

**Spittal to Loch Buidhe to Beaully 400 kV
OHL Connection
Environmental Impact Assessment
Volume 5 | Technical Appendix**

**Appendix 7.4 | Designated and
Protected Landscapes Assessment**

July 2025



VOLUME 5: APPENDIX 7.4 – DESIGNATED AND PROTECTED LANDSCAPES ASSESSMENT

1.	ASSESSMENT OF DESIGNATED AND PROTECTED LANDSCAPES	1
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Methodology	1
1.3	Section A	1
1.4	Section B	15
1.5	Section C	21
1.6	Section D	30
1.7	Section E	42

1. ASSESSMENT OF DESIGNATED AND PROTECTED LANDSCAPES

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Appendix provides the detailed assessment of potential effects on designated and protected landscapes as a result of the Proposed Development. Statutory designated landscapes, or landscapes otherwise protected by the planning system, that have been identified for consideration within the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) are provided in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Designated and Protected Landscapes included in the LVIA

Section	National Context	Regional / Local Context
Section A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Causeymire – Knockfin Flows Wild Land Area (WLA) Ben Klibreck – Armine Forest WLA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast Special Landscape Area (SLA)
Section B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ben Klibreck – Armine Forest WLA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA
Section C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dornoch Firth National Scenic Area (NSA) Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA
Section D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dornoch Firth NSA Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA Ben Wyvis SLA
Section E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA Central Highlands WLA Glen Strathfarrar NSA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ben Wyvis SLA Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA

- 1.1.2 The above areas are illustrated on **Volume 3, Figure 7.2: Designated and Protected Landscapes**.

1.2 Methodology

- 1.2.1 The assessment of designated landscapes has been undertaken in accordance with the methods and criteria outlined in **Volume 5, Appendix 7.2** and with reference to the following additional guidance documents:
- Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas: Technical Guidance¹; and
 - Guidance for Assessment of Effects on Special Landscape Qualities².
- 1.2.2 The assessment of designated and protected landscapes gives consideration to effects on landscape character and identified Special Qualities of NSAs, SLAs, and the key attributes and qualities of WLAs. Conclusions made during the assessment of Landscape Character (refer to **Volume 5, Appendix 7.5 – Appendix 7.9**) are used to feed into this assessment and are cross referenced as necessary. Evaluation of sensitivity to development of the type proposed and impact magnitude has been undertaken for all relevant Special Qualities. In each case landscape value is generally considered to be High. Potential variations in landscape sensitivity are based on susceptibility to change only.

1.3 Section A

- 1.3.1 The following designated or protected areas have been identified for assessment within Section A:
- National-level Landscape Designations:

¹ NatureScot. 2020. Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas: Technical Guidance

² NatureScot. 2018. Guidance for Assessment of Effects on Special Landscape Qualities

- Causeymire – Knockfin Flows WLA; and
- Ben Klibreck – Armine Forest WLA.
- Regional / Local-level Landscape Designations:
 - Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA; and.
 - The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA.

1.3.2 Section A extends through the Causeymire – Knockfin Flows WLA, the Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA and the Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA, this will result in direct effects on landscapes within the SLA. For the Ben Kilbreck- Armine Forest WLA designation, the potential effects on existing key attributes and qualities would be indirect and restricted to those resulting from potential views of the Proposed Development within the wider landscape context.

Table 2: Causeymire – Knockfin Flows WLA

Baseline Description			
Description	<p>Covering an area of 514 km2 of southern Caithness and the eastern fringe of Sutherland, extending across the interior peatlands between Forsinard in the north, Causeymire in the east, the Strath of Kildonan in the west, and Braemore and the hills above Helmsdale in the south.</p> <p>A small portion of this WLA intersects with the Proposed Development in the mountainous area north of Helmsdale. Direct effects will be restricted to this portion, for the majority of the WLA indirect effects will be resultant from long-range views of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>A valued landscape for its expansive open peatlands, steep mountains, deep glens, meandering rivers, rolling hills, and sheltered valleys. These defining features reinforce the area's strong sense of wilderness and remoteness, particularly in regions with limited accessibility.</p>		
Associated LCTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sweeping Moorland and Flows LCT (134); and• Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT (135).		
Key Attributes and Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awe inspiring simplicity of wide-open peatland from which rise isolated, arresting, steep mountains;• Irregular peatland and dubh lochan, comprising a complex mix of hidden pools, bogs and lochans that contribute to perceived naturalness and limit access;• An extensive remote interior with few visitors in contrast to the margins of the area from which many people view into the WLA;• Wide glens containing meandering rivers that limit access and are often the focus for isolated historic features; and• Rolling, interlocking hills in the south containing remote, sheltered glens with limited visibility.		
Assessment of Key Attributes and Qualities			
Qualities of Relevance to the Proposed Development	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Impact Magnitude
Awe inspiring simplicity of wide-open peatland from which rise isolated, arresting, steep mountains.	High	<p>In the northern section of the Section A alignment there would be no direct impacts on the peatlands within the WLA given Proposed Development would be located in a spatially separate landscape, 1.5 km to the east of the WLA at the closest point. ZTV coverage across the WLA is limited to the eastern edges and higher peaks. From these vantage points the construction activities and new steel lattice towers would represent discreet elements in the background landscape. Accordingly, the influence of the Proposed Development on the existing sense of isolation and wildness within the WLA would be limited.</p> <p>In the southern section of the Section A alignment the Proposed Development briefly traverses the southern edge of the WLA north of Brora. There would be direct effects resulting from the construction of the towers and indirect effects on long-range views from peaks including Col Bheinn.</p>	Construction: Low Operation: Low

Irregular peatland and dubh lochan, comprising a complex mix of hidden pools, bogs and lochans that contribute to perceived naturalness and limit access.	High	Direct effects on the peatland would be restricted to a localised area at the southern extent of the Proposed Development. Indirect effects will include views towards the towers across the peatland areas and from peaks Any views would be seen in conjunction with other built elements such as the existing OHLs in addition to wind farm developments including Halsary, Causeymire and Bad á Cheò .	Construction: Low Operation: Low
An extensive remote interior with few visitors in contrast to the margins of the area from which many people view into the WLA.	High	The Proposed Development would not reduce the remoteness of the interior of the WLA. All effects would be indirect only and relate to the increase in humanity artefacts and access tracks outwith the WLA boundary.	Construction: Low Operation: Low
Wide glens containing meandering rivers that limit access and are often the focus for isolated historic features.	High	There would be no direct impact on the glens and rivers within the WLA and therefore no effect on this Key Attribute/Quality.	Construction: None Operation: None
Rolling, interlocking hills in the south containing remote, sheltered glens with limited visibility.	High	There would be direct impact on the hills in the southern edge of the WLA although this is for a localised section as the Proposed Development traverses a small portion of the WLA. The Proposed development would exert minor influence upon the existing sense of solitude and isolation within these areas as a result of an increase in human activity outwith the WLA boundary.	Construction: Low Operation: Low
Assessment of Effects			
Landscape Sensitivity	Within the Study Area, the WLA encompasses parts of LCT 134 Sweeping Moorland and flows and LCT 135 Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland. Which have a landscape sensitivity to changes of the type proposed within these areas has been identified as High. This reflects the high value of the WLA. On balance, the landscape sensitivity across parts of the WLA within the Study Area is considered to be High .		
Nature and Magnitude of Change	Section A of the Proposed Development would be located at a minimum distance of 1.5 km to the east of the WLA with the exception of a very small section at the south of the WLA (south-west of Ousdale) where the Proposed Development traverses the WLA. Accordingly, the influence of the Proposed Development on its Special Qualities would be indirect and based upon views and there would be no direct effects on the landscape features and elements which contribute to the Key Qualities and Attributes of the WLA as a result of the Proposed Development. A small portion of the WLA lies within the study area at the southern end of Section A. ZTV coverage across this area of the WLA is limited. From this localised area, potential views of the construction activities and the towers during the operational phase would be restricted by the distance of view, in combination with the screening influence of intervening mountains and the scale of the receiving landscape. With reference to the landscape character assessment, the impact magnitude across the LCTs that coincide most closely with the WLA is typically Low during both construction and operation. This is primarily based upon parts of the LCTs that are located in closer proximity to the Proposed Development than the WLA. Accordingly, this is not considered to be representative of landscape change that would occur in relation to the WLA.		

	In summary, the impact magnitude upon the WLA would be Negligible during construction and operation. Across the vast majority of the WLA there would be no views and no indirect influence on the Key Attributes and Qualities of the designation.
Significance of Effect	<p>The effects on the WLA and its Key Attributes and Qualities would be limited based on its spatial separation from the Proposed Development, in combination with the limited ZTV coverage, which reflects the screening influence of the intervening mountains.</p> <p>In summary, all effects on the WLA would be generally indirect only. The construction activities and new steel lattice towers would represent extremely discreet additions to the background landscape to the east of the WLA within less remote, more settled landscapes associated with the coastal fringe and in the region of the A9(T). The overall effect would be Minor (not significant) during construction and operation. Across the vast majority of the WLA there would be no views and no effect. As such, the integrity of the WLA would not be compromised.</p>

Table 3: Ben Klibreck – Armine Forest WLA

Baseline Description	
Description	<p>The Ben Klibreck- Armine Forest WLA comprises peatland and hills that, at a broad level, seem very simple in both their form and ground cover. Given these extend over a large area, there is an impression of extreme simplicity and openness which results in a strong sense of awe, as well as a perception of 'emptiness' and solitude across the interior.</p> <p>The openness of the landscape means it is very exposed. Views of dynamic weather conditions unobstructed by human elements emphasise the naturalness of the landscape.</p> <p>There will be no direct effects on the WLA as the Proposed Development at its closest point is c. 7.5km to the east and minimal indirect effects from occasional long-range views of the Proposed Development.</p>
Associated LCTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweeping Moorland and Flows LCT (134); and • Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT (135).
Key Attributes and Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An awe-inspiring simplicity of landform and landcover and a perception of 'emptiness', so that the extent of the peatland often seems greater than it is. • Arresting, isolated mountains rise in stark contrast to surrounding peatland and glens, amplifying the awe-inspiring qualities of each. • A remote interior where access involves long distances and lengthy time via penetrating glens or crossing over and around rugged landforms and waterbodies. • An extensive area of peatland with a prevailing strong sense of naturalness. • A secluded, elevated and remote interior plateau shielded by an outer rim of hills, in which there is a strong sense of solitude, sanctuary and risk.
Assessment of Key Attributes and Qualities	

Qualities of Relevance to the Proposed Development	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Impact Magnitude
An awe-inspiring simplicity of landform and landcover and a perception of 'emptiness', so that the extent of the peatland often seems greater than it is.	High	The Proposed Development would be located in a spatially separate landscape, c7.5 km to the east of the WLA at the closest point. There would be no direct effects on the simple landform and landcover within the WLA. ZTV coverage across the WLA is limited to very localised peaks at Cnoc Meadhonach and Cnoc Ruighean na Sgainn. From these vantage points the construction activities and new steel lattice towers would represent discreet elements in the background landscape. Accordingly, the influence of the Proposed Development on the existing sense of isolation and wildness within the WLA would be limited.	Construction: Low Operation: Low
Arresting, isolated mountains rise in stark contrast to surrounding peatland and glens, amplifying the awe-inspiring qualities of each.	High	There would be no direct effects on the isolated mountains which would result in reducing the Given the intervening distances, views towards the Proposed Development would be restricted to the peaks. Any views would be seen in conjunction with other built elements such as the existing windfarm.	Construction: Low Operation: Low
A remote interior where access involves long distances and lengthy time via penetrating glens or crossing over and around rugged landforms and waterbodies.	High	The Proposed Development would not reduce the remoteness of the interior of the WLA. All effects would be indirect only and relate to the increase in humanity artefacts and access tracks outwith the WLA boundary.	Construction: Low Operation: Low
An extensive area of peatland with a prevailing strong sense of naturalness.	High	There would be no direct impact on the peatland landscapes within the WLA and therefore no effect on this Key Attribute/Quality.	Construction: None Operation: None
A secluded, elevated and remote interior plateau shielded by an outer rim of hills, in which there is a strong sense of solitude, sanctuary and risk.	High	There would be no direct impact on the secluded, interior plateau landscapes within the WLA and therefore no effect on this Key Attribute/Quality. The Proposed development would exert minor influence upon the existing sense of solitude and isolation within these areas as a result of an increase in human activity beyond the WLA boundary.	Construction: None Operation: None
Assessment of Effects			
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>Within the Study Area, the WLA encompasses parts of LCT 135 Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland. Which has a landscape sensitivity to changes of the type proposed within these areas has been identified as typically ranging from Medium to High. This reflects the high value of the WLA in combination with slightly reduced susceptibility to change across localised areas.</p> <p>On balance, the landscape sensitivity across parts of the WLA within the Study Area is considered to be High-Medium.</p>		

Nature and Magnitude of Change	<p>Section A of the Proposed Development would be located at a minimum distance c.7.5 km to the south-east and east of the WLA. Accordingly, the influence of the Proposed Development on its Special Qualities would be indirect and based upon views and there would be no direct effects on the landscape features and elements which contribute to the Key Qualities and Attributes of the WLA because of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>ZTV coverage across the SLA is limited and is generally across a small number of isolated summits. From these very localised areas, potential views of the temporary construction activities and the towers during the operational phase would be restricted by the distance of view, in combination with the screening influence of intervening mountains and the scale of the receiving landscape.</p> <p>With reference to the landscape character assessment, the impact magnitude across the LCTs that coincide most closely with the WLA is typically Low during both construction and operation. This is primarily based upon parts of the LCTs that are located in closer proximity to the Proposed Development than the WLA. Accordingly, this is not considered to be representative of landscape change that would occur in relation to the WLA.</p> <p>In summary, the impact magnitude upon the WLA would be Negligible during construction and operation. Across the vast majority of the WLA there would be no views and no influence on the Key Attributes and Qualities of the designation.</p>
Significance of Effect	<p>The effects on the WLA and its Key Attributes and Qualities would be limited based on its spatial separation from the Proposed Development, in combination with the limited ZTV coverage, which reflects the screening influence of the intervening mountains.</p> <p>In summary, the construction activities and new steel lattice towers would represent extremely discreet additions to the background landscape to the south. The overall effect would be Negligible (not significant) during construction and operation. Across the vast majority of the WLA there would be no views and no effect. As such, the integrity of the WLA would not be compromised.</p>

