but structures would be taller and more visible. Would interrupt views towards mountains where obtained and may lead to an increased a sense of visual disconnect between the settlement and mountains.</p>	<p>During construction: Likely During operation: Possible</p>
<p>S5 – Kinloch Ainort Residents and visitors of a cottage and workers at a fish farm base near head of Loch Ainort on the north side.</p>	<p>The main focus of view is to the south and south-east across Loch Ainort featuring the mountains of Glas-bheinn Mhòr and Gàrbh-bheinn. Side and oblique views towards other surrounding mountains and down loch Ainort</p>	<p>Residents: High \ Workers: Low</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would feature in main, side and oblique views between 350 m to 1.3 km distant, as a replacement to existing wood poles. Towers would be less frequent than wood poles but taller and more noticeable. Towers would appear closer in rear and side views and less prominent in main views over the loch, but may contribute to a sense of visual disconnect between the coastal seascape and mountains.</p>	<p>During construction: Possible During operation: Possible</p>
<p>S6 – Luib Residents and visitors to a small settlement of cottage and surrounding crofts.</p>	<p>Predominantly coastal aspect to views although the arrangement of properties around a small bay and burn outfall leads to some views being more oblique to the shoreline of Loch Ainort with a wider field of view inland. Views from external areas including gardens and crofts are both coastal and inland towards surrounding peaks.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would feature in rear, oblique and side views at a minimum distance of 250 m replacing existing. Although generally outwith the main view, towers have the potential to be prominent, would potentially skyline and may create a visual barrier between the settlement and mountains.</p>	<p>During construction: Likely During operation: Likely</p>



<p>S7 – Ard Dorch and Corran a’ Chinn Uachdaraich Residents and visitors to a group of properties on the south side at the mouth of Loch Ainort and on the opposite shore of Loch na Cairidh on Scalpay.</p>	<p>Predominantly coastal orientation, north and north-east from Ard Dorch, occasionally filtered by trees, towards the offshore islands and south-west from Corran a’ Chinn Uachdaraich towards the mainland mountains.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would be unlikely to be perceptible from Ard Dorch due to intervening land form and vegetation. From Corran a’ Chinn Uachdaraich towers would be perceptible crossing the coastal foothills of the mainland but are considered unlikely to be lead to a significant effect due to distances of over 1.8 km.</p>	<p>During construction: Unlikely During operation: Unlikely</p>
<p>S8 – Dunan and Strolamus Residents and visitors of a linear settlement along coast of Loch na Cairidh</p>	<p>Predominantly easterly or north-easterly orientation with views across Loch na Cairidh towards Scalpay, some slightly filtered by trees. Inland views are more limited at Dunan but the more open situation of properties at Strollamus results in wider secondary views inland featuring the surrounding hills.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Rear and side views of the Proposed Development would be less noticeable from properties at Dunan due to trees and land form but towers would be around 250 – 300 m to the rear of some properties at Strollamus which have a more open situation, particularly the more elevated ones inland of the A87. The towers would be less frequent than existing wood poles but the taller structures would be more prominent in rear views from some properties.</p>	<p>During construction: Likely During operation: Likely</p>
<p>S9 – Old Corry and Coire-chat-achan Residents and visitors of a linear group of properties on minor road to south of Braodford Substation.</p>	<p>Main, easterly orientation to view across moorland and fields/rough and towards nearby forestry.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Potential oblique or side views may feature the Section 2 alignment on the approach to Braodford Substation but would depend on potential felling requirements of forest area. Even with felling, likely to be of minimal perceptibility.</p>	<p>During construction: Unlikely During operation: Unlikely</p>
<p>S10 – Broadford and surrounding area Residents, visitors and shoppers or travellers within settlements of Broadford, Corry, Harrapool, Waterloo, Skulamus, Breakish, Ashaig and scattered coastal properties.</p>	<p>Variety of mixed views featuring properties, coastal views and surrounding hills with the Cuillin hills more distantly to the west.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Section 2 of the Proposed Development may be perceptible in westerly views as it descends the hill on the approach to Broadford Substation but would be likely to have limited perceptibility.</p>	<p>During construction: Unlikely During operation: Unlikely</p>



