Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

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

Appendix 7.5 | LVIA of Section A

July 2025

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks
TRANSMISSION

VOLUME 5: APPENDIX 7.5 – LVIA OF SECTION A

Figures (Volume 3 of this EIA Report)

Figures 7.1-1 and 7.1-2: Section A Zone of Theoretical Visibility
Figures 7.2-1 and 7.2-2 : Section A Designated and Protected Landscapes
Figures 7.3-1 and 7.3-2: Section A Landscape Character
Figures 7.4-1 to 7.4-4: Section A Visual Receptors
Figures 7.5-1 and 7.5-2: Section A Developments Included in the Cumulative Assessment

Visualisations (Volume 4 of this EIA Report)

4a Visualisations to NatureScot Guidelines
4b Visualisations to The Highland Council Guidelines

Appendices (Volume 5 of this EIA Report)

Appendix 7.4: Assessment of Designated and Protected Landscapes (Section A)
Annex 1: Landscape Character Assessment (Section A)
Annex 2: Visual Receptor Assessment (Section A)

7. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT OF SECTION A

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 This appendix presents the findings of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for Section A of the proposed Spittal to Loch Buidhe to Beauly 400 kV Overhead Line (OHL) Connection (the Proposed Development). The primary aim of the LVIA is to identify the predicted landscape and visual effects that would result from the construction and operation of the Proposed Development, as described in **Volume 2, Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development**. This includes potential effects upon views experienced by those living, working, and visiting in the area, as well as those on the wider landscape resource.

7.1.2 The LVIA has been undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects at ERM, a registered practice with the Landscape Institute. The assessment is in accordance with best practice guidance within the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3)[1].

7.2 Scope of Assessment and Methodology

Scope of Assessment

7.2.1 Detailed explanation of the process and rationale for scoping the LVIA is contained within **Volume 5, Appendix 7.1: LVIA Scoping Appraisal**. In summary, the LVIA considers the potential effects resulting from the temporary construction phase, as well as the long term / permanent effects resulting from the operational stage of the Proposed Development. This also includes consideration of embedded mitigation measures.

7.2.2 The following scope has been agreed through EIA Scoping and consultation with NatureScot and The Highland Council (THC):

- Study Area extending to 10 km from the Proposed Development;
- Landscape character assessment, identifying potential effects on Landscape Character Types (LCTs); within the Study Area, with reference to the NatureScot National Landscape Character Assessment[2];
- Landscape assessment of potential effects on the Special Qualities of designated and/or protected landscapes, specifically the Flow Country and Berriedale Coast Special Landscape Area (SLA), but also the Causeymire – Knockfin Flows Wild Land Area (WLA); Ben Klibreck – Armine Forest Wild Land Area (WLA), and Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth Special Landscape Area (SLA);
- Visual assessment giving consideration to views obtained by those living, working, and travelling and undertaking recreation within the Study Area. This includes views from settlement areas, views from promoted recreational routes or vantage points, and views from key transport routes; and
- Cumulative assessment giving consideration to the combined effects with all other proposed power-related infrastructure works within the Study Area. For Section A, this includes effects associated with:
  - Section B of the Proposed Development (steel lattice tower OHL);
  - Proposed Banniskirk 400 kV Substation (24/04898/FUL);
  - Proposed Spittal to Peterhead HVDC Link at early development stage (N/A);
  - Proposed West of Orkney Wind Farm Grid Connection (23/05353/PIP);
  - Proposed Watten Wind Farm (23/04113/S36);
  - Proposed Camster II Wind Farm (19/03015/FUL);

[1] Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. 2013. Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition.
[2] NatureScot. 2023. Landscape Character Assessment in Scotland.

- Proposed Swarclett Wind Farm (24/04932/FUL);
- Golticlay Wind Farm Redesign (23/05188/S36);
- Proposed Ouglassy Wind Farm (24/00902/SCOP);
- Proposed Ayre Wind Farm Grid Connection (24/00243/SCOP);
- Proposed Hill of Lynchrobbie Wind Farm (23/03246/SCOP);
- Proposed Baledigle Wind Farm (24/03036/SCOP);
- Proposed Tormsdale Wind Farm (21/04984/S36; PLN/045/24);
- Proposed Loch Toftingall BESS (23/04690/FUL);
- Proposed Spittal BESS (24/01734/SCRE);
- Proposed Mybster BESS (24/01950/SCRE); and
- Proposed Thurso Bess (25/00240/SCRE).

7.2.3 For each identified receptor, the LVIA describes the overall effects with a clear narrative to explain the process in a transparent manner. In each case, a conclusion is drawn on whether the effect is significant or not.

Supporting Visualisations

7.2.4 The LVIA is supported by 30 visualisations that show the predicted appearance of the Proposed Development during operation once landscape reinstatement of disturbed areas has been assumed to be fully established. Visualisations have been included from locations listed in **Table 7.1**.

Table 7.1: Viewpoint Locations (Section A)

Number	Location	Grid Reference		
Viewpoint 7-01	(B874)	ND	15181	60640
Viewpoint 7-02	Halkirk (B874)	ND	13691	59694
Viewpoint 7-03	A9 (north of Achalone Croft)	ND	15518	57568
Viewpoint 7-04	Calder Mains (B874)	ND	10066	59507
Viewpoint 7-05	A9 (Achalone)	ND	15734	56104
Viewpoint 7-06	B870 (west of Houstry of Dunn)	ND	19903	54616
Viewpoint 7-07	B870 (Newton)	ND	21628	54012
Viewpoint 7-08	Camster Road (south-east of Loch Watten)	ND	25035	53402
Viewpoint 7-09	Westerdale (B870)	ND	12958	51732
Viewpoint 7-10	A9 (T) Lay-by (Bad a Cheo)	ND	17173	49945
Viewpoint 7-11	A9 (T) Air Crew Memorial	ND	17332	48551
Viewpoint 7-12	A9 (Loch Rangag)	ND	17994	42149
Viewpoint 7-13	A9 (north east of Guidebest)	ND	19064	36124
Viewpoint 7-14	Houstry	ND	15489	34719
Viewpoint 7-15	A9 (T) Laidhay Croft Museum	ND	17409	30602
Viewpoint 7-16	Achorn Road	ND	14542	30128
Viewpoint 7-17	East Scaraben	ND	08088	27282
Viewpoint 7-18	A9 (T) Berriedale Braes	ND	12046	22746
Viewpoint 7-19	A9 (T) south-west of Berriedale	ND	10695	21802

Number	Location	Grid Reference		
Viewpoint 7-20	Langwell	ND	09874	22280
Viewpoint 7-21	A9 (T) Badbea Historical Village	ND	08549	20388
Viewpoint 7-22	Badbea	ND	08001	20005
Viewpoint 7-23	Ousdale	ND	07148	20236
Viewpoint 7-24	Creag Thoraraidh	ND	03778	18923
Viewpoint 7-25	A897 (Caen)	ND	01913	17581
Viewpoint 7-26	Marrel	ND	01702	17311
Viewpoint 7-27	A897 (East of Kilphedir)	ND	00210	18087
Viewpoint 7-28	Helmsdale	ND	02619	15199
Viewpoint 7-29	Glen Loth (north)	NC	93961	16475
Viewpoint 7-30	Glen Loth (south)	NC	93394	13764

7.2.5 Two sets of visualisations have been produced, which comply with NatureScot 2017[3] guidelines and THC 2016[4] standards. These are included within **Volume 4a** and **Volume 4b,** respectively. Further detail on the preparation of visualisations can be found in **Volume 5**, **Appendix 7.3: Technical Methodologies for Visual Representation**.

Methodology

7.2.6 The detailed methodology for the LVIA is set out in **Volume 5, Appendix 7.2: LVIA Methodology**. This is based on best practice within the GLVIA3, which identifies five key stages:

- Understanding the Proposed Development;
- Establishment of the baseline;
- Identification of key landscape and visual receptors;
- Recognition of potential effects; and
- Assessment of the significance of effects.

7.2.7 To this end, the assessment has drawn from other published guidance and the following relevant baseline information:

- Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Guidance[5];
- Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas - Technical Guidance[6];
- Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing landscape Value Outside National Designations[7];
- Technical Guidance Note 6/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals[8];
- National Landscape Character Assessment (web-based interactive map)[9];

[3] Scottish Natural Heritage. 2017. Visual Representation of Wind Farms. Version 2.2. Visual Representation of Wind Farms.
[4] The Highland Council. 2016. Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments.
[5] NatureScot. 2022. Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Guidance.
[6] NatureScot. 2020. Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas - Technical Guidance.
[7] Landscape Institute. 2021. Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations.
[8] Landscape Institute. Technical Guidance Note 6/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals.
[9] NatureScot. 2019. National Landscape Character Assessment in Scotland.

- The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas (Commissioned Report No.374)[10];
- Wild Land Areas Map and Descriptions[11];
- Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes[12];
- Wildness in Scotland's Countryside[13];
- Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas[14];
- Ordnance Survey Land ranger (1:50 000) and Explorer (1:25 000) maps;
- Aerial photography; and
- Site survey (to review landscape character, potential visibility and obtain viewpoint photography, undertaken throughout 2024).

7.2.8 Landscape and visual assessments are separate, though linked, procedures. In both cases the significance of effect is based upon the correlation between the impact magnitude (i.e. High, Medium, Low, or Negligible) and the sensitivity of the receptor (i.e. High, Medium, Low or Negligible), which are summarised below.

Landscape Sensitivity and Impact Magnitude

7.2.9 The sensitivity of the landscape to a particular development considers the susceptibility of the landscape and its value. This is assessed by taking into account the existing landscape characteristics, markers signifying value such as designations, and landscape capacity to accommodate change, which often vary depending on the type of development proposed and the particular site location. As such, sensitivity needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

7.2.10 The impact magnitude arising from the Proposed Development at any location is based on the interpretation of a combination of quantifiable elements, as follows:

- the loss or alteration to key landscape features / elements or characteristics;
- distance from the Proposed Development;
- duration of effect;
- landscape context of the Proposed Development, including other nearby development or scale features.

Visual Sensitivity and Impact Magnitude

7.2.11 The sensitivity of visual receptors is based on a combination of how susceptible the viewer is to potential change as a result of the Proposed Development, and the value of the existing views. Residents are usually regarded as the highest susceptibility group, as well as those engaged in outdoor pursuits for whom landscape experience is the primary objective. The susceptibility of potential visual receptors varies depending on the activity of the receptor. The value attributed to views varies depending on the nature, location and context of the view and the recognised importance of the view.

7.2.12 The impact magnitude arising from the Proposed Development at any particular viewpoint is based on the following elements:

- distance of view from the Proposed Development;
- duration of effect;

[10] NatureScot. 2010. The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas (Commissioned Report No.374).
[11] NatureScot. 2014. Wild Land Areas Map and Descriptions.
[12] Historic Environment Scotland. 2021. Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes.
[13] NatureScot. 2022. Wildness in Scotland's Countryside, SNH Policy Statement 02/03.
[14] The Highland Council. 2011. Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas.

- extent of the Proposed Development in the view;
- angle of view in relation to main receptor activity;
- proportion of the view occupied by the Proposed Development;
- background to the Proposed Development; and
- extent of other built development visible, particularly vertical elements.

Significance of Effect

7.2.13 GLVIA3 places a strong emphasis on the importance of professional judgement in identifying and defining the significance of landscape and visual effects. Accordingly, professional judgement has been used in combination with the criteria outlined above to evaluate landscape and visual sensitivity, impact magnitude, and significance of effect. The assessment has been undertaken and verified by Chartered Landscape Architects to provide a robust and consistent approach.

7.2.14 For the purposes of this assessment, the significance of effect is based on a four-point scale (i.e. Major, Moderate, Minor, or Negligible). Intermediate ratings, such as Moderate-Minor are also possible. GLVIA3 (paragraph 2.21) acknowledges the use of split ratings to reflect such intermediate judgements in LVIA. It stresses that the scope and depth of assessment should be proportionate to project scale; split grades prevent over- or under-assessment of minor effects. Where the landscape or visual effect is classified as Moderate or greater, this is considered to be 'significant'. Effects are considered to be adverse unless stated otherwise.

Limitations and Assumptions

7.2.15 The LVIA has been undertaken on the basis of the following limitations and assumptions:

- The Proposed Development would be permanent;
- The construction stage would be temporary and approximately 48 months in duration; and
- The LVIA has assessed the design heights of the proposed towers and their location as per the tower schedule provided in **Volume 5**, **Appendix 3.1: Indicative Tower Schedule**. Variations in tower heights and deviations of the final alignment may occur at certain tower locations to account for undulations in the surrounding topography, and to align with best practices. Accordingly, the LVIA accounts for a vertical Limit of Deviation of +/- 9 m with the proposed towers heights and locations detailed in **Volume 5, Appendix 3.1: Indicative Tower Schedule**.
- A horizontal Limit of Deviation of up to 100 m in most cases, where necessary to avoid or minimise environmental impact while remaining consistent with wayleave boundaries. It is also recognised that the horizontal Limit of Deviation would be less than 50 m along some sections of the Alignment.
- The LVIA is undertaken on the assumption that the Proposed Development would be experienced in clear visibility and the assessment is carried out on that basis. Where appropriate, comment is made in relation to lighting and weather conditions, including visibility in winter months during periods of seasonal leaf-fall.
- The LVIA draws on field observations from publicly accessible locations. Accordingly, the assessment of effects at individual residential properties has been undertaken from publicly accessible locations within closest proximity to the dwelling to ensure appropriate representation of potential views, unless stated otherwise where access was granted by the property owner.
- The assessment of operational effects assumes that areas disturbed but not required for the operation of the Proposed Development—such as temporary tracks, laydown and compound areas, and excavations for tower foundations—would be successfully reinstated to reflect, as closely as possible, similar vegetation types and appearance to those present prior to construction. It is important to note that these vegetation types may not necessarily comprise habitat types and values identical to those that were previously present.

- The data used in the completion of the LVIA has some inherent limitations regarding data tolerances and levels of accuracy; however, these limitations have been factored into the assessment.

7.2.16 No further limitations and assumptions specific to the Landscape and Visual Assessment of Section A have been identified or made.

7.3 Baseline Conditions: Landscape

Landscape Overview

7.3.1 Section A traverses a diverse range of landscapes in the north of Scotland. From the north to the south the Proposed Development runs from Spittal across broad peatland landscapes following the route of the existing 132 kV line towards Latheronwheel and then extends south-west across the rolling moorland hills above the coastal shelf between Dunbeath and Beinn Lunndaidh. The extent of views across the landscape reflects the change in landform, the openness of the landscape in the north affording expansive views across the Flow Country west of the A9(T) and the Proposed Development to the east, views becoming confined where the landscape exhibits a greater sense of enclosure and becomes more undulating in nature. Built form and settlement is largely limited to scattered individual properties near road infrastructure in the north, and to the coastal shelf and narrow glens in the south. In addition, the presence of existing OHL and wind farms highlights the established character of energy infrastructure within the northern part of the landscape. In the north, clusters of wind turbines are prominently positioned within the lower rolling hills to the south of the Loch of Toftingall, in close proximity to the existing transmission line. The line runs broadly parallel to the proposed Section A alignment along the A9 (T), before diverging southwest toward Dunbeath.

Landscape Designations and Protected Landscapes

7.3.2 Landscapes recognised for their natural beauty and scenic appeal may be designated at an international, national, or regional / local level, and are typically subject to protection by planning policy. Landscape designations are considered in the determination of the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors as they provide an indication of value ascribed to the landscape or visual resource.

7.3.3 With reference to **Volume 3, Figure 7.2: Section A Designated and Protected Landscapes,** Section A of the Proposed Development extends through four designated or protected landscapes. The following landscapes, have been identified, where direct effects are anticipated:

- National Context:
  - Causeymire – Knockfin Flows WLA.
- Regional / Local Context:
  - The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA; and
  - Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA.

7.3.4 Landscape designations and protected landscapes within wider parts of the Study Area that may be indirectly impacted by the Proposed Development have been identified as follows:

- National Context
  - Ben Klibreck – Armine Forest WLA.

7.3.5 A detailed description of the landscape designations and protected landscapes included within the assessment can be found in **Volume 5**, **Appendix 7.4: Assessment of Designated and Protected Landscapes**. A summary of their Key Attribute and Qualities and/or Special Qualities is provided below.

Causeymire – Knockfin Flows WLA

7.3.6 The Causeymire – Knockfin Flows WLA covers an area of approximately 514 km^2 of southern Caithness and the eastern fringes of Sutherland. The WLA extends across the 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. A small portion of this WLA intersects with the Proposed Development in the rolling hills to the north of Helmsdale. The WLA is largely uninhabited except for a small number of isolated estate houses. The peatlands present challenging terrain however a number of tracks and paths provide access into the WLA and are popular with hillwalkers seeking to attain the summits of Maiden Pap, Morven and Scaraben.

7.3.7 Settlement and roads surround the WLA on its west, south and eastern edges; however, views are only clearly experienced into the WLA from elevated sections of the A9(T) at Causeymire, the minor roads to Strathmore and Braemore, and the Far North railway line. This is because rising slopes tend to screen inward views from other locations.

7.3.8 The WLA coincides with The Flow Country World Heritage Site (WHS) and the Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA.

The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA

7.3.9 The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA extends to an area of approximately 363 km^2. The majority of the Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA falling within the Study Area to Section A lies in the southern portion of the Study Area, between Berriedale and Badbea. The SLA is defined by its vast peatlands and low horizons in the north. These create 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. In the south, moorland foothills above the coastal shelf introduce diverse focal 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 and the coastal shelf.

Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA

7.3.10 The Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA covers an area of approximately 210 km² of rolling hills along the east coast of Sutherland, stretching from the southern slopes of Strath Ullie in the north to Loch Fleet in the south. The Proposed Development within Section A traverses this SLA from Helmsdale to Brora, crossing a landscape defined by rolling plateaux, heather-clad hills, and grass moorland.

7.3.11 The SLA encompasses a diverse range of landscapes, including straths and glens that provide natural corridors between the interior hills and the coastline. These areas are enriched with native woodlands and water bodies that reinforce their scenic and ecological value. To the east, a narrow coastal shelf accommodates roads, rail routes, small farms, and settlements. This area features a distinctive field pattern of pasture enclosed by trees and stone walls, forming a contrast with the open moorland beyond. The adjacent hill slopes define the coastal shelf, offering expansive views along the coastline and across the open sea.

7.3.12 While modern infrastructure, including wind turbines and electricity lines, subtly influences the landscape, these elements do not dominate its overall character. Historic built features, such as traditional farms and estate structures, remain prominent visual landmarks, reinforcing the heritage value of the SLA.

Ben Klibreck – Armine Forest WLA

7.3.13 The Ben Klibreck- Armine Forest WLA covers an area of approximately 530 km^2 across central Sutherland between the settlements of Lairg, Altnaharra and Kinbrace. The Ben Klibreck – Armine Forest WLA extends into a small portion of the Study Area for Section A, covering the peak of Cnoc Meadhonach and Coir an Eoin.

This WLA is defined by its vast, simple landform, dominated by extensive peatland and rolling hills that reinforce a strong sense of solitude and exposure. Dramatic, isolated mountains, including Ben Klibreck and the surrounding hills of Loch Choire, serve as striking focal points, contrasting sharply with the low-lying peatland and highlighting the landscape's remote and untamed nature. Access to the area is challenging, requiring navigation through rugged terrain with few established paths. Sparse human activity contributes to the landscape's strong sense of tranquillity, with only a few isolated buildings used for deer stalking and fishing.

7.3.14 The WLA is primarily experienced from outside its boundaries, with key receptors including users of the A836, particularly cyclists following National Cycle Route 1. Ben Klibreck, as a Munro, attracts a high number of hillwalkers, while others venture further into the interior towards Loch Choire and the Grahams of Ben Armine and Creag Mhòr. The WLA's boundaries vary in character. To the north, Ben Klibreck and Ben Armine create a sharply defined edge, while on the western side, a ridge of hills between Meall Meadhonach and Meall a' Chaise forms a distinct transition. In contrast, the southern and eastern margins of the WLA blend more gradually into the surrounding landscape, where human elements such as forestry, wind farms, and telecom masts become increasingly prevalent, subtly diminishing the perception of remoteness in these areas.

7.3.15 The Special Qualities of the landscape designations and protected landscapes, as identified by the guidance documents listed in paragraph 7.2.5, are listed below in **Table 7.2**. Special qualities of specific relevance to the Proposed Development are highlighted in bold.