Table 4: Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA

Baseline Description	
Description	<p>The Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA is located in the southern part of the Study Area, The Section A alignment traverses the SLA north of Brora on moorland.</p> <p>The SLA encompasses an area of rolling moorland hills, punctuated by a series of southeast orientated glens, straths and lochs, and edged to a narrow strip of farmed coastal shelf running along the shoreline. The character of this area is distinguished by its composition of contrasting landscape features – the contrasting landform, landcover and landscape pattern that emphasise the distinction of each other.</p>
Associated LCTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting LCT (145) • Coastal Farmland & Woodlands LCT (146) • Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT (135) • Strath – Caithness & Sutherland LCT (142)

Special Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The combination and juxtaposition of the rolling moorland hills, linear glens, the coastal shelf and tidal basin creates a diverse yet connected landscape composition, which is experienced in sequence when travelling along the A9(T) and from the railway.The hill area contains straths and glens with differing local character derived from the varying combination of native woodland, forest plantation, moorland and water bodies. Providing sheltered access routes through the hills and physical and visual connections between the interior and the coastal shelf.Views are obtained from some areas of wind turbines and overhead electricity lines whose large scale and man-made character can seem to diminish the scale of the interior hills and their wildness qualities.A simple uniform, rolling plateau of interior broad, interwoven rounded hills, clothed by an open mosaic of heather and grass moorland. As this composition is simple and extends throughout the area.Skelbo Castle is a dominant feature on the south-side of Loch Fleet, sitting atop a hill commanding excellent views of the loch.The linear coastal shelf, is defined by the edge formed by the adjacent hill slopes, providing expansive views both along the coastal edge and outwards across the open sea. Interior views are limited by the convex nature of the hill slopes.To the east lies a narrow fertile coastal shelf contains the main road and rail routes in this area, and small farms and settlements. A distinctive field pattern of pasture runs parallel to the coast.The Mound is a prominent and man-made causeway over which the main A9 coastal road passes. Engineered by T Telford in 1814 –16.		
Assessment of Special Qualities			
Special Qualities of Relevance to the Proposed Development	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Impact Magnitude
The combination and juxtaposition of the rolling moorland hills, linear glens, the coastal shelf and tidal basin creates a diverse yet connected landscape composition, which is experienced in sequence when travelling along the A9 and from the railway.	High-Medium	<p>The Proposed Development would transect a section of the SLA c. 11.9 km long north of Brora on the moorland around Col-Bheinn and Beinn Dhorain close to the coastal shelf. There would be limited visibility of the towers from the coastal shelf views of construction activities and the operational line would be predominantly experienced with the interior landscapes within the SLA,</p> <p>The construction activities would occur within a relatively localised section of the SLA resulting in direct effects on the coastal moorland hills. The Proposed Development would be viewed as extending north from the SLA and views would be experienced from hill summits.</p> <p>There would be limited change to landcover and landform within the SLA however construction activities would diminish the sense of wildness and tranquillity of the hills.</p>	Construction: High Operation: High-medium

		Once operational, the towers would be a permanent feature within the northern portion of the SLA and visible across the moorland. At greater distances the valley tree cover, and landform would restrict views to the towers, but some would remain visible as they ascend to higher ground.	
The hill area contains straths and glens with differing local character derived from the varying combination of native woodland, forest plantation, moorland and water bodies. Providing sheltered access routes through the hills and physical and visual connections between the interior and the coastal shelf.	High-Medium	The construction operations and new steel lattice towers would be located within a small area of the open moorland plateau in the north of the SLA and would result in a change to the relatively simple composition of the SLA. Where views occur of the Proposed Development, they would be relatively localised and experienced from upper slopes and summits within the SLA. Views towards the Proposed Development will occasionally include existing wind turbines or OHLs and will in these instances diminish the scale of the interior hills and their wildness qualities.	Construction: High Operation: High-medium
To the east lies a narrow fertile coastal shelf contains the main road and rail routes in this area, and small farms and settlements. A distinctive field pattern of pasture runs parallel to the coast,	High-Medium	There would be no direct effects on the lower lying, coastal shelf landscapes of the eastern SLA as a result of the Proposed Development. Some localised construction traffic may be apparent along the A9 (T) during the construction period. During operation views to the Proposed Development would be restricted by intervening vegetation, and topography. The Proposed Development would not detract from views experienced within the SLA along the coastal edge or outwards across the open sea.	Construction: Low-None Operation: None
A simple uniform, rolling plateau of interior broad, interwoven rounded hills, clothed by an open mosaic of heather and grass moorland. As this composition is simple and extends throughout the area.	High	The construction operations and new steel lattice towers would be located within a small area of the open moorland plateau to the north of the SLA and result in a change to the relatively simple composition of the SLA. Where views occur of the Proposed Development, they would be relatively localised and experienced from upper slopes and summits within the SLA. Views towards the Proposed Development will occasionally include existing wind turbines or OHLs and will in these instances diminish the scale of the interior hills and their wildness qualities.	Construction: High Operation: High-medium

Assessment of Effects	
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>Within the Study Area, the SLA encompasses parts of two LCTs. Landscape sensitivity to changes of the type proposed within these areas has been identified as typically ranging from Medium to High. This reflects the high value of the SLA in combination with slightly reduced susceptibility to change across localised areas.</p> <p>On balance, the landscape sensitivity across parts of the SLA within the Study Area is considered to be High.</p>
Nature and Magnitude of Change	<p>Section A would extend across the SLA for a distance of c. 11.9 km. Accordingly, there would be direct effects on the SLA as a result of the Proposed Development within a relatively small area, however indirect effects as a result of visibility of the Proposed Development would occur primarily from upland elements of the SLA. There would be very limited visibility or no visibility of Section A from coastal elements of the SLA.</p> <p>Potential views of the construction activities across the moorland plateau within the SLA would be tempered by the distance of view in combination with the relatively low-level nature of construction works / vehicle movements. Within the valleys, tree cover, and topography would restrict longer-range views, but from closer range, often 1 km, as the Proposed Development crosses the valleys, the construction activities would be visible and prominent.</p> <p>Once operational, the towers would be visible from open moorland vantage points. Given the distance of view, they would represent relatively discreet additions to the background landscape enclosing the wider moorland and hills, however on occasions the towers would combine with existing OHLs or wind turbines. Within the valleys the towers would be visible in closer proximity as they traverse the valley. Intervening vegetation would restrict longer-range views</p> <p>In summary, the impact magnitude upon the SLA would be locally High during construction and High-medium during operation. This would diminish across more northern parts of the SLA, where ZTV coverage is more limited, and / or views would be fully screened by intervening woodland and topography.</p>
Significance of Effect	<p>As described above, the effects on the Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA would be focussed on its northern extents in the upland landscapes in the region north of Brora where direct effects would occur. The Proposed Development would have a direct effect on the landscapes which contribute to the Special Qualities of the SLA. The introduction of the Section A alignment would reduce the perceived wildness and tranquillity of the interior hills and Glen Loth. The influence of Section A alignment on the SLA would however diminish steadily at increased distance. The effect would be locally Major Adverse (significant) during construction and Major-Moderate Adverse during operation, with effects diminishing with greater distance across the SLA to the north-east. The Proposed Development would have very limited effects on the coastal aspects of the SLA and very limited effects on the perception of change within the SLA from the A9(T) and the Far North Railway line. Overall, it is assessed that the integrity of the SLA would not be compromised by the Proposed Development.</p>

Table 5: The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA

Baseline Description	
Description	<p>Defined by its vast peatlands and low horizons, creating a wild and remote atmosphere further reinforced by limited accessibility. Isolated mountains, marked by exposed rock formations and montane vegetation, offer dramatic views of both the Flow Country and the open sea. Moorland foothills introduce diverse focal</p>

	points, including scattered lochs and meandering watercourses. Settlements are primarily located in sheltered glens and coastal regions, where the landscape transitions from open moorland to more enclosed and habitable areas.
Associated LCTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 134 – Sweeping Moorland and Flows LCT; • 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT; • 140- Sandy Beaches and Dunes LCT; • 141- High Cliffs and Sheltered Bays LCT; • 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland LCT; and • 144 – Coastal Crofts & Small Farms LCT.
Special Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A striking combination of mountains rising abruptly from surrounding extensive areas of peatland that is vast in scale, with a long low horizon and broadly very simple in character, although containing numerous lochs, lochans and pools. The peatland areas are very difficult to access or cross due to the lack of tracks and roads and because of the drainage conditions. Consequently, these areas tend to possess a strong sense of wildness. • The isolated mountains are typified by exposed rock, rocky outcrops and scree, and montane vegetation. They form distinctive and offer extensive views over the Flow Country and out to sea. • The moorland foothills which flank the lone mountains typically comprise undulating and sloping broad convex hills, plateaux, rocky outcrops and crags, dense heather and grassland mosaics. The landform sweeps gently north from impressive elevations across vast open moorland to the flat peatland. • The peatland expanse is incised in places by deeply carved, meandering wooded glens. Parallel tracks and footpaths, penetrate some interior parts of these glens, also occupied by isolated lodges and bothies utilising the shelter and protection offered by these glen slopes. These build structures empathise and contrast the vast scale of the surrounding peatlands. • Settlement only occurs at the south eastern part of this area, restricted to the sheltered glens and coastal areas. This leaves the area largely undeveloped and consequently possessing strong qualities of wildness. • Experience of the open peatlands area is strongly affected by big skies with rapidly changing light and weather conditions. Views from local roads are particularly important along the higher sections of the A9 around Achavanich and Berriedale and from the road into Braemore. Views from the railway which skirts the area's north western side, from the valley tracks, from the mountain peaks, or even from aircraft all give different perspectives. • The inland waterways were a vital method of transport and communication in prehistory monuments are predominantly located along Langwell and Berriedale Waters and their tributaries. The remains represent the full range of major prehistoric features and include chambered cairns, roundhouses, brochs, souterrains, burnt mounds etc.

Assessment of Special Qualities			
Special Qualities	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Effect
A striking combination of mountains rising abruptly from surrounding extensive areas of peatland that is vast in scale, with a long low horizon and broadly very simple in character, although containing numerous lochs, lochans and pools. The peatland areas are very difficult to access or cross due to the lack of tracks and roads and because of the drainage conditions.	High	<p>The Proposed Development would transect the SLA south of Dunbeath on moorland which includes the peaks of Beinn Dhorain, Meall na Caorach, and Creag Scalabsdale. There would be no direct effects on the expansive peatland areas as a result of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The construction activities would occur within a relatively localised sections of the SLA resulting in direct effects on the southern moorland hills above the coastal fringe. The Proposed Development would be viewed as extending north across the SLA and views would be experienced from hill summits and coastal areas.</p> <p>Once operational, the towers would be a permanent feature within the southern portion of the SLA and visible across the moorland hills above the coastal fringe. At greater distances the valley tree cover, and landform would restrict views to the towers, but some would remain visible as they ascend to higher ground.</p>	<p>Construction: Major</p> <p>Operation: Moderate</p>
Settlement only occurs at the southeastern part of this area, restricted to the sheltered glens and coastal areas. This leaves the area largely undeveloped and consequently possessing strong qualities of wildness.	High-Medium	<p>In the southern section, the Proposed Development is located c 2.5 km from the closest coastal settlements which are aligned with the A9 and the railway. Given the distances, intervening vegetation and topography, views towards the Proposed Development will be restricted.</p> <p>During construction some taller elements such as crane movements may be perceptible in the distance from the A9, but these would be restricted by landform and intervening vegetation. Similarly, construction traffic along the A9 may be visually apparent.</p> <p>There would be no direct effects on the Flow Country landscapes exhibiting the strongest qualities of wildness (coinciding with the Causeymire – Knockfin Flows WLA), and the area would remain largely undeveloped).</p>	<p>Construction: Low-None</p> <p>Operation: None</p>

		Once operational intervening topography, vegetation and the separation distances from the Proposed Development would restrict visibility.	
Experience of the open peatlands area is strongly affected by big skies with rapidly changing light and weather conditions. Views from local roads are particularly important along the higher sections of the A9 around Achavanich and Berriedale and from the road into Braemore. Views from the railway which skirts the area's north western side, from the valley tracks, or from the mountain peaks.	High-Medium	<p>There would be no direct effects on the peat moorlands to the north of the SLA. The Proposed Development is located to the east of the A9 in the northern extent of the Section A alignment and as such will not have effect on the views towards the moorland.</p> <p>South of Latheron, the Proposed Development is aligned to the north and west of the A9, and although outside of the SLA there would be indirect effect on the views across towards the moorland of the SLA.</p> <p>South of Helmsdale, the railway line and A897 head west from A9, the Proposed Development traverses the routes before heading south across the moorland, before traversing through the SLA southwards. During construction there would be direct effects on the peatlands as construction activities progress including tower erection, access tracks, vehicle movement and materials storage.</p> <p>During operation views of the Proposed Development across the southern moorlands of the SLA would remain as the Section A alignment traverses the open moorland south of Helmsdale. There would be direct effects on the views towards the moorland from the A87 and the railway as the Section A alignment traverses the routes within Strath Ulla. Further north the effects would be indirect and limited to distant views tempered by topography and intervening vegetation.</p>	<p>Construction: Low-None (northern section)</p> <p>Construction: Major-Moderate (southern section)</p> <p>Operation: Low-None (northern section)</p> <p>Operation: Moderate (southern section)</p>
Assessment of Effects			
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>Within the Study Area, the SLA encompasses parts of four LCTs. Landscape sensitivity to changes of the type proposed within these areas has been identified as typically ranging from Medium to High. This reflects the high value of the SLA in combination with slightly reduced susceptibility to change across localised areas.</p> <p>On balance, the landscape sensitivity across parts of the SLA falling within the Study Area is judged to be High.</p>		
Nature and Magnitude of Change	<p>North of Dunbeath, Section A is located outside of the SLA, at its closest proximity the distance is 500 m, this rises to c 6 km, west of Dunbeath. Accordingly in this northern section there would be indirect effects on the SLA because of the Proposed Development. Visibility towards the Proposed Development would</p>		

	<p>occur primarily from upland elements of the SLA. South and west of Dunbeath, the southern portion of Section B is largely located within the SLA and therefore direct effects would occur as a result of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Potential views of the construction activities within the northern section, would be tempered by the distance of view in combination with the relatively low-level nature of construction works / vehicle movements. Within the valleys, tree cover, and topography would restrict longer-range views, but from closer range, often 1 km, as the Proposed Development crosses the valleys, the construction activities would be visible and prominent. In the southern portion of Section A, construction activities would be viewed at close distances both across the moorland and within the valleys including Strath Ullie</p> <p>Once operational, the towers would be visible from open moorland vantage points. Given the distance of view, they would represent relatively discreet additions to the background landscape enclosing the wider moorland and hills.</p> <p>In summary, the impact magnitude upon the SLA would be locally (within 1 km) High-medium during construction and Medium during operation within the rolling hills adjoining the coastal fringe. This would diminish across more northern parts of the SLA, where views would be fully screened by intervening distances, woodland and topography, or where there is no direct impact to the landscape features which contribute to the Special Qualities of the SLA.</p>
Significance of Effect	<p>As described above, direct effects on The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA would be focussed on its southern extents in the upland landscapes in the region west and northwest of Helmsdale to Dunbeath where direct effects would occur. The influence of Section A alignment on the SLA would diminish steadily at increased distance. The effect would be locally Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) during construction and locally Moderate Adverse (significant) during operation, with effects diminishing with greater distance across the SLA further north and no direct effects on the expansive peatlands of the Flow covered by the designation. The Proposed Development would have very limited effects on the coastal aspects of the SLA given distances and intervening vegetation and topography. Overall, it is assessed that the integrity of the SLA would not be compromised by the Proposed Development.</p>

1.4 Section B

1.4.1 The following designated or protected areas have been identified for assessment within Section B:

- National-level Landscape Designations:
 - Ben Kilbreck- Armine Forest WLA.
- Regional / Local-level Landscape Designations:
 - Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA.