Table 2: Roads

Receptor Description	Existing views	Sensitivity	Potential Effects	Potential for Effects to be Significant
R1 – A87 Commuters and recreational travellers / tourists on main route between Broadford and Portree. Tourists and visitors stopped at various parking laybys and viewpoints along the route.	A variety of passing and sequential views of surrounding mountains and coastline, with particular views into the mountains obtained at the head of Loch Sligachan and Loch Ainort where parking laybys and popular viewing areas are located.	Static Receptors: High / Travellers: Medium	The Proposed Development would frequently be seen from the A87 interrupting mountain views and in locations rounding the heads of Lochs Sligachan and Ainort would interrupt views towards the coast. This has the potential to create form a visual barrier between the road and valued views. Although replacing existing wood poles, towers would be more prominent throughout this section of road, and would distract from mountain and coastal views, affecting appreciation of the NSA.	During construction: Likely During operation: Likely
R2 – A863 Commuters and recreational travellers / tourists on route between Sligachan and Dunvegan	Within the study area, views from this route are focussed when travelling east on the Cuillins and less expansive views when travelling west. On descending towards Sligachan, elevated views down Loch Sligachan are revealed.	Medium	On descending towards Sligachan, the Proposed Development would be seen crossing the head of Loch Sligachan and along the lower part of Glamaig. This would interrupt the views down Loch Sligachan and could be potentially distracting.	During construction: Possible During operation: Possible
R3 – B8083 Commuters and recreational travellers / tourists on route between Broadford and Elgol	Within the study area, views across rural outskirts of Broadford and open moorland and forest with existing OHL. Mountains are seen to west from areas where forest does not obscure views.	Low	Section 2 of the Proposed Development would potentially be perceptible from this route within the study area on its approach to Broadford substation but would be unlikely to be distracting in the view.	During construction: Unlikely During operation: Unlikely
R4 – Minor Road between Loch Ainort and Sconser via Moll Recreational users or residential commuters on single track road around coastline	Coastal views towards the offshore isles and across Loch Ainort. On approach to Kinloch Ainort and Sconser, views along the coastline, inland feature a backdrop of mountains.	High	There would be no perceptible view of towers from a large part of this route but the Proposed Development would be close and prominent from the section at Kinloch Ainort and would interrupt views towards the surrounding mountains when travelling towards Kinloch Ainort and Sconser.	During construction: Likely During operation: Likely

Table 3: Recreational Routes



Receptor Description	Existing views	Sensitivity	Potential Effects	Potential for Effects to be Significant
<p>RR1 – Mountain paths commencing at Sligachan</p> <p>Walkers and other recreational users of a number of mountain and glen routes which commence near to the Sligachan Hotel. Includes Scottish Hill Track 292: Elgol to Sligachan Hotel.</p>	<p>Striking and impressive views of surrounding mountains from lower areas and wide ranging views of mountains and coastline in elevated views.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Within the study area views of the Proposed Development would be largely limited to towers crossing the head of Loch Sligachan and ascending to Glen Varragill Forest on the opposite hills slopes when approaching Sligachan Hotel. This would be limited, and other developed features are already present in these views, though the towers could be more distracting. From the summit of Glamaig and ridge between Beinn Dearg Mheadhonach and Bealach na Sgàirde the alignment would be seen rounding Loch Ainort and may emphasise the divide between the mountains and developed coastal lands though it would be seen in the context of the busy road.</p>	<p>During construction: Possible</p> <p>During operation: Possible</p>
<p>RR2 – Sligachan to Peinachorrain Path</p> <p>Walkers or bikers following coastal path on north shore of Loch Sligachan</p>	<p>Views across the open water of the loch towards Sconser and Glamaig, up loch to east towards Sligachan and down the loch towards the offshore islands.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Looking across the Proposed Development would be seen cutting across the lower part of Glamaig with the potential impression of ringing the base of the mountain, creating a visual interruption between the coastal and mountain landscapes. The Proposed Development towers would cut across the top of Loch Sligachan and the path interrupting coastal views its eastern side and mountain views from its western side.</p>	<p>During construction: Likely</p> <p>During operation: Likely</p>
<p>RR3 – Mountain Routes from Loch Ainort</p> <p>Walkers ascending / descending Garbh-bheinn via either of two routes</p>	<p>Views inwards amongst the mountains of the Red Cuillins and towards Garbh-bheinn. Elevated views across and down Loch Ainort, becoming more extensive with increased height and leading to far ranging views across the coastline to the east and towards the Black Cuillin to the west, from the summit.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>From lower parts of the route the Proposed Development may be very noticeable and potentially distracting in views over Loch Ainort and the coast. From higher areas, the Proposed Development would be likely to be perceptible but less obvious in the coastal views.</p>	<p>During construction: Possible</p> <p>During operation: Possible</p>



<p>RR4 – The Torrin Ring from Luib (Scottish Hill Track 290)</p> <p>Walkers or cyclists using three longer distance paths or a combinations of these – Luib to Strollamus (also a Core Path), Luib to Torrin or Strollamus to Torrin</p>	<p>Open expansive inland views up the straths and of surrounding hills and mountains. An existing wood pole lines interrupts the view slightly from the track between Luib and Strollamus. Coastal views from the ends of the routes near Luib and Strollamus.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>The route between Strollamus and Luib would run alongside the Proposed Development and, whilst replacing existing wood poles, would be more prominent and distracting in the open views up the straths and towards the hills. Towers would also be seen when approaching the northern end of the other routes which would pass below them potentially interrupting and affecting coastal views.</p>	<p>During construction: Likely</p> <p>During operation: Likely</p>
<p>RR5 – Core Paths around Broadford</p> <p>Walkers or cyclists using a number of paths around the western side of Broadford</p>	<p>Variety of views across coastal and moorland areas and within forest. Existing steel lattice towers can be seen cutting through the forest in some views.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>There would be some views from parts of these routes but the context of surrounding forest areas and existing steel lattice towers would be likely to limit potential effects.</p>	<p>During construction: Unlikely</p> <p>During operation: Unlikely</p>