Table 7.2: Special Qualities of Designated and Protected Landscapes

Designation	Key Attributes and Special Qualities
Causeymire – Knockfin Flows WLA	**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.**
The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA	**Distinctive mountain and moorland skyline;** **Exposed peaks, vast openness, and Intimate glens;** and • The Historic Landscape.
Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA	**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;

Designation	Key Attributes and Special 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 fairly simple, and extends throughout the area, there is a strong consistency of this backdrop to the coast.** • 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; and • **To the east lies a narrow fertile coastal shelf which 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.**
Ben Klibreck – Armine Forest WLA	• **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;** • Isolated mountains rise in stark contrast to the surrounding peatland and glens'; • **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; and** • **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.**

Landscape Character

7.3.16 With reference to NatureScot's National Landscape Character Assessment, LCTs within the Study Area for Section A are illustrated in **Volume 3**, **Figure 7.3: Section A Landscape Character**. The Proposed Development would extend through parts of the following five LCTs, and result in direct effects in each case:

- 134 – Sweeping Moorland and Flows LCT;
- 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT;
- 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland LCT;
- 143 – Farmed Lowland Plain LCT; and
- 144 – Coastal Crofts & Small Farms LCT.

7.3.17 In addition, four other LCTs located within the Study Area for Section A, that may be indirectly impacted by the Proposed Development have been identified as follows:

- 138 – Lone Mountains LCT;
- 140 – Sandy Beaches and Dunes LCT;
- 141 – High Cliffs and Sheltered Bays LCT; and
- 146 – Coastal Farmland and Woodlands LCT.

7.3.18 Descriptions of these LCTs, including their key characteristics are included in **Annex 1**.

7.4 Baseline Conditions: Visual

Interpretation of the ZTV

7.4.1 **Volume 3, Figure 7.1: Section A Zone of Theoretical Visibility** illustrates the potential visibility of the Proposed Development across the 10 km Study Area. Within a 5 km radius of the Section A alignment, ZTV coverage is relatively extensive. However, visibility becomes increasingly fragmented toward the southern extent of the alignment, where the landscape transitions from open moorland in the north to more varied topography characterised by undulating terrain, peaks, and rolling hills. Theoretical visibility of a high proportion of the proposed steel lattice towers is primarily concentrated within the open, flatter landscape between Loch of Toftingall and Rumster Forest. This area is largely defined by areas of expansive peatland to the west of the A9(T) and a mix of farmland, forestry, and moorland to the south. The openness of the peatlands conveys a strong sense of remoteness and wilderness, with an open, unobstructed skyline that increases visual exposure. However, to the immediate south of Loch of Toftingall, the proposed towers would be viewed in combination with large number of nearby wind farms and existing power lines, which form prominent features in the when viewed from the A9(T).

7.4.2 Beyond the remote, wilderness areas, destinations frequently visited by receptors would experience varying degrees of visibility of the proposed towers across the Study Area. Most of these locations are publicly accessible and situated close to the A9(T) or other key transport routes. Popular hillwalking destinations, such as Maiden Pap, Scaraben, and Morven, would be subject to relatively greater visibility due to their elevated positions, which increase exposure to views of the Proposed Development.

7.4.3 Fewer towers are predicted to be visible for receptors across the lower-lying coastal shelves, rolling hills, and straths. Additionally, there are large areas of ZTV coverage in close proximity to the towers that coincide with blankets of forestry plantations, which would lessen the overall availability of views. At distances beyond the 5 km Study Area, ZTV coverage becomes increasingly fragmented, particularly to the west and south-west, where the Proposed Development would be intermittently discernible or imperceptible across the broader landscape.

Visual Receptors

7.4.4 The visual receptors within the Study Area have been identified from review of Ordnance Survey maps, aerial photographs, ZTV maps and field survey. The key visual receptors considered in this LVIA comprise:

- residents within settlements and isolated dwellings in closest proximity to the Proposed Development;
- road users / passengers on key transport routes, comprising A-roads, B-roads, and railway lines;
- tourists visiting cultural heritage locations / outdoor locations where enjoyment of the view is one of the principal reasons for being at the location; and
- walkers / cyclists on promoted long-range recreational trails, Core Paths, and National Cycle Network Routes.

7.4.5 The following section identifies visual receptors within the Study Area for Section A that would experience potential views of the Proposed Development. Where distances to the Proposed Development are noted, these distances are measured from the visual receptor to the closest tower location, on the basis that the towers would form the largest and most prominent part of the Proposed Development and would be visible from greater distances. Visual receptors are described in greater detail within **Annex 2. T**heir locations are illustrated in **Volume 3**, **Figure 7.4: Section A Visual Receptors**.

<u>Settlements</u>

7.4.6 Settlements and residential properties are primarily concentrated along the shores and within glens. The largest settlement within the Study Area for Section A is Helmsdale on the south-eastern coast of Sutherland. Halkirk,

another key settlement, lies to the north of the Study Area, to the west of the A9 on the River Thurso in Caithness. Smaller clusters of settlements are found along the shore, including Latheron, Landhallow, Dunbeath, Ramscraigs, Newport, Berriedale, Borgue, and Portgower where they are almost entirely orientated to take advantage of open, coastal views. Scattered hamlets, single properties, and farmsteads are found at lower elevations throughout the Study Area, where topography allows.

7.4.7 With reference to **Volume 3, Figure 7.4a-d: Section A Visual Receptors**, settlements within the ZTV that may have views of the Proposed Development include:

- Crofting township at Smerral (SA-06) is situated broadly to the east of the Proposed Development. The nearest point of infrastructure is Tower N69, situated at a distance of approximately 334 m from the closest property within the township;
- Badbagie (SA-07) is situated broadly to the east of the Proposed Development. The nearest point of infrastructure is Tower N80, situated at a distance of approximately 726 m from the closest property within Badbagie;
- Borgue (SA-09) is situated broadly to the east of the Proposed Development. The nearest point of infrastructure is Tower N98, situated at a distance of 431 m from the closest property within Borgue;
- Badrinsary (SA-10) is situated broadly to the east and south-east of the Proposed Development. The nearest point of infrastructure is Tower N106, situated at a distance of approximately 343 m from the closest property within Badrinsary; and
- Marrel and scattered cottages along the A897 (SA-13) stretch broadly to the west and east of the Proposed Development. The nearest point of infrastructure is Tower N148, situated at a distance of approximately 470 m from the closest property within Marrel.

7.4.8 There are isolated small clusters of properties, farmsteads and dwellings scattered across the surrounding landscape. Small groups or individual residential properties within closest proximity to the Proposed Development (within 500m of the Alignment) are listed below.

- Lanergill Farm (SA-01) is a modern farmhouse with agricultural outbuildings. The nearest point of infrastructure is Tower N12, situated at a distance of approximately 230 m to the property;
- Lydias House, Toftingall Farm (SA-02), a single-storey farmhouse, is located to the south, south-west, west, and north-west of the Proposed Development. The nearest point of infrastructure is Tower N12, situated at a distance of approximately 330 m from the property;
- Farmstead at Halsary (SA-03), a farmhouse with agricultural outbuildings, is sheltered by surrounding trees and positioned in proximity to the Flow Country WHS. The farmstead is situated broadly to the north and north-west of the Proposed Development, with the nearest point of infrastructure (Tower N29) located approximately 256 m in the south-east;
- Farmsteads and cottages along the A9(T) (SA-04) are located to the west of the Proposed Development. The nearest point of infrastructure is Tower N46, situated at a distance of approximately 198 m from the closest property within this group;
- A single-story cottage (Braehungie) and a mobile home (Mountain View) (SA-05) are situated to the west of the A9(T). The nearest point of infrastructure to Braehungie is Tower N61, located approximately 213 m away, while the nearest to Mountain View is Tower N62, located approximately 178 m away;
- Achorn House (SA-08) is situated broadly to the east and south-east of the Proposed Development. The closest point of infrastructure is Tower N87, located at a distance of approximately 365 m from the property;
- Langwell Gardens, Langwell Kennels, and Keepers House (SA-11) are situated broadly to the south-east of the Proposed Development. The nearest point of infrastructure is Tower N114, located at a distance of approximately 386 m to the closest property within this group; and
- The Bungalow, Ousdale, and Keepers Cottage (SA-12), located approximately 187 m to the south-east of the Proposed Development (Tower N127) at the closest point.

Transport Routes

7.4.9 Transportation routes across the Study Area for Section A are generally aligned to the coastal shelf and narrow ribbons through the peatlands. The Proposed Development would be potentially viewed by users of the A9, A897, B870, and minor roads over short distances, as well as longer-distance views across the open peatland landscapes such as views from the A897 in the vicinity of the River Helmsdale. With reference to **Volume 3, Figures 7.4-2 and 7.4-2: Section A Visual Receptors**, those located within the ZTV, from which there may be views of the Proposed Development are as follows:

- The A9(T) (RA-01) is a single carriageway road that connects Inverness to Thurso, passing through predominantly remote and rural landscapes with few major settlements. At its closest point, the road passes directly beneath the Proposed Development at Braehungie, between Towers N61 and N62;
- The A882 (RA-02) is a single carriageway, located approximately 2.3 km north-east of the Proposed Development at its closest point near Tower N10. It traverses rural Caithness landscapes, linking small settlements. The route is relatively straight with gentle curves, passing through open countryside, farmland, and areas with scattered residential properties;
- The A897 (RA-03) is a single carriageway road running through remote Highland countryside. It follows a route along the Strath of Kildonan, passing through moorland, rolling hills, and alongside the River Helmsdale, before joining the A9 at Helmsdale. At its closest point, it passes directly beneath the Proposed Development at Marrel, between Towers N148 and N149;
- The A99(T) (RA-04) is a single carriageway road traversing the Caithness countryside, located approximately 3.3 km south-east of the Proposed Development at its closest point (near Tower N71). It connects small settlements and agricultural areas, serving as a key transport route between the northernmost parts of Scotland and the A9, which continues southward;
- The B870 (RA-05) is a single carriageway road that winds through the rural landscape of Caithness, passing by farmland, scattered dwellings, and small settlements. It offers a quiet, scenic route that connects local communities and links with the B876, providing access toward Thurso and Wick. At its closest point, the road passes directly beneath the Proposed Development near the Moss of Toftingall (between Towers N11 and N12);
- The B874 (RA-06) is a single carriageway road traversing the Caithness countryside, located approximately 4 km north-east of the Proposed Development at its closest point near Tower N1. It connects Glengolly to Lochshell, passing through Castletown and several small settlements. The route ultimately links with the A882 near Wick, offering access to the broader regional road network;
- The B876 (RA-07) is a single carriageway road that runs through the Caithness countryside, located approximately 9.6 km north-east of the Proposed Development at its closest point near Tower N10, connecting the rural village of Bower to Kirk. Serving as an important local route, the road links smaller communities with major roads such as the A882 and A99, supporting travel between Thurso and Wick;
- Far North Railway Line from Inverness to Thurso via Helmsdale (RA-08). At its closest point, the railway passes directly beneath the Proposed Development at Marrel (between Towers N148 and N149); and
- Far North Railway Line between Scotscalder and Wick via Georgemas Junction (RA-09), located approximately 2.5 km north-west of the Proposed Development at its closest point near Tower N1.

Recreational Routes

7.4.10 Recreational routes considered within the visual assessment include core paths and long-distance paths. These are listed below in order from north to south of the Proposed Development and are illustrated in **Volume 3**, **Figure 7.4: Section A Visual Receptors**.

Core Paths

- Core Path CA06.08: The Old Quarry (RA-10) is a gravel track stretching from the A9 near Spittal, located approximately 2 km to the west of the Proposed Development at the closest point (near Tower N12);
- Core Path CA06.04: Causeymire Wind Farm (RA-11) is a loop track winding through the Causeymire Wind Farm, located approximately 2.5 km to the west of the Proposed Development at the closest point (near Tower N23);
- Core Path CA10.11: Achavanich and Munsary (RA-12) is a track leading to Munsary via Loch Stemster, located approximately 342 m to the east of the Proposed Development at the closest point (near Tower N47);
- Core Paths CA10.03: Rumster Mast Loop, CA10.04: Rumster, and CA10.07: Rumster to A99 (RA-13) are a collection of forest tracks at Rumster, located approximately 1.08 km to the west of the Proposed Development at the closest point (near Tower N58);
- Core Paths CA04.01: Dunbeath Strath, CA04.02: Coopers Path, CA04.04: Achnaclyth Track by Toutnagoul, CA04.06: Footbridge Link, CA04.07: Post Office Path, CA04.08: Balcladich and the Sandy Pools, CA04.09: Back Path, CA04.10: Milton Track, CA04.11: A9 Roadside Link, CA04.12: Old Road Link, CA04.13: Old Road by the Driveway to Dunbeath Castle, CA04.16: Clashvalley Track, CA04.17: Portormin Beach, CA04.18: Camel Humps, and CA04.19: Balintra Wood (RA-14) are a collection of tracks at Dunbeath. At its closest point, the route extends directly under the Proposed Development (between Towers N83 and N84);
- Core Paths CA04.15: Langwell Woodland and CA04.14: Berriedale Pier (RA-15) is a collection of gravel paths stretching from Berriedale to Langwell, located approximately 560 m to the south-east of the Proposed Development at the closest point (near Tower N113);
- Core Path CA04.03: Badbea (RA-16) is a gravel track off North Coast 500 that leads to Badbea, located approximately 360 m to the south of the Proposed Development at the closest point (near Tower N121).
- Core Paths SU13.01: Lobster Ponds – Navidale, SU13.02: St Johns Well, SU13.03: Helmsdale River Bank, SU13.04: Simpson Crescent, SU13.05: Old Helmsdale - Old Caithness Road, SU13.05: Navidale Cycle Path, SU13.06: Old Helmsdale - East Helmsdale, SU13.07: Playing Fields – West Helmsdale, and SU13.09: Navidale Farm Track/Seaweed Road (RA-17) are a collection of tracks at Helmsdale, located approximately 1.2 km to the east of the Proposed Development at the closest point (near Tower N151); and
- Core Path SU13.08: Portgower Inn Road – Gartymore (RA-18) is a hill walk winding through rolling hills at Gartymore, located approximately 2.1 km to the south-east of the Proposed Development at the closest point (near Tower N156).

Long-distance Routes

- The North Coast 500 (RA-19) is a promoted scenic route that runs almost parallel to the Proposed Development between Latheron and Brora where it utilises the A9(T), and is located approximately 230 m to the south-east at its closest point near Badbea (near Tower N121).

Outdoor Locations

7.4.11 Outdoor visitor attractions / destinations have been included where the view of the landscape is considered to be a principal reason for being at the location. The assessment focuses on those within closest proximity to the Proposed Development (within 3 km of the alignment). These outdoor locations are illustrated in **Volume 3, Figure 7.4a-d: Section A Visual Receptors**, as listed below:

- Location OA-01 Dunbeath Castle is a historic castle positioned along the east coast of Caithness, Scotland, overlooks the North Sea and is situated approximately 2.75 km south-east of the Proposed Development at the closest point;

- Location OA-02 The peak of Scaraben in Caithness, lies approximately 4.6 km north-west of the Proposed Development at its closest point. This location offers a challenging yet rewarding hill walk with panoramic views across the Flow Country and the North Sea, making it a popular destination for walkers seeking expansive, scenic vistas;
- Location OA-03 Berriedale Braes Viewpoint is situated on the steep descent of the A9 at Berriedale, approximately 1.43 km to the south-east of the Proposed Development, overlooking the Berriedale Water and the North Sea. It is promoted for travellers on the North Coast 500 to experience panoramic views of the coastline, surrounding hills, and valley;
- Location OA-04 Badbea Historic Clearance Village is located on the east coast of Caithness, approximately 720 m to the south of the Proposed Development. The village was built on steep, exposed cliffs now accessed off the A9, south of Berriedale;
- Location OA-05 Hill walk location at Creag Thoraraidh is a hillwalking destination in Caithness, Scotland, located approximately 700 m to the south-east of the Proposed Development, offering spectacular views of the north-east Highland landscape and coastline; and
- Location OA-06: Emigrants Memorial is located in Couper Park above the River Helmsdale. positioned in a prominent location, overlooking the village of Helmsdale, the mouth of the Strath of Kildonan, and the North Sea. The memorial is located approximately 2 km south-east of the nearest point of the Proposed Development.

Future Baseline

7.4.12 The baseline landscape and visual resource of the Study Area is predicted to undergo some continued minor development (new properties / housing extensions, or similar), in combination with ongoing changes to forestry/tree cover as a result of commercial forestry practices. However, these activities are not anticipated to result in notable change to the landscape characteristics of the Study Area or visual amenity and are therefore not considered further.

7.4.13 Conversely, transmission infrastructure and wind energy development have been identified with the potential to exert a more notable influence on the future landscape and baseline resource within the Study Area. These consist of the consented West of Orkney Wind Farm Grid Connection and Camster II Wind Farm, along with the proposed Banniskirk 400kV Substation and HVDC Converter Station, Tormsdale Wind Farm, Watten Wind Farm, and Golticlay Wind Farm Redesign. If built, these developments would be located across extensive low-lying moorland and agricultural fields within or adjacent to the River Wick drainage basin, bordered by dense forests and existing wind farms.

7.4.14 Due to the scale of these developments (with reference to their spread and vertical height), these are anticipated to result in changes to local landscape character and visual amenity. The potential effects are considered further within the assessment of cumulative effects.

7.5 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects: Landscape

7.5.1 This section assesses the likely effects of the Proposed Development on relevant LCTs, and designated and protected landscapes during the construction and operational phases. This follows the significance of effects criteria outlined in the methodology (refer to **Volume 5**, **Appendix 7.2: LVIA Methodology**). The assessment begins with LCTs, which informs the subsequent evaluation of effects on designated and protected landscapes.

7.5.2 The detailed assessment of effects for each LCT is described within **Annex 1**. The detailed assessment of effects on designated and protected landscapes is provided in **Volume 5**, **Appendix 7.4: Assessment of Designated and Protected Landscapes**. In each case, the key effects are summarised below.

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

7.5.3 The detailed assessment of landscape character has considered nine separate LCTs as illustrated in **Volume 3, Figure 7.3-1 and 7.3-2: Section A Landscape Character**. Likely significant effects have been identified across localised parts of the following:

- LCT 134 – Sweeping Moorland and Flows;
- LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland;
- LCT 142 – Strath – Caithness & Sutherland;
- LCT 143 – Farmed Lowland Plain; and
- LCT 144 – Coastal Crofts & Small Farms;

LCT 134 – Sweeping Moorland and Flows

7.5.4 The landscape within the Sweeping Moorland and Flows LCT is highly valued, with much of it located within the Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA, featuring the vastness and natural beauty of the peatland and coastline as the defining characteristics. The Proposed Development would extend through the LCT from the open moorlands in the vicinity of Spittal to the coastal hills in the vicinity of Dunbeath for approximately 31.5 km. Where the alignment intersects the existing OHL at Braehungie, a Special Arrangement (a duck-under with space provision for live scaffolding) would occur (refer to Viewpoints 7-10 A9 (T) Lay-by (Bad a Cheo), 7-11 A9 (T) Air Crew Memorial, 7-12 A9 (Loch Rangag) and 7-13 A9 (north-east of Guidebest)).

7.5.5 Section A alignment runs broadly parallel to the existing 132 kV OHL and A9(T), concentrating development within a defined corridor and avoiding more remote areas west of the A9(T), particularly visible near Rangag. Construction would involve tower installation, access tracks, and forestry felling. Felling of forestry to the east of Loch of Toftingall, and to the north-east of Rangag would be required in order to ensure a wind firm edge to the retained forestry in the surrounding area. The construction works would result in increased vehicular movement and human activity within existing areas of forestry and open moorland. A **major-moderate adverse** effect that is **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations is predicted along a linear corridor within 700-800 m of the works, due to the open nature of the moorland landscape. At greater distances, the construction activities would represent more discreet elements in the background landscape. Accordingly, across the wider LCT, the effects would be **moderate-minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations).

7.5.6 During operation, steel lattice towers would increase the presence of infrastructure in the LCT, especially across open moorland. The most significant effects would occur within 700–800 m of the alignment, where impact magnitude would be High due to visual exposure and reduced remoteness. Across the wider LCT, resultant changes would diminish with distance, with operation effects assessed as **Moderate–Minor Adverse** (not significant), while within 700–800 m, effects would be **Major–Moderate Adverse** (significant).

LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland

7.5.7 The majority of this LCT to the east of Strath Ullie falls within the Causeymire -Knockfin Flows WLA and the Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA, reinforcing its rugged nature and wilderness qualities that define the area. The landscape is highly valued as a tourist destination, providing visitors the opportunity to experience its scenic beauty. Refer to Viewpoints 7-19 A9 (T) south-west of Berriedale, 7-21 A9 (T) Badbea Historical Village, 7-22 Badbea, 7-24 Creag Thoraraidh. 7-29 Glen Loth (north), and 7-30 Glen Loth (south).