1.4.2 Section B extends through the Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA, this will result in direct effects on landscapes within the SLA, albeit for a distance of c. 1 km only of Section B. For the Ben Kilbreck- Armine Forest WLA designation, the potential effects on existing key attributes and qualities would be indirect and restricted to those resulting from potential views of the Proposed Development within the wider landscape context.

Table 6: Ben Kilbreck – Armine Forest WLA

Baseline Description			
Description	<p>The Ben Kilbreck- Armine Forest WLA comprises peatland and hills that, at a broad level, seem very simple in both their form and ground cover. Given these extend over a large area, there is an impression of extreme simplicity and openness which results in a strong sense of awe, as well as a perception of ‘emptiness’ and solitude across the interior.</p> <p>The openness of the landscape means it is very exposed. Views of dynamic weather conditions unobstructed by human elements emphasise the naturalness of the landscape.</p> <p>There will be no direct effects on the WLA and minimal indirect effects from occasional long-range views of the Proposed Development.</p>		
Associated LCTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sweeping Moorland and Flows LCT (134); and• Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT (135).		
Key Attributes and Qualities (those of relevance to the Proposed Development are highlighted in bold)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An awe-inspiring simplicity of landform and landcover and a perception of ‘emptiness’, so that the extent of the peatland often seems greater than it is.• Arresting, isolated mountains rise up in stark contrast to surrounding peatland and glens, amplifying the awe-inspiring qualities of each.• A remote interior where access involves long distances and lengthy time via penetrating glens or crossing over and around rugged landforms and waterbodies.• An extensive area of peatland with a prevailing strong sense of naturalness.• A secluded, elevated and remote interior plateau shielded by an outer rim of hills, in which there is a strong sense of solitude, sanctuary and risk.		
Assessment of Key Attributes and Qualities			
Qualities of Relevance to the Proposed Development	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Impact Magnitude
An awe-inspiring simplicity of landform and landcover and a perception of ‘emptiness’, so that the extent of the peatland often seems greater than it is.	High	<p>The Proposed Development would be located in a spatially separate landscape, 3 km to the south of the WLA at the closest point. There would be no direct effects on the simple landform and landcover within the WLA.</p> <p>ZTV coverage across the WLA is limited to very localised peaks at Cnoc Meadhonach and Cnoc Ruighean na Sgainn From these vantage points the construction activities and new steel lattice towers would represent discreet elements in the background landscape. Accordingly, the influence of the Proposed Development on the existing sense of isolation and wildness within the WLA would be limited.</p>	Construction: Low Operation: Low
Arresting, isolated mountains rise up in stark contrast to surrounding peatland and	High	There would be no direct effects on the isolated mountains which would result in reducing the	Construction: Low Operation: Low

glens, amplifying the awe-inspiring qualities of each.		Given the intervening distances, views towards the Proposed Development would be restricted to the peaks. Any views would be seen in conjunction with other built elements such as the existing windfarm.	
A remote interior where access involves long distances and lengthy time via penetrating glens or crossing over and around rugged landforms and waterbodies.	Medium	The Proposed Development would not reduce the remoteness of the interior of the WLA. All effects would be indirect only and relate to the increase in humanity artefacts and access tracks outwith the WLA boundary.	Construction: Low Operation: Low
An extensive area of peatland with a prevailing strong sense of naturalness.	High	There would be no direct impact on the peatland landscapes within the WLA and therefore no effect on this Key Attribute/Quality.	Construction: None Operation: None
A secluded, elevated and remote interior plateau shielded by an outer rim of hills, in which there is a strong sense of solitude, sanctuary and risk.	High	There would be no direct impact on the secluded, interior plateau landscapes within the WLA and therefore no effect on this Key Attribute/Quality. The Proposed development would exert minor influence upon the existing sense of solitude and isolation within these areas as a result of an increase in human activity outwith the WLA boundary. .	Construction: Low Operation: Low
Assessment of Effects			
Landscape Sensitivity	Within the Study Area, the WLA encompasses parts of LCT 135 Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland. Which has a landscape sensitivity to changes of the type proposed within these areas has been identified as typically ranging from Medium to High. This reflects the high value of the WLA in combination with slightly reduced susceptibility to change across localised areas. On balance, the landscape sensitivity across parts of the WLA within the Study Area is considered to be High-Medium .		
Nature and Magnitude of Change	Section B of the Proposed Development would be located at a minimum distance of 3 km to the south of the WLA. Accordingly, the influence of the Proposed Development on its Special Qualities would be indirect and based upon views and there would be no direct effects on the landscape features and elements which contribute to the Key Qualities and Attributes of the WLA as a result of the Proposed Development. ZTV coverage across the SLA is extremely limited and is generally limited to a small number of isolated summits. From these very localised areas, potential views of the temporary construction activities and the towers during the operational phase would be restricted by the distance of view, in combination with the screening influence of intervening mountains and the scale of the receiving landscape. With reference to the landscape character assessment, the impact magnitude across the LCTs that coincide most closely with the WLA is typically Low during both construction and operation. This is primarily based upon parts of the LCTs that are located in closer proximity to the Proposed Development than the WLA. Accordingly, this is not considered to be representative of landscape change that would occur in relation to the WLA. In summary, the impact magnitude upon the WLA would be Negligible during construction and operation. Across the vast majority of the WLA there would be no views and no influence on the Key Attributes and Qualities of the designation.		
Significance of Effect	The effects on the WLA and its Key Attributes and Qualities would be limited based on its spatial separation from the Proposed Development, in combination with the limited ZTV cove coverage, which reflects the screening influence of the intervening mountains.		

In summary, the construction activities and new steel lattice towers would represent extremely discreet additions to the background landscape to the south. The overall effect would be **Negligible** (not significant) during construction and operation. Across the vast majority of the WLA there would be no views and no effect. Accordingly, it is assessed that the integrity of the WLA would not be compromised.

Table 7: Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA

Baseline Description	
Description	The Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA is located in the eastern part of the Study Area, The Section B alignment traverses the SLA east of the River Fleet valley for a distance of c. 1 km. The SLA encompasses an area of rolling moorland hills, punctuated by a series of southeast orientated glens, straths and lochs, and edged to a narrow strip of farmed coastal shelf running along the shoreline. The character of this area is distinguished by its composition of contrasting landscape features – the contrasting landform, landcover and landscape pattern that empathise the distinction of each other.
Associated LCTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting LCT (145) • Coastal Farmland & Woodlands LCT (146) • Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT (135) • Strath – Caithness & Sutherland LCT (142)
Special Qualities (those of relevance to the Proposed Development are highlighted in bold)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The combination and juxtaposition of the rolling moorland hills, linear glens, the coastal shelf and tidal basin creates a diverse yet connected landscape composition, which is experienced in sequence when travelling along the A9 and from the railway. • The hill area contains straths and glens with differing local character derived from the varying combination of native woodland, forest plantation, moorland and water bodies. Providing sheltered access routes through the hills and physical and visual connections between the interior and the coastal shelf. • Views are obtained from some areas of wind turbines and overhead electricity lines whose large scale and man-made character can seem to diminish the scale of the interior hills and their wildness qualities. • A simple uniform, rolling plateau of interior broad, interwoven rounded hills, clothed by an open mosaic of heather and grass moorland. As this composition is simple and extends throughout the area. • Skelbo Castle is a dominant feature on the south-side of Loch Fleet, sitting atop a hill commanding excellent views of the loch. • The linear coastal shelf, is defined by the edge formed by the adjacent hill slopes, providing expansive views both along the coastal edge and outwards across the open sea. Interior views are limited by the convex nature of the hill slopes. • To the east lies a narrow fertile coastal shelf contains the main road and rail routes in this area, and small farms and settlements. A distinctive field pattern of pasture runs parallel to the coast, • The Mound is a prominent and man-made causeway over which the main A9 coastal road passes. Engineered by T Telford in 1814 –16.

Assessment of Special Qualities			
Special Qualities of Relevance to the Proposed Development	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Impact Magnitude
The combination and juxtaposition of the rolling moorland hills, linear glens, the coastal shelf and tidal basin creates a diverse yet connected landscape composition, which is experienced in sequence when travelling along the A9 and from the railway.	High-Medium	<p>The Proposed Development would transect a short section (c. 1 km) of the rolling hills in the southern extents of the SLA. The majority of the Proposed Development would be located outwith the SLA.</p> <p>The construction activities would occur within a relatively localised section of the SLA resulting in direct effects on the moorland hills. The Proposed Development would be viewed as extending south-west from the SLA and views would be experienced from hill summits and valleys. Within the valleys, some long-distance views are screened by topography and vegetation which consists of plantation trees on the slopes or native woodland within the valley floor.</p> <p>Once operational, the towers would be a permanent feature within the southwestern portion of the SLA and visible across long-distance within the expansive plateau landscape and within the valleys would be visible across the farmed landscape, from distances up to 2 km, some views will be screened by localised vegetation and topography. At greater distances the valley tree cover and landform would restrict views to the towers, but some would remain visible as they ascend to higher ground.</p>	<p>Construction: Major-Moderate</p> <p>Operation: Moderate</p>
To the east lies a narrow fertile coastal shelf contains the main road and rail routes in this area, and small farms and settlements. A distinctive field pattern of pasture runs parallel to the coast,	High-Medium	There would be no direct effects on the coastal shelf landscapes of the eastern SLA as a result of the Proposed Development.	<p>Construction: Low-None</p> <p>Operation: None</p>
The linear coastal shelf, is defined by the edge formed by the adjacent hill slopes, providing expansive views both along the coastal edge and outwards across the open sea. Interior views are limited by the convex nature of the hill slopes.	Medium	<p>The Proposed Development would result in no direct change to features within the linear coastal shelf.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would not detract from views experienced within the SLA along the coastal edge or outwards across the open sea. Partially screened views of the Proposed Development would be experienced towards interior landscapes in the region of the Mound.</p>	<p>Construction: Negligible</p> <p>Operation: Negligible</p>
A simple uniform, rolling plateau of interior broad, interwoven rounded hills, clothed by an open mosaic of heather and grass moorland. As this composition is simple and extends throughout the area.	High	The construction operations and new steel lattice towers would be located within a small area of the open moorland plateau and result in a change to the relatively simple composition of the SLA. Where views occur of the Proposed Development, they would be relatively localised and experienced from upper slopes and summits within the SLA. Views towards the Proposed Development will occasionally include existing wind turbines or OHLs and will in these instances diminish the scale of the interior hills and their wildness qualities.	<p>Construction: Major- Moderate</p> <p>Operation: Moderate</p>
The Mound is a prominent and man-made causeway over which the main A9 coastal	High	Views towards the Proposed Development from both the Mound and Skelbo Castle would be minimised by intervening vegetation and topography.	Construction: Negligible

<p>road passes. Engineered by Telford in 1814 –16.</p> <p>Skelbo Castle is a dominant feature on the south-side of Loch Fleet, sitting atop a hill commanding excellent views of the loch.</p>		<p>The Proposed Development would have very limited impacts on the prominence of the Mound.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would have very limited impact on the dominance of Skelbo Castle</p>	<p>Operation: Negligible</p>
Assessment of Effects			
<p>Landscape Sensitivity</p>	<p>Within the Study Area, the SLA encompasses parts of two LCTs. Landscape sensitivity to changes of the type proposed within these areas has been identified as typically ranging from Medium to High. This reflects the high value of the SLA in combination with slightly reduced susceptibility to change across localised areas.</p> <p>On balance, the landscape sensitivity across parts of the SLA within the Study Area is considered to be High.</p>		
<p>Nature and Magnitude of Change</p>	<p>A short section of Section B (c. 1km) would be located within the Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA. Accordingly there would be direct effects on the SLA as a result of the Proposed Development within a relatively small area, however indirect effects as a result of visibility of the Proposed Development would occur primarily from upland elements of the SLA. There would be very limited visibility or no visibility of Section B from valley and coastal elements of the SLA.</p> <p>Potential views of the construction activities across the moorland plateau within the SLA would be tempered by the distance of view in combination with the relatively low-level nature of construction works / vehicle movements. Within the valleys, tree cover, and topography would restrict longer-range views, but from closer range, often 1km, as the Proposed Development crosses the valleys, the construction activities would be visible and prominent.</p> <p>Once operational, the towers would be visible from open moorland vantage points. Given the distance of view, they would represent relatively discreet additions to the background landscape enclosing the wider moorland and hills, however on occasions the towers would combine with existing OHLs or wind turbines. Within the valleys the towers would be visible in closer proximity as they traverse the valley. Intervening vegetation would restrict longer-range views</p> <p>In summary, the impact magnitude upon the SLA would be locally Medium during construction and operation. This would diminish across more northern parts of the SLA, where ZTV coverage is more limited, and / or views would be fully screened by intervening woodland and topography.</p>		
<p>Significance of Effect</p>	<p>As described above, the effects on the Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA would be focussed on its southeastern extents in the upland landscapes in the region of Loch Fleet where direct effects would occur. The influence of Section B alignment on the SLA would diminish steadily at increased distance. The effect would be locally Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) during construction and operation, with effects diminishing with greater distance across the SLA to the north-east. The Proposed Development would have very limited effects on the coastal aspects of the SLA.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that the integrity of the SLA would not be compromised by the Proposed Development.</p>		

1.5 Section C

1.5.1 The following designated or protected areas have been identified for assessment within Section C:

- National-level Landscape Designations:
 - Dornoch Firth NSA; and
 - Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA.
- Regional / Local-level Landscape Designations:
 - Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA.

1.5.2 Section C does not extend through any of these areas, hence there would be no direct effects. Accordingly, in each case the potential effects on existing Special Qualities would be indirect and restricted to those resulting from potential views of the Proposed Development within the wider landscape context.