ANNEX 2: APPRAISAL OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES

Table 1: LCT 357 – Farmed and Settled Lowlands - Skye & Lochalsh

Potential Landscape Receptors	Landscape Sensitivity	Potential Effects	Potential for Effects to be Significant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharp contrast between human activity and small-scale land use patterns, and the surrounding large scale, mainly uninhabited, landscapes. • Contrast of green pasture with surrounding muted colours of rough grass land. • Margins of broadleaved woodlands in sheltered areas. • Existing croft patterns 	<p>Within the study area, this LCT typically lies around the fringes of The Cuillin Hills NSA and has a close relationship with it. The small scale of the landscape in relation to surrounding mountains is typically susceptible to large scale change although the presence of existing smaller OHLs may create some precedence for a larger OHL to be present.</p> <p>Sensitivity is High</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would not pass through this LCT but would pass close to the inland side of it in areas near Sconser, Luib, Dunan and Strollamus. During construction there would be a likely level of disruption to some of parts of the LCT and potential for temporary direct effects from access and site establishment which could lead to changes in vegetation patterns. In the operational context, although the Proposed Development would replace existing wood pole OHLs in this area, the larger scale of the Proposed Towers and greater spread of conductors, and the typical alignment higher up the hillside would create a more prominent feature which would create a greater sense of disconnect between the low lying settled fringes and croft land and the mountainous landscape to the rear which could affect the visual relationship of the these areas, cited as a Special Quality of the NSA. The Proposed Development would also draw the appearance of development further up the hill potentially leading to some blurring of the contrast in land cover and land use.</p>	<p>During Construction: Likely</p> <p>During Operation: Likely</p>

Table 2: LCT 358 – Low, Smooth Moorland

Potential Landscape Receptors	Landscape Sensitivity	Potential Effects	Potential for Effects to be Significant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple composition with horizontal or gently sloping skyline; and • Expansive and open character, with views of mountains, islands and sea, channelled by adjacent hill slopes. 	<p>This LCT is found around in two areas of differing character within the study area: at Sligachan where the character is open and coastal; and near Broadford substation which is forested in character. The Sligachan sub-area is partly in The Cuillin Hills NSA and WLA 23 and the open character which forms a transitional link between the mountains and the sea is considered to be very susceptible to change. The forested character with existing substation and steel lattice OHL at Broadford is less susceptible to change.</p> <p>Sensitivity is High at Sligachan and Low at Broadford.</p>	<p>At Sligachan, the Proposed Development would cross the head of Loch Sligachan outwith the tidal area. Although a replacement to existing wood poles, the towers would be taller and likely to be more prominent, and would more directly influence this landscape than the wood pole line which is further to the east within the tidal zone. This would create a strong linear feature, emphasising the separation between the land and the sea. Towers would form new vertical foci within the low lying flat landscape and would interrupt and distract within the framed seaward views which are obtained down Loch Sligachan. This has the potential to affect the existing relationship between the inland landscape and the coast in this area.</p>	<p>During Construction: Likely</p> <p>During Operation: Likely</p>
		<p>At Broadford Substation, the Proposed Development would not directly affect the LCT but would be seen to the east descending to the substation. Whilst this may affect some views, the lower sensitivity of the LCT in this area and existing OHL steel lattice towers which create a precedent for such development are considered to lead to significant effects being unlikely.</p>	<p>During Construction: Unlikely</p> <p>During Operation: Unlikely</p>

Table 3: LCT 359 – Upland Sloping Moorland

Potential Landscape Receptors	Landscape Sensitivity	Potential Effects	Potential for Effects to be Significant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple composition with distance and scale difficult to judge, except where roads, powerline or wind turbines introduce scale; • Exposed and open character with extensive views to surrounding mountains, islands, coastlines and the sea. 	<p>Located to the north and west of Sligachan and a very small area in the west of the study area which is discounted in this appraisal. This LCT is largely outwith the NSA but maintains a close association due to its proximity and the mountain views which dominate the area.</p> <p>Sensitivity is High</p>	<p>One tower of the Proposed Development would be just inside this LCT near Sligachan. The Proposed Development would also be seen in the wider context and may form a new visual focus, and greater sense of visual scale, although roads and forest areas which are present already give a sense of scale to some degree. The Proposed Development would also be seen in the wider context from some areas, particularly traversing the lower slopes of Glamaig, potentially creating an interruption to relationship between mountains and coast. They would also interrupt the more elevated views down Loch Sligachan from this LCT which could create a sense of disconnect between the LCT and the sea and coastline. However, the visual relationship with the southern mountains would not be affected.</p>	<p>During Construction: Possible</p> <p>During Operation: Possible</p>