7.5.8 From Berriedale to Brora, the construction of steel lattice towers would be visually prominent particularly where towers cross the strath floor and upper hill slopes. However, the combined screening effects of undulating terrain, dense woodland, and commercial forestry plantations would largely contain the wider visibility, with only occasional glimpses of cranes or emerging towers. Forestry felling required at the crossings of Berriedale Water, Langwell Water, Glen Loch, Loch Brora, Dunrobin Glen, and areas north of Ousdale, and Achrimsdale

to facilitate installation works, and ensure a wind firm edge, would contribute to localised landscape change within the defined linear corridor. Key effects would be concentrated along the eastern edge of the LCT, primarily associated with the establishment of access tracks near Borgue and Berriedale, which would extend up to 1 km from the alignment to the A9, where a **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) effect is predicted. At greater distances, the influence of the construction activities would be reduced due to the screening influence of the intervening hills. Accordingly, across the wider LCT, the effects would be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant).

7.5.9 Once operational, the visual presence of the new infrastructure between Berriedale and Brora would be integrated with the existing 132 kV overhead line, especially between Borgue and Badbea, where both routes closely align within a defined corridor. While the alignment would intensify development within this localised zone, it would avoid extending infrastructure into more remote and undeveloped areas of the LCT. Surrounding landform, woodland, and forestry would partially screen the towers along the hill slopes, limiting visibility to intermittent glimpses of tower tops. Over time, forestry regeneration and ground cover reinstatement would soften the landscape change and reduce perceived fragmentation. In summary, the most pronounced effects would be concentrated within a linear corridor extending up to 1 km from the Section A alignment, where the magnitude of effect is assessed as **Major–Moderate Adverse** (significant). Across the wider LCT, effects are anticipated to reduce with distance and are assessed as **Moderate–Minor Adverse** (not significant)

LCT 142 – Strath – Caithness & Sutherland

7.5.10 The Strath LCT encompasses the low-lying river valleys near Berriedale and Helmsdale, intersecting with three localised Section A alignment sections. Refer to Viewpoints 7-25 A897 (Caen), 7-26 Marrel and 7-27 A897 (East of Kilphedir).

7.5.11 Construction within the Straths of Langwell, Berriedale, and Kildonan would involve localised tree felling on upper slopes and the creation of temporary and permanent access tracks. The construction works would extend directly across the LCT rather than following its length, introducing short sections of linear interventions that contrast with the natural and wild characteristics of the landscape. Vehicular movement and construction activities would be most evident on the strath floors within the LCT, where they would stand out against the existing agricultural land use and moorland hills. This contrast would be most pronounced within the Strath of Kildonan near Marrel, where the works would occupy a linear area extending from the alignment approximately 400–500 m in the north-west and 600–700 m in the south-east.

7.5.12 Due to the introduction of new infrastructure elements and increased human activity within a predominantly natural setting, a **Major-Moderate** Adverse (significant) effect is predicted during the construction phase. At greater distances, the construction activities would be screened / backclothed by surrounding tree cover, representing more discreet elements in the background landscape. Accordingly, across the wider LCT, the effects would be **Moderate Adverse (**significant).

7.5.13 Once operational, the Proposed Development would extend directly across the LCT, minimising its influence on the wider landscape. Four towers (Towers N108–N110 and N115) would be introduced within the Straths of Langwell and Berriedale, and six towers (Towers N145–N150) within the Strath of Kildonan. Permanent access tracks would connect the alignment with major routes, including the A9(T) and A897. The main effects would be focused within a linear corridor through the three straths, with a maximum width of 600-700 m south-east from the alignment in the Strath of Kildonan, where a permanent track would follow the contours of Caen Hill's western hillside. As the alignment crosses the enclosing slopes, towers would appear on hilltops against the sky. In summary, the most pronounced effects would be concentrated within a linear corridor extending to 600-700 m from the Section A alignment, where the magnitude of effect is assessed as **Major–Moderate Adverse** (significant). Across the wider LCT, effects are anticipated to reduce with distance and are assessed as **Moderate Adverse** (significant).

LCT 143 – Farmed Lowland Plain

7.5.14 The Farmed Lowland Plain LCT is characterised by gently undulating landforms with broad horizontal emphasis, and enormous skies creating an open, light, and exposed environment. The landform also includes broad, shallow valleys running southeast to northwest, with the valley of the River Wick being the largest, hosting Lochs Watten and Scarmclate in its upper part. Refer to Viewpoints 7-01 B874 to 7-08 Camster Road (south-east of Loch Watten).

7.5.15 The Proposed Development would involve forestry felling to create a wayleave through a small section of the northernmost forestry plantation and establish temporary access tracks for tower construction. This would result in increased activity human activity/vehicular movement within a confined area of the LCT. While construction activities would generally resemble periodic forest management operations and existing roads would introduce occasional movement, the works would present a more concentrated and sustained level of activity, with localised changes being more evident at tower positions, access tracks, and compound areas. Key effects would be largely confined to the localised areas of the LCT, with vehicular movement extending up to 750 m from the northern end of the alignment. Construction activities would contrast with agricultural land use but become less visually intrusive over greater distances due to intervening landforms and vegetation. The key effects would be along a linear area within approximately 750 m of the works, where a **Moderate Adverse** (significant) effect is predicted. At greater distances, the influence of the construction activities would be reduced due to the intervening screening. Accordingly, across the wider LCT, the effects would be **Minor Adverse** (not significant).

7.5.16 Once operational, the Proposed Development (Towers N1–11) would introduce prominent vertical elements into the rural landscape, establishing a visible infrastructure footprint. While forestry felling would result in some fragmentation of the land cover, the overall effect would be localised by the presence of surrounding forestry plantations and mitigated by vegetation reinstatement. The immediate surroundings of the towers would experience a more noticeable change, while intervening tree cover and landforms would restrict visibility of the towers across more distant parts of the LCT. In summary, a **Moderate Adverse** (significant) effect is predicted within approximately 750 m of the alignment. Accordingly, across the wider LCT, the effects would be **Minor Adverse** (not significant).

LCT 144 – Coastal Crofts & Small Farms

7.5.17 The LCT intersects with a substantial portion of the Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA, as well as the Loch Fleet, Brora & Glen Loth SLA. A short section of the Proposed Development within Section A traverses the outer edge of the Coastal Crofts & Small Farms LCT, specifically at Badnagie, Borgue, and Ousdale, where the landscape is defined by a narrow coastal shelf bordered inland by steep hills. Refer to Viewpoints 7-15 A9 (T) Laidhay Croft Museum, 7-16 Achorn Road, and 7-18 A9 (T) Berriedale Braes.

7.5.18 Construction activities would be geographically dispersed across Badnagie, Borgue, and Ousdale. Changes resulting from intensified human intervention would be moderated to varying degrees by distance, topography, and tree cover. In more exposed areas, where construction works would involve ground clearance, vehicle movements, and the presence of infrastructure, the construction footprint would extend beyond individual tower locations and compound areas. Key effects would occur within a 2.2 km corridor north of Dunbeath, especially within 100–200 m north-west and 800–900 m south-east of the alignment. Accordingly, a **Major Adverse** (significant) effect is predicted within the linear corridor of the alignment. Across the wider LCT, the effects would be **Moderate Adverse** (significant).

7.5.19 Once operational, the Section A alignment would extend directly across the LCT rather than following its length. Steel lattice towers at Badnagie (Towers N78–N83), Borgue (Towers N95–N99), and Ousdale (Towers N125–N128) would introduce a new infrastructure element, partially aligned with the existing 132 kV overhead line. Towers positioned on the upper slopes would appear silhouetted against the sky, while those situated lower

down would be backdropped by forested moorland hills, making them appear more recessive. Their visual prominence and influence on the LCT would decrease with distance, and no discernible effect is anticipated from areas within the SLA. In summary, a **Major Adverse** (significant) effect is predicted within a corridor extending 100–200 m to the north-west and 800–900 m to the south-east from the alignment. Across the wider LCT, the effects are assessed as **Moderate Adverse** (significant).

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

7.5.20 Landscape effects for all other LCTs within the Study Area have been identified as not significant during construction and operation. This includes:

- LCT 138 – Lone Mountains;
- LCT 140 – Sandy Beaches and Dunes;
- LCT 141 – High Cliffs and Sheltered Bays; and
- LCT 146 – Coastal Farmland & Woodlands.

7.5.21 In each case, these LCTs are spatially separate from the Proposed Development within Section A, and would undergo no direct, physical change. Indirect effects based on potential views of the Proposed Development would be limited based on their spatial separation from the construction activities and the new alignment, in combination with the presence of intervening screening elements, and / or existing OHL in the foreground.

7.5.22 During construction and operation, **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effects are predicted for LCT 138 – Lone Mountains and LCT 141 – High Cliffs and Sheltered Bays. Whilst the construction activities and new alignment would represent recognisable new features in the wider landscape, they would be unlikely to alter the overriding landscape characteristics of these landscapes. The nearest LCT identified in the Study Area for Section A is LCT 141 – High Cliffs and Sheltered Bays, located approximately 860 m south-east of the Proposed Development at its closest point, near Badbea. All other LCTs are located at distances of 2.5 km or more from the Proposed Development and typically exhibit more limited ZTV coverage in LCT 140 – Sandy Beaches and Dunes and LCT – 146 Coastal Farmland and Woodlands, meaning that large areas would be completely unaffected due to the construction activities or the new alignment. A **Negligible** (not significant) effect is predicted for these landscapes as no discernible effects are predicted based on the spatial separation from Section A and the lack of views.

Assessment of Effects on Designated and Protected Landscapes

7.5.23 The detailed assessment of designated and protected landscapes has considered three distinct areas, as illustrated in **Volume 3, Figure 7.2: Section A Designated and Protected Landscapes**. This includes consideration of potential effects with reference to their Special Qualities and/or key attributes. The identified effects are summarised below.

Causeymire – Knockfin Flows WLA

7.5.24 The Proposed Development passes through the Causeymire Knockfin Flows WLA for a distance of approximately 3.5 km, south-west of Ousdale on the rolling hills above the coastal fringe. There would be no effects on the vast peatlands to the north of the alignment which make up the majority of the land falling within the WLA boundary. Therefore, the influence of the Proposed Development on the WLA's key attributes and qualities would be largely indirect and primarily based on views, with limited direct effects on the landscape features and elements that contribute to the Key Qualities and Attributes of the WLA. Refer to Viewpoint 7-17 East Scaraben.

7.5.25 Due to the rolling nature of the landscape, ZTV coverage is limited across the WLA. From this localised area in the south, potential views of the construction activities and the towers during the operational phase would be restricted due to the distance, combined with the screening effect of intervening mountains and the scale of the

receiving landscape. The effects on the WLA and its key attributes and qualities would be limited due to the relatively small footprint of the Section A alignment within the WLA, its spatial separation from the Proposed Development and the limited ZTV coverage, which reflects the screening influence of the intervening mountains.

7.5.26 In summary, all effects on the WLA would generally be indirect, with limited effects on the coastal hills in the south of the WLA. The construction activities and new steel lattice towers would constitute very discreet additions to the background landscape to the east of the WLA, within less remote, more settled landscapes associated with the coastal fringe and the vicinity of the A9(T). The overall effect during both construction and operation would be **Minor** (not significant). In the vast majority of the WLA, there would be no views and no effect, and the integrity of the WLA would not be compromised.

Ben Klibreck – Armine Forest WLA

7.5.27 Section A of the Proposed Development would be situated approximately 7.5 km to the south-east and east of the WLA. As a result, the influence of the Proposed Development on the Special Qualities of the WLA would be indirect and primarily based on views, with no direct effects on the landscape features and elements that contribute to the WLA's Key Qualities and Attributes. Due to the spatial separation and limited ZTV coverage, which reflects the screening effect of intervening mountains, the effects on the WLA and its Key Attributes and Qualities would be limited.

7.5.28 The ZTV coverage across the SLA is limited, generally confined to a few isolated summits within the WLA. From these localised areas, potential views of temporary construction activities and towers during operation would be limited by the viewing distance and the screening influence of the intervening mountains, as well as the scale of the receiving landscape. In summary, the construction activities and new steel lattice towers would be very discreet additions to the background landscape to the south. The overall effect during both construction and operation would be **Negligible** (not significant), with no views and no effect across the vast majority of the WLA. Consequently, the integrity of the WLA would remain intact.

Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA

7.5.29 Section A of the Proposed Development would transect the SLA for approximately 15.6 km. This would result in direct effects within a relatively small area, while indirect effects, primarily due to the visibility of the Proposed Development, would occur mainly from the upland elements of the SLA. Coastal elements of the SLA would experience very limited or no visibility of Section A. Views of the Proposed Development are provided to Viewpoints 7-17 East Scaraben, 7-18 A9 (T) Berriedale Braes 7-29 Glen Loth (north), and 7-30 Glen Loth (south).

7.5.30 During construction, potential views of activities across the moorland plateau within the SLA would be moderated by viewing distance and the relatively low-level nature of construction works and vehicle movements. In the valleys, the combination of tree cover and topography would restrict longer-range views, but at closer range (around 1 km), particularly where the Proposed Development crosses the valleys, construction activities would be visible and prominent. Once operational, the towers would be visible from open moorland vantage points, appearing as relatively discreet additions to the background landscape enclosing the wider moorland and hills. However, there would be instances where the towers would visually combine with existing OHLs or wind turbines. In the valleys, the towers would be visible at closer proximity as they traverse the landscape, although intervening vegetation would limit longer-range views.

7.5.31 The effects on the Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA would primarily concentrate on its northern extents in the upland landscapes north of Brora, where direct effects would occur. The Proposed Development would directly impact the landscapes contributing to the Special Qualities of the SLA, reducing the perceived wildness and tranquillity of the interior hills and Glen Loth. However, the influence of Section A on the SLA

would gradually decrease with increased distance. The overall effect during construction would be locally **Major Adverse** (significant), and during operation, it would be **Major-Moderate Adverse**, with diminishing effects at greater distances across the SLA to the north-east. The Proposed Development would have very limited effects on the coastal aspects of the SLA and minimal impact on the perception of change within the SLA as seen from the A9(T) and the Far North Railway line.

The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA

7.5.32 Section A of the Proposed Development is largely located outside the Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA, but passes through the SLA in the region of the Berriedale Coast for a distance of approximately 5.6 km. In the northern portion of the SLA, which relates more so to the peatbogs of the Flow Country, the effects on the SLA and its Special Qualities would be indirect. Representative views of the Proposed Development are provided in Viewpoint 7-17 East Scaraben and Viewpoint 7-18 A9 (T) Berriedale Braes.

7.5.33 In the northern portion of the SLA, potential views of construction activities would be moderated by the viewing distance and the relatively low-level nature of construction works and vehicle movements. In the valleys, tree cover and topography would limit longer-range views, but at closer range (often around 1 km), where the Proposed Development crosses the valleys, construction activities would become visible and prominent. In the southern portion of Section A, construction activities would be visible at close distances, both across the moorland and within the valleys, including Strath Ullie and the landscape would be directly impacted by the Proposed Development.

7.5.34 Once operational, the towers would be visible from open moorland vantage points. Due to the viewing distance, they would appear as relatively discreet additions to the background landscape, enclosing the wider moorland and hills. Direct effects on The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA would be concentrated on its southern extents, in the upland landscapes west and north-west of Helmsdale to Dunbeath. Here, direct effects would occur, but the influence of Section A on the SLA would gradually decrease with increased distance.

7.5.35 In summary, during construction the effects on the Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA would be locally **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) and locally **Moderate Adverse** (significant) during operation, with diminishing effects as the distance increases further north. There would be no direct effects on the expansive peatlands of the Flow covered by the designation.

Summary of Landscape Effects

7.5.36 A summary of effects on LCTs, and designated and protected landscapes within the Study Area is presented in **Table 7.3** during construction and **Table 7.4** during operation. The symbol 'L' is used to denote effects that would be localised in nature.

Table 7.3: Summary of Effects During Construction

Landscape Receptor	Beneficial Effect					Adverse Effect					
	Major	Major-Mod	Mod.	Mod-Minor	Minor	Neg	Minor	Mod-Minor	Mod	Major-Mod	Major
LCT 134 – Sweeping Moorland and Flows								•		L	
LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland								•		L	
LCT 138 – Lone Mountains							•				
LCT 140 – Sandy Beaches and Dunes						•					

Landscape Receptor	Beneficial Effect					Adverse Effect					
	Major	Major-Mod	Mod.	Mod-Minor	Minor	Neg	Minor	Mod-Minor	Mod	Major-Mod	Major
LCT 141 – High Cliffs and Sheltered Bays							•				
LCT 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland									•	**L**	
LCT 143 – Farmed Lowland Plain							•		L		
LCT 144 – Coastal Crofts & Small Farms									•		L
LCT 146 – Coastal Farmland & Woodlands							•				
Causeymire – Knockfin Flows WLA						•					
Ben Klibreck – Armine Forest WLA						•					
Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA											L
The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA										L	

Table 7.4: Summary of Effects During Operation

Landscape Receptor	Beneficial Effect					Adverse Effect					
	Major	Major-Mod	Mod.	Mod-Minor	Minor	Neg	Minor	Mod-Minor	Mod	Major-Mod	Major
LCT 134 – Sweeping Moorland and Flows								•		**L**	
LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland								•		**L**	
LCT 138 – Lone Mountains							•				
LCT 140 – Sandy Beaches and Dunes						•					
LCT 141 – High Cliffs and Sheltered Bays							•				
LCT 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland									•	**L**	
LCT 143 – Farmed Lowland Plain							•		L		
LCT 144 – Coastal Crofts & Small Farms									•		L
LCT 146 – Coastal Farmland & Woodlands							•				
Causeymire – Knockfin Flows WLA						•					
Ben Klibreck – Armine Forest WLA						•					

Landscape Receptor	Beneficial Effect					Adverse Effect					
	Major	Major-Mod	Mod.	Mod-Minor	Minor	Neg	Minor	Mod-Minor	Mod	Major-Mod	Major
Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA										L	
The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA									L		

7.6 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects: Visual

7.6.1 The detailed assessment of effects on the visual amenity of residential properties and settlements, transport routes, recreational routes, and individuals at outdoor viewing locations is presented in **Annex 2**. Predicted effects are summarised below with an emphasis on predicted significant effects.

Residential Properties and Settlements (Residential Receptors)

7.6.2 Eight residential properties and five settlements were included as part of the visual assessment. The assessment concluded that significant effects would occur for all the residential properties and settlements. The key effects are summarised below.

SA-01: Lanergill Farm

7.6.3 The principal views from Lanergill Farm are oriented to the north, north-west, and north-east, extending across open grazing fields partially curtailed by gently rising landforms and screened by existing outbuildings, collectively limiting more distant visibility into the broader landscape. Views are partially screened to the south and west by foreground tree cover, approximately 10 m away. Where this intervening vegetation is sparse, wind turbines on the moorland are visible, though plantation forestry at Moss of Toftingall (approximately 730 m away) obscures their lower sections.

7.6.4 During both the construction and operational phases, views of the Proposed Development would be experienced at close proximity, occupying a significant portion of the north-west and south-west outlooks. In closest-range views, Tower N12, located approximately 230 m away, would be visible obliquely through gaps in the foreground curtilage trees. Tower N11, situated around 380 m away, would be seen to the west and north-west. Further south, beyond Moss of Toftingall, direct sightlines to the Proposed Development would extend up to 3 km, where the towers would appear against the sky, aligned with distant wind turbines. During winter, seasonal leaf loss would reduce natural screening, leaving the towers more exposed. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in **major adverse** effects that are **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations, during both the construction and operational stages.

SA-02: Lydias House, Toftingall Farm

7.6.5 The main views from the property and judged to be oriented to the south-west, south, and south-east, overlooking the Loch of Toftingall. These open views encompass expansive fields, rolling hills, and clusters of wind turbines on the horizon. However, wider visibility in these directions is partially reduced by plantation forestry (Moss of Toftingall), located approximately 760 m away. To the north and north-west, views are enclosed by landforms, elevated forestry, and scattered trees, while plantation forestry restricts eastern views in the immediate foreground.

7.6.6 During both the construction and operational phases, close-range views of the Proposed Development would occur to the south and south-east. Tower N12, the nearest structure (approximately 330 m away), would be

seen obliquely, prominently set against open fields and the background sky. Although forestry to the east provides substantial screening, the openness of the foreground fields leaves much of the view exposed. The coniferous tree cover offers consistent screening throughout the year, with minimal seasonal variation. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in **major adverse** effects that are **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations, during both the construction and operational stages.

SA-03: Farmstead at Halsary

7.6.7 Views from SA-03 are primarily oriented to the south-east across the Flow Country, with trees in the curtilage in the foreground providing partial filtering. The landscape features wind turbines, pylons, and power lines to the south-west, west, and north-west, contributing to a strong infrastructure presence both in the immediate foreground and extending into the distance. In contrast, views to the east, south-east, and south are more expansive, encompassing open peatland (approximately 380 m to the east and south-east at the closest point) and distant rolling hills (approximately 13 km to the south) with minimal visible infrastructure.