Table 8: Dornoch Firth NSA

Baseline Description			
Description	The Dornoch Firth NSA is located on the south-eastern part of the Study Area, 4.5 km south-east of the Section C alignment. The NSA encompasses the linear landscape along the Firth, which is enclosed by rounded hills with a ground cover consisting primarily of heather moor and scree. The lower slopes incorporate areas of woodland and plantation forestry, as well as areas of pasture and arable farmland. The coastal landscape is characterised by a series of bays, sandy beaches, flats, shallows and promontories.		
Associated LCTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting LCT (145)Coastal Farmland & Woodlands LCT (146)Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty LCT (330)Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT (135)Strath – Caithness & Sutherland LCT (142)		
Special Qualities (those of relevance to the Proposed Development are highlighted in bold)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The contrast between the enclosed west and the expansive east.Inhabited surrounds within a wilder backdrop of hills and moors.A wide diversity of woodland cover.A rich variety of alluvial lands, dunes and links.The ever-changing firth.The tranquillity of an undeveloped coastline.Migdale, a microcosm of the wider Dornoch Firth.		
Assessment of Special Qualities			
Special Qualities of Relevance to the Proposed Development	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Impact Magnitude
The contrast between the enclosed west and the expansive east.	Medium	<p>The Proposed Development would be located in the wider landscape towards the western end of the Firth.</p> <p>The construction activities would be experienced at distance, and would be subject to screening by forestry extending across the upper slopes around the Firth, reducing their potential influence on westerly views.</p> <p>Once operational, the tops of the towers would be visible on the horizon within westerly views. At this distance they would represent relatively discreet components within the background landscape. There would be no influence upon expansive views to the east.</p>	<p>Construction: Low-Negligible</p> <p>Operation: Low</p>

Inhabited surrounds within a wilder backdrop of hills and moors.	High-Medium	<p>The construction operations and the steel lattice towers would be located in the distant hillsides and upland moorland extending around the firth.</p> <p>The vehicular movements associated with the construction activities would contrast with the wilder qualities of the existing backdrop. However, the overall influence of the construction activities would be tempered by their typically low-lying nature, and the presence of intervening forestry across the intervening slopes.</p> <p>Once operational, the tops of the towers would be visible on the horizon from more open vantage points within the NSA. These would form a new linear component that would contrast with the wilder qualities of the existing backdrop. However, the influence of the Proposed Development would be limited by the distance of view, and the large scale of the receiving landscape.</p>	<p>Construction: Low-Negligible</p> <p>Operation: Low-Negligible</p>
A wide diversity of woodland cover.	Medium	There would be no loss of woodland within the NSA. Conversely, the existing tree cover would restrict outward views towards the Proposed Development from parts of the NSA, resulting in more fragmented, indirect effects.	<p>Construction: Negligible</p> <p>Operation: Negligible</p>
The tranquillity of an undeveloped coastline.	High	As described above, the construction operations and the steel lattice towers would be located in the context of the distant hillsides extending around the firth. Accordingly, they would be geographically separate from the low-lying, undeveloped coastline within the NSA, and represent background components in the wider landscape.	<p>Construction: Negligible</p> <p>Operation: Low-Negligible</p>
Assessment of Effects			
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>Within the Study Area, the NSA encompasses parts of five LCTs. Landscape sensitivity to changes of the type proposed within these areas has been identified as typically ranging from Medium to High-Medium. (High sensitivity was ascribed to the Coastal Farmland and Woodlands LCT, which accounts for a relatively small geographic areas of the NSA at greatest distance from the Section C alignment). This reflects the high value of the NSA in combination with slightly reduced susceptibility to change across localised areas.</p> <p>On balance, the landscape sensitivity across parts of the NSA within the Study Area is considered to be High-Medium.</p>		
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	<p>There would be no direct effects upon the Dornoch Firth NSA. Instead, Section C of the Proposed Development would be located at a minimum distance of 4.5 km to the north-west. Accordingly, the influence of the Proposed Development on its Special Qualities would be indirect and based upon views.</p> <p>Potential views of the construction activities would be tempered by the distance of view in combination with the relatively low-level nature of construction works / vehicle movements, which would be subject to screening by intervening tree cover.</p> <p>Once operational, the tops of the towers would be visible on the skyline from more open vantage points. Given the distance of view, they would represent relatively discreet additions to the background landscape enclosing the wider firth, and would be spatially and geographically separate from the coastline.</p>		

	<p>With reference to the landscape character assessment, the impact magnitude across the LCTs that coincide most closely with the NSA has been identified as typically ranging from Low to Negligible during both construction and operation. This is considered to be broadly representative of landscape change that would occur in relation to the NSA.</p> <p>In summary, the impact magnitude upon the NSA would be Low-Negligible during construction and operation. This would diminish across more easterly parts of the NSA, where ZTV coverage is more limited, and / or views would be fully screened by intervening woodland.</p>
Significance of Effect	<p>As described above, the effects on the Dornoch Firth NSA and its Special Qualities would be limited based on its spatial separation from the Proposed Development, in combination with the presence of intervening woodland and tree cover that would restrict potential views of the Section C alignment. The construction activities and steel lattice towers would represent relatively discreet additions to the background landscape enclosing the firth.</p> <p>From western parts of the NSA in closest proximity to the Proposed development, the overall effect would be Minor Adverse (not significant) during construction and operation. The effects upon eastern parts of the NSA would steadily diminish at greater distance from the Section C alignment. Large parts of the NSA would be completely unaffected. In summary, there would be no significant effects to the Special Qualities of the NSA and its integrity would not therefore be compromised.</p>

Table 9: Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA

Baseline Description	
Description	<p>The Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA extends between Ullapool in the north-west to the mountain of Ben Wyvis in the south-east, 2.6 km south-west of the Section C alignment. It encompasses a complex composition of high and steep mountains within the central section, which transitions to a series of knolls (cnocans) and open peatland hills in the north, and rounded hills and plateaux in the south. The challenging terrain and quiet, uninhabited glens create a sense of isolation and wildness, albeit there are some isolated estate buildings and forestry activity on the outer edges. The area is primarily used for deer stalking, fishing and hydro-electric generation, as well as hill walking. It is also enjoyed in views from adjoining areas, including those from the A837 to the north.</p>
Associated LCTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rugged Mountain Massif – Caithness & Sutherland LCT (139); • Rounded Mountain Massif LCT (329); • Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes – Ross & Cromarty LCT (330); and • Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT (135).
Special Qualities (those of relevance to the Proposed Development are highlighted in bold)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of awe-inspiring massive, high rounded hills and plateaux, as well as steep rocky peaks and ridges, offering elevated panoramas. • Long and deep penetrating glens with steep, arresting side slopes that limit views, some containing access routes and clearly influenced by estate management.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very large interior with a strong sense of remoteness and sanctuary that seems even more extensive where appearing to continue into neighbouring wild land areas. • Rocky hills, cnocan and peatland slopes that appear simple and awe-inspiring at a broad scale, but harbour intricate features at a local level, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude. 			
Assessment of Special Qualities			
Special Qualities of Relevance to the Proposed Development	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Impact Magnitude
A range of awe-inspiring massive, high rounded hills and plateaux, as well as steep rocky peaks and ridges, offering elevated panoramas.	High-Medium	The Proposed Development would be located in the wider landscape towards the north-east. ZTV coverage across the WLA is predominantly limited to the summits and north-facing slopes along its northern edge. From the most open vantage points, the construction works and steel lattice towers would represent new elements of human activity / presence within the landscape to the north-east, on the opposite site of Strathcarron. The activities and vehicle movements of the construction phase, and the operational Section C alignment would be spatially separate from the rounded hills and mountain peaks within the WLA, reducing their potential influence on existing elevated panoramas.	Construction: Low-Negligible Operation: Low
A very large interior with a strong sense of remoteness and sanctuary that seems even more extensive where appearing to continue into neighbouring wild land areas.	High	As described above, ZTV coverage is predominantly limited to the northern edge of the WLA. Potential views from the more remote interior would be limited to very localised peaks, where the construction works and the steel lattice towers would represent discreet components in the background landscape, beyond intervening summits. As such, the potential influence on the existing sense of remoteness would be very limited.	Construction: Negligible Operation: Negligible
Rocky hills, cnocan and peatland slopes that appear simple and awe-inspiring at a broad scale, but harbour intricate features at a local level, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude.	High	As described above, the Proposed Development would be located in the spatially separate landscape to the north, on the opposite side of Strathcarron. The construction works and steel lattice towers associated with Section C would represent new elements of human activity / presence, with the potential to erode the sense of sanctuary and solitude. However, the influence of the Proposed Development would be tempered by the localised nature of ZTV coverage, and the large scale of the receiving landscape. In the most open views, the construction works and the steel lattice towers would represent background components in the wider landscape.	Construction: Negligible Operation: Low-Negligible
Assessment of Effects			
Landscape Sensitivity	Within the Study Area, the WLA encompasses parts of four LCTs. Landscape sensitivity to changes of the type proposed within these areas has been identified as ranging from Medium to High. This reflects the high value of the WLA in combination with slightly reduced susceptibility to change across localised areas, which are primarily associated with its outer edge.		

	With reference to the reduced susceptibility of the WLA based upon its more remote central areas, landscape sensitivity across parts of the WLA within the Study Area is considered to be High .
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	<p>There would be no direct effects upon the WLA. Instead, Section C of the Proposed Development would be located at a minimum distance of 2.6 km to the north-east. Accordingly, the influence of the Proposed Development on its Special Qualities would be indirect and based upon views.</p> <p>Potential views of the construction activities would be restricted to the summits and upper slopes on the northern edge of the WLA. The activities and vehicle movements would contrast with the wild and remote qualities of the landscape. However, the overall influence would be limited by the distance of view in combination with the relatively low-level nature of construction works / vehicle movements, which would be subject to screening by intervening tree cover.</p> <p>Once operational, the towers would be visible from the northern edge of the WLA in the vicinity of Cnoc a Bhreac Leathaid, Carn a Chlaiginn, and Carn Salachaidh. In the most open views the towers would be visible on the skyline to the north, where they would form a new linear component in wider panoramas. As above, the steel lattice towers would contrast with the more natural and wild characteristics of the WLA. However, in the context of the large scale of the receiving landscape and the extensive panoramic views across surrounding mountains, the influence of the towers would be relatively limited. Instead, they would be experienced in the distance, on the opposite side of the Strathcarron valley. Accordingly, they would be spatially and geographically separate from the WLA reducing their influence upon its existing characteristics and Special Qualities.</p> <p>With reference to the landscape character assessment, the impact magnitude across the LCTs that coincide most closely with the WLA has been identified as typically ranging from Low to Negligible during both construction and operation. This is considered to be broadly representative of landscape change that would occur in relation to the WLA.</p> <p>In summary, the impact magnitude upon the WLA would be Negligible at most during construction and operation. This would be focused across the northern edge of the WLA in closest proximity to the Proposed Development (in the vicinity of Cnoc a Bhreac Leathaid, Carn a Chlaiginn, and Carn Salachaidh). The influence of the Proposed Development would diminish abruptly across more southern parts of the WLA (towards its more remote interior) where ZTV coverage is extremely limited / completely absent across extended areas.</p>
Significance of Effect	<p>As described above, the effects on the Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA would be restricted to localised areas along its northern edge. The influence of the Proposed Development on these areas would be limited based on its spatial and geographical separation from the Proposed Development, on the opposite side of Strathcarron.</p> <p>From northern parts of the WLA in closest proximity to the Proposed development, the overall effect would be Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) during construction and operation. The effects upon southern parts of the WLA (comprising the vast majority of the WLA, including its more remote interior) would reduce abruptly south of Carn Salachaidh. With reference to the ZTV, potential views of the Proposed Development from these area would be extremely limited, and completely absent across lower lying slopes and glens. Accordingly, across the majority of the WLA the effect would be Negligible (not significant). The integrity of the WLA would not therefore be compromised.</p>

Table 10: Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA

Baseline Description	
Description	The Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA covers an extensive area of mountains and moorland between Loch Glascarnoch and the head of Loch Broom, 8.1 km south-west of the Section C alignment. This encompasses a combination of rugged terrain, high summits enclosing sheltered glens with plantation and native woodland, as well as upland lochans. There is very limited habitation and access, which combine to create a sense of remoteness and solitude. The peaks and ridges in the northern and eastern parts of the SLA are characterised by more extensive areas of gentle slopes and high plateau summits.
Associated LCTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rugged Mountain Massif – Caithness & Sutherland LCT (139); • Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT (135); and • Strath – Caithness & Sutherland LCT (142) – across an extremely localised area only.
Special Qualities (those of relevance to the Proposed Development are highlighted in bold)	<p>Rugged Mountains and Lonely Glens and Spectacular Panoramic Views</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A complex pattern of interconnected and remote groups of mountains, penetrated by long glens and strongly enhanced by a virtual absence of habitation, offers a powerful sense of isolation and wildness amidst physically challenging terrain. From many of the glens, it is difficult to see the mountain tops and, from the tops, it is difficult to see the glen floors. • In the south-west of this area, the Fannichs are a cluster of high, well-defined peaks within a relatively small area. Most of the main summits are connected by a continuous, high ridgeline which makes them popular for high-level walks. • From the glens, it is very difficult to see the mountain tops and, from the tops, it is difficult to see the glen floors. • Further north, the broad peaks in the Freevater area – Seana Bhraigh, Carn Bàn and An Socach – give the experience of a remote high plateau which drops off dramatically on its northern side. • The view north-west through the Dirrie More across the waters of Loch Droma to the distant peak of An Teallach often captures the attention of travellers en route to the west coast. This channelled view is particularly striking on a clear winter's day when Loch Droma is frozen over and the strata of the cliffs of An Teallach are clearly etched by snow. • The view down Strath More from the elevated position of the A832 near its head, is a striking one and the viewpoint here is a popular stop for tourists. The lush pastoral quality of the valley floor and its attendant diverse woodland contrasts with, and is tightly framed by the steep rugged hillsides above. • The remains of a number of cleared townships survive in Glencalvie. • A series of quiet, uninhabited glens, punctuated only by a few lonely bothies, and remote coires extend towards the core of the mountain heartland, contributing to a landscape where solitude and isolation are key characteristics. <p>Impressive Natural Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The easily accessible Corrieshalloch Gorge, one of Britain's most impressive examples of a deep box canyon through which drop the spectacular Falls of Measach, offers an intimate and exciting landscape experience of striking geology, natural processes and exclusive ravine habitats.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Alladale Pinewood and Amat Forest, the largest expanse of ancient Caledonian Pinewood in Scotland, provide a substantial, visible link to the native forest landscape which once extended over much of the Highlands.		
Assessment of Special Qualities			
Special Qualities of Relevance to the Proposed Development	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Impact Magnitude
Absence of habitation, offers a powerful sense of isolation and wildness amidst physically challenging terrain.	High	The Proposed Development would be located in the spatially separate landscape, 8.1 km to the north-east of the SLA at the closest point. ZTV coverage across the SLA is limited to very localised peaks at Cnoc na Tuppat and Carn an Lochan. From these vantage points the construction activities and steel lattice towers would represent discreet elements in the background landscape. Accordingly, the influence of the Proposed Development on the existing sense of isolation and wildness within the SLA would be extremely limited.	Construction: Negligible Operation: Negligible
The remains of a number of cleared townships survive in Glencalvie.	Medium	Glencalvie is located on the south-western edge of the Study Area, 9.4 km south-west of the Section C alignment. The valley is completely outside the ZTV.	Construction: None Operation: None
A series of quiet, uninhabited glens, punctuated only by a few lonely bothies, and remote coires extend towards the core of the mountain heartland, contributing to a landscape where solitude and isolation are key characteristics.	High	ZTV coverage across the glens within the SLA is completely absent, hence the Proposed development would exert no influence upon the existing sense of solitude and isolation within these areas.	Construction: None Operation: None
Assessment of Effects			
Landscape Sensitivity	Within the Study Area, the SLA encompasses parts of three LCTs. Landscape sensitivity to changes of the type proposed within these areas has been identified as typically ranging from Medium to High. This reflects the high value of the SLA in combination with slightly reduced susceptibility to change across localised areas. On balance, the landscape sensitivity across parts of the SLA within the Study Area is considered to be High-Medium .		