Table 4: LCT 360 – Stepped Moorland

Potential Landscape Receptors	Landscape Sensitivity	Potential Effects	Potential for Effects to be Significant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinctive stepped landform with repetitive pattern of vertical faces and gently sloping or slanting terraces. • Terraces forming steeper cliffs or promontories along coastline. • General lack of settlement; and • Exposed and open character with, extensive visibility. 	<p>This LCT falls generally outwith designated landscapes within the study area although maintains a close visual association with The Cuillin Hills NSA and falls partially within WLA and SLA boundaries outwith the study area. Its open and exposed character and perceived remoteness are susceptible to change although its broadscale patterns of forestry occasional settlement and roads give some opportunities to accommodate OHL development if well sited. Nevertheless, within the study area, the steep coastal hill-slopes are considered highly susceptible to change.</p> <p>Sensitivity is Medium to High.</p>	<p>This LCT comprises the typical character type of northern Skye and only a small portion of the Proposed Development in Section 2 at its northern end falls within its edge, transitioning with LCT 358. This would have a limited effect on the appreciation of this LCT. However, in the context to the south of the LCT, the Proposed Development would be seen crossing the head of Loch Sligachan and traversing the lower slopes of Glamaig. Whilst this visual connection to the adjacent mountain landscape is not cited as one of the key characteristics of the LCT, at a local level the Proposed Development would create some barrier effect between the near and far sides of Loch Sligachan and the mountainous landscape of the Cuillins. Whilst there is already a contrast between the undeveloped northern side of Loch Sligachan where this LCT is located and the more developed southern side the Proposed Development may enhance this sense of separation.</p>	<p>During Construction: Possible</p> <p>During Operation: Possible</p>

Table 5: LCT 364 – Rocky Moorland - Skye & Lochalsh

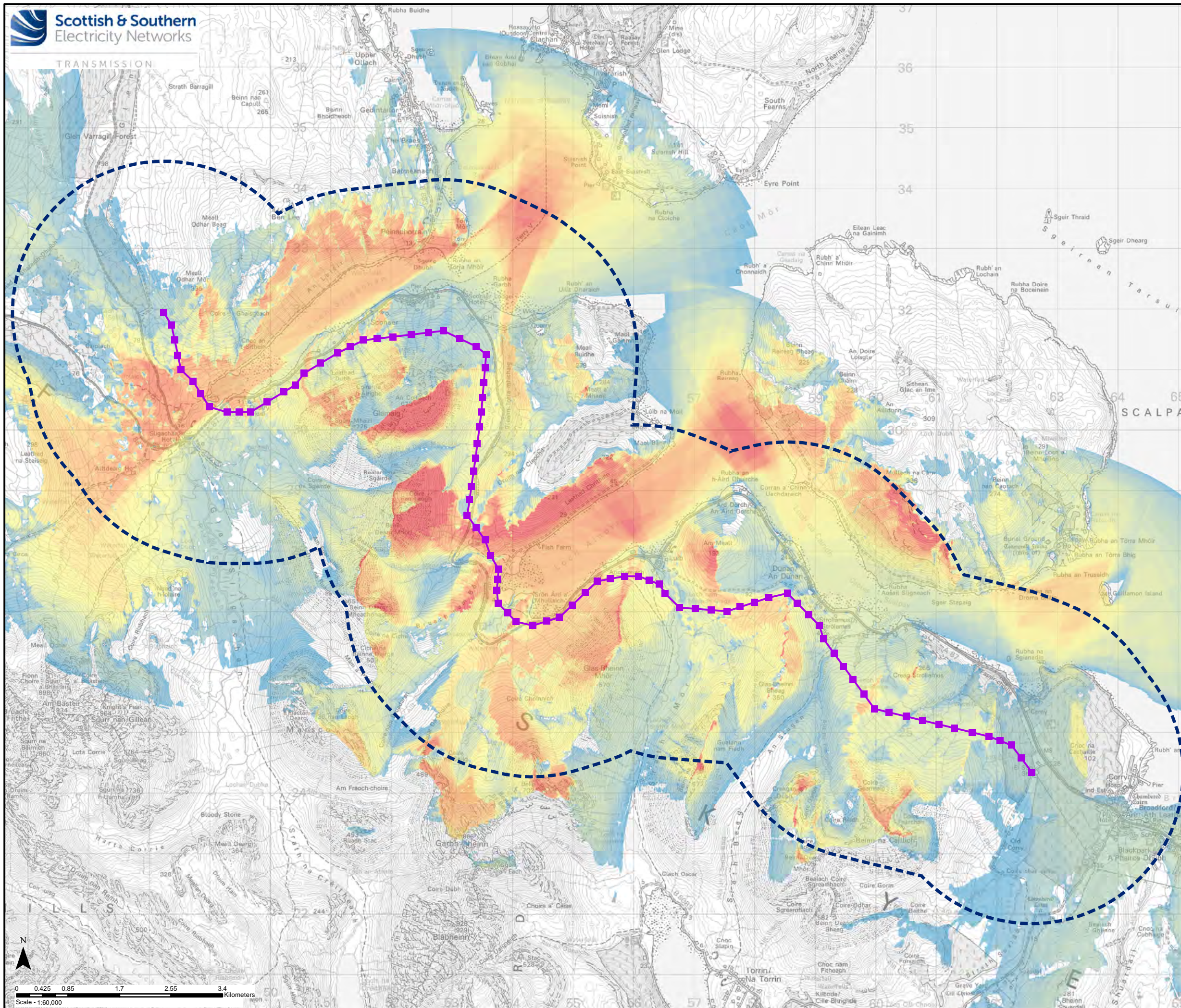
Potential Landscape Receptors	Landscape Sensitivity	Potential Effects	Potential for Effects to be Significant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High proportion of exposed rock with raw and rugged appearance; • Sparse habitation and little obvious land management; • General lack of landmarks; • Scale and distance difficult to perceive, in larger areas but some power lines and roads introduce human scale; • Rarely visited, giving a sense of isolation and remoteness. 	<p>Within the study area this LCT is found on Scalpay and a very small and peripheral area south of Broadford which has been discounted in this LVA. The LCT does not fall within any designated landscapes within the study area, but is valued for its remote and rugged character and as part of the coastal and island landscape and seascape which forms an important setting to the mountains of the NSA.</p> <p>Sensitivity is High.</p>	<p>This LCT would not be directly affected by the Proposed Development and it's situation offshore gives it a sense of separation and isolation from the areas affected. The lowest ground closer to the Proposed Development is mainly forested, which would limit potential intervisibility with the Proposed Development. From higher areas, the Proposed Development may be seen to cross the mountain slopes of the mainland to the west, although at a distance where perceptibility would be fairly limited.</p>	<p>During Construction: Unlikely</p> <p>During Operation: Unlikely</p>