7.6.8 During both the construction and operational phases, views of the Proposed Development would be experienced in close-range views to the north-east, east, and south-east, with partial filtering provided by foreground tree cover. Tower N29, the nearest structure, would be directly visible at approximately 256 m. In wider southern views, Towers N30 to N37 would be partially visible up to a distance of 3.3 km, appearing against the background sky. The broadleaved curtilage trees would slightly reduce their filtering effects during winter months, subtly increasing the visibility of infrastructure elements. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in **major adverse** effects that are **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations, during both the construction and operational stages.

SA-04: Farmsteads and cottages along the A9(T)

7.6.9 Farmsteads and cottages along the A9(T) primarily have westward views toward the Flows, characterised by expansive peatland framed by notable distant hills and peaks, including Morven, Scaraben, and Maiden Pap. Partially screened views of wind turbines are visible to the north-west from these properties, appearing on the horizon. Existing transmission infrastructure to the north-east, east, and south-east is intermittently visible at varying distances from the properties (approximately 90–250 m), positioned on the elevated moorland hill slopes and standing out notably against the sky. Curtilage trees variably filter oblique views toward the eastern hills, while most properties maintain open, uninterrupted views to the north-west, west, and south-west, offering expansive panoramic vistas of wilderness and vast skies that evoke a strong sense of remoteness. A representative view of the Proposed Development from the location is provided in Viewpoint 7-12 A9 (Loch Rangag).

7.6.10 The Proposed Development (Towers N40–N46 and N56–N58) would be visible at close range to the north-east, east, and south-east from varying angles, closely aligned with the existing infrastructure. Achavanich Farm (approximately 198 m from Tower N46) and Corrie View (approximately 280 m from Tower N57) would experience the most direct views. Views toward designated and protected landscapes west of the A9(T) would remain largely unaffected, preserving the sense of remoteness and open sky. Due to the broadleaf nature of the curtilage trees, visibility of the Proposed Development would increase during the autumn and winter months as foliage diminishes. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in **major adverse** effects that are **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations, during both the construction and operational stages.

SA-05: Single-storey cottage (Braehungie) and mobile home (Mountain View) west of the A9 (T)

7.6.11 Properties at this location experience expansive, panoramic westerly views across the Flow Country. In contrast, views to the south-east, east, and north-east are more enclosed by rising terrain, with existing transmission infrastructure occasionally visible against the skyline.

7.6.12 During both the construction and operational phases, the construction and the introduction of steel lattice towers would be prominently visible in close proximity. At Braehungie, views of the Proposed Development to the north and north-east would be partially screened by intervening landforms and tree cover, while open views remain to the north-west, west, and south-west. Due to the presence of broadleaved vegetation, reduced filtering effects are anticipated during winter months, resulting in increased visibility. Elevated ground limits easterly views at Mountain View, but exposure to the south and south-west would increase the visibility of the Proposed Development. Tower N62 of the Proposed Development is situated approximately 213 m northwest of the cottage (Braehungie), and Tower N61 is approximately 178 m southeast of the mobile home (Mountain View). Due to their proximity, both towers would appear prominent in the foreground contrasting against the surrounding landscape and sky. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in **major adverse** effects that are **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations, during both the construction and operational stages.

SA-06: Crofting township at Smerral

7.6.13 The township of Smerral is situated within the Houstry Valley, enclosed by elevated terrain to the east and west. Open views across rolling fields and distant hills are available from higher elevations, especially in the north-east, south-west, and south-east sides of the township. Infrastructure elements, including wind turbines, power lines, and agricultural outbuildings, are intermittently visible on the upper hill slopes when viewed toward the north-west, west, and south-west. Most properties experience minimal visual obstruction, although views from lower elevations are more enclosed by intervening landforms, limiting visibility to the broader landscape.

7.6.14 Construction activities and steel lattice towers associated with the Proposed Development would be prominently visible along ridgelines and elevated ground. Notably, the farmstead north of Boultach, approximately 334 m from Tower N69, would experience the closest-range views. Wider visibility of Towers N61 to N71 would be experienced from higher elevations across the township, including properties at Achnacloich, Boultach, Homeland, and Boultach Farm, ranging from 530 m to 2.3 km. In the south-eastern and south-western parts of the township, the Proposed Development would be perceptible from greater distances, appearing against the landscape and sky. These towers would become less prominent but remain distinguishable within the broader views. Visibility levels would remain consistent throughout the year due to limited tree cover and negligible seasonal filtering effects. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in **moderate-minor adverse** effects that are **not significant**, to **major adverse** effects that are **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations, depending on proximity and the proportion of the view occupied, during both the construction and operational stages, properties in the northern portion of the township being more likely to experience a greater level of effect.

SA-07: Scattered properties at Badnagie

7.6.15 Isolated dwellings and farm structures in this area have generally open and expansive westerly and north-westerly views channelled along Dunbeath Strath, encompassing rolling hills, open moorland, and grassy fields. The east and north-east views are partially curtailed by elevated landforms, notably the Hill of Lychrobbie and Cnoc Breac. Intervening vegetation and rolling terrain offer varying degrees of filtering, with shrubs and occasional tree clusters providing localised screening.

7.6.16 Construction works and introduction of steel lattice towers would create varying degrees of visual change. Towers N77–N84 would be visible along the strath at varying distances, partially screened by tree cover and/or landform. Visual contrast would be most noticeable against the sky from lower elevations within 1 km of the Proposed Development, especially in open areas with sparse vegetation. Ballentink, approximately 726 m from Tower N80, would experience the closest-range visibility. Due to the nature of surrounding vegetation, visibility would remain consistent throughout the year, with minimal seasonal variation. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in **moderate-minor adverse** effects that are **not significant**, to **major adverse**

effects that are **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations, depending on proximity and the proportion of the view occupied, during both the construction and operational stages.

SA-08: Achorn House

7.6.17 The main views from the property are oriented south-east toward Balnabruich, with plantation forestry approximately 250 m in the foreground. Elevated above Dunbeath Strath, the receptors at the property experience broad panoramic views to the north-west, north, and north-east, encompassing a mix of low-lying riparian tree belts, moorland, and farmland. To the south-west, south, and south-east, views are more enclosed by moorland hills, while partially screened views of a distant wind farm to the north contrast with the surrounding wilderness.

7.6.18 Construction activity and steel lattice towers would be visible at close range to the south-west, west, and north-west, with minimal filtering. The prominence of towers would be greatest where they cross the foreground landscape in north-western, western, and south-western views. Tower N87, the closest to the property, is located approximately 365 m to the north-west and would be visible at an oblique angle. In wider views extending up to 5.7 km north-east toward Braehungie, Towers N71–N86 would remain perceptible against the moorland backdrop and sky, albeit appearing more recessive due to distance. Views toward Towers N87–N94 from higher ground to the south, south-east, and south-west would be limited by landform to around 2.5 km. In the absence of intervening vegetation, visibility would remain consistent throughout the year. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in **major adverse** effects that are **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations, during both the construction and operational stages.

SA-09: Borgue

7.6.19 Views from farmsteads and cottages along the A9 at Borgue are primarily oriented towards the north-east, east, and south-east, extending across the North Sea, framed by moorland hills rising to the west. Gently sloping crofting fields create a defined coastal foreground, limiting visibility inland to the west.

7.6.20 Existing OHL crosses elevated ground west of the A9(T), and new steel lattice towers would appear as extensions of this infrastructure, particularly noticeable from north-west, west, and south-west-facing properties. Tower visibility would be intermittent, influenced by rolling terrain and curtilage trees, with the nearest tower (Tower N98) at approximately 431 m distance from Redlesburn House, visible at an oblique angle. Key seaward views would remain unaffected, but wider views to the south-west (up to 2.7 km) and west/north-west (up to 3 km) would partially include tower silhouettes against the sky. Vegetation would offer limited screening in spring and summer but reduced foliage in autumn and winter would increase visibility. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in **major-moderate adverse** effects that are **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations, during both the construction and operational stages.

SA-10: Badrinsary

7.6.21 At Badrinsary, south-west-facing views from the properties overlook Berriedale Strath, while views to the north-west, north, and north-east are generally screened by woodland and rolling terrain. In contrast, open sea views are obtained to the south-east and east, extending over farmland toward the coastal shelf.

7.6.22 During both the construction and operational phases, steel lattice towers would be visible in close proximity within the north-west, north, and north-east-facing views. Some of these views would be partially filtered by intervening landforms and vegetation. Tower N106, the nearest visible structure (approximately 343 m away), would be intermittently seen through gaps in the trees. Despite the new infrastructure, key sea views to the south-east and east would remain unaffected. In wider views to the south-west, extending across Berriedale Strath (up to 4.6 km), partial glimpses of the tower tops would be visible, primarily set against the background landscape and the expansive sky. Seasonal vegetation would provide a degree of screening during spring and summer, while visibility would increase during autumn and winter due to foliage reduction. Overall, the

Proposed Development would result in **moderate adverse** effects that are **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations, during both the construction and operational stages.

SA-11: Langwell Gardens, Langwell Kennels, and Keepers House

7.6.23 Langwell Gardens and nearby properties have enclosed and filtered views, particularly to the south-west, where rolling hills and dense woodland define the outlook over Berriedale Strath. Visibility of the broader landscape is generally limited by intervening landform and vegetation, with only occasional openings providing glimpses of the surroundings. Sea views to the east and north-east are heavily screened by terrain variation and curtilage vegetation, creating narrow, filtered sightlines towards distant slopes. Refer to Viewpoint 7-20 Langwell.

7.6.24 Construction works and steel lattice towers (Towers N113–N114) would introduce visual changes in close proximity (approximately 386 to 520 m) to properties including Langwell Gardens, Langwell Kennels, and Keepers House. North- and north-west-facing views would experience intermittent visibility of tower tops through tree gaps, though heavily filtered by intervening landform and tree cover. In more distant views to the west and south-west, towers would appear partially against the background landscape and sky, with their lower sections often obscured by vegetation and rolling hills around Creagan Cosach and Cadha Fhionn. Infrastructure elements would become more recessive within the landscape with increased distance, while sea views and open skylines would remain unaffected. Seasonal vegetation would provide effective screening during spring and summer but reduced foliage in autumn and winter would increase visibility around these properties. Overall, the Proposed Development is anticipated to result in **moderate adverse** effects that are **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations, during both the construction and operational stages.

SA-12: The Bungalow, Ousdale, and Keepers Cottage

7.6.25 Views from the cottages and farmhouses at this location extend across a rural landscape characterised by rolling hills, open fields, and scattered forestry plantations. Ousdale Farm and The Bungalow experience relatively open, panoramic views oriented north and south, overlooking gently sloping grazing fields. In contrast, Keepers Cottage, located at the base of Braigh na h-Eaglaise, is more enclosed by forested hills, with restricted views in all directions due to topography and vegetation. Existing overhead lines are present along the rural track connecting the properties and across the distant hills to the east.

7.6.26 Construction works and the introduction of steel lattice towers (Towers N124–N129) would be intermittently visible to the north-west, west, and south-west from varying distances and angles, set against the forested moorland backdrop and background sky. A short section of the Proposed Development, particularly Towers N125–N127, would be experienced at close range from these properties, with the lower parts of the structure frequently filtered by forestry plantations. Keepers Cottage, located approximately 187 m from Tower N127, would experience the closest-range views of the Proposed Development, viewed at an extremely oblique angle toward the upper hill slopes. In wider views to the west and north-west across all properties, the infrastructure would remain partially visible against the sky, while dense woodland would effectively screen most views to the north-east. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in **moderate adverse** effects that are **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations, during both the construction and operational stages.

SA-13: Marrel and scattered cottages along the A897

7.6.27 The properties at Marrel are situated within the valley, bordered by mature woodland and scattered trees on the surrounding hill slopes which extend north-west, north-east, and south-west from the A897. Primary views from these properties are generally oriented north-west and south-east along the Strath of Kildonan, with woodland and riparian forest forming the immediate foreground. Throughout the settlement, views are predominantly enclosed by the elevated terrain of Eldrable Hill and Caen Hill, which channel sightlines along the River Helmsdale, thereby limiting the visibility of the broader landscape. Refer to Viewpoints 7-25 A897 (Caen), 7-26 Marrel and 7-27 A897 (East of Kilphedir).

7.6.28 Due to the varying topography and density of tree cover, different levels of visibility for the Proposed Development would be experienced from the properties. Generally, construction works and steel lattice towers would be largely screened within the strath by the surrounding woodland and landform, with some glimpses of the tower tops discernible against the sky. However, more open oblique views may occur from the properties at elevated slopes north of Creag Marail, especially where tree cover is sparse. Towers N147–N150 would be intermittently visible from these properties, with the most pronounced and direct views occurring at closer locations, particularly at Craig Brae. Craig Brae, located near the River Helmsdale to the south-east of the alignment, lies approximately 470 m away, where the visibility of the Proposed Development would be noticeable in closest-range views. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in **major-moderate adverse** effects that are **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations, depending on proximity and the proportion of the view occupied, during both the construction and operational stages.

Other Residential Properties and Settlements

7.6.29 No significant effects are identified for other isolated or clustered properties or settlements within the Study Area for Section A, as the combination of distance and intervening landform and tree cover limits wider visibility.

Transport Routes

7.6.30 Throughout the Study Area for Section A in the visual assessment, nine key transport routes have been included. Significant effects are identified for localised sections of three of these routes during both construction and operation. All three of these routes extend directly under the alignment route. A summary of the key effects is provided below.

A Roads

7.6.31 During construction, close-range activities would be visible from the A897 but often filtered by vegetation (Refer to Viewpoint 7-25 A897 (Caen) and Viewpoint 7-27 A897 (East of Kilphedir)). In operation, towers (Towers N148–N149) would be prominent at close distances, though beyond approximately 500 m, their visual impact would notably diminish due to landform and intervening vegetation, appearing as a recessive linear feature against the backdrop of distant hills. Accordingly, the influence of the construction activities and new steel lattice towers would be limited to localised sections within 500 m of the Proposed Development, where road users would experience a **major adverse** effect that is **significant**, during construction and operation based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied, and a **minor adverse** effect that is **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations, across the wider location. Views from other A class roads, including the A9(T), A99(T), and A882, would be more limited and intermittent due to a combination of distance, intervening landforms, and tree cover. As a result, the influence of construction activities and new steel lattice towers would be reduced, resulting in either no effects or between **minor** and **moderate-minor adverse** effects that are **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations, during both the construction and operational phases. Refer to Viewpoints 7-05 A9 (Achalone), 7-10 A9 (T) Lay-by (Bad a Cheo), 7-12 A9 (Loch Rangag), 7-13 A9 (north-east of Guidebest), 7-15 A9 (T) Laidhay Croft Museum, 7-18 A9 (T) Berriedale Braes, 7-19 A9 (T) south-west of Berriedale, 7-21 A9 (T) Badbea Historical Village, 7-28 Helmsdale, and 7-31 A9 (T) Greenhill.

B Roads

7.6.32 Road users of the B870 would experience close views of the Proposed Development near the Moss of Toftingall, with Tower N12 (approximately 90 m away) notably visible (Refer to Viewpoints 7-6 B870 (west of Houstry of Dunn), 7-7 B870 (Newton) and 7-9 B870 (Westerdale)). Construction activity and towers would be partially screened by forestry to the south (approximately 750 m away) and landform to the north. At greater distances, towers would appear recessive against the landscape backdrop. During operation, towers crossing the road would remain clearly visible, with distant views continuing to be partially screened by vegetation. Accordingly, the influence of the construction activities and new steel lattice towers would be limited to localised sections within 750 m of the Proposed Development, where road users would experience a **major-moderate**

adverse effect that is **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations, during construction and operation based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied, and a **minor adverse** effect that is **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations, across the wider location.

7.6.33 No effects from other B Roads, including the B874 and B876, have been identified due to considerable spatial separation from the Proposed Development and the presence of intervening landforms limiting direct sightlines.

Railway Lines

7.6.34 The Far North Railway line via Helmsdale follows Strath Ullie from Helmsdale towards Marrel, where the Proposed Development (between Towers N148 and N149) would cross the line. Views experienced by users travelling on this rail service are channelled north-west and south-east between heather-covered slopes, with landforms creating a layered and intimate visual experience.

7.6.35 The railway would pass directly beneath the alignment, offering brief, close-range views of the Proposed Development, similar to views along the A897 close to Marrel and the River Helmsdale. Construction works would be visible along a short stretch, though partially filtered by surrounding tree cover depending on viewing angle. At greater distances, the Proposed Development would appear as a recessive, linear element within broader vistas to the south-east and north-west, set against hills and mountains. During operation, the Proposed Development would be visible as it crosses the line within the strath and at greater distances as the alignment descends or climbs out of the strath. Overall, the views obtained along this section of the Far North Railway line would be limited to localised sections within 500 m of the Proposed Development at Marrel. Rail users would experience a **major adverse** effect that is significant in the context of the EIA Regulations, during construction and operation based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied. **Minor adverse** effects that are **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations, are predicted across the wider route.

7.6.36 No effects from the Far North Railway line between Scotscalder and Wick via Georgemas Junction have been identified due to considerable spatial separation from the Proposed Development and the presence of intervening landforms limiting direct sightlines.

Recreational Routes

7.6.37 Of the ten individual or grouped recreational routes included in the visual assessment, significant effects have been identified at four (localised sections) during both construction and operation of the Proposed Development. Of these routes, one would be located directly under the alignment route, and three would be located within 2 km of the closest tower. The key effects are summarised below.

RA-10: Core Path CA06.08 A gravel track stretching from the A9 near Spittal

7.6.38 The Proposed Development, situated east of the path and the A9(T), would be visible across the open landscape until it enters the Loch of Toftingall area and surrounding plantation woodland. During construction, limited screening elements in the open landscape would result in construction activities, including crane operations, tower erection, traffic, and material storage, visible from the track. Once operational, the towers would remain visible as the alignment continues south towards the Loch and woodland. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in **moderate adverse** effects that are **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation. This accounts for a limited extent of the footpath and would be experienced by route users for a short duration.

RA-11: Core Path CA06.04 Wind farm access track, Causeymire Wind Farm

7.6.39 The Proposed Development, located east of the A9(T) and the footpath to the east of the windfarm, would run parallel and close to the road, with the closest distance to the footpath being approximately 2 km. Due to the open and undulating landscape, views towards the alignment would be possible to the south-east once it clears

the plantation around the Loch. During construction, crane movement, tower erection, traffic, and material storage would be visible from the footpath, appearing within the context of the wind farm and the expansive landscape. Once operational, the towers would remain prominent visual elements but would be seen alongside multiple turbines and existing OHLs. Overall, and in the context of the existing views experienced from the track, the Proposed Development would result in **moderate adverse** effects that are **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation.

RA-12: Core Path CA10.11 Track leading to Munsary via Loch Stemster

7.6.40 As the track heads north from the minor road, it runs parallel to the A9 and the Proposed Development, coming within approximately 346 m at its closest point. The existing OHL is visible from the track, and the Proposed Development would add to the built elements within the western view as it runs south parallel to the existing OHL. During construction, crane movements, tower erection, traffic, and material storage would be visible from the footpath. Once operational, the towers would remain prominent visual elements within the landscape, integrated within the context of existing turbines and OHLs. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in **major-moderate adverse** effects that are **significant** during construction and **moderate adverse** effects that are **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during operation. This accounts for a limited extent of the footpath and would be experienced by route users for a short duration.

RA-13: Core Paths CA10.03, CA10.04 and CA10.07. A collection of forest tracks at Rumster

7.6.41 Due to intervening topography and plantation woodland, views to the east towards the Proposed Development would be limited. The closest point of the Proposed Development is approximately 1.1 km to the west, with the alignment running southwards parallel to the A9(T). In the southern sections of the path, where woodland blocks open up, views towards the Proposed Development would become possible. During construction, taller elements of tower erection may be visible through woodland gaps and over Ben-a-chielt, while in the southern portion, views of construction activities, traffic, and compounds would be seen across the flatter, open terrain. Once operational, the towers would be visible from the southern section of the path but would be obscured further north by topography and woodland. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in **minor adverse** effects that are **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation. This accounts for a limited extent of the footpath and would be experienced by route users for a short duration.

RA-14: Core Paths CA04.01, CA04.02, CA04.04, CA04.06, CA04.07, CA04.08, CA04.09, CA04.10, CA04.11, CA04.12, CA04.13, CA04.16, CA04.17, CA04.18, and CA04.19. A collection of tracks at Dunbeath

7.6.42 The Proposed Development crosses the path west of Balcraggie Lodge, where scrub planting would allow views toward the west and the Proposed Development. During construction, at a distance of approximately 500 m, activities such as crane work, material storage, and construction traffic would be prominent within the view. The Proposed Development would be visible as it crosses the path and to the north with clear views toward Braehiller. As the alignment moves south-west, increased tree cover on the southern bank would limit visibility. During operation, the Proposed Development would remain a prominent feature within 500 m, but at greater distances, intervening vegetation would restrict visibility to the tops of the towers. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in **major-moderate adverse** effects that are **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations within 500 m based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied during construction and operation. A **minor adverse** effect that is **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations would be experienced across the wider locations.