<p>Nature of change and Impact Magnitude</p>	<p>Section C of the Proposed Development would be located at a minimum distance of 8.1 km to the north-east of the SLA. Accordingly, the influence of the Proposed Development on its Special Qualities would be indirect and based upon views.</p> <p>ZTV coverage across the SLA is extremely limited, and focused on a small number of isolated summits. From these very localised areas, potential views of the temporary construction activities and the towers during the operational phase would be restricted by the distance of view, in combination with the screening influence of intervening mountains and the scale of the receiving landscape.</p> <p>With reference to the landscape character assessment, the impact magnitude across the LCTs that coincide most closely with the SLA is typically Low during both construction and operation. This is primarily based upon parts of the LCTs that are located in closer proximity to the Proposed Development than the SLA. Accordingly, this is not considered to be representative of landscape change that would occur in relation to the SLA.</p> <p>In summary, the impact magnitude upon the NSA would be Negligible during construction and operation. Across the vast majority of the SLA there would be no views.</p>
<p>Significance of Effect</p>	<p>As described above, the effects on the SLA and its Special Qualities would be limited based on its spatial separation from the Proposed Development, in combination with the limited ZTV coverage, which reflects the screening influence of the intervening mountains.</p> <p>In summary, the construction activities and the steel lattice towers would represent extremely discreet additions to the background landscape to the north-east. The overall effect would be Minor (not significant) during construction and operation. Across the vast majority of the SLA there would be no views and no effect. As such, the integrity of the SLA would not be compromised.</p>

1.6 Section D

1.6.1 The following designated or protected areas have been identified for assessment within Section D:

- National-level Landscape Designations:
 - Dornoch Firth NSA; and
 - Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA.
- Regional / Local-level Landscape Designations:
 - Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA; and
 - Ben Wyvis SLA.

1.6.2 Section D does not extend through any of these areas, hence there would be no direct effects. Accordingly, in each case the potential effects on existing Special Qualities would be indirect and restricted to those resulting from potential views of the Proposed Development within the wider landscape context.

Table 11: Dornoch Firth NSA

Baseline Description			
Description	The Dornoch Firth NSA is located on the north-eastern part of the Study Area, 4.0 km east of the Section D alignment at the closest point. The NSA encompasses the linear landscape along the Firth, which is enclosed by rounded hills with a ground cover consisting primarily of heather moor and scree. The lower slopes incorporate areas of woodland and plantation forestry, as well as areas of pasture and arable farmland. The coastal landscape is characterised by a series of bays, sandy beaches, flats, shallows and promontories.		
Associated LCTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting LCT (145)Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty LCT (330)Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT (135)Strath – Caithness & Sutherland LCT (142)		
Special Qualities (those of relevance to the Proposed Development are highlighted in bold)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The contrast between the enclosed west and the expansive east.Inhabited surrounds within a wilder backdrop of hills and moors.A wide diversity of woodland cover.A rich variety of alluvial lands, dunes and links.The ever-changing firth.The tranquillity of an undeveloped coastline.Migdale, a microcosm of the wider Dornoch Firth.		
Assessment of Special Qualities			
Special Qualities of Relevance to the Proposed Development	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Impact Magnitude
The contrast between the enclosed west and the expansive east.	Medium	<p>Section D would be located towards the west / south-west of the NSA, beyond the slopes that rise on the southern side of the Firth. Accordingly, potential views of the Proposed Development would be subject to screening based on the intervening landform. The clearest views would be experienced from open vantage points on the northern side of the Firth, at greater distance from the alignment,</p> <p>The construction activities, including felling of forestry and temporary site traffic, would be partly visible. However, these elements would be located in a geographically separate part of the background landscape outside the Firth, reducing their potential influence on westerly views.</p> <p>Once operational, the tops of the towers would be visible on the horizon within westerly views. At a minimum distance of 4.0 km, they would represent relatively discreet components within the background landscape. There would be no influence upon expansive views to the east.</p>	<p>Construction: Low-Negligible</p> <p>Operation: Low</p>

Inhabited surrounds within a wilder backdrop of hills and moors.	High-Medium	<p>The construction operations and the steel lattice towers would be located in the distant hillsides and upland moorland extending around the Firth.</p> <p>The vehicular movements associated with the construction activities would contrast with the wilder qualities of the existing backdrop. However, the overall influence of the construction activities would be tempered by their typically low-lying nature, and the presence of intervening forestry across the intervening slopes.</p> <p>Once operational, the tops of the towers would be visible on the horizon from more open vantage points within the NSA – in particular those on the northern side of the Firth, which is located at a minimum distance of 5.4 km from the Section D alignment. The towers would form a new linear component that would contrast with the wilder qualities of the existing backdrop. However, the influence of the Proposed Development would be limited by the distance of view, and the large scale of the receiving landscape.</p>	<p>Construction: Low-Negligible</p> <p>Operation: Low-Negligible</p>
A wide diversity of woodland cover.	Medium	There would be no loss of woodland within the NSA. Conversely, the existing tree cover would restrict outward views towards the Proposed Development from parts of the NSA, resulting in more fragmented, indirect effects.	<p>Construction: Negligible</p> <p>Operation: Negligible</p>
The tranquillity of an undeveloped coastline.	High	As described above, the construction operations and the steel lattice towers would be located in the context of the distant hillsides extending around the Firth to the west / south-west. Accordingly, they would be geographically separate from the low-lying, undeveloped coastline within the NSA, and represent background components in the wider landscape.	<p>Construction: Negligible</p> <p>Operation: Low-Negligible</p>
Assessment of Effects			
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>Within the Section D Study Area, the NSA encompasses parts of four LCTs. Landscape sensitivity to changes of the type proposed within these areas has been identified as typically ranging from Medium to High-Medium. This reflects the high value of the NSA in combination with slightly reduced susceptibility to change across localised areas.</p> <p>On balance, the landscape sensitivity across parts of the NSA within the Study Area is considered to be High-Medium.</p>		
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	<p>There would be no direct effects upon the Dornoch Firth NSA. Instead, Section D of the Proposed Development would be located at a minimum distance of 4.0 km to the west. Accordingly, the influence of the Proposed Development on its Special Qualities would be indirect and based upon views.</p> <p>Potential views of the construction activities would be restricted by the rising landform that encloses the Firth, and accordingly would be focused on parts of the NSA on the northern side of the Firth. From open vantage points, the influence of the construction works would be further tempered by the distance of view in combination with the relatively low-level nature of construction works / vehicle movements, which would be subject to screening by intervening tree cover.</p> <p>Once operational, the tops of the towers at the northern end of Section D would be visible on the skyline from more open vantage points on the northern side of the Firth. Given the distance of view, they would represent relatively discreet additions to the background landscape enclosing the wider firth, and</p>		

	<p>would be spatially and geographically separate from the coastline. Central and southern parts of the Section D alignment would be fully screened by the intervening landform.</p> <p>With reference to the landscape character assessment, the impact magnitude across the parts of the LCTs that coincide most closely with the NSA has been identified as typically Low during both construction and operation (excluding localised effects that occur across parts of these LCTs that coincide with the alignment, or extend in close proximity to it). This is considered to be broadly representative of landscape change that would occur in relation to the NSA.</p> <p>In summary, the impact magnitude upon the NSA would be Low at most during construction and operation based on open views from the northern side of the Firth. However, the influence of the Proposed Development would drop off across parts of the NSA on the southern side of the Firth, as well as more easterly parts of the NSA (at greater distance from the alignment), where ZTV coverage is more limited, and / or views would be fully screened by intervening woodland. As such, there would be no discernible change across large parts of the NSA and the majority of impacts would be Negligible or None.</p>
Significance of Effect	<p>As described above, the effects on the Dornoch Firth NSA and its Special Qualities would be limited based on its spatial separation from the Proposed Development, in combination with the landform around the Firth, and the presence of intervening woodland and tree cover that would restrict potential views of the alignment. The construction activities and steel lattice towers would represent relatively discreet additions to the background landscape enclosing the Firth.</p> <p>From the north-western parts of the NSA (on the northern side of the Firth), the overall effect would be Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) during construction and operation. The effects upon parts of the NSA further to the east, and on the southern side of the Firth, would be far more limited based on the limited views of Section D. Large parts of the NSA in these areas would be completely unaffected.</p> <p>In summary, there would be no significant effects to the Special Qualities of the NSA. Accordingly, it is assessed that the integrity of the NSA would not be compromised.</p>

Table 12: Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA

Baseline Description	
Description	<p>The Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA extends between Ullapool in the north-west to the mountain of Ben Wyvis in the south-east, 450 m west of the Section D alignment at the closest point (Tower S50). It encompasses a complex composition of high and steep mountains within the central section, which transitions to a series of knolls (cnocans) and open peatland hills in the north, and rounded hills and plateaux in the south. The challenging terrain and quiet, uninhabited glens create a sense of isolation and wildness, albeit there are some isolated estate buildings and forestry activity on the outer edges. The area is primarily used for deer stalking, fishing and hydro-electric generation, as well as hill walking. It is also enjoyed in views from adjoining areas, including those from the A837 to the north.</p>
Associated LCTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rugged Mountain Massif – Caithness & Sutherland LCT (139); • Rounded Mountain Massif LCT (329); • Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes – Ross & Cromarty LCT (330);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT (135); and• Rounded Rocky Hills - Ross & Cromarty (331).		
Special Qualities (those of relevance to the Proposed Development are highlighted in bold)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A range of awe-inspiring massive, high rounded hills and plateaux, as well as steep rocky peaks and ridges, offering elevated panoramas.• Long and deep penetrating glens with steep, arresting side slopes that limit views, some containing access routes and clearly influenced by estate management.• A very large interior with a strong sense of remoteness and sanctuary that seems even more extensive where appearing to continue into neighbouring wild land areas.• Rocky hills, cnocan and peatland slopes that appear simple and awe-inspiring at a broad scale, but harbour intricate features at a local level, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude.		
Assessment of Special Qualities			
Special Qualities of Relevance to the Proposed Development	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Impact Magnitude
A range of awe-inspiring massive, high rounded hills and plateaux, as well as steep rocky peaks and ridges, offering elevated panoramas.	High-Medium	The Proposed Development would be located in the landscape to the east of the WLA, extending through areas of open moorland. ZTV coverage across the WLA is predominantly focused across the summits and upper slopes on the eastern edge of the WLA, including Cnoc a' Bhreac Leathaid, Carn a Chlaiginn and Carn an Laith-bhaid, as well as higher summits located slightly further to the west including Carn Salachaidh, Sron na Saobhaidhe, and Carn Cas nan Gabhar. From these vantage points, the construction works and steel lattice towers would represent new elements of human activity / presence within the landscape to the east. However, these elements would be experienced in the context of plantation forestry, within a landscape context of massive scale. Potential views from other parts of the WLA would be subject to screening by the intervening landform.	Construction: Medium-Low Operation: Medium-Low
A very large interior with a strong sense of remoteness and sanctuary that seems even more extensive where appearing to continue into neighbouring wild land areas.	High	As described above, ZTV coverage is focused on the eastern edge of the WLA. Potential views from the more remote interior would be limited to very localised peaks, where the construction works and the steel lattice towers would represent discreet components in the background landscape, beyond intervening summits. As such, the potential influence on the existing sense of remoteness would be very limited. Large parts of the WLA interior would be completely unaffected.	Construction: Negligible Operation: Negligible
Rocky hills, cnocan and peatland slopes that appear simple and awe-inspiring at a broad scale, but harbour intricate features at a local level, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude.	High	As described above, the Proposed Development would be located in the landscape to the east, in the context of open moorland and plantation forestry. The construction works and steel lattice towers associated with Section D would represent new elements of human activity / presence, with the potential to erode the sense of sanctuary and solitude. However, the influence of the Proposed Development would be focused upon relatively localised areas on the eastern edge of the WLA. Across all other areas the influence would be tempered by the	Construction: Low Operation: Low

		intervening landform (reflected in the localised nature of ZTV coverage), and the large scale of the receiving landscape.	
Assessment of Effects			
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>Within the Section D Study Area, the WLA encompasses parts of five LCTs. Landscape sensitivity to changes of the type proposed within these areas has been identified as ranging from Medium to High. This reflects the high value of the WLA in combination with its susceptibility to change based on the lack of access and built features that contribute towards the existing sense of wildness. The susceptibility of the WLA is slightly reduced along its outer eastern edge, due to the presence of large scale commercial plantation forestry and associated tracks in the neighbouring landscape (which detract from the sense of solitude prevalent in other parts of the WLA).</p> <p>With reference to the susceptibility of the WLA across its more remote central areas, landscape sensitivity of the WLA within the Study Area is considered to be High.</p>		
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	<p>There would be no direct effects upon the WLA. Instead, Section D of the Proposed Development would be located in the landscape to the east at a minimum distance of 450 m. Accordingly, the influence of the Proposed Development on its Special Qualities would be indirect and based upon views. Views of the construction activities would be focused on the summits and upper slopes on the eastern edge of the WLA, in particular Cnoc a' Bhreac Leathaid, Carn a Chlaiginn and Carn an Laith-bhaid. The activities and vehicle movements would contrast with the wild and remote qualities of the landscape. However, the overall influence would be limited by the relatively low-level nature of construction works / vehicle movements, and the massive scale of the receiving landscape. Across the vast majority of the WLA, including more remote interior areas, there would be no views of construction activities.</p> <p>Once operational, the towers would also be most visible from the eastern edge of the WLA in the vicinity of Cnoc a' Bhreac Leathaid, Carn a Chlaiginn and Carn an Laith-bhaid, as well as more limited views from higher summits slightly further west including Carn Salachaidh, Sron na Saobhaidhe, and Carn Cas nan Gabhar. In the most open views the towers would form a new linear component in wider panoramas to the east. As above, the steel lattice towers would contrast with the more natural and wild characteristics of the WLA. However, the towers would be located in the context of commercial plantation forestry, and would be experienced within a receiving landscape of vast scale. Accordingly, the influence of the towers would be relatively limited, and would diminish steadily across other parts of the WLA. Across the most remote central parts of the WLA (and lower-lying straths between the summits) views of the Proposed Development would be predominantly screened by the intervening landform.</p> <p>With reference to the landscape character assessment, the impact magnitude across parts of the LCTs that coincide most closely with the WLA has been identified as typically ranging from Low to Low-Negligible during both construction and operation (excluding localised effects that occur across parts of these LCTs that coincide with the alignment, or extend in close proximity to it). This is considered to be broadly representative of landscape change that would occur in relation to the WLA.</p> <p>In summary, the impact magnitude would be most pronounced on the eastern edge of the WLA (in closest proximity to Section D). From the eastern-most edge of the WLA, on the easterly-facing slopes of Cnoc a' Bhreac Leathaid, Carn a Chlaiginn and Carn an Laith-bhaid (encompassing the outer-most 400-500 m of the WLA), the impact magnitude would be Medium. However, the influence of the Proposed Development would diminish steadily at increased distance from the alignment. On balance, the impact magnitude on the wider WLA would be Low during construction and operation. This would be reduced Negligible or None across the interior of the WLA, where ZTV coverage is extremely limited / completely absent across extensive areas.</p>		