Table 6: LCT 367 – Smooth Mountain Range

Potential Landscape Receptors	Landscape Sensitivity	Potential Effects	Potential for Effects to be Significant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly conical mountains separated by wide glaciated straths and glens. Smooth texture and profile Roads, forest areas, quarries and power lines located mainly within the edges of the foothills Uninhabited landscape, accessed by paths and tracks through straths and glens; Wild character derived from the remoteness, natural landform and lack of human activity, except around the margins of the area. 	<p>This LCT falls almost entirely within the Cuillin Hills NSA within the study area and mostly within WLA 23 and is integral to its designation. The simple structure of the landform which rises steeply and continuously from the coastline and glens is highly susceptible to change, although the existing fringe of rural development and roads around the outer area reduces slightly within the local context.</p> <p>Sensitivity is High.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would be routed around the edge of the LCT and through Gleann Torra-mhichaig where there is already some existing precedent for linear development due to the trunk road and existing wood pole lines. However, although it would replace existing wood pole lines, the towers would be taller and more noticeable with a greater spread of conductors and would typically be located further up the mountain side. This has the potential to create a greater linear barrier, distracting from and affecting the appreciation of the mountains from the surrounding glens and would particularly affect areas around Sligachan and Sconser, through Gleann Torra-mhichaig and around Loch Ainort. It may also affect a sense of remoteness and naturalness of the mountain landscape and the appreciation of the wild characteristics which, although not directly present, can still be sensed around the edges of the LCT. The Proposed Development would also be seen within some areas to create a greater sense of separation between the LCT and the coastal seascape with which it has a strong association.</p>	<p>During Construction: Likely</p> <p>During Operation: Likely</p>

Table 7: LCT 368 – Angular Mountain Range - Skye & Lochalsh

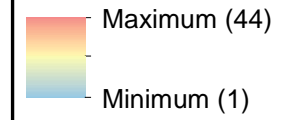
Potential Landscape Receptors	Landscape Sensitivity	Potential Effects	Potential for Effects to be Significant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mountains of high elevation and massive scale; • Contrast with form of adjacent smooth red hills; • Largely uninhabited; • Prominent landmark set within relatively low seascapes and landscapes and visible from great distances; • Complex visual composition in close proximity, with immense vertical scale viewed from valleys and peaks; and • Wild character. 	<p>This LCT falls within and is integral to the designation of the Cuillin Hills NSA. It also forms the core of the WLA 23. The dramatic topography, valued views and lack of development are highly susceptible to change of the type proposed.</p> <p>Sensitivity is High.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would not directly affect this LCT and would have limited intervisibility with it, limited to some views through glens. However, there would be indirect effects relating to the appreciation of the LCT from other external areas, likely to be particularly noticeable around Sligachan. This may lead to a distraction in views towards the distinctive mountains from exterior areas and their role as a landmark, as well as the visual composition of the rugged peaks in relation to the surrounding seascape.</p>	<p>During Construction: Possible</p> <p>During Operation: Possible</p>