RA-15: Core Paths CA04.14 and CA04.15. A collection of gravel paths stretching from Berriedale to Langwell

7.6.43 The Proposed Development would be situated to the north of the footpath, with the closest point approximately 560 m away. The alignment would cross elevated ground north of Langwell Plantation before heading south at Turnal Rock. During construction, taller elements like crane work or tower construction would appear above the tree line, but visibility would be intermittent due to topography and vegetation, increasing during winter months.

During operation, the tops of the towers would be visible from the footpath, particularly in winter, but visibility would generally remain limited due to the surrounding landscape features. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in **minor adverse** effects that are **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation. This accounts for a limited extent of the footpath and would be experienced by route users for a short duration.

RA-16: Core Path CA04.03. A gravel track off the A9(T) that leads to Badbea

7.6.44 The Proposed Development would be situated on elevated ground north of the roadside plantation woodland, aligned parallel to the existing OHL, and would be approximately 360 m north of the carpark at its closest point (Refer to Viewpoint 7-16). During construction, views from the carpark would be limited by vegetation, with only taller activities such as crane works being visible. From the monument, construction activities would be seen above the tree line, in conjunction with the existing OHL. During operation, the Proposed Development would remain visible from the monument on elevated ground north of the A9(T), appearing alongside the existing OHL. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in **moderate adverse** effects that are **significant** during construction and **minor adverse** effects that are **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during operation. This accounts for a limited extent of the footpath and would be experienced by route users for a short duration.

RA-17: Core Paths SU13.01, SU13., SU13.03, SU13.04, SU13.05, SU13.05, SU13.06, SU13.07, and SU13.09. A collection of tracks at Helmsdale

7.6.45 The Proposed Development would be situated approximately 1.2 km north of the footpath at its closest point. Visibility towards the alignment would be restricted by topography as it traverses the valley west of Caen, though some views of the hills on either side would be possible due to the open terrain along the riverbank. During construction, crane movements related to tower erection on the hilltops would be visible as the alignment heads east from Caen Hill. During operation, the Proposed Development would remain visible east of Caen Hill and as it descends into the valley, before being obscured by the topography around Marrel. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in **moderate-minor adverse** effects that are **not significant** during construction and **minor adverse** effects that are **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during operation. This accounts for a limited extent of the footpath and would be experienced by route users for a short duration.

RA-18: Core Path CU13.08. A hill walk winding through rolling hills at Gartymore

7.6.46 The Proposed Development would be located approximately 2.1 km north of the path on elevated ground, with views restricted by topography and vegetation on the slopes of Creag a Choire and Creag an Taghain. During construction, visibility from the path would include crane work, material, and plant movements, though views would be moderated by the terrain and vegetation. During operation, views towards the Proposed Development would remain limited, primarily due to the intervening vegetation and topography. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in **minor adverse** effects that are **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation. This accounts for a limited extent of the footpath and would be experienced by route users for a short duration.

RA-19: North Coast 500

7.6.47 Within the Study Area the route of the North Coast 500 utilises the A9(T) and the A99(T). The Proposed Development would be located approximately 3 km north of the A9(T) on moorland hills, with topography and vegetation largely restricting visibility. Occasional and fleeting views would occur as the alignment crosses valleys and straths. During construction, road users would see construction traffic and material movements, with occasional glimpses of crane work, depending on topography and vegetation. During operation, views towards the Proposed Development would be unlikely due to the distance and intervening landscape features. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in **minor adverse** effects that are **not significant** in the

context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation. This accounts for a limited extent of the footpath and would be experienced by route users for a short duration.

Other Recreational Routes

7.6.48 For all other paths, located at greater distance from the Proposed Development, potential views of the construction activities and steel lattice towers would be restricted by a combination of intervening landform, tree / forest cover and the increasing distance of the view. Accordingly, the influence of the construction activities and new steel lattice towers would reduce, and the Proposed Development would represent a discreet element within wider views. Accordingly, the visual effect experienced by recreational receptors using these paths would be **minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations or less during construction and operation.

Outdoor Locations

7.6.49 Six outdoor locations have been identified in the visual assessment. Among these, two are identified as having significant effects during both construction and operation. The key effects are summarised below.

OA-01: Dunbeath Castle

7.6.50 Dunbeath Castle faces north-west and is bordered by mature trees along the narrow access road, creating a strong sense of enclosure that limits visibility into the broader landscape. The views inland to the north-west, north, and west would be heavily screened by vegetation, whereas the sea views to the east and south-east remain open. Due to the effective natural screening, spatial separation, and intervening landforms, visibility of the Proposed Development is not anticipated, and therefore, no visual effects are expected during construction and operation.

OA-02: Scaraben

7.6.51 Panoramic views from Scaraben overlook Caithness and Sutherland (refer to Viewpoint 7-17 East Scaraben).

7.6.52 To the north-east, east, and south-east, the Proposed Development (Towers N94–N146) would traverse lower hills in the midground and beyond, extending in a north-south direction, appearing obliquely as distant elements set predominantly against a backdrop of coastal hills, the Flow Country, and the North Sea, closely associated with other existing infrastructure. The nearest tower (Tower N108) would be approximately 4.8 km away in the south-east. Structural details would be discernible at closer distances but would become less perceptible further away. Landward views to the west, north-west, and north remain unaffected, retaining their defining remote character. Given the absence of intervening vegetation, the overall number of visible towers would be relatively high, with limited seasonal variation in visibility across the lower moorland expanses. Accordingly, the Proposed Development would result in **minor adverse** effects that are **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation.

OA-03: Berriedale Braes Viewpoint

7.6.53 The Berriedale Braes Viewpoint offers an elevated, unobstructed vantage point with open views across the hills on the coastal fringe, Berriedale Water and Scaraben to the north-west, and expansive views across the North Sea to the east (refer to Viewpoint 7-18 A9 (T) Berriedale Braes).

7.6.54 Construction works and steel lattice towers (Towers N106–N110) would be intermittently visible to the north-west to the fore of Scaraben. Filtered views of the towers would be possible in views to the south-west, albeit occupying a minor portion of the view. Dense woodland and landform would provide substantial screening, naturally channelling sightlines along the strath. The towers would appear in mid-range views (approximately 1.4 km from Tower N109 at the closest point). Seasonal variation would affect visibility, with reduced screening in autumn and winter due to leaf loss, slightly increasing the visibility of towers. Accordingly, the Proposed

Development would result in **moderate adverse** effects that are **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation.

OA-04: Badbea Historic Clearance Village

7.6.55 Views from Badbea Historic Clearance Village are predominantly oriented to the south and south-east, providing uninterrupted views across the North Sea while limiting visibility towards inland areas (refer to Viewpoints 7-21 A9 (T) Badbea Historical Village and 7-22 Badbea).

7.6.56 Views of the construction works and steel lattice towers from the historic site and the associated car park would be entirely obscured by intervening landform and dense forestry. However, visitors would experience views of the works from the access track. From the track, filtered views of the Proposed Development (Towers N116–N135) would be possible at varying angles. In these instances, the towers would be visible against a combination of the sky and landscape. Accordingly, the Proposed Development would result in **none** / **moderate-minor adverse** effects that are **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied.

OA-05: Creag Thoraraidh

7.6.57 The summit of Creag Thoraraidh offers expansive views across the surrounding landscape and the North Sea to the east (refer to Viewpoint 7-24 Creag Thoraraidh).

7.6.58 Views from Creag Thoraraidh would include intermittent visibility of construction works and steel lattice towers (Towers N94–N171) oriented towards the interior from the south-west to north-east. Positioned at distances ranging from 517 m to 12.9 km, these towers would appear on the lower hillsides to the fore of views towards the interior landscapes. Views to the east across the North Sea and to the south would be unaffected. In close-range views, some towers would be partially obscured by landforms at their lower sections. The nearest tower (Tower N139), at approximately 517 m from the peak of Creag Thoraraidh. With minimal intervening vegetation, a high number of towers would remain visible throughout the year, as seasonal variation would not affect filtering effects. Accordingly, the Proposed Development would result in **moderate adverse** effects that are **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation.

OA-06: Emigrants Memorial, Helmsdale

7.6.59 The Emigrants Memorial is situated on elevated ground above the River Helmsdale, offering open views in all directions (refer to Viewpoint 7-28 Helmsdale).

7.6.60 From the memorial, construction works and steel lattice towers across the strath and elevated positions would introduce new infrastructure elements into the views to the north-west where the Proposed Development descends Caen Hill. These features would be partially visible from the memorial, particularly where their silhouettes contrast with the sky. However, the overall visibility of the Proposed Development would be significantly restricted due to the distance (approximately 2.2 km from the nearest Tower N152) and intervening vegetation and landforms. Views across the North Sea would be unaffected. Accordingly, the Proposed Development would result in **moderate-minor adverse** effects that are **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation.

Summary of Visual Effects

7.6.61 A summary of effects on visual receptors is presented in **Table 7.5** during construction and **Table 7.6** during operation. The numbers listed in the tables reflect the number of receptors within each type (settlements or transport routes etc) that would experience the corresponding level of effect. The symbol 'L' is used to denote effects that would be experienced from localised sections of routes.

Table 7.5: Summary of Effects During Construction

Visual Receptor	Beneficial Effect						Adverse Effect					
	Major	Major-Mod	Mod	Mod-Minor	Minor	Neg / None	Neg - Minor	Minor	Mod-Minor	Mod	Major-Mod	Major
Residential Properties and Settlements									2	3	2	8
Transport Routes						8		4	1		1L	2L
Core Paths								6	2	4	2L	
North Coast 500								1				
Outdoor Locations						2		1	2	2		

Table 77.6: Summary of Effects During Operation

Visual Receptor	Beneficial Effect						Adverse Effect					
	Maior	Major-Mod.	Mod.	Mod-Minor.	Minor	Neg / None	Neg - Minor	Minor	Mod-Minor	Mod	Major-Mod	Major
Residential Properties and Settlements									2	3	2	8
Transport Routes						8		4	1		1L	2L
Core Paths								6	2	4	2L	
North Coast 500								1				
Outdoor Locations						2		1	2	2		

7.7 Cumulative Effects

7.7.1 As this LVIA covers only a localised Section of the Proposed Development, consideration has also been given to potential combined effects with other Sections of the Proposed Development. In addition, this assessment of cumulative effects has also included consideration of other grid infrastructure or other energy projects currently proposed within the Study Area. Those located at distances greater than 10 km from the Proposed Development are excluded from consideration. With reference to the main assessment, this is on the basis that the Proposed Development would not meaningfully contribute towards cumulative effects at this distance (accordingly any notable cumulative effects identified would be due to the other development proposals, and not the Proposed Development).

7.7.2 The cumulative assessment has been set out considering two different scenarios:

- Scenario 1: Including other parts of the Proposed Development and other related development proposals. For Section A, this includes:
  - Section B of the Proposed Development (steel lattice tower OHL); and

  - Proposed Banniskirk 400 kV Substation (24/04898/FUL).
- Scenario 2: Including, in addition, other unrelated development proposals (considered during the operation phase only). For Section A, this includes:
- Proposed Spittal to Peterhead HVDC Link at early development stage (N/A);
- Proposed West of Orkney Wind Farm Grid Connection (23/05353/PIP);
- Proposed Watten Wind Farm (23/04113/S36);
- Proposed Camster II Wind Farm (19/03015/FUL);
- Proposed Swarclett Wind Farm (24/04932/FUL);
- Golticlay Wind Farm Redesign (23/05188/S36);
- Proposed Ouglassy Wind Farm (24/00902/SCOP);
- Proposed Ayre Wind Farm Grid Connection (24/00243/SCOP);
- Proposed Hill of Lynchrobbie Wind Farm (23/03246/SCOP);
- Proposed Baledigle Wind Farm (24/03036/SCOP);
- Proposed Tormsdale Wind Farm (21/04984/S36; PLN/045/24);
- Proposed Loch Toftingall BESS (23/04690/FUL);
- Proposed Spittal BESS (24/01734/SCRE);
- Proposed Mybster BESS (24/01950/SCRE); and
- Proposed Thurso Bess (25/00240/SCRE).

7.7.3 As it is likely that Scenario 1 development would be constructed concurrently with the Proposed Development in Section A, this scenario considers cumulative effects during both construction and operation. However, as it is difficult to predict the timing and nature of construction works for other unrelated developments within Scenario 2, this scenario considers operational effects only.

Cumulative Scope: Scenario 1

7.7.4 A LVIA of Section B of the Proposed Development has been completed and is included in this EIA Report as **Volume 5**, **Appendix 7.6**. The LVIA identified effects to the following receptors which have been identified within the Study Area for Section A.

- Landscape Effects
  - LCT 134 – Sweeping Moorland and Flows;
  - LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland;
  - LCT 138 – Lone Mountains;
  - LCT 140 – Sandy Beaches and Dunes;
  - LCT 141 – High Cliffs and Sheltered Bays;
  - LCT 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland;
  - LCT 143 – Farmed Lowland Plain;
  - LCT 144 – Coastal Crofts & Small Farms;
  - LCT 146 – Coastal Farmland and Woodlands;
  - Causeymire – Knockfin Flows WLA;
  - Ben Klibreck – Armine Forest WLA;
  - The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA; and
  - Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA.
- Visual Effects

- Residential receptors SA1 – SA13;
- Road and Rail users RA1 – RA9;
- Recreational Route receptors RA10 – RA19; and
- Receptors at Outdoor Locations OA1 – OA6.

7.7.5 The predicted effects on these receptors, as identified within the Section B LVIA (**Volume 5, Appendix 7.6**) and Section A LVIA (this Appendix) are detailed in **Tables 7.7** and **Table 7.8** below. It is considered that where negligible effects have been identified for individual sections of the Proposed Development, these would not meaningfully contribute or lead to a significant cumulative effect. As such, receptors where minor effects or less have been identified have not been included further in the cumulative assessment, except for the Causeymire-Knockin Flows WLA in respect of the potential for effects relating to other development proposals.

Table 7.7: Individual Effects on Cumulative Receptors

LCT / Designated or Protected Landscape	Section A Effect Rating	Section B Effect Rating	Included in Cumulative
LCT 134 – Sweeping Moorland and Flows	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) Locally Major-Moderate Adverse (significant)	No effect	**Yes**
LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) Locally Major-Moderate Adverse (significant)	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)	**Yes**
LCT 138 – Lone Mountains	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	No effect	**Yes**
LCT 140 – Sandy Beaches and Dunes	Construction and Operation: Negligible Adverse (not significant)	No effect	No
LCT 141 – High Cliffs and Sheltered Bays	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	No effect	No
LCT 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland	Construction and Operation: Moderate- Adverse (significant) Locally Major-Moderate Adverse (significant)	Construction and Operation: Moderate- Adverse (significant)	**Yes**
LCT 143 – Farmed Lowland Plain	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant) Locally Moderate Adverse (significant)	No effect	**Yes**
LCT 144 – Coastal Crofts & Small Farms	Construction and Operation: Moderate- Adverse (significant) Locally Major Adverse (significant)	No effect	**Yes**
LCT 146 – Coastal Farmland and Woodlands	Construction and Operation: Negligible Adverse (not significant)	Construction and Operation: Negligible (not significant)	No

LCT / Designated or Protected Landscape	Section A Effect Rating	Section B Effect Rating	Included in Cumulative
Causeymire – Knockfin Flows WLA	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	No effect	**Yes**
Ben Klibreck – Armine Forest WLA	Construction and Operation: Negligible Adverse (not significant)	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)	No
The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA	Construction and Operation: Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) during construction Moderate Adverse (significant) during operation	Construction and Operation: Negligible (locally Moderate-Minor Adverse, not significant)	**Yes**
Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA	Construction and Operation: Major Adverse (significant) during construction Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) during operation	Construction and Operation: Major Adverse (significant) during construction Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) during operation	**Yes**
Visual Receptor	**Section A Effect Rating**	**Section B Effect Rating**	**Included in Cumulative**
Lanergill Farm (SA-01)	Construction and Operation: Major Adverse (not significant)	No effect	**Yes**
Lydias House, Toftingall Farm (SA-02)	Construction and Operation: Major Adverse (significant)	No effect	**Yes**
Farmstead at Halsary (SA-03)	Construction and Operation: Major Adverse (significant)	No effect	**Yes**
Farmsteads and cottages along the A9(T) (SA-04)	Construction and Operation: Major Adverse (significant)	No effect	**Yes**
Single-storey cottage west of the A9(T) (Braehungie and Mountain View (SA-05)	Construction and Operation: Major Adverse (significant)	No effect	**Yes**
Crofting township at Smerral (SA-06)	Construction and Operation: Minor-Moderate Adverse (not significant) across the wider locations / Major Adverse (significant) for properties at the northern end of Smerral	No effect	**Yes**
Scattered properties at Badnagie (SA-07)	Construction and Operation: Minor-Moderate Adverse (not significant) / Major Adverse (significant) (based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied)	No effect	**Yes**
Achorn House (SA-08)	Construction and Operation: Major Adverse (significant)	No effect	**Yes**
Borgue (SA-09)	Construction and Operation:	No effect	**Yes**

LCT / Designated or Protected Landscape	Section A Effect Rating	Section B Effect Rating	Included in Cumulative
	Major-Moderate Adverse (significant)		
Badrinsary (Rose Cottage and an unnamed house) (SA-10)	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant)	No effect	**Yes**
Langwell Gardens, Langwell Kennels, and Keepers House (SA-11)	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant)	No effect	**Yes**
The Bungalow, Ousdale, and Keepers Cottage (SA-12)	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant)	No effect	**Yes**
Marrel and scattered cottages along the A897 (SA-13)	Construction and Operation: Major- Moderate Adverse (significant) during construction Moderate Adverse (significant) during operation	No effect	**Yes**
Dunbeath Castle (OA-01)	No effect	No effect	No
Hill walk – Scaraben (OA-02)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	No effect	**Yes**
Berriedale Braes Viewpoint (OA-03)	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant)	No effect	**Yes**
Badbea Historic Clearance Village (OA-04)	Construction and Operation: None / Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)	No effect	**Yes**
Hill walk location at Creag Thoraraidh (OA-05)	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant)	No effect	**Yes**
Emigrants Memorial, Helmsdale (OA-06)	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)	No effect	**Yes**
A9 (T) between Achalone and Spittal (RA-01-1)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	No effect	**Yes**
A9 (T) between Spittal and Mybster (RA-01-2)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	No effect	**Yes**
A9 (T) between Mybster and South of Moss of Toftingall (RA-01-3)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	No effect	**Yes**
A9 (T) between South of Moss of Toftingall and Rumster (RA-01-4)	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)	No effect	**Yes**
A9 (T) between Rumster and Brora (RA-01-5)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	No effect	**Yes**
A882 Clayock to Haster (RA-02)	No effect	No effect	No
A897 Carn na Buth to Helmsdale (RA-03)	Construction and Operation:	No effect	**Yes**

LCT / Designated or Protected Landscape	Section A Effect Rating	Section B Effect Rating	Included in Cumulative
	Major Adverse (significant) within 500 m at Marrel Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider location		
A99 (T) Milton to Latheron (RA-04)	No effect	No effect	No
B870 Glengolly to the junction with B876 north of Kirk (RA-05)	Construction and Operation: Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) within 750 m north of Moss of Toftingall Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider location	No effect	**Yes**
B874 Glengolly to Lochshell (RA-06)	No effect	No effect	No
B876 Bower to Kirk (RA-07)	No effect	No effect	No
Far North Railway Line via Helmsdale (RA-08)	Construction and Operation: Major Adverse (significant) within 500 m at Marrel Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider route	Construction and Operation: Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) within 2 km Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider route	**Yes**
Far North Railway Line between Scotscalder and Wick via Georgemas Junction (RA-09)	No effect	No effect	No
Core Path CA06.08 A gravel track stretching from the A9 near Spittal (RA-10)	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant)	No effect	**Yes**
Core Path CA06.04 Wind farm access track, Causeymire Wind Farm (RA-11)	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant)	No effect	**Yes**
Core Path CA10.11 Track leading to Munsary via Loch Stemster (RA-12)	Construction and Operation: Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) during construction Moderate Adverse (significant) during operation	No effect	**Yes**
Core Paths CA10.03, CA10.04 and CA10.07. A collection of forest tracks at Rumster (RA-13)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	No effect	**Yes**
Core Paths CA04.01, CA04.02, CA04.04, CA04.06, CA04.07, CA04.08, CA04.09, CA04.10, CA04.11, CA04.12, CA04.13, CA04.16, CA04.17, CA04.18, and CA04.19. A collection of tracks at Dunbeath (RA-14)	Construction and Operation: Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) within 500 m Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider location	No effect	**Yes**
Core Paths CA04.14 and CA04.15. A collection of gravel	Construction and Operation:	No effect	**Yes**

LCT / Designated or Protected Landscape	Section A Effect Rating	Section B Effect Rating	Included in Cumulative
paths stretching from Berriedale to Langwell (RA-15)	Minor Adverse (not significant)		
Core Path CA04.03. A gravel track off the A9(T) that leads to Badbea (RA-16)	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant) during construction Minor Adverse during operation	No effect	**Yes**
Core Paths SU13.01, SU13., SU13.03, SU13.04, SU13.05, SU13.05, SU13.06, SU13.07, and SU13.09. A collection of tracks at Helmsdale (RA-17)	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) during construction Minor Adverse (not significant) during operation	No effect	**Yes**
Core Path CU13.08. A hill walk winding through rolling hills at Gartymore (RA-18)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	No effect	**Yes**
North Coast 500 (RA-19)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider route during construction Negligible across the wider route during operation	**Yes**

Cumulative Scope: Scenario 2

7.7.6 Assumptions have been made regarding the likely visual effects of these developments, based on available information from March 2025. The final layouts of these developments are subject to change.