Significance of Effect	<p>As described above, the effects on the Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA would be focused across its eastern edge, in closest proximity to the Proposed Development, which would diminish steadily at increased distance from the alignment.</p> <p>From a very localised area, encompassing the outer-most 400-500 m of the WLA to the east of Cnoc a' Bhreac Leathaid, Carn a Chlaiginn and Carn an Laith-bhaid, the effects during construction and operation would be Major-Moderate Adverse (significant). This would account for an area of approximately 250 ha, within a WLA that encompasses a total landmass of 90,466 ha (equating to less than 0.3%). The effects would diminish steadily across western parts of the WLA at increased distance from the Section D alignment. The overall effect would be Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) during construction and operation. The effects upon more remote interior parts of the WLA (comprising the majority of the WLA) would be extremely limited, and completely absent across lower lying slopes and glens, where there would be no views and no effect. Accordingly, it is assessed that the integrity of the WLA would not be compromised.</p>
-------------------------------	---

Table 13: Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA

Baseline Description	
Description	The Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA covers an extensive area of mountains and moorland between Loch Glascarnoch and the head of Loch Broom, 6.4 km west of the Section D alignment at the closest point (Tower S50). This encompasses a combination of rugged terrain, high summits enclosing sheltered glens with plantation and native woodland, as well as upland lochans. There is very limited habitation and access, which combine to create a sense of remoteness and solitude. The peaks and ridges in the northern and eastern parts of the SLA are characterised by more extensive areas of gentle slopes and high plateau summits.
Associated LCTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rugged Mountain Massif – Caithness & Sutherland LCT (139); • Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT (135); • Strath – Caithness & Sutherland LCT (142) – across an extremely localised area only; and • Rounded Mountain Massif LCT (329) – across an extremely localised area only.
Special Qualities (those of relevance to the Proposed Development are highlighted in bold)	<p>Rugged Mountains and Lonely Glens and Spectacular Panoramic Views</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A complex pattern of interconnected and remote groups of mountains, penetrated by long glens and strongly enhanced by a virtual absence of habitation, offers a powerful sense of isolation and wildness amidst physically challenging terrain. From many of the glens, it is difficult to see the mountain tops and, from the tops, it is difficult to see the glen floors. • In the south-west of this area, the Fannichs are a cluster of high, well-defined peaks within a relatively small area. Most of the main summits are connected by a continuous, high ridgeline which makes them popular for high-level walks. <p>From the glens, it is very difficult to see the mountain tops and, from the tops, it is difficult to see the glen floors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further north, the broad peaks in the Freevater area – Seana Bhraigh, Carn Bàn and An Socach – give the experience of a remote high plateau which drops off dramatically on its northern side.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The view north-west through the Dirrie More across the waters of Loch Droma to the distant peak of An Teallach often captures the attention of travellers en route to the west coast. This channelled view is particularly striking on a clear winter's day when Loch Droma is frozen over and the strata of the cliffs of An Teallach are clearly etched by snow. The view down Strath More from the elevated position of the A832 near its head, is a striking one and the viewpoint here is a popular stop for tourists. The lush pastoral quality of the valley floor and its attendant diverse woodland contrasts with, and is tightly framed by the steep rugged hillsides above. The remains of a number of cleared townships survive in Glencalvie. A series of quiet, uninhabited glens, punctuated only by a few lonely bothies, and remote coires extend towards the core of the mountain heartland, contributing to a landscape where solitude and isolation are key characteristics. <p>Impressive Natural Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The easily accessible Corrieshalloch Gorge, one of Britain's most impressive examples of a deep box canyon through which drop the spectacular Falls of Measach, offers an intimate and exciting landscape experience of striking geology, natural processes and exclusive ravine habitats. Alladale Pinewood and Amat Forest, the largest expanse of ancient Caledonian Pinewood in Scotland, provide a substantial, visible link to the native forest landscape which once extended over much of the Highlands.
--	---

Assessment of Special Qualities

Special Qualities of Relevance to the Proposed Development	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Impact Magnitude
Absence of habitation, offers a powerful sense of isolation and wildness amidst physically challenging terrain.	High	The Proposed Development would be located in the spatially separate landscape, 6.4 km to the east of the SLA at the closest point. ZTV coverage across the SLA is limited to very localised peaks at Cnoc na Tuppat and Amat Forest. From these vantage points the construction activities and steel lattice towers would represent discreet elements in the background landscape. Accordingly, the influence of the Proposed Development on the existing sense of isolation and wildness within the SLA would be extremely limited.	Construction: Negligible Operation: Negligible
The remains of a number of cleared townships survive in Glencalvie.	Medium	Glencalvie is located on the western edge of the Study Area, 7.9 km west of the Section D alignment at the closest point. The valley is completely outside the ZTV.	Construction: None Operation: None
A series of quiet, uninhabited glens, punctuated only by a few lonely bothies, and remote coires extend towards the core of the mountain heartland, contributing to a landscape where solitude and isolation are key characteristics.	High	ZTV coverage across the glens within the SLA is completely absent, hence the Proposed Development would exert no influence upon the existing sense of solitude and isolation within these areas.	Construction: None Operation: None

Assessment of Effects

Landscape Sensitivity	Within the Study Area, the SLA encompasses parts of four LCTs (albeit limited to very localised outer edges of two of these LCTs). Landscape sensitivity to changes of the type proposed within these areas has been identified as ranging from Medium to High. This reflects the high value of the SLA in combination with slightly reduced susceptibility to change across localised areas. On balance, the landscape sensitivity across parts of the SLA within the Study Area is considered to be High-Medium .
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	<p>Section D of the Proposed Development would be located at a minimum distance of 6.4 km to the east of the SLA. Accordingly, the influence of the Proposed Development on its Special Qualities would be indirect and based upon views. ZTV coverage across the SLA is extremely limited, and focused on a small number of isolated summits on its eastern edge. From these very localised areas, potential views of the temporary construction activities and the towers during the operational phase would be restricted by the distance of view, in combination with the screening influence of intervening mountains and the scale of the receiving landscape.</p> <p>With reference to the landscape character assessment, the impact magnitude across the parts of the LCTs that coincide with the SLA is typically Low to Low-Negligible during both construction and operation. This incorporates parts of the LCTs in closer proximity to the Proposed Development than the SLA. Accordingly, this is not considered to be representative of landscape change that would occur in relation to the SLA.</p> <p>In summary, the impact magnitude upon the NSA would be Negligible during construction and operation. Across the vast majority of the SLA there would be no views.</p>
Significance of Effect	<p>As described above, the effects on the SLA and its Special Qualities would be limited based on its spatial separation from the Proposed Development, in combination with the limited ZTV coverage, which reflects the screening influence of the intervening mountains.</p> <p>In summary, the construction activities and the steel lattice towers would represent extremely discreet additions to the background landscape to the east. The overall effect would be Negligible (not significant) during construction and operation. Across the vast majority of the SLA there would be no views and no effect. As such, the integrity of the SLA would not be compromised.</p>

Table 14: Ben Wyvis SLA

Baseline Description	
Description	The Ben Wyvis SLA is located 2.6 km west of the Section D alignment at the closest point (Towers S151 and S152). The SLA is centred on the summit of Ben Wyvis, and encompasses the surrounding summits and foothills from Loch Glass in the north to Little Wyvis to the south. The landscape comprises a relatively level ridge, and several corries. Its spatial separation from the other mountains to the north means that it stands out as a key feature in the wider landscape, and forms the backdrop to many views. Ground cover includes heather moorland, grassland and heath. Coniferous plantations encircle the mountain and represents an incongruous element in the surrounding landscape.
Associated LCTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rugged Mountain Massif LCT (329); and • Rounded Rocky Hills - Ross & Cromarty LCT (331).

Special Qualities (those of relevance to the Proposed Development are highlighted in bold)	<p>Dominant landmark and uninterrupted panoramas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Standing well above a surrounding range of much lower foothills, Ben Wyvis has a commanding presence with its broad and fairly level summit ridge stretching more than 7 km from Garbat to Loch Glass. It is a dominant landmark feature from many locations, most notably from the south and north-west, including Inverness and the Black Isle. Little Wyvis also appears prominent at a local level.The summit of Ben Wyvis provides some of the more extensive panoramas in Scotland. These include the wild and dramatic mountain profiles of Wester Ross and Sutherland to the north and west, the indented coastline and settled, fertile lowlands of Easter Ross and the Black Isle to the east, and the distant summits of the Cairngorms and Ben Nevis to the south.Views of the top and the overall profile of the mountain are limited from the immediate surroundings due to its massive scale and convex upper slopes. The form of the mountain is most clearly appreciated when viewed from a distance, for example from Inverness and the Black Isle.Ben Wyvis is a popular Munro due in part to its proximity to Inverness, but also because it is a relatively straightforward walk with a broad, easy ridge from which the panoramic views can be appreciated. It is also popular for cross-country skiing.With the exception of Wyvis Lodge, the odd shieling hut, and the very occasional boundary wall and rough track, there is virtually no visible evidence of human occupation within the SLA.		
Assessment of Special Qualities			
Special Qualities of Relevance to the Proposed Development	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Impact Magnitude
It (Ben Wyvis) is a dominant landmark feature from many locations, most notably from the south and north-west.	High-Medium	The construction works and steel lattice towers would represent new elements of human activity / presence within the landscape to the east of the SLA. From the most open vantage points to the east / south-east, the Proposed Development would be visible in the foreground of Ben Wyvis. However, the summit would remain the 'dominant landmark' within such views. As reflected in the ZTV, there would be no discernible influence on views from the north-west (the Proposed Development would be located behind Ben Wyvis and screened by the intervening landform).	Construction: Low-Negligible Operation: Low-Negligible
The summit of Ben Wyvis provides some of the more extensive panoramas in Scotland.	High-Medium	The Proposed Development would be visible within the 'extensive panoramas' from the summit. The construction works and steel lattice towers would be experienced at a distance of 6.2 km from the summit, and accordingly would represent distant elements in the lower-lying background landscape to the east, in the context of existing forestry. In views to the north-east, the Proposed Development would be located behind the operational Novar Wind Farm.	Construction: Low-Negligible Operation: Low-Negligible
The form of the mountain is most clearly appreciated when viewed from a distance, for example from Inverness and the Black Isle.	High-Medium	As above, the construction works and steel lattice towers would represent new elements within the landscape to the east of the SLA. From the most open vantage points to the east the Proposed Development would be visible in the foreground of Ben Wyvis. This includes the coast and rising landform on the Black Isle. However, the Section D alignment would be located at a minimum distance of 7.5 km from the Black Isle and would	Construction: Negligible Operation: Low-Negligible

		represent a minor addition to the distant landscape on the opposite side of the Cromarty Firth. The summit of Ben Wyvis would remain the dominant landmark within such views.	
With the exception of Wyvis Lodge, the odd shieling hut, and the very occasional boundary wall and rough track, there is virtually no visible evidence of human occupation within the SLA.	High	<p>The construction works and steel lattice towers associated with Section D would represent new elements of human activity / presence. However, the Section D alignment would not extend into the SLA.</p> <p>Instead, the Proposed Development would be located in the spatially separate landscape, 2.6 km to the east of the SLA at the closest point, in the context of plantation forestry. In views to the north-east, the Proposed Development would be located behind the operational Novar Wind Farm. Accordingly, the limited evidence of human occupation within the SLA would remain largely unchanged.</p>	<p>Construction: Negligible</p> <p>Operation: Negligible</p>
Assessment of Effects			
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>Within the Study Area, the SLA encompasses parts of two LCTs. Landscape sensitivity to changes of the type proposed within these areas has been identified as typically ranging from High-Medium to High. This reflects the high value of the SLA in combination with slightly reduced susceptibility to change across localised areas.</p> <p>On balance, the landscape sensitivity across parts of the SLA within the Study Area is considered to be High-Medium.</p>		
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	<p>Section D of the Proposed Development would be located at a minimum distance of 2.6 km to the east of the SLA (at a distance of 6.2 km from the summit of Ben Wyvis). Accordingly, the influence of the Proposed Development on its Special Qualities would be indirect and based upon views – including those to, and from, the summit. ZTV coverage across the SLA is fragmented, and focused on the slopes and summits on its eastern side including Glas Leathad Beag, Meall na Drochaide, Meall nan Tunn, and Meall an t-Slugain Duibh, as well as the highest summits further west including Ben Wyvis (which reaches AOD 1046 m) and Little Wyvis.</p> <p>The activities and vehicle movements would contrast with the more remote qualities of the landscape. However, the overall influence would be limited by the relatively low-level nature of construction works / vehicle movements, their spatial separation from the summits within the SLA, and the massive scale of the receiving landscape. Across western parts of the SLA there would be no views of construction activities.</p> <p>Once operational, the towers would form a new linear component in wider panoramas to the east. As above, the steel lattice towers would contrast with the more natural characteristics of the SLA (which exhibits very little evidence of human occupation). However, the towers would be located in the spatially separate, lower-lying forested landscape to the east, and would be experienced within wide-sweeping, 'extensive panoramas'. Accordingly, the influence of the towers would be relatively limited. Across western parts of the SLA there would be no views of the Section D towers.</p> <p>With reference to the landscape character assessment, the impact magnitude across parts of the LCTs that coincide most closely with the SLA has been identified as typically ranging from Low to Low-Negligible during both construction and operation (excluding localised effects that occur across parts of these LCTs that coincide with the Section D alignment, or extend in close proximity to it). This is considered to be broadly representative of landscape change that would occur in relation to the SLA.</p> <p>In summary, the impact magnitude would be most pronounced on the eastern edge of the SLA (in closest proximity to Section D). However, the influence of the Proposed Development would diminish steadily at increased distance from the Section D alignment. On balance, the impact magnitude on the SLA would be Low-Negligible during construction and operation. This would be reduced across western parts of the SLA, where ZTV coverage is fragmented / completely absent across extended areas.</p>		

Significance of Effect

As described above, the effects on the Ben Wyvis SLA would be focused across its eastern edge, in closest proximity to the Proposed Development. The influence of the Section D alignment on the SLA would diminish steadily at increased distance. The effect would be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction and operation. The effects upon western parts of the SLA, west of Ben Wyvis, would reduce abruptly. With reference to the ZTV, there would be no views of the Proposed Development from these areas, and no effect.