Key

- Study Area
- Tower Position
- Baseline Alignment

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV):
Number of Towers Theoretically Visible
within 5km



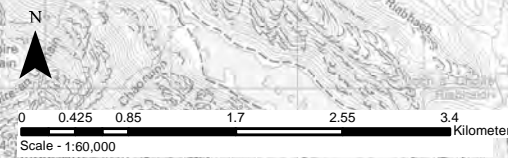
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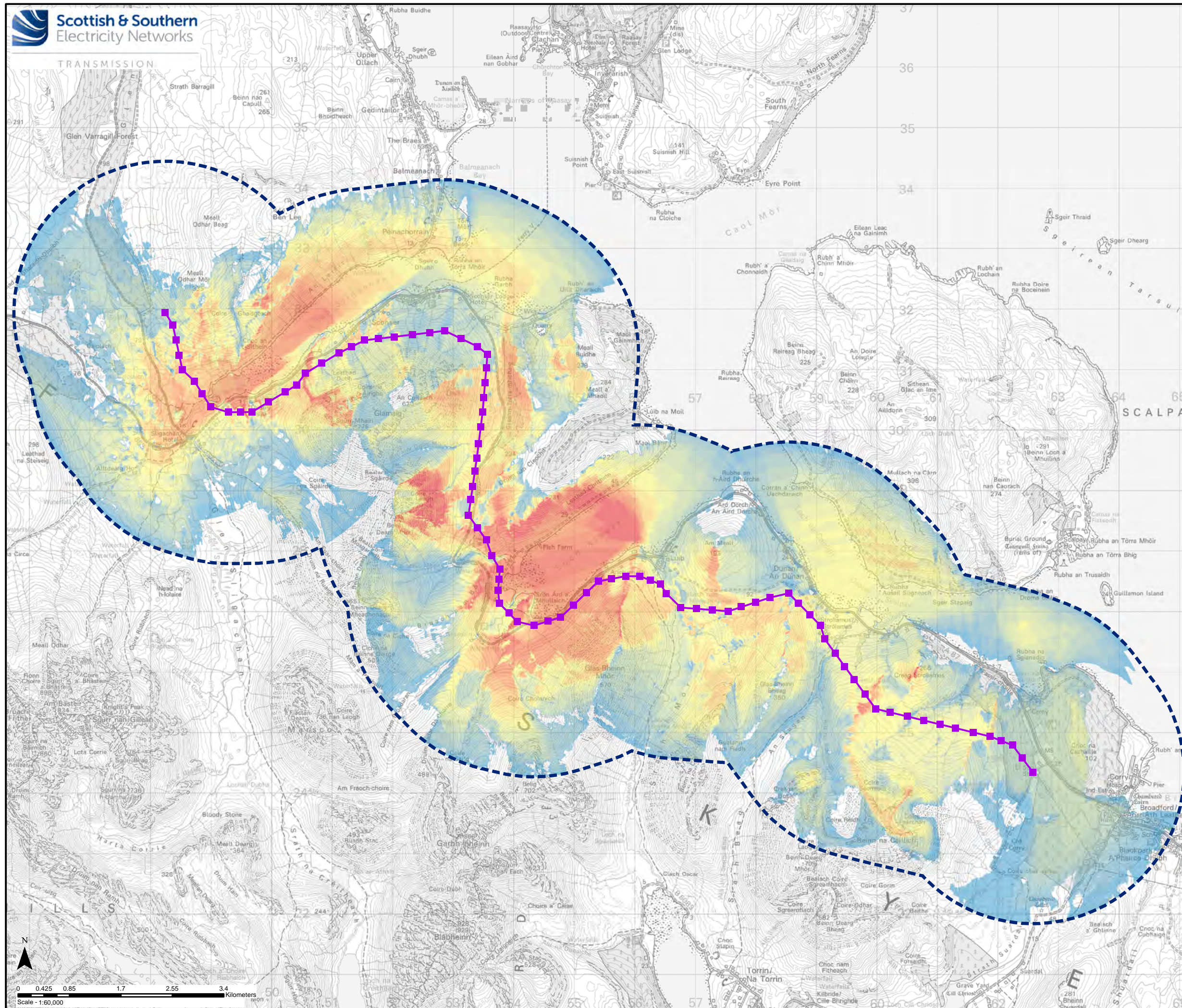
Project No: LT91
Project: Skye Reinforcement Project

Title: Landscape and Visual Appraisal
of Baseline OHL Alignment in Section 2
Figure 1 - Theoretical Visibility of Towers
within 5km