Assessment of Cumulative Effects

7.7.7 The cumulative assessment for the above receptors is presented below in **Table 7.8** and **Table 7.9**. The description of effects should be read in conjunction with the baseline descriptions for these receptors and landscape effects described in **Section 7.5** and **Annex 1**, respectively.

Table 77.8: Cumulative Effects on Landscape Receptors

Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
LCT 134 – Sweeping Moorland and Flows	Scenario 1: • Proposed Banniskirk 400 kV Substation	Potential cumulative effects on the LCT relating to Scenario 1 would be largely indirect. The influence of Section A in combination with Banniskirk Substation would be limited due to the intervening landform and presence of forestry / woodland, in combination with the distance of view, which would reduce the visibility and indirect influence attributable to the substation. The construction activities and new steel lattice towers would represent background elements within wider vistas across the LCT. There would be no notable increase in relation to the effects described within the main assessment. The cumulative effect would be **minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation.
	Scenario 2: • Proposed Spittal to Peterhead HVDC Link at early development stage (N/A); • Proposed Watten Wind Farm • Proposed Loch Toftingall BESS • Proposed Spittal BESS • Proposed Ayre Wind Farm Grid Connection; • Proposed Camster II Wind Farm • Proposed Golticlay Wind Farm Redesign • Propose Swarclett Wind Farm • Proposed Baledigle Wind Farm (Scoping • Proposed Hill of Lynchrobbie Wind Farm (Scoping	In combination with the proposed Watten, Tormsdale and Hill of Lynchrobbie Wind Farms the Proposed Development would increase the extent of energy generation/transmission infrastructure within the LCT, and result in direct effects on the features and elements that define the LCT. The wind turbines would exhibit greater visual prominence and be likely to result in a greater level of influence on the LCT where viewed in combination with existing wind farms in the vicinity of Spittal and Rangag, wind turbines constituting an increasingly prominent feature in the landscape, while the two proposed turbines at Hill of Lynchrobbie increase the occurrence of energy infrastructure close to the coastal fringe near Latheronwheel. The proposed Ouglassy Wind Farm north-east of Spittal would increase indirect effects on the LCT in addition to Camster II, Golticlay, Swarclett and Watten Wind Farms. It is assumed that the proposed grid connection projects (Spittal to Peterhead HVDC Link, West of Orkney and Ayre Wind Farm grid connections) would be undergrounded and have limited impacts on the LCT following reinstatement of ground cover. On balance, the cumulative effect would be **moderate adverse** and **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations across localised parts on the LCT in closest proximity to the Proposed Development during construction and operation (typically within approximately 700 m). The effects would reduce across the wider LCT, and would be **moderate-minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations.

Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
	• Proposed Tormsdale Wind Farm • Proposed Ouglassy Wind Farm	
LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland	Scenario 1: • Section B of the Proposed Development	Sections A and B of the Proposed Development both extend through upland parts of the LCT. Similar to Section B, the construction activities and new steel lattice towers would represent notable linear features within parts of the LCT in closest proximity. However, the influence in each case would diminish at increased distance. Across wider parts of the LCT, the construction works and new towers would represent relatively discreet elements within a broad scale landscape context. On balance, the cumulative effect would be **major-moderate adverse** and **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations across localised parts on the LCT in closest proximity to the Proposed Development during construction and operation (typically within approximately 700 m). The effects would reduce across the wider LCT and would be **moderate-minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations).
	Scenario 2: • Proposed Hill of Lynchrobbie Wind Farm	There would be no direct effects on the LCT as a result of the Proposed Development and/or other development proposals. The proposed turbines at Hill of Lynchrobbie Wind Farm would be sited to the south-west of Latheron Wheel and result in indirect effects on the Rounded Hills LCT. The proposed wind farm would increase the perceived increase of energy infrastructure within and close to the LCT, the wind turbines as a function of their height and the movement of the rotors. Effects relate primarily to those resulting from the Proposed Development. On balance, the cumulative effect would be **major-moderate adverse** and **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations across localised parts on the LCT in closest proximity to the Proposed Development during construction and operation (typically within approximately 700 m of the Section A alignment). The cumulative effects relating to the alignment would reduce across the wider LCT and would be **moderate-minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations.
LCT 138 – Lone Mountains	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2 • Proposed Watten Wind Farm • Proposed Camster II Wind Farm • Proposed Golticlay Wind Farm Redesign	There would be no direct effects on the LCT as a result of the Proposed Development and/or other development proposals. The Proposed Development would potentially be viewed in combination with the proposed Watten, Camster II, Golticlay, Swarclett, Watten, Ouglassy and Hill of Lynchrobbie Wind Farms. In combination, the Proposed Development and proposed wind farm would increase the perceived extent of energy infrastructure in landscapes to the south of the Lone Mountains LCT. In combination the Proposed Development would increase perceived indirect effects on the remoteness and wildness aspects exhibited by the LCT. The proposed wind farm would individually be likely to result in greater indirect effects on the landscape character in its own right due to the

Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
	• Propose Swarclett Wind Farm • Proposed Ouglassy Wind Farm • Proposed Hill of Lynchrobbie Wind Farm	vertical scale of the turbines and the movement of the rotors. However, these effects would diminish at greater distance and would account for a relatively focused geographic area within the well-defined LCT. In combination, the cumulative effect across the LCT as a whole is predicted to remain **moderate-minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations. This is based primarily on the combined presence of large-scale wind turbines and the Proposed Development, balanced by the spatial separation of the developments from the distinctive LCT. The effects of the Proposed Development would be localised, and accordingly its contribution to cumulative effects across the LCT would be relatively limited.
LCT 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland	Scenario 1: • Section B of the Proposed Development	Sections A and B of the Proposed Development both extend through very localised parts of the LCT, where the alignment crosses the individual narrow strath landscapes. Similarly to Section B, the Proposed Development would extend directly across each strath, rather than along it, thereby limiting the footprint of the associated construction works, as well as the number of new steel lattice towers. Given the enclosed nature of the straths, these elements would represent notable elements from parts of the LCT in closest proximity. However, the influence of construction activities and the new alignment would reduce at greater distance within the strath due to the screening influence of intervening tree cover and the landform enclosing the valley. On balance, the cumulative effect would be **major-moderate adverse** and **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations across localised parts on the LCT in closest proximity to the Proposed Development during construction and operation (typically within approximately 700 m). The effects would reduce across the wider LCT and would be **moderate-minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations.
	Scenario 2: None	There are no other energy-related proposals within the LCT. Potential indirect effects based on views of proposed wind farms within the surrounding uplands (outside the LCT) would be largely restricted by intervening landform.
LCT 143 – Farmed Lowland Plain	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: • Proposed Swarclett Wind Farm	There would be no direct effects on the LCT as a result of the Proposed Development and/or other development proposals. The proposed turbines at Swarclett Wind Farm would be sited to the east of Durran and result in direct effects on the Farmed Lowland Plain LCT. The proposed wind farm would increase the perceived increase of energy infrastructure within and close to the LCT, the wind turbines as a function of their height and the movement of the rotors. Effects relate primarily to those resulting from the proposed wind farm. On balance, the cumulative effect would be **moderate-minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations across localised parts on the LCT in closest proximity to the Proposed Development during construction and operation (typically within approximately 700 m of the Section A alignment). The cumulative effects relating to the alignment would reduce across the wider LCT and would be **minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations.

Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
LCT 144 – Coastal Crofts and Small Farms	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: Proposed Hill of Lynchrobbie	There would be no direct effects on the LCT as a result of the Proposed Development and/or other development proposals. The Proposed Development would potentially be viewed in combination with the proposed Hill of Lynchrobbie Wind Farms. In combination, the Proposed Development and proposed wind farm would increase the perceived extent of energy infrastructure in landscapes to the north of the Coastal Crofts and Small Farms LCT found on the coastline of Caithness and Sutherland. The proposed wind farm would individually be likely to result in greater indirect effects on the landscape character in its own right due to the vertical scale of the turbines and the movement of the rotors. However, these effects would diminish at greater distance and would account for a relatively focused geographic area within the well-defined LCT. In combination, the cumulative effect across the LCT as a whole is predicted to be **minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations. The effects of the Proposed Development would be localised, and accordingly its contribution to cumulative effects across the LCT would be relatively limited.
Causeymire and Knockfin Flows WLA	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: • Proposed Watten Wind Farm • Proposed Camster II Wind Farm • Proposed Golticlay Wind Farm Redesign • Propose Swarclett Wind Farm • Proposed Baledigle Wind Farm • Proposed Hill of Lynchrobbie Wind Farm • Proposed Tormsdale Wind Farm	None of the proposed energy developments would directly affect the Causeymire and Knockfin Flows WLA, direct effects would result from the Proposed Development only. The Proposed Development would be viewed in combination with the Watten, Camster II, Golticlay Redesign, Swarclett, Baledigle, Hill of Lynchrobbie and Tormsdale wind farm proposals. In combination, the Proposed Development and proposed wind farm would increase the perceived extent of energy infrastructure in the landscapes surrounding the WLA but have limited or no direct effects on the components of the landscape which contribute to the WLA's key attributes and qualities. In combination, the cumulative effect across the WLA as a whole is predicted to remain **minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations. This is based primarily on the direct effects the Proposed Development would have on the WLA, balanced by the spatial separation of the proposed wind farm developments from the WLA. The effects of the Proposed Development would be localised, and accordingly its contribution to cumulative effects across the WLA would be relatively limited.

Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
	• Proposed Ouglassy Wind Farm	
The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: • Proposed Watten Wind Farm • Proposed Camster II Wind Farm • Proposed Golticlay Wind Farm Redesign • Propose Swarclett Wind Farm • Proposed Loch Toftingall BESS • Proposed Spittal BESS • Proposed Ayre Wind Farm Grid Connection • Proposed Baledigle Wind Farm • Proposed Hill of Lynchrobbie Wind Farm • Proposed Tormsdale Wind Farm • Proposed Ouglassy Wind Farm	None of the proposed energy developments would directly affect the Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA, direct effects would result from the Proposed Development only. The Proposed Development would be viewed in combination with the Watten, Camster II, Goltliclay Redesign, Swarclett, Baledigle, Hill of Lynchrobbie and Tormsdale wind farm proposals. In combination, the Proposed Development and proposed wind farm would increase the perceived extent of energy infrastructure in the landscapes surrounding the Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA but have limited or no direct effects on the components of the landscape which contribute to the SLA's Special Qualities. Owing to their low lying nature and likely limited visibility, the proposed BESS developments would result in limited indirect effects only on the SLA. In combination, the cumulative effect across the SLA as a whole is predicted to remain **moderate-minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations. This is based primarily on the direct effects the Proposed Development would have on the SLA, balanced by the spatial separation of the proposed wind farm developments from the SLA. The effects of the Proposed Development would be localised, and accordingly its contribution to cumulative effects across the SLA would be relatively limited.
Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA	Scenario 1: • Section B of the Proposed Development.	Sections A and B of the Proposed Development both extend through the SLA. In combination with Section B, the Proposed Development would introduce a large scale transmission line into the SLA and impact the Special Qualities relating to wildness/remoteness and accessibility. The towers would represent notable elements from parts of the LCT in closest proximity. However, the influence of construction activities and the new alignment would reduce at greater distance within the SLA due to the screening influence of intervening tree cover and the landform enclosing lower lying areas.

Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
		On balance, the cumulative effect would be **major adverse** and **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations across localised parts on the LCT in closest proximity to the Proposed Development during construction and operation (typically within approximately 700 m). The effects would reduce across the wider LCT, and would be **major-moderate adverse** and **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations.
	Scenario 2:	No predicted cumulative effect.

Table 77.9: Cumulative Effects on Visual Receptors

Visual Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
Lanergill Farm (SA-01)	Scenario 1: • Proposed Banniskirk Substation	Potential views of the proposed Banniskirk Substation would be restricted by intervening landform and vegetation, in combination with the distance of view. As a result, there would be no notable change to the level of effect reported within the main assessment. The cumulative effect would be **minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation.
	Scenario 2: • Proposed Ouglassy Wind Farm	Section A would potentially be viewed in combination with the proposed Ouglassy Wind Farm immediately to the north-west of the receptor location. The proposed turbines would be very prominent elements within the view, viewed over a short distance simultaneously with the Proposed Development. In combination the Proposed Development and the proposed wind farm would result in a **major adverse** and **significant** cumulative effect in the context of the EIA Regulations.
Lydias House, Toftingall Farm (SA-02)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: • Proposed Ouglassy Wind Farm	Section A would potentially be viewed in combination with the proposed Ouglassy Wind Farm immediately to the north-west of the receptor location. The proposed turbines would be very prominent elements within the view, viewed over a short distance simultaneously with the Proposed Development. In combination the Proposed Development and the proposed wind farm would result in a **major adverse** and **significant** cumulative effect in the context of the EIA Regulations.
Farmstead at Halsary (SA-03)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: None	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
Farmsteads and cottages along the A9(T) (SA-04)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: • Proposed Tormsdale Wind Farm	Visual receptors at SA-04 would experience very short distance views to the Proposed Development to the east in combination with longer distance views to the north-west towards the proposed Tormsdale and potentially the two proposed turbines at Hill of Lynchrobbie Wind farm to the south over a long distance. Owing to intervening vegetation and landform views of the Hill of Lynchrobbie wind farm are likely to be restricted to the upper components of the wind turbines only.

Visual Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
	• Proposed Hill of Lynchrobbie Wind Farm	The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in combination with the proposed Tormsdale wind farm would be **major-moderate adverse** and **significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation. In combination with the proposed Hill of Lynchrobbie Wind Farm the cumulative effects would be **minor adverse** and not significant in the context of the EIA Regulations.
Single-storey cottage west of the A9(T) (Braehungie and Mountain View (SA-05)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	• Proposed Tormsdale Wind Farm	From SA-05 the proposed Tormsdale Wind Farm would be potentially visible to the north-west however views from the receptor location would be likely to be filtered by tree planting within the garden area/property boundary. In combination with the planting and intervening landform, views of the proposed wind farm would be limited. The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in combination with the proposed Tormsdale wind farm would be **minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation.
Crofting township at Smerral (SA-06)	Scenario 1: None	No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: • Proposed Hill of Lynchrobbie Wind Farm	From SA-06 the proposed Hill of Lynchrobbie Wind Farm would be potentially visible to the south however views from the receptor location would be likely to be filtered by intervening landform and vegetation to the extent that views of the proposed turbines would be restricted to upper components only. The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in combination with the proposed Tormsdale wind farm would be **minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation.
Scattered properties at Badnagie (SA-07)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: • Proposed Hill of Lynchrobbie Wind Farm	From SA-07 the proposed Hill of Lynchrobbie Wind Farm would be potentially visible to the east however views from the receptor location would be likely to be filtered by intervening landform and vegetation to the extent that views of the proposed turbines would be restricted to upper components only. The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development in combination with the proposed Tormsdale wind farm would be **minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation.
Achorn House (SA-08)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.

Visual Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
Borgue (SA-09)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: None	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
Badrinsary (Rose Cottage and an unnamed house) (SA-10)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
Langwell Gardens, Langwell Kennels, and Keepers House (SA-11)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: None	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
The Bungalow, Ousdale, and Keepers Cottage (SA-12)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: None	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
Marrel and scattered cottages along the A897 (SA-13))	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
Scaraben (OA-02)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: None	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 1:	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.

Visual Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
Berriedale Braes Viewpoint (OA-03)	None	
	Scenario 2: None	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
Badbea Historic Clearance Village (OA-04)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: None	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
Hill walk location at Creag Thoraraidh (OA-05)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: None	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
Emigrants Memorial, Helmsdale (OA-06)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: None	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
A9 (T) between Achalone and Spittal (RA-01-1)	Scenario 1: • Proposed Banniskirk Substation	Section A in combination with the proposed Banniskirk Substation would be visible from the A9(T) between Achalone and Spittal. Views of the proposed substation would be of very short duration for road users, the proposed substation partially screened by intervening vegetation and landform. As a result, there would be limited notable change to the level of effect reported within the main assessment. The cumulative effect would be **minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation.
	Scenario 2: None	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 1: Banniskirk Substation.	Section A in combination with the proposed Banniskirk Substation would be visible from the A9(T) between Spittal and Mybster. Views of the proposed substation would be of short duration for road users, the proposed substation partially screened by intervening vegetation

Visual Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
A9 (T) between Spittal and Mybster (RA-01-2)		and landform. As a result, there would be limited notable change to the level of effect reported within the main assessment. The cumulative effect would be **minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation.
	Scenario 2: • Proposed Tormsdale Wind Farm • Ouglassy Wind Farm	Users of the A9(T) travelling between Spittal and Mybster would experience views of Section A in combination with views of the proposed Tormsdale Wind Farm. Views would be typically experienced by southbound travellers, the proposed turbines appearing beyond the existing Causeymire and Bad a Cheo Wind Farms located to the west of the A9. The proposed wind farm in combination with the Proposed Development would increase the prevalence of energy developments by a modest level and have limited further effects on the available view. The cumulative effect would be **minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation.
A9 (T) between Mybster and South of Moss of Toftingall (RA-01-3)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: • Proposed Tormsdale Wind Farm • Proposed Ouglassy Wind Farm • Proposed Spittal BESS	Users of the A9(T) travelling between Mybster and South Moss of Toftingall would experience views of Section A in combination with views of the proposed Tormsdale Wind Farm in addition to short duration views of the proposed Spittal BESS. Views would be typically experienced by southbound travellers, the proposed turbines appearing beyond the existing Causeymire and Bad a Cheo Wind Farms located to the west of the A9. The proposed wind farm in combination with the Proposed Development would increase the prevalence of energy developments by a modest level and have limited further effects on the available view. The cumulative effect would be **minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation.
A9 (T) between South of Moss of Toftingall and Rumster (RA-01-4)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: • Proposed Tormsdale Wind Farm • Proposed Golticlay Redesign • Proposed Watten Wind Farm	Users of the A9(T) travelling between Mybster and South Moss of Toftingall would potentially experience views of Section A in combination with views of the proposed Tormsdale, Golticlay Redesign and Watten Wind Farms. Views would be typically experienced by both northbound and southbound travellers, the proposed turbines to Tormsdale appearing to the west of the A9 and in close proximity to the existing Causeymire and Bad a Cheo Wind Farms, Golticlay and Watten appearing to the east of the A9. The proposed wind farm in combination with the Proposed Development would increase the prevalence of energy developments by a modest level and have limited further effects on the available view. The cumulative effect would be **minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation.
	Scenario 1:	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.