1.7 Section E

1.7.1 The following designated or protected areas have been identified for assessment within Section E:

- National-level Landscape Designations:
 - Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA;
 - Central Highlands WLA; and
 - Glen Strathfarrar NSA.
- Regional / Local-level Landscape Designations:
 - Ben Wyvis SLA; and
 - Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA.

1.7.2 Section E does not extend through any of these areas, hence there would be no direct effects. Accordingly, in each case the potential effects on existing Special Qualities would be indirect and restricted to those resulting from potential views of the Proposed Development within the wider landscape context.

Table 15: Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA

Baseline Description			
Description	The Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA extends between Ullapool in the north-west to the mountain of Ben Wyvis in the south-east, 6.1 km north of the Section E alignment at the closest point (Tower S170). It encompasses a complex composition of high and steep mountains within the central section, which transitions to a series of knolls (cnocans) and open peatland hills in the north, and rounded hills and plateaux in the south. The challenging terrain and quiet, uninhabited glens create a sense of isolation and wildness, albeit there are some isolated estate buildings and forestry activity on the outer edges. The area is primarily used for deer stalking, fishing and hydro-electric generation, as well as hill walking. It is also enjoyed in views from adjoining areas, including those from the A837 to the north.		
Associated LCTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rounded Mountain Massif LCT (329); and• Rounded Rocky Hills - Ross & Cromarty (331).		
Special Qualities (those of relevance to the Proposed Development are highlighted in bold)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A range of awe-inspiring massive, high rounded hills and plateaux, as well as steep rocky peaks and ridges, offering elevated panoramas.• Long and deep penetrating glens with steep, arresting side slopes that limit views, some containing access routes and clearly influenced by estate management.• A very large interior with a strong sense of remoteness and sanctuary that seems even more extensive where appearing to continue into neighbouring wild land areas.• Rocky hills, cnocan and peatland slopes that appear simple and awe-inspiring at a broad scale, but harbour intricate features at a local level, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude.		
Assessment of Special Qualities			
Special Qualities of Relevance to the Proposed Development	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Impact Magnitude
A range of awe-inspiring massive, high rounded hills and plateaux, as well as steep rocky peaks and ridges, offering elevated panoramas.	High-Medium	The Section E alignment would be located in the landscape 6.1 km to the south of the WLA. Within the Study Area, ZTV coverage across the WLA is predominantly focused across the summits and southerly-facing slopes, including Carn Gorm, Cnoc nan Each Mor, Tom na Caillich and Meall na Speiraig. From these vantage points, the construction works and steel lattice towers would represent new elements of human activity / presence within the landscape to the south. Their influence upon existing panoramas would be restricted by the distance of view and the massive scale of the receiving landscape.	Construction: Negligible Operation: Negligible
A very large interior with a strong sense of remoteness and sanctuary that seems even more extensive where appearing to continue into neighbouring wild land areas.	High	As described above, ZTV coverage is focused on the summits and southerly-facing slopes, where the Proposed Development would be experienced at a minimum distance of 6.1 km. Potential views from the more remote interior would be subject to screening by intervening summits along the southern edge of the WLA (including Carn Gorm, Cnoc nan Each Mor, Tom na Caillich and Meall na Speiraig), and would be experienced at greater distance. As a result, the construction works and steel lattice towers would represent very discreet	Construction: Negligible Operation: Negligible

		components in the background landscape. The potential influence on the existing sense of remoteness would be very limited. Large parts of the WLA interior would be completely unaffected.	
Rocky hills, cnocan and peatland slopes that appear simple and awe-inspiring at a broad scale, but harbour intricate features at a local level, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude.	High	As described above, the Proposed Development would be located in the landscape to the south of the WLA. The construction works and steel lattice towers associated with Section E would represent new elements of human activity / presence, with the potential to erode the sense of sanctuary and solitude. However, the influence of the Proposed Development would be diminished by its spatial separation from the WLA, the scale of the receiving landscape, and spread of forestry across intervening areas.	Construction: Negligible Operation: Negligible
Assessment of Effects			
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>Within the Section E Study Area, the WLA encompasses parts of two LCTs. Landscape sensitivity to changes of the type proposed within these areas has been identified as ranging from High-Medium to High. This reflects the high value of the WLA in combination with its susceptibility to change based on the lack of access and built features that contribute towards the existing sense of wildness. The susceptibility of the WLA is slightly reduced along its outer southern edge, due to the presence of large scale commercial plantation forestry and associated tracks in the neighbouring landscape (which detract from the sense of solitude prevalent in other parts of the WLA).</p> <p>With reference to the susceptibility of the WLA across its more remote central areas, landscape sensitivity of the WLA within the Study Area is considered to be High.</p>		
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	<p>There would be no direct effects upon the WLA. Instead, Section E of the Proposed Development would be located in the landscape to the south at a minimum distance of 6.1 km. Accordingly, the influence of the Proposed Development on its Special Qualities would be indirect and based upon views.</p> <p>Views of the construction activities would be focused on the summits and southerly-facing slopes including Carn Gorm, Cnoc nan Each Mor, Tom na Caillich and Meall na Speiraig. Whilst construction activities and vehicle movements would contrast with the wild and remote qualities of the landscape, their influence would be very limited due to their spatial separation from the WLA, the massive scale of the receiving landscape, and the relatively low-level nature of construction works / vehicle movements.</p> <p>Similarly, once operational, the towers would be most visible from the slopes and summits along the southern edge of the WLA, where they would form a linear element in the background landscape to the south. Their influence would be very limited due to the distance of view and the massive scale of the landscape. The potential effects upon the more natural and wild characteristics of the WLA would be further restricted by the presence of vast swathes of forestry in the intervening landscape, and would diminish steadily across other parts of the WLA (including the interior areas located further north).</p> <p>In summary, the influence of the Section E alignment would be focused on the southern edge of the WLA (in closest proximity to Section E). This includes the summits and southerly-facing slopes including Carn Gorm, Cnoc nan Each Mor, Tom na Caillich and Meall na Speiraig, where the impact magnitude would be Negligible during construction and operation. The influence of the Proposed Development would diminish further at increased distance from the Section E alignment, including more remote interior parts of the WLA located further north (at greater distance from the Section E alignment).</p>		
Significance of Effect	<p>As described above, the effects on the Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA would be limited, and focused across its southern edge (which is closest to the Proposed Development, albeit at a minimum distance of 6.1 km). From vantage points at Carn Gorm, Cnoc nan Each Mor, Tom na Caillich and Meall na Speiraig the effects during construction and operation would be Minor Adverse (not significant). The effects would diminish steadily across other parts of the</p>		

	WLA at increased distance from the Section E alignment. There would be no discernible effects upon more remote interior parts of the WLA (comprising the majority of the WLA). Accordingly, it is assessed that the integrity of the WLA would not be compromised.
--	--

Table 16: Central Highlands WLA

Baseline Description			
Description	Within the Study Area, the Central Highlands WLA extends across the large mountains, peatland and glens on the south side of Strathconon, towards Glen Orrin. It is located 2.3 km to the west of the Section E alignment at the closest point (Tower S221). The WLA is largely uninhabited and used mainly for deer stalking and fishing. However, there are some isolated estate lodges, cottages and stock grazing within some of the glens, as well as hydro-electric reservoirs and forest plantations around the margins. It is also used for recreational activities, including walking and cycling.		
Associated LCTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rounded Rocky Hills – Ross & Cromarty LCT (331);• Rugged Massif - Inverness LCT (220);• Rugged Mountain Massif - Ross & Cromarty LCT (328); and• Wooded Glen - Inverness LCT (226).		
Special Qualities (those of relevance to the Proposed Development are highlighted in bold)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An extensive and awe-inspiring range of large scale, high and rugged mountains.• An extensive, remote mountain interior with strong qualities of sanctuary and solitude.• Deep glens that have steep, arresting side slopes as well as rivers and waterfalls, with some containing lochs and some revealing human land use.• Small and extensive areas of native woodland that contribute to the sense of naturalness and highlight some arresting landscape features.		
Assessment of Special Qualities			
Special Qualities of Relevance to the Proposed Development	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Impact Magnitude
An extensive and awe-inspiring range of large scale, high and rugged mountains.	High-Medium	From the most open vantage points on the eastern edge of the WLA (closest to the Section E alignment) the Proposed Development would be experienced in the context of lower lying areas of moorland and forestry. The construction works and steel lattice towers would represent new elements of human activity / presence in the landscape to the east. However, from the summits of Carn na Gearrsaich, Beinn nam Fitheach, Mullach Binnean a' Chromhnaird and Beinn a' Chlaonaidh, on the south-eastern edge of the WLA, the Proposed Development would be subject to screening by the intervening summits of Cul Mor, Cul Beag, Cnoc Beinn na Lice, Cnoc Dubh, Buachaille Breige. As such, views of the construction works and steel lattice towers would be restricted. From the summits of Carn Sgolbaidh and Carn na Cloiche Moire on the north-eastern edge of the WLA, the Proposed Development would be experienced at greater distance (a minimum distance of 4.8 km), in	Construction: Negligible Operation: Low-Negligible

		the background beyond the operational Fairburn Wind Farm. Accordingly, it would exert limited influence upon the large-scale landscape experienced in outward views from the mountains within the WLA.	
An extensive, remote mountain interior with strong qualities of sanctuary and solitude.	High	Across interior parts of the WLA, further to the west (at greater distances from the Section E alignment) ZTV coverage is increasingly fragmented. Potential views of the Proposed Development would be primarily focused on localised areas of higher ground. This includes the summits of Meall Mor and Meall nan Damh on the northern side of the Orrin Reservoir, and Carn a' Ghorm-Locha, Sgurr a'Phollain, Carn na Gabhalach, and Beinn a' Bhathaich Ard to the south. From these summits, the Section E alignment would be located beyond intervening summits on the eastern edge of the WLA, at distances in excess of 6.7 km. Accordingly, the construction works and steel lattice towers would represent discreet elements in the background landscape, and would exert very limited influence on the existing sense of remoteness, sanctuary and solitude. There would be no views and no effect on lower-lying interior areas.	Construction: Negligible Operation: Low-Negligible
Small and extensive areas of native woodland that contribute to the sense of naturalness and highlight some arresting landscape features.	High-Medium	The Proposed Development would be located in the landscape to the east of the WLA. Accordingly, there would be no effect on the existing landscape fabric within the WLA, including areas of native woodland. The construction works and steel lattice towers would represent new elements of human activity / presence in the landscape to the east. However, these elements would exert limited influence on the existing sense of naturalness due to their spatial separation from the WLA, in combination with the intervening summits of Cul Mor, Cul Beag, Cnoc Beinn na Lice, Cnoc Dubh, and Buachaille Breige (which would screen parts of the Proposed Development from view), and intervening wind energy development of Fairburn Wind Farm.	Construction: Negligible Operation: Low-Negligible
Assessment of Effects			
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>Within the Section E Study Area, the WLA coincides with parts of four LCTs. Landscape sensitivity to changes of the type proposed within these areas has been identified as ranging from Medium to High. This reflects the value of the WLA in combination with its susceptibility to change based on the lack of access and built features that contribute towards the existing sense of sanctuary and solitude. The susceptibility of the WLA is slightly reduced along its outer eastern edge, which is influenced by existing wind energy development at Fairburn Wind Farm. On the whole, its susceptibility to modern development is assessed as being High.</p> <p>In summary, landscape sensitivity across parts of the WLA within the Study Area is considered to be High.</p>		
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	<p>There would be no direct effects upon the WLA. Instead, Section E of the Proposed Development would be located at a minimum distance of 2.3 km to the east. Accordingly, the influence of the Proposed Development on its Special Qualities would be indirect and based upon views.</p> <p>From the summits and upper slopes within the WLA there would be partial views of the construction activities in the landscape to the east. The works and vehicle movements would contrast with the wild and remote qualities of the local landscape. However, the influence would be limited by the relatively low-level nature of construction works / vehicle movements, which would be subject to screening by intervening summits and / or experienced beyond existing infrastructure at Fairburn Wind Farm.</p> <p>Once operational, the towers would be visible from eastern parts of the WLA (in closest proximity to the Section E alignment) as well as localised peaks further to the west. The towers would form a new linear component in wider panoramas to the east. As above, the steel lattice towers would contrast with the more natural and wild characteristics of the WLA, albeit would be partly screened by intervening summits (including Cul Mor, Cul Beag, Cnoc Beinn na Lice, Cnoc Dubh,</p>		