Drawn by: SK 20/09/2021

Drawing: 119026-D-S2-LVA1-1.0.0

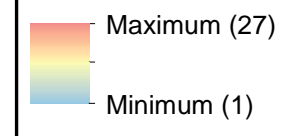




Key

- Study Area
- Tower Position
- Baseline Alignment

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV):
Number of Towers Theoretically Visible
within 2.5km

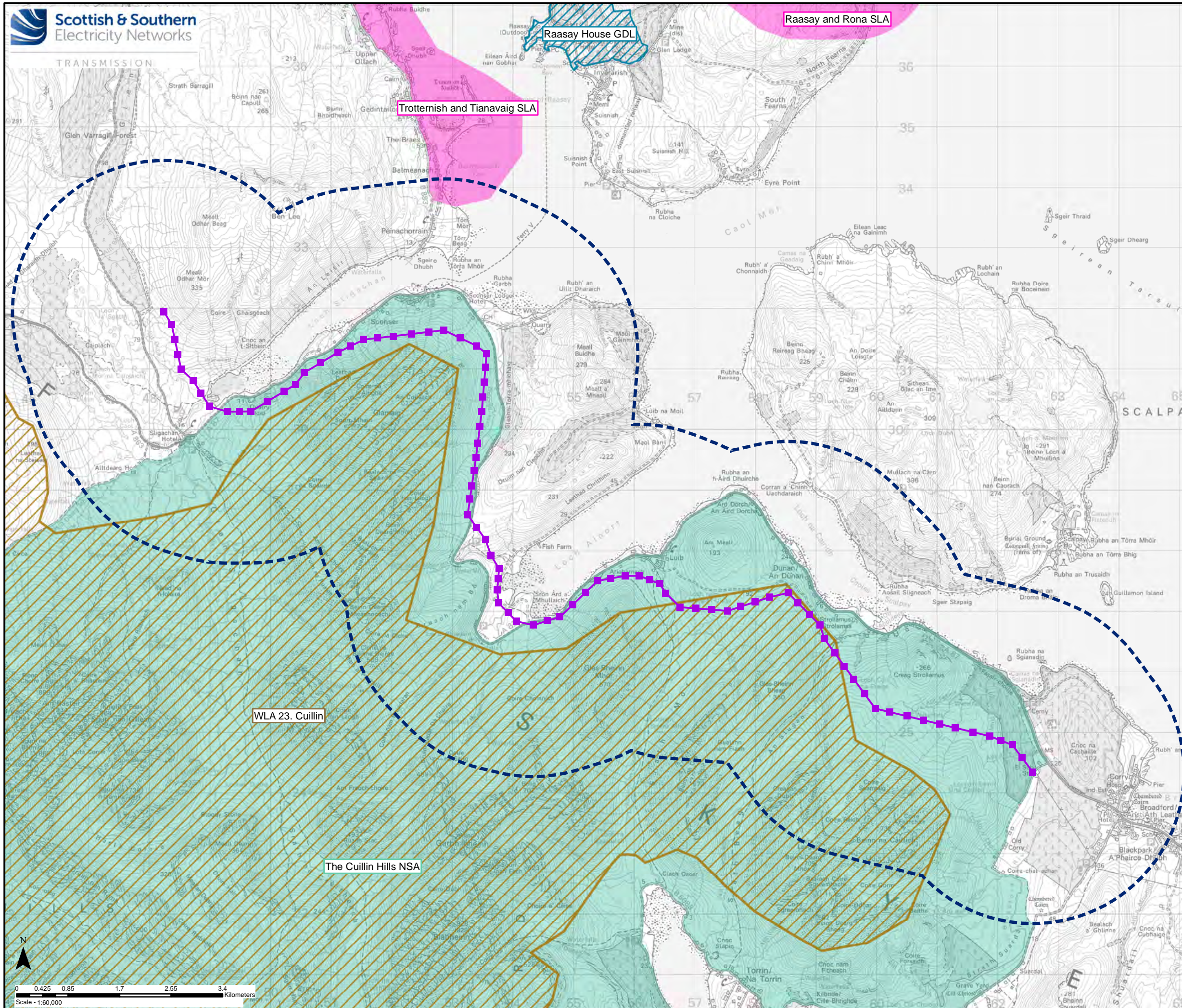


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Project No: LT91
Project: Skye Reinforcement Project

Title: Landscape and Visual Appraisal
of Baseline OHL Alignment in Section 2
Figure 2 - Theoretical Visibility of Towers
within 2.5km

Drawn by: SK 20/09/2021
Drawing: 119026-D-S2-LVA2-1.0.0



Key

-  Study Area
 -  Tower Position
 -  Baseline Alignment
- Designated and Protected Landscapes
-  National Scenic Area (NSA)
 -  Special Landscape Area (SLA)
 -  Wild Land Area (WLA)
 -  Site Included in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDL)