Visual Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
A9 (T) between Rumster and Brora (RA-01-5)	None	
	Scenario 2: • Proposed Hill of Lynchrobbie • Proposed Watten Wind Farm	Users of the A9(T) travelling between Rumster and Brora would potentially experience views of Section A in combination with views of the proposed Hill of Lynchrobbie Wind Farm and proposed Watten Wind Farm. Views would be typically experienced by both northbound and southbound travellers, the proposed Hill of Lynchrobbie turbines appearing on the hillside west of Latheron Wheel and the proposed turbines to Watten Wind Farm to the east of the A9. The proposed wind farm in combination with the Proposed Development would increase the prevalence of energy developments by a modest level and have limited further effects on the available view. The cumulative effect would be **minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation.
A897 Carn na Buth to Helmsdale (RA-03)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: None	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
B870 Glengolly to the junction with B876 north of Kirk (RA-05)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: None	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
Far North Railway Line via Helmsdale (RA-08)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: None	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
Core Path CA06.08 A gravel track stretching from the A9 near Spittal (RA-10)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: • Tormsdale Wind Farm	The core path extends to the west of the A9(T) in the region of Spittal. Users of the core path would potentially experience views of the proposed Tormsdale Wind Farm to the south in combination with Section A to the north and east. The proposed turbines would be viewed beyond the existing Achlachan, Causeymire and Bad a Cheo wind farm developments, increasing the number of turbines and

Visual Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
		extent of wind farm development in views to the south but resulting in limited change to the overall view. Views to the west would be unaffected. On balance, the cumulative level of effect would be **minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations.
Core Path CA06.04 Wind farm access track, Causeymire Wind Farm (RA-11)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: Tormsdale Wind Farm	The core path utilises sections of the Causeymire Wind Farm access tracks, enabling users to walk amongst the turbines and gain views across the moorlands to the south and west in addition to other wind farm developments to the east and north Users of the core paths would experience views of the Proposed Development to the east in combination with views of the proposed Tormsdale Wind Farm to the south-west. Wind turbines and energy transmission infrastructure are prominent elements in views from the core path. The cumulative level of effect would be **minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations.
Core Path CA10.11 Track leading to Munsary via Loch Stemster (RA-12)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: • Tormsdale Wind Farm • Proposed Watten Wind Farm • Proposed Golticlay Wind Farm Redesign	Views of the proposed Watten. Tormsdale Wind Farm in combination with Section A would be experienced to the north-west of the core path. Views of the proposed Golticlay Wind Farm Redesign would be experienced to the south. Views of the turbines would be likely to be experienced intermittently from the track, views screened by vegetation and/or landform, with greater levels of visibility occurring from elevated locations. The proposed Tormsdale wind farm would potentially be viewed in proximity to Bad a Cheo wind farm, extending the existing cluster of turbines onto the peatland landscapes to the south-west, and Watten Wind Farm in proximity to Halsary Wind Farm. The cumulative level of effect would be **moderate-minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations.
Core Paths CA10.03, CA10.04 and CA10.07. A collection of forest tracks at Rumster (RA-13)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: Proposed Golticlay Wind Farm Redesign	Views of the proposed Golticlay Wind Farm Redesign would be experienced to the north. Views of the turbines would be likely to be experienced intermittently from the track, views screened by vegetation and/or landform, with greater levels of visibility occurring from elevated locations. The cumulative level of effect would be **moderate-minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations.
Core Paths CA04.01, CA04.02, CA04.04,	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.

Visual Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
CA04.06, CA04.07, CA04.08, CA04.09, CA04.10, CA04.11, CA04.12, CA04.13, CA04.16, CA04.17, CA04.18, and CA04.19. A collection of tracks at Dunbeath (RA-14)	Scenario 2: None	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
Core Paths CA04.14 and CA04.15. A collection of gravel paths stretching from Berriedale to Langwell (RA-15)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: None	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
Core Path CA04.03. A gravel track off the A9(T) that leads to Badbea (RA-16)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: None	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
Core Paths SU13.01, SU13., SU13.03, SU13.04, SU13.05, SU13.05, SU13.06, SU13.07, and SU13.09. A collection of tracks at Helmsdale (RA-17)	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
	Scenario 2: None	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.
Core Path CU13.08. A hill walk winding	Scenario 1: None	Potential views of Scenario 1 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. No predicted cumulative effect.

Visual Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
through hills at Gartymore (RA-18)	Scenario 2: None	No predicted cumulative effect.
North Coast 500 (RA-19)	Scenario 1: • Proposed Banniskirk Substation	Section A in combination with the proposed Banniskirk Substation would be visible from the A9(T) between Spittal and Mybster. Views of the proposed substation would be of short duration for road users, the proposed substation partially screened by intervening vegetation and landform. As a result, there would be limited notable change to the level of effect reported within the main assessment. The cumulative effect would be **minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation.
	Scenario 2: • Proposed Hill of Lynchrobbie Wind Farm	Travellers on the North Coast 500 would potentially experience views of Section A in combination with the proposed Lynchrobbie Wind Farm where users are southbound travelling between Occumster on the A99(T) and Latheronwheel on the A9(T). The proposed turbines would appear to the fore of Section A or consecutively. Views of the turbines and the steel lattice towers would be likely to be experienced intermittently from the road, views screened by vegetation and/or landform, with greater levels of visibility occurring from elevated locations. The expansive views across the North Sea to the east and south of the A99(T) would be unaffected. The cumulative effect would be **minor adverse** and **not significant** in the context of the EIA Regulations during construction and operation.

7.8 Mitigation

7.8.1 Principal mitigation measures throughout Section A have been embedded in the design process and relate to the identification of a preferred alignment, to reduce as far as possible, landscape and visual effects. The requirement for, and location of, permanent access tracks has also been carefully reviewed with these being limited to the minimum required for longer term maintenance.

7.8.2 The following section summarises key mitigation elements during the construction and operational phase.

Design Mitigation during Construction Phase

7.8.3 Construction of the Proposed Development would follow an agreed construction method statement that would include arrangements for implementation of various aspects of the works to mitigate local adverse impacts during construction (to be agreed with The Highland Council and other statutory agencies). Specific mitigation measures during construction will include:

- Minimising land clearance / vegetation removal as far as possible;
- Protection of existing features such as field boundaries;
- Maintaining the Proposed Development Site in a tidy and contained condition;
- Controlling construction lighting (construction works would be focused within daytime periods only);
- Use of existing tracks where possible;
- Utilise temporary access tracks where conditions allow; and
- Removal of the works areas and all temporary construction materials would be undertaken after construction work is completed.

Design Mitigation During Operational Phase

7.8.4 Mitigation in relation to the operational phase primarily relates to the gradual re-establishment of any disturbed ground cover along the route of the Proposed Development. The reinstatement would focus on native moorland, reflecting the local ground conditions and landscape character, ensuring a natural context to the proposed built form, and also providing ecological habitat to the locality. Where required, reinstatement would involve replacement of topsoil, grading and installation of drainage as required. Graded areas would be allowed to vegetate naturally, although some seeding may be required to stabilise sites for example where peat has become exposed. For the purposes of this LVIA, it is assumed that the ground cover reinstatement would occur rapidly following cessation of construction activities.

7.8.5 Where tree felling to mitigate the risk of windblow (management felling) is deemed appropriate, these measures can only be undertaken with the agreement of the affected landowner and with felling permission granted by Scottish Forestry. This would require the landowner to fully address the replanting of such areas of felling outwith the operational corridor. It is the intention of the applicant to encourage the landowners to follow this best practice in terms of redesigning their current Long-Term Forest Plans which in turn would aim to follow UK Forestry Standard for the implementation of the works required. This management felling is therefore considered temporary.

7.9 Residual Effects

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

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

7.10 Summary and Conclusions

Landscape Effects

7.10.1 The landscape assessment has identified that there would be temporary significant effects on localised parts of five LCTs during the construction phase, namely LCT 134 Sweeping Moorland and Flows, LCT 135 Rounded Hills – Caithness and Sutherland, LCT 142 Strath – Caithness and Sutherland, LCT 143 – Farmed Lowland Plain, 144 Coastal Crofts & Small Farms. These effects would be based upon the focussed corridor of construction activity throughout valued and sensitive landscape areas. However, due to the generally low-lying nature of construction activities, these temporary effects would be primarily focused within 700-900 m of the Proposed Development.

7.10.2 During operation, when construction works are complete and vegetation has re-established, there would continue to be significant effects upon localised parts of the same five LCTs. These effects would be based upon the addition of the proposed steel lattice towers, which would represent new vertical features within the local landscape (located directly within all five of these LCT). The key effects would remain focussed within 700-900 m of the Proposed Development, or less based on localised screening. At greater distances, the influence of the Proposed Development would reduce, and the effects would reduce in significance.

7.10.3 In terms of landscape designations, the landscape assessment has concluded that there would be no significant effects upon the key attributes and qualities of the Ben Armine WLA. However, there would be direct localised effects on land falling within the southern extents of the Causeymire Knockfin Flows close to the coastal fringe.

7.10.4 There would be significant adverse effects on the Special Qualities of both the Flow Country and Berriedale Braes SLA and the Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA. Effects on the Flow Country and Berriedale Braes SLA would be relatively localised and occur on the rolling hills between the peatlands and the coastal shelf. Effects on the Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA would be more pronounced in upland areas and in the north of the SLA. Where viewed the Proposed Development would be perceived as reducing the perceived wildness and tranquillity of the interior hills and Glen Loth.

Visual Effects

7.10.5 During construction and operation, significant adverse effects were identified for twelve residential properties/receptor groupings located within close proximity of the Proposed Development. There would also be significant effects applicable to localised sections of four recreational routes (comprising four individual or grouped core paths) and two outdoor locations (Berriedale Braes viewpoint and the summit of Creag Thoraraidh). In terms of road / rail users, there would be significant effects on views from localised sections of three transport routes comprising the B870 and the A897 and the Far North Railway Line (via Helmsdale).

Cumulative Effects

7.10.6 The LVIA has identified that there would be significant effects on localised parts of the landscape and select visuals receptors as a result of Section A of the Proposed Development, in combination with Section B related works, and / or other proposed unrelated developments (predominantly wind farms).

7.10.7 In terms of landscape character, the LVIA has identified that there would be significant cumulative effects applicable to three Landscape Character Types (LCT 134 - Sweeping Moorland and Flows, LCT 135 –

Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland, LCT 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland). There would also be significant cumulative effects on the Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA as a result of cumulative effects result from Section A and Section B of the Proposed Development.

7.10.8 In terms of visual receptors, significant cumulative effects would potentially occur at two residential receptor locations (Lydias House, Toftingall Farm (SA-02) and at farmsteads and cottages along the A9(T) (SA-04)). There would be no significant cumulative effects on other receptors within the Section A Study Area.

Conclusions

7.10.9 The LVIA has concluded that there would be temporary significant landscape and visual effects occurring during the construction of the Proposed Development. These effects would be localised in nature and primarily focused upon receptors in closest proximity to the Site. Localised significant landscape and visual effects would continue to occur in the longer term, particularly at close range, where due to the absence of screening the proposed steel lattice towers would form noticeable new elements within the landscape. There would be significant cumulative effects on localised landscape character, and views from a small number of routes and outdoor destinations.

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

VOLUME 5: APPENDIX 7.5: ANNEX 1 – LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT SECTION A

1. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT SECTION A

1.1.1 This Annex provides the detailed assessment of potential effects on landscape character as a result of the Proposed Development (Section A). Landscape Character Types (LCTs) that have been identified for consideration within the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), that fall within the Study Area, are listed below. The location and extents of the LCTs relative to the Proposed Development are illustrated in Volume 3, Figures 7.3-1 and 7.3-2: Section A Landscape Character.

1.1.2 LCTs that host parts of Section A (direct effects):

- 134 – Sweeping Moorland and Flows LCT;
- 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT;
- 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland LCT;
- 143 – Farmed Lowland Plain LCT; and
- 144 – Coastal Crofts & Small Farms LCT.

1.1.3 Other LCTs within the Study Area (indirect effects):

- 138 – Lone Mountains LCT;
- 140 – Sandy Beaches and Dunes LCT;
- 141 – High Cliffs and Sheltered Bays LCT; and
- 146 – Coastal Farmland and Woodlands LCT.

1.1.4 The assessment of potential effects on these LCTs is set out in Tables 1 – 9. The assessment makes reference to the key characteristics specific to each LCT as described within the National Landscape Character Assessment[1].

[1] NatureScot. 2019. SNH National Landscape Character Assessment. Available online at: Landscape Character Assessment in Scotland. (Accessed on 20/11/2024).

Table 1: Effects on LCT 134 – Sweeping Moorland and Flows

Baseline Description	
Description	The Sweeping Moorland and Flows LCT occurs extensively across Caithness and east Sutherland. It is defined by flat, smooth landforms dominated by blanket bogs, wet heath, grassland, and mire. Isolated hills, such as Ben Alisky and Ben Dorrery, rise above the moorland; while meandering rivers, lochs, and shallow valleys create natural focal features. The Flows, a vast peatland at the core of Caithness, forms a complex network of watercourses, dubh lochans, and diverse pool systems that merge seamlessly into the surrounding moorland. The Proposed Development Section A passes through the LCT for approximately 31.5 km. The region of the LCT traversed by the alignment is characterised by low, smooth skylines and vast open skies, contributing to high exposure and visibility. The blanket bog vegetation introduces vibrant colour with sphagnum mosses, while peat cutting and hagging leave dark brown scars across the terrain. Improved grazing areas, appearing as green islands near farm buildings, contrast with patches of coniferous forestry, some of which are undergoing restoration to return to blanket bog. Broadleaf woodlands along watercourses, primarily composed of birch, alder, willow, and rowan, provide additional texture and ecological diversity. The landscape remains sparsely settled but spans a large area with numerous prehistoric and medieval monuments, interspersed with dispersed crofts, farms, and estate buildings. Remnants of ruined structures and old field boundaries further reflect the region's historical depth. Vehicular tracks and railway lines reinforce access, with the A9(T) serving as one of the most prominent features, running parallel to the proposed OHL alignment of this Section.
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	A substantial portion of the Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA coincide with the LCT.
Key Characteristics	• Gently sloping landform with occasional isolated hills; • Presence of lochs and meandering rivers; • Distinct flora dominated by sphagnum moss due to wet conditions; • Areas of peat cuttings and hagging, with pockets of improved grazing on outer fringes; • Coniferous forests are a dominant characteristic in parts of the landscape; • Broadleaf woodlands occasionally lining water courses and loch edges; • Sparse settlement with dispersed crofts, farms, and estate buildings mostly on outer edges of the coastline; • Key infrastructures include vehicular tracks, wind farms, transmission lines, and minor roads;

Baseline Description	
	• Long, low skylines provide extensive views and a sense of openness; • Consistent views of the distant Lone Mountains and Rugged Mountain Massif; and • Sense of exposure in flat peatland areas and strong remoteness in uninhabited moorlands.
Landscape Value	Parts of the LCT are valued, with much of its extent falling within the Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA, which contributes to its recognised Special Qualities. Additionally, the LCT encompasses sections of the Flow Country WHS and the Causeymire – Knockfin Flows WLA along the coastal fringe, reinforcing its status as a scenically significant backdrop for the region and its coastal settlements. The coastal landscape is defined by its extensive woodlands, backed by rounded hill slopes, which enhance its aesthetic appeal and contribute to the broader scenic character of the area. The vastness and natural beauty of the peatland and coastline form the defining characteristics of the LCT, emphasising its contribution to designated and protected landscapes. The landscape's recognised scenic qualities and relative rarity further elevate its value, underlining its sensitivity to even slight alterations. Beyond its open peatlands and coastal scenery, the LCT also encompasses areas of farmland, woodland, and policy plantings, adding to its diverse aesthetic appeal. While certain areas with existing OHL infrastructure, wind farm developments, and undulating terrain may exhibit a degree of tolerance to change, these factors remain secondary to the landscape's broader public value and its recognised scenic importance. Given its designation within multiple protected landscapes, its expansive scenic qualities, and its contribution to the region's landscape character, the Landscape Value of this LCT is considered **High**.

Assessment of Effects	
Possible Landscape Receptors	**Potential Effects**
Large, expansive areas of peat bog.	Direct impact on landcover as a result of construction works and erection of the towers.
Long, low skylines provide extensive views and a sense of openness	Construction works and the introduction of steel lattice towers would disrupt the existing skyline and form a new focal element within the landscape, increasing the prevalence of energy transmission infrastructure. This would be experienced typically from the A9(T) and views to the east. The Proposed Development would have limited impact on the skylines and sense of openness extending across the Flows to the west of the A9(T).
Coniferous forests are a dominant characteristic in parts of the landscape	The Proposed Development extends through areas of existing plantation forestry, requiring localised tree felling to facilitate the construction process.

Baseline Description	
Sparse settlement with dispersed crofts, farms, and estate buildings mostly on outer edges of the coastline	There would be no direct change to the pattern and occurrence of crofts and buildings throughout the LCT.
Wind farms are situated within lower rolling hills in proximity to the existing transmission line, which runs broadly parallel to the part of the proposed Section A alignment.	Construction works and the steel lattice towers would increase the prevalence of energy generation/energy transmission infrastructure within the LCT within an area close the A9(T) and or the existing 132 kV OHL.
Landscape Sensitivity	A substantial portion of the LCT coincides with nationally and regionally valued landscapes, reinforcing its high value as a promoted landscape. While its designation highlights its scenic and ecological significance, parts of the LCT also possesses characteristics that allow for a degree of change of the type proposed. The valued peatland landscape and coastline contribute considerably to the LCT's scenic appeal. The long, low skylines characteristic of these landscapes offers extensive inland views, making them highly susceptible to change as even minor alterations could alter its perceived openness and remoteness. However, in other areas, the presence of managed forestry and more enclosed terrain presents opportunities to accommodate the Proposed Development with reduced landscape impact. These elements, including forested areas and undulating topography, help mitigate susceptibility by partially screening infrastructure and integrating it into the existing landscape framework. Overall, while the LCT retains a level of sensitivity due to its recognised scenic qualities, its varied composition and existing landscape characteristics suggest it would tolerate some degree of change. On balance, Landscape sensitivity is assessed as **Medium-High**.
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	Construction works would extend through the LCT from the open moorlands in the vicinity of Spittal to the coastal hills in the vicinity of Dunbeath for a distance of approximately 31.5 km. The works would include formation of temporary and permanent access tracks to facilitate the construction of the new towers, and installation of the towers. Works would also include localised forestry felling in order to create wayleaves for the alignment. Existing tracks would be utilised where practicable in order to reduce the extent of new tracks required. From Halsary to Crofts of Benachielt the alignment of Section A would be closely aligned with the existing 132 kV OHL and the A9(T). From Crofts of Benachielt to Helmsdale the alignment would closely follow the routing of the 132 kV OHL only. The routing of Section A in close association with existing transmission infrastructure and the A9(T) would intensify the extent of development in a localised corridor but limit the introduction of transmission infrastructure into less developed and remote parts of the LCT (typically found to the west of the A9(T)). This would be most apparent from the A9 carriageway in the region of the Rangag where the influence of transmission infrastructure would be pronounced to the east but less so in views across the Flow to the west. Once operational, the Proposed Development would increase the extent of steel lattice towers within the LCT, increasing the prominence of transmission infrastructure within the landscape, commonly in proximity to the existing 132 kV OHL. The towers would predominantly extend across open moorland, albeit would be partly contained by blocks of forestry and within areas of rolling landform close to the coastal fringe. In summary, the key effects would be focused within a linear corridor along the alignment. Given the open nature of the local moorland landscape, this would extend out to approximately 700-800 m from the Section A alignment, where the impact magnitude would typically be **High** during construction and operation. This represents a localised section of the LCT. The influence of the Proposed Development would diminish at greater distances. Across the wider LCT (representing the vast majority of the LCT) the impact magnitude would typically be **Low** during construction and operation.

Baseline Description	
Significance of Effect	The construction stage activities, including vehicular movement and the presence of people, would reduce the sense of remoteness within a localised area of the LCT generally where OHLs are already established. These works would be partly screened / backclothed by forestry and by rolling hill forms but would be typically prominent in proximity to the OHL. The main influence of these activities would therefore account for a localised, linear part of Section A. During operation, the level of human activity and vehicle movement would reduce. The new towers and sections of permanent access track would form new components within the landscape. The Proposed Development would result in an increase in built form and accessibility within more settled, less wild parts of the LCT and not directly affect more remote regions of the LCT where the sense of wildness and remoteness of LCT is more prevalent. In summary, within 700-800 m of the Section A alignment the effects during construction and operation would be **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant). Across the wider 134 – Sweeping Moorland and Flows LCT, the effects would be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction and operation.

Table 1: Effects on LCT 135 – Rounded Hills – Caithness & Sutherland

Baseline Description	
Description	The Rounded Hills – Caithness & Sutherland LCT covers extensive areas of central and eastern Sutherland. This landscape is distinguished by rolling moorland that rises into broad, rounded hills, typically ranging between 400 to 500 m in height, with some peaks reaching higher elevations. The terrain transitions from gently undulating moorland to more pronounced coastal hills, occasionally featuring steeper slopes marked by patches of scree and crags. The region of the LCT traversed by the Proposed Development Section A is characterised by rolling moorland, gently undulating hills, and steep coastal slopes. Woodland cover is sparse, primarily comprising broadleaf species typically found in remote areas. Land use predominantly consists of rough grazing, interspersed with fragmented patches of coniferous forestry and native birch and Scots Pine woodlands. Settlement is mainly concentrated along the coastal shelf, lower slopes near the straths, and within narrow glens. These areas typically include crofts, farms, occasional estate buildings, and the remnants of abandoned crofts set within a landscape dominated by heather moorland. Historical land use practices, including peat cutting, remain evident throughout the area. Archaeological features are prevalent in the glens and lower slopes, with notable concentrations in Glen Loth, Strath Brora, the upper reaches of the Strath of Kildonan, and the region north of Bonar Bridge.
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	The majority of the LCT overlaps with the Loch Fleet & Brora & Glen Loth SLA and the Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA.
Key Characteristics	• Rolling hills forming broad, subtly rounded summits but with some more pronounced hills also occurring, these often featuring steeper slopes along the coast or where truncated by deep glens. • Hills cut by numerous narrow burns and small lochans lie within dips, corries and on plateau summits.