	<p>Buachaille Breige) and / or experienced beyond existing infrastructure at Fairburn Wind Farm. Within the context of the large scale receiving landscape, and the extensive panoramic views across surrounding mountains, the influence of the towers would be limited.</p> <p>In summary, the influence of the Section E alignment would be focused on the eastern edge of the WLA (in closest proximity to Section E). This includes the summits and easterly-facing slopes of Carn na Gearrsaich, Beinn nam Fitheach, Mullach Binnean a' Chromhnaird and Beinn a' Chlaonaidh, where the impact magnitude would be Negligible during construction and Low-Negligible during operation. The influence of the Proposed Development would diminish further at increased distance from the Section E alignment, including more remote interior parts of the WLA located further west (at greater distance from the Section E alignment).</p>
Significance of Effect	<p>As described above, the effects on the Central Highlands WLA would be limited, and focused across its eastern edge in closest proximity to the Proposed Development. From vantage points at Carn na Gearrsaich, Beinn nam Fitheach, Mullach Binnean a' Chromhnaird and Beinn a' Chlaonaidh, the effects during construction would be Negligible (not significant), and the effects during operation would be Minor Adverse (not significant).</p> <p>The effects would diminish steadily across other parts of the WLA at increased distance from the Section E alignment. This includes more remote interior parts of the WLA (comprising the majority of the WLA). Accordingly, it is assessed that the integrity of the WLA would not be compromised.</p>

Table 17: Glen Strathfarrar NSA

Baseline Description	
Description	The Glen Strathfarrar NSA is located on the south-western part of the Study Area, 7.9 km south-west of the Section E alignment (Tower S222). This encompasses a long, steep-sided glen, extending east-west and focused on Loch Beannacharan and the River Farrar. The strath drops eastwards, from high mountains to the west, towards the Culligran Falls and lower strath in the east. The glen sides incorporate extensive natural pine woodland.
Associated LCTs	Rugged Massif - Inverness LCT (220); Wooded Glen - Inverness LCT (226); and Farmed Strath - Inverness LCT (227).
Special Qualities (those of relevance to the Proposed Development are highlighted in bold)	<p>An archetypal Highland glen.</p> <p>Ancient Caledonian pine forest amidst rocky slopes.</p> <p>A sinuous, fast-moving river emerging out of a peaceful loch.</p> <p>The contrasts in colour, light and views.</p> <p>A sense of peace and tranquillity.</p>

Assessment of Special Qualities			
Special Qualities of Relevance to the Proposed Development	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Impact Magnitude
An archetypal Highland glen.	Medium	<p>There would be no direct effects upon the landscape within the glen. Furthermore, ZTV coverage is limited to localised areas of higher ground to the north and south of the strath.</p> <p>The construction activities would be located in a geographically separate part of the background landscape, beyond intervening hillsides and areas of forestry. Accordingly, they would exert minimal influence on north-easterly views.</p> <p>Once operational, the towers would represent discreet, distant components within the background landscape. There would be no views from the lower-lying strath floor.</p>	<p>Construction: Negligible</p> <p>Operation: Negligible</p>
The contrasts in colour, light and views.	High	<p>The construction operations and the steel lattice towers would be located in the distant hillsides to the north-east. Potential views would be limited to areas of higher ground along the upper valley sides.</p> <p>The overall influence of the construction activities would be tempered by their typically low-lying nature, intervening landform and the distance of view. Similarly, once operational the influence of the towers would be limited by the distance of view and the large scale of the receiving landscape.</p>	<p>Construction: Negligible</p> <p>Operation: Negligible</p>
A sense of peace and tranquillity.	High	<p>The Proposed Development would contrast with the wider qualities of the NSA and the sense of tranquillity. However, as described above, the construction operations and the steel lattice towers would be located in the context of the distant hillsides to the north-east. Accordingly, they would be geographically separate from the NSA, and represent very distant and discreet background components in the wider landscape.</p>	<p>Construction: Negligible</p> <p>Operation: Negligible</p>
Assessment of Effects			
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>Within the Section E Study Area, the NSA encompasses parts of three LCTs. Landscape sensitivity to changes of the type proposed within these areas has been identified as typically ranging from Medium to High-Medium. This reflects the high value of the NSA in combination with slightly reduced susceptibility to change across localised areas.</p> <p>On balance, the landscape sensitivity across parts of the NSA within the Study Area is considered to be High-Medium.</p>		
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	<p>There would be no direct effects upon the Glen Strathfarrar NSA. Instead, Section E of the Proposed Development would be located at a minimum distance of 7.9 km to the north-east. Accordingly, the influence of the Proposed Development on its Special Qualities would be indirect and based upon views.</p> <p>Potential views of the construction activities would be restricted by the rising landform that encloses the strath, and accordingly would be focused on the highest slopes and summits that demarcate the strath on its northern and southern sides. From open vantage points, the influence of the construction works would be extremely limited based on the distance of view, in combination with the relatively low-level nature of construction works / vehicle movements and intervening tree cover and forestry.</p> <p>Once operational, views of towers would be restricted to the more elevated vantage points on the northern and southern sides of the strath, including Carn Coire na Muic and Blar Mor / Maol nan Ceap. Given the distance of view, they would represent extremely discreet additions to the background landscape to</p>		

	<p>the north-east, and would be spatially and geographically separate from the strath landscape. With reference to the ZTV, there would be no views of the towers within the lower lying parts of Strathfarrar.</p> <p>In summary, the impact magnitude upon the NSA would be Negligible during construction and operation based on distant views from the peaks on the northern and southern sides of the strath. There would be no views and no impact upon the strath floor, where ZTV coverage is absent. As such, there would be no discernible change across large parts of the NSA.</p>
Significance of Effect	<p>As described above, the effects on the Glen Strathfarrar NSA and its Special Qualities would be very limited based on its spatial separation from the Proposed Development, in combination with the enclosing nature of the landform along the strath. From the most open and elevated vantage points, the construction activities and steel lattice towers would represent very discreet additions to the distant landscape.</p> <p>The overall effect would be Negligible (not significant) during construction and operation. Large parts of Glen Strathfarrar NSA would be completely unaffected.</p> <p>In summary, there would be no significant effects to the Special Qualities of the NSA and its integrity would not therefore be compromised.</p>

Table 18: Ben Wyvis SLA

Baseline Description	
Description	<p>The Ben Wyvis SLA is located 6.1 km north of the Section E alignment at the closest point (Tower S170).</p> <p>The SLA is centred on the summit of Ben Wyvis, and encompasses the surrounding summits and foothills from Loch Glass in the north to Little Wyvis to the south. The landscape comprises a relatively level ridge, and several corries. Its spatial separation from the other mountains to the north means that it stands out as a key feature in the wider landscape, and forms the backdrop to many views. Ground cover includes heather moorland, grassland and heath. Coniferous plantations encircle the mountain and represents an incongruous element in the surrounding landscape.</p>
Associated LCTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rugged Mountain Massif LCT (329); and • Rounded Rocky Hills - Ross & Cromarty LCT (331).
Special Qualities (those of relevance to the Proposed Development are highlighted in bold)	<p>Dominant landmark and uninterrupted panoramas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing well above a surrounding range of much lower foothills, Ben Wyvis has a commanding presence with its broad and fairly level summit ridge stretching more than 7 km from Garbat to Loch Glass. It is a dominant landmark feature from many locations, most notably from the south and north-west, including Inverness and the Black Isle. Little Wyvis also appears prominent at a local level. • The summit of Ben Wyvis provides some of the more extensive panoramas in Scotland. These include the wild and dramatic mountain profiles of Wester Ross and Sutherland to the north and west, the indented coastline and settled, fertile lowlands of Easter Ross and the Black Isle to the east, and the distant summits of the Cairngorms and Ben Nevis to the south. • Views of the top and the overall profile of the mountain are limited from the immediate surroundings due to its massive scale and convex upper slopes. The form of the mountain is most clearly appreciated when viewed from a distance, for example from Inverness and the Black Isle.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ben Wyvis is a popular Munro due in part to its proximity to Inverness, but also because it is a relatively straightforward walk with a broad, easy ridge from which the panoramic views can be appreciated. It is also popular for cross-country skiing.With the exception of Wyvis Lodge, the odd shieling hut, and the very occasional boundary wall and rough track, there is virtually no visible evidence of human occupation within the SLA.		
Assessment of Special Qualities			
Special Qualities of Relevance to the Proposed Development	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Impact Magnitude
It is a dominant landmark feature from many locations, most notably from the south and north-west.	High-Medium	The construction works and steel lattice towers would represent new elements of human activity / presence within the landscape to the south of the SLA, at a minimum distance of 6.1 km. The summit of Ben Wyvis is located centrally within the SLA, at a distance of >10 km from the Proposed Development (outside the Section E Study Area). Given its geographic separation from the Proposed Development, the summit would remain the 'dominant landmark' within the surrounding area.	Construction: Negligible Operation: Negligible
The summit of Ben Wyvis provides some of the more extensive panoramas in Scotland.	High-Medium	As above, the summit of Ben Wyvis is located outside the Study Area (>10km from the Section E alignment). From the surrounding slopes / summits, the Proposed Development would represent a very discreet, distant element within 'extensive panoramas'.	Construction: Negligible Operation: Negligible
The form of the mountain is most clearly appreciated when viewed from a distance, for example from Inverness and the Black Isle.	High-Medium	As above, the construction works and steel lattice towers would represent new elements within the spatially separate landscape to the south of the SLA. From the most open vantage points at Inverness and the Black Isle, the Section E alignment would be located within a different sector of view to Ben Wyvis, and would not detract from existing views / appreciation of the mountain.	Construction: Negligible Operation: Negligible
With the exception of Wyvis Lodge, the odd shieling hut, and the very occasional boundary wall and rough track, there is virtually no visible evidence of human occupation within the SLA.	High	The construction works and steel lattice towers associated with Section E would represent new elements of human activity / presence. However, the Proposed Development would be located in the spatially separate landscape, 6.1 km to the south of the SLA at the closest point, beyond swathes of intervening plantation forestry. Accordingly, there would be no discernible change to the lack of 'human occupation' within the SLA.	Construction: Negligible Operation: Negligible
Assessment of Effects			
Landscape Sensitivity	Within the Study Area, the SLA encompasses parts of two LCTs. Landscape sensitivity to changes of the type proposed within these areas has been identified as typically ranging from High-Medium to High. This reflects the high value of the SLA in combination with slightly reduced susceptibility to change across localised areas. On balance, the landscape sensitivity across parts of the SLA within the Study Area is considered to be High-Medium .		

Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	<p>Section E of the Proposed Development would be located at a minimum distance of 6.1 km to the south of the SLA (at a distance of >10 km from the summit of Ben Wyvis). Accordingly, the influence of the Proposed Development on its Special Qualities would be indirect and based upon views. ZTV coverage across the SLA is fragmented, and focused on summits and southerly-facing slopes including Carn Gorm, Cnoc nan Each Mor, Tom na Caillich and Meall na Speiraig.</p> <p>The construction activities and vehicle movements would contrast with the more remote qualities of the landscape. However, the overall influence would be very limited due to their spatial separation from the SLA, the massive scale of the receiving landscape, and the relatively low-level nature of construction works / vehicle movements.</p> <p>Once operational, the towers would form a linear component in wider panoramas to the south. Due to the separation distance, the towers would represent very discreet elements in the background landscape. Accordingly, they would exert very limited influence on the more natural characteristics of the SLA. The influence of the towers would be further restricted by the presence of vast swathes of forestry in the intervening landscape.</p> <p>In summary, the influence of the Section E alignment would be focused on the southern edge of the SLA (in closest proximity to Section E). This includes the summits and southerly-facing slopes including Carn Gorm, Cnoc nan Each Mor, Tom na Caillich and Meall na Speiraig, where the impact magnitude would be Negligible during construction and operation. The influence of the Proposed Development would diminish further at increased distance from the Section E alignment, including the summit of Ben Wyvis (located >10 km to the north of Section E).</p>
Significance of Effect	<p>As described above, the effects on the Ben Wyvis WLA would be limited, and focused across its southern edge in closest proximity to the Proposed Development. From vantage points at Carn Gorm, Cnoc nan Each Mor, Tom na Caillich and Meall na Speiraig the effects during construction and operation would be Minor Adverse (not significant). The effects would diminish steadily across other parts of the SLA at increased distance from the Section E alignment.</p>

Table 19: Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA

Baseline Description	
Description	<p>The Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA covers an extensive area of remote interior hills between Strathconon, Glen Strathfarrar and Glen Cannich. At its closest point, it is located 9.2 km south-west of the Section E alignment (Tower S222). The area includes large scale open mountain ridges and deep sinuous glens with smaller scale birch and pine woods, rivers and waterbodies, which results in strongly contrasting scenery. The limited extent of habitation and access means that the area is typically viewed by a small number of residents, estate workers and recreational visitors.</p>
Associated LCTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rugged Massif - Inverness LCT (220); • Rugged Mountain Massif - Ross & Cromarty LCT (328) – across an extremely localised area only.
Special Qualities (those of relevance to the Proposed Development are highlighted in bold)	<p>Grand mountain ridges, long glens and wide strath:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of grand, broadly parallel, high mountain ridges, separated by long, sinuous, steep-sided glens and straths combine to form a landscape of immense scale which tends to be experienced sequentially along the ridges and/or glens and straths. • There is a marked contrast between the bare, dramatic scenery of the ridges and upper glens – exaggerated by the huge scale of Lochs Monar and Mullardoch – and the more tranquil and intimate qualities of the strath and glen floors, with their patchworks of grassland, bog, birch and pine wood, river and lochan. • Distinctive sequential changes in the visual and landscape qualities travelling along the glens reflect a transition from lowland strath to mountain interior.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an intimate sequential travelling experience on the A890 through Strathcarron with ever changing enclosure and exposure and views to adjacent features. • There are contrasting deep, steep-sided glens and wide, wooded straths on the eastern and western periphery. <p>Wildness and Remoteness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a very strong sense of wildness and remoteness within most parts of this landscape, typically evoked by the long journey from the main access points into this area from the east along winding single-track roads to the head of the glens. A sense of wildness is also influenced by the sparse network of rough, isolated paths and tracks, and the spectacular summit views over vast expanses of moorland and hills. The main detractors from these qualities are reservoir draw down scars and tracks compromise the sense of wildness within the interior. • The mountain interior and upper reaches of the glens are out of sight of public roads, remote from any habitation, and are amongst the most remote areas of mainland Britain. The only part of this area significantly less remote is within Strathcarron where there are roads and rail links. • Extensive areas of hill slopes and summits are dominated by native vegetation that contributes to the wildness qualities, including mosaics of montane heaths, grasses, and mosses contrast with the afforested side slopes and partly wooded flood plain at Strathcarron. There are also important remnants of native Caledonian pinewood. • The mountain terrain is physically challenging to access and ideally suited to adventurous ridge walkers. The area is very popular with hill walkers, with a high number of Munro mountains in close proximity. Also, given the large extent of the area and the limited accessibility, many wild camp within the area.
Assessment of Effects	
Significance of Effect	<p>There would be no views of Section E from the Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA due to intervening landform screening (as reflected in the ZTV, which is completely absent across parts of the SLA within the Study Area). As such, there would be no change to its Special Qualities, and no effect on the integrity of the SLA.</p>