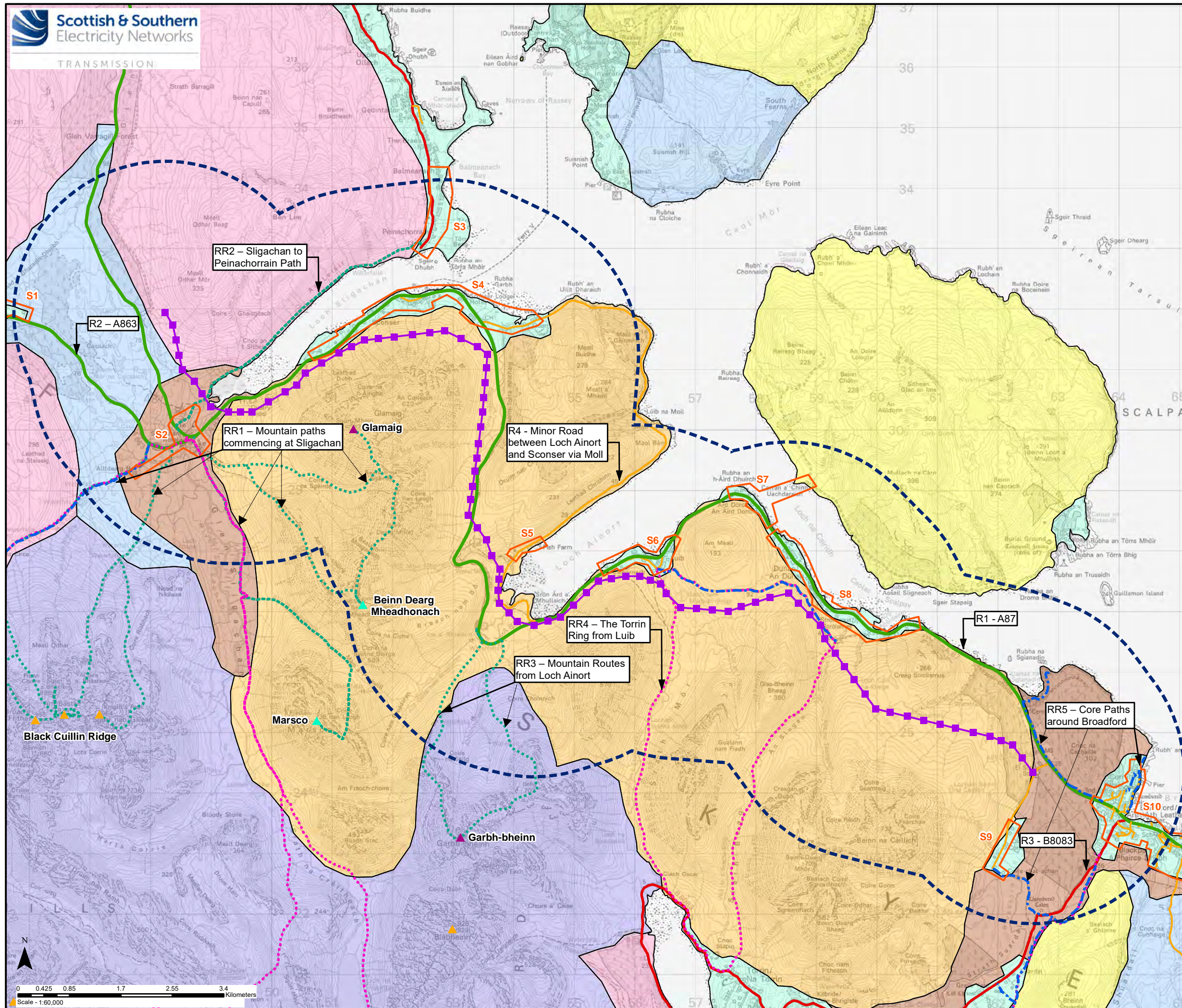
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Figure 3 - Designated and Protected
Landscapes

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Drawing: 119026-D-S2-LVA3-1.0.0



Key

- Study Area
- Tower Position
- Baseline Alignment

Potential Visual Receptors

- Settlement Area
- A Road
- B Road
- Minor Road
- Core Path
- Scottish Hill Track
- Other Recognised Recreational Route
- ▲ Munro Summit
- ▲ Corbett Summit
- ▲ Other Summit

Landscape Character Type (LCT)

- LCT 357: Farmed and Settled Lowlands - Skye & Lochalsh
- LCT 358: Low Smooth Moorland
- LCT 359: Upland Sloping Moorland
- LCT 360: Stepped Moorland
- LCT 364: Rocky Moorland - Skye & Lochalsh
- LCT 367: Smooth Mountain Range
- LCT 368: Angular Mountain Range - Skye & Lochalsh

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Figure 4 - Landscape Character and Potential Visual Receptors

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