Baseline Description	
	• Predominantly dense heather ground cover and moorland grasses, but also some areas of bog. • Fragments of broadleaf woodland in inaccessible locations. • Scarcely settled with a largely uninhabited interior and widely scattered crofts and farms on lower slopes adjoining straths and farmed landscapes. • Narrow glens and lower hill slopes often rich in archaeology with features such as standing stones, brochs and medieval townships. • Wind farms located in more accessible and generally lower rolling hills, either close to extensive forestry or the high voltage transmission line aligned broadly parallel to the south-east Sutherland coast. • Convex character of hill slopes limiting distant visibility and views of the hill tops when travelling through the landscape. • Views into the interior of the hills very restricted. • Strong sense of wild character can be experienced within the more remote and little modified parts of this landscape.
Landscape Value	The majority of this LCT within the study area coincides with the Loch Fleet & Brora & Glen Loth and the Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLAs, characterised by distinctive landforms, unspoiled character, and remote qualities. Smooth, gently domed hills, broad skylines, and rolling upland terrain define the landscape, evoking a profound sense of isolation. Subtle transitions between moorland, woodland, and pastures enhance its scenic appeal, reinforcing the perceptions of the blend of undisturbed wildness and the sparsely settled nature integral to the area's sense of place. The Landscape Value of this LCT is considered **High**.

Assessment of Effects	
Possible Landscape Receptors	**Potential Effects**
The land is predominantly uninhabited, with settlement primarily confined to the coastal shelf. Sporadic crofts and farms are widely scattered across the area, typically located on the lower slopes adjoining straths and farmed landscapes.	The Proposed Development would increase the occurrence of energy transmission infrastructure within the LCT in close proximity to existing infrastructure. The Proposed Development would not encroach on residential properties or settlements, thereby exerting no direct influence on their pattern or occurrence.
Rolling hills with broad, subtly rounded summits, occasionally featuring more pronounced hills with steeper slopes along the coast or where intersected by deep glens reflecting a strong sense of wild character in remote areas.	Construction works and the introduction of steel lattice towers would in places interrupt the existing skyline, forming a new focal element within the landscape but remaining confined to a localised linear corridor.
Straths exhibit diverse forms, with rivers winding through floodplains often bordered by birch and alder, creating a varied and natural landscape character. The predominant land cover consists of smooth pastures interspersed with areas of wetland, adding to the mosaic of natural features within the strath environment.	There would be direct effect on landcover including localised tree felling as a result of construction works and erection of towers.

Baseline Description	
Rich in archaeology with features such as standing stones, brochs and medieval townships	The alignment avoids direct effects on archaeological features, albeit would be visible from some archaeological points of interest.
Landscape Sensitivity	This large-scale mountainous landscape is highly recognised in value with locally prominent characteristics. Its promoted scenic qualities and wilderness character contribute to its importance, making it more susceptible to change in settled coastal fringes, lower hill slopes, and narrow straths. However, the overall susceptibility of the LCT to the Proposed Development would be limited due to the influence of undulating hills and peaks, which would naturally constrain the visual dominance of linear infrastructure. These landforms would help integrate the proposed infrastructure elements with the existing power lines, ensuring minimal disruption to the broader landscape and maintaining the overall visual composition. On balance, landscape sensitivity is assessed as **Medium-High**.
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	From Berriedale to Badbea, the construction of steel lattice towers crossing the strath floor and ascending the southern slopes west of Langwell House would be more visually prominent than typical land management activities involving similar levels of intervention. Forestry felling would be required to widen the operational corridor, particularly within the linear riparian woodland and adjacent commercial forestry plantation. However, the surrounding topography and vegetation would restrict wider visibility, containing landscape changes to localised areas. These changes would be partially perceptible from the road, where existing infrastructure and land management practices are already present, helping reduce their overall prominence. During operation, the towers would become less noticeable as construction activities cease and the infrastructure visually integrates with the existing 132 kV line, especially between Borgue and Badbea. Localised fragmentation within the riparian woodlands and plantations would diminish over time as vegetation regenerates. The development would remain partially visible from the A9, particularly where towers cross the strath or ascend nearby slopes. From Badbea to Brora, the landform and forest cover would further limit intervisibility during construction. Views of the development within this section of the LCT would be largely restricted, with only occasional glimpses of taller construction elements, such as cranes, appearing on lower slopes or within the glen. Small-scale tree felling would be barely perceptible, as the topography continues to screen and contain most construction activity. Once operational, the terrain and forested areas would naturally limit views of the new infrastructure, with only sporadic glimpses of tower tops in localised areas such as lower hillsides or the glen. Over the following decade, vegetation reinstatement would soften the visual impact of tree felling, allowing the landscape to gradually return to a more natural appearance. The close alignment of the new infrastructure with existing features and transmission routes would help ensure that visual disruption remains minimal, preserving the character and visual coherence of the setting. The key effects would be focused within a linear corridor along the alignment. Given the predominantly hilly terrain, the corridor would extend to 600---700 m from the Section A alignment, where the impact magnitude would typically be **Medium** during construction and operation. The influence of the Proposed Development would diminish at greater distances. Across the wider LCT (representing the vast majority of the LCT), the impact magnitude would typically be **Low** or less during construction and operation.
Significance of Effect	Between Berriedale and Badbea, forestry felling would be required to broaden the operational corridor. Construction activities—including tower erection, tree felling, and associated works—would be partially perceptible from sparsely settled areas near roads, where existing transmission infrastructure and land management practices are

Baseline Description	
	already established. However, the dense forest cover and undulating terrain would limit intervisibility, keeping visual effects contained and reducing their overall impact on the wider landscape. The broader landscape would remain largely undisturbed due to effective natural screening and the alignment of the development with existing infrastructure. Once operational, the reinstatement of felled areas would result in more subtle changes to the landscape, with forest regrowth and surrounding topography helping to accommodate the presence of the new infrastructure. Natural screening from landform, woodland, and plantation forestry would continue to limit visibility, particularly near roads and sparsely populated coastal areas, further minimising potential landscape alterations. The transparent design of the steel lattice towers, combined with their proximity to existing transmission lines, would ensure minimal disruption to the landscape's perceptual and physical character. From Badbea to Brora, the Proposed Development would run parallel to the A9 before diverging into rolling hills with broad summits and steep slopes, eventually crossing the River Helmsdale. Steel lattice tower installation and temporary construction equipment, such as cranes, may occasionally be visible on lower hillsides or within the glen. Small-scale forestry or woodland felling within the operational corridor would be perceptible in certain locations, but the surrounding landform and forest cover would limit wider visibility. Any changes would remain localised, confined to areas where terrain and vegetation allow glimpses of tower tops or tall equipment. The broader landscape, including its natural features and character, would remain largely unaffected. Once in operation, the steel lattice towers, due to their lightweight, transparent structure, would be less visually intrusive than construction-phase elements. Landform and forested areas would continue to restrict intervisibility, with only occasional glimpses of towers on lower hillsides or within the glen. The wider landscape and its defining characteristics would remain intact, as natural screening would minimise the visual prominence of the infrastructure and help maintain the area's overall integrity. In summary, within 1 km of the Section A alignment the effects during construction and operation would be **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant). Across the wider 135 – Rounded Hills – Caithness & Sutherland LCT, the effects would be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant) at most during construction and operation.

Table 3: Effects on LCT 142 – Strath – Caithness & Sutherland

Baseline Description	
Description	This LCT encompasses the low-lying river valleys near Berriedale and Helmsdale, intersecting with three localised Section A alignment sections. It extends across the Straths of Langwell, Berriedale, and Kildonan in Caithness and Sutherland, areas known for their rugged landforms, rich historical significance, and remote character. The enclosed straths are characterised by a combination of woodland, farmland, and dispersed settlements, predominantly composed of isolated cottages and farmsteads along the central watercourse. The sense of enclosure varies based on the height and steepness of the surrounding hills, shaping both visual boundaries and spatial experience within the valleys. Land cover consists primarily of floodplains used for pasture, interspersed with wetlands and woodlands. Settlements are more concentrated in the lower straths closer to the coast, while the upper straths remain sparsely populated. Wind farm developments are visible from certain angles, introducing modern infrastructure into the otherwise untamed setting.

Baseline Description	
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	The majority of this LCT within the study area falls within the Causeymire – Knockfin Flows WLA and the Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA.
Key Characteristics	• Straths range from fairly straight deeply incised troughs to more winding valleys with a number of minor side glens. • River terraces and hummocky lower side slopes a common feature. • Water is a key characteristic with straths accommodating a central river meandering across the floodplain, often traced by clumps of birch and alder. • Lochs in some straths, where a string of small lochs add to the scenic richness of the lower strath. • Areas of wetland often present on the strath floors. • Smooth and fairly large pastures the predominant land cover on the floodplains of the straths, commonly enclosed by wire fences. • Semi-improved pastures, heather and grass moorland and coniferous plantations covering lower side slopes. • Increasing extent of moorland and woodland generally further up the straths, where the floodplain narrows and settlement is sparser. • Smaller strip-fields present on often hummocky, lower side slopes and associated with croft houses arranged in linear groups raised on terraces above the floodplain and sometimes backed by woodland. • Some crofts within the Straths more randomly dispersed or staggered on lower hill slopes. • Occasional small farms located in the broader and more fertile parts of the straths. • Settlement generally denser within the lower reaches of many straths, especially at bridging points, on the coast and close to major roads. • Many areas rich in archaeology with cairns, roundhouses, brochs and old field systems, usually found on side slopes. • Abandoned crofts, particularly within the upper straths and in narrow side glens. • Focus in views from roads provided by a number of estate shooting lodges, and clustered, predominantly 19th Century, often estate style buildings. • Narrow roads, commonly aligned along the edge of the floodplain, from which views are strongly channelled by the side slopes. • Rounded Hills often forming prominent edges to the straths with shapely well-defined hills, providing a distinctive skyline and scenic backdrop. • Highly scenic backdrop of mountains often revealed in some of the upper reaches of these straths.

Baseline Description	
Landscape Value	The LCT comprises a mix of natural features, including meandering rivers, wetlands, lochs, and woodlands. These elements are complemented by cultural features such as archaeological sites, crofting landscapes, and estate shooting lodges, and experienced within a backdrop created by the rounded hills that envelope the LCT to either side. These features contribute towards its aesthetic value. The LCT falls within Causeymire – Knockfin Flows WLA and the Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA. On balance, the Landscape Value is **High**.

Assessment of Effects	
Possible Landscape Receptors	**Potential Effects**
The floodplains of the straths are predominantly covered by smooth, relatively large pastures enclosed by wire fences. Lower side slopes are typically occupied by semi-improved pastures, heather and grass moorland, and coniferous plantations. As the floodplain narrows further up the straths, moorland and woodland coverage increase, and settlement becomes sparser.	The construction works and the introduction of steel lattice towers would directly influence the land cover but remain confined to a linear corridor extending across the strath. The alignment encroaches on only a short section of the LCT rather than following its length. Based on the height of the towers, the Proposed Development would potentially form a new focus within views along the strath.
Smaller strip fields often appear on lower-side slopes, associated with croft houses arranged in linear groups on terraces above the floodplain; some crofts are more randomly dispersed or staggered on lower hill slopes. Occasional small farms are found in the broader, more fertile parts of the straths. Settlement density generally increases in the lower reaches of many straths, particularly at bridging points, along the coast, and near major roads.	The Proposed Development would traverse the strath more inland, avoiding direct effects on the pattern and occurrence of residential properties and settlements.
Many areas within the straths are archaeologically rich, featuring cairns, roundhouses, brochs, and old field systems, typically located on the side slopes. Abandoned crofts are commonly found in the upper straths and narrow side glens. Estate shooting lodges and clustered 19th-century estate-style buildings are strategically positioned to focus on views from roads.	The Proposed Development avoids direct effects on archaeological features, albeit would be visible from some archaeological or historic points of interest.
Narrow roads typically follow the edge of the floodplain, where the side slopes channel views along the strath. Rounded hills often form prominent edges, with shapely, well-defined hills creating a distinctive skyline and scenic backdrop. In some upper reaches of the straths, mountains emerge as a highly scenic backdrop, enhancing the visual appeal.	Construction works and new steel lattice towers could disrupt the existing skyline, creating a new focal point against the established backdrop. The enclosing landform on either side of the Strath would limit views of the wider sections of the Proposed Development, focusing visibility primarily on the short sections extending across or within the Strath.
Landscape Sensitivity	The LCT exhibits scenic qualities based upon its combination of natural features, albeit is predominantly undesignated. Its susceptibility to the Proposed Development would be increased by the smaller-scale enclosed nature of the strath. However, this is tempered by the presence of the existing OHL extending across the Straths of Langwell, Berriedale, and Kildonan in Caithness and Sutherland, which suggests the LCT is tolerant of some degree of change based on the type proposed.

Baseline Description	
	On balance, landscape sensitivity is assessed as **Medium-High**.
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	Construction within the Straths of Langwell, Berriedale, and Kildonan would involve localised tree felling on the upper slopes and the creation of new access tracks. While these tracks would be established in more exposed areas, surrounding woodland and forestry would partially screen vehicle movements and provide a backcloth to construction activities. The most open views of the works would be concentrated on the strath floors, where vehicle movements and construction activity would contrast with the existing agricultural land use and moorland hills. However, the influence of these activities on the wider LCT would be restricted due to the low-lying nature of the landscape, intervening tree cover, and the enclosing landform of the valley sides. Once operational, the Proposed Development would extend directly across the LCT rather than following its length, thereby limiting its overall influence on the broader landscape areas. The alignment would introduce four towers (Towers N108–N110 and N115) within the LCT area of the Straths of Langwell and Berriedale and six towers (Towers N145–N150) within the Strath of Kildonan. Although similar in design to the existing 132 kV OHL, the new towers would be taller, introducing a new visual element within valley views. Short sections of associated permanent access tracks would also be established to connect the alignment with major transport routes. The overall effects would be concentrated within a linear corridor traversing the three straths, with the maximum width extending to 400-500 m northwest and 600-700 m southeast from the alignment within the Strath of Kildonan, where a permanent track would be introduced. This track would closely follow the contours of Caen Hill's western hillside. As the alignment crosses the slopes enclosing the straths along the corridor, the towers would be positioned on the hilltops, appearing against the background sky. On balance, impacts would be focused within a linear corridor across the three glens to 600-700 m from the alignment. Within these localised parts of the LCT the impact magnitude would be **High** during construction and operation. Across the wider LCT, at greater distance from the Proposed Development, the impact magnitude would be **Medium** or less during construction and operation.
Significance of Effect	As outlined above, construction activities and vehicle movements would temporarily create contrasts with the existing agricultural land use within the straths. However, these effects would remain confined to a highly localised area. During the operational phase, human activity and vehicle movements would notably decrease, with the towers and sections of permanent access tracks becoming new but static elements within the landscape. The towers would introduce vertical features within views directed along the straths, contrasting with the natural characteristics of the LCT. Nevertheless, the alignment follows the shortest route across each strath, thereby minimising its physical footprint within the broader LCT. In summary, within 600-700 m of the alignment the effects during construction and operation would be **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant). Across the wider 142 – Strath – Caithness & Sutherland LCT, the effects would be **Moderate-Adverse** (significant) or less during construction and operation.

Table 4: Effects on LCT 143 – Farmed Lowland Plain

Baseline Description	
Description	The landform of this LCT is characterised by gently undulating landforms with broad horizontal emphasis, enormous skies, and clear northern air, creating an open, light, and exposed environment. The landform also includes broad, shallow valleys running southeast to northwest, with the valley of the River Wick being the largest, hosting Lochs Watten and Scarmclate in its upper part. A predominantly farmed landscape with wetter rough pasture, moss, and occasional lochs was identified in the area. The lochs serve as focal points amidst well-managed farmland, especially in bright conditions. Large arable fields are found near the coast and in the Wick Valley, while farmland elsewhere is mixed with improved pastures, arable fields, rough grazing, and wetland areas. The landscape is characterised by fences, stone walls, dykes, and Caithness stone delineating fields with various crops changing throughout the year. Scattered transmission infrastructures, farms, and croft houses spread out over the land, where sparse woodland consists of small coniferous shelterbelts, broadleaf trees around farms, and more diverse wooded parcels near estate houses. Larger coniferous woodlands are present at the transition to Sweeping Moorland and Flows, planted on former mosses and less fertile ridges. Past and current stone quarries are located near Spittal and Castletown.
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	The LCT intersects only a small portion of the Flow Country WHS within the Section A Study Area, specifically south of Loch Watten.
Key Characteristics	• The landscape is characterised by open, low-lying plains with gently undulating shallow valleys, often filled with lochs and mosses, interspersed with occasional smooth hills that serve as landmarks. The River Wick forms the most prominent valley, running southeast to northwest across the plain; • The landscape is predominantly agricultural, with intensively managed farmland concentrated near Thurso, Wick, and Loch Watten, interspersed with sparse coniferous woodlands providing shelter. Larger conifer woodlands are found at the transition to the Sweeping Moorland and Flows, typically planted on poorer, wetter ground. Farm buildings and houses serve as focal points, often appearing in clusters of croft houses on marginal slopes and coastal areas; • Archaeological or historic features, including castles, baronial mansions, brochs, and cairns, are scattered throughout the farmland and hills. Key infrastructure elements include vehicular tracks, wind farms, transmission lines, and minor roads, with roads typically following field boundaries, running straight with sharp corners. The landscape offers extensive views, revealing distant summits, small clusters of wind turbines on low ridges and hills, and larger wind farms in adjoining LCTs.
Landscape Value	The LCT is valued for its rural setting and extensive views, especially towards Lone Mountains and Rounded Hills – Caithness and Sutherland. While the landscape features are generally common, this area has local significance as a backdrop for nearby coastal settlements and serves as a destination for tourists and visitors. Regionally, the landscape is appreciated for its open, low-lying plains with gently undulating shallow valleys, which include scattered residential developments, woodlands, lochs, and hills. It is mainly undesignated, and the nearby Flow Country WHS has minimal influence on its settings. Additionally, the presence of man-made structures,

Baseline Description	
	such as wind farms, substations, overhead lines, and commercial forestry, reduces its scenic value. Most landscape components are common and not particularly outstanding within the local context. Landscape value is considered **Low-Medium**.

Assessment of Effects	
Possible Landscape Receptors	**Potential Effects**
The landscape is predominantly agricultural, with intensively managed farmland surrounding the Loch Watten, interspersed with sparse coniferous woodlands providing shelter. Larger conifer woodlands are found at the transition to the Sweeping Moorland and Flows, typically planted on poorer, wetter ground.	The construction works and steel lattice towers would exert direct effects on the land cover but would affect only a small section of the LCT within a refined corridor. Small-scale forestry felling would be anticipated at the northernmost section of the alignment on the lower slopes of Spittal Hill.
Farm buildings and houses serve as focal points, often appearing in clusters of croft houses on marginal slopes and coastal areas.	There would be no direct change to the pattern and occurrence of crofts and buildings throughout the LCT.
Historic features, including castles, baronial mansions, brochs, and cairns, are scattered throughout the farmland and hills.	The alignment avoids direct effects on archaeological or historic features, albeit would be visible from some archaeological or historic points of interest.
The landscape is characterised by open, low-lying plains with gently undulating shallow valleys, interspersed with occasional smooth hills that serve as landmarks. The River Wick forms the most prominent valley, running southeast to northwest across the plain.	Construction works and the introduction of steel lattice towers would interrupt the existing skyline, forming a new focal element within the landscape and increasing the prevalence of energy transmission infrastructure. This change would be most noticeable from the B870, particularly in views to the north and south. While these features may disrupt the open skyline, their visual impact would be confined to a minor portion of the LCT.
Key infrastructure elements include vehicular tracks, wind farms, transmission lines, and minor roads, which contribute to the area's developed, yet expansive character	The Proposed Development would increase the prevalence of energy transmission infrastructure/energy generation that intensify the infrastructure presence within a minor part of the LCT, particularly in the area close the B870.
Landscape Sensitivity	The LCT spans a broad geographic area, defined by its notable scenic qualities shaped by a combination of natural features, though it remains largely undesignated. Within the Study Area for Section A, settlement patterns are sparse, consisting mainly of dispersed farmsteads and cottages. Key landscape elements, such as the River Wick and Loch Watten, contribute to its visual appeal and are particularly sensitive to change. The landscape's expansive, open character and simple, retrospective qualities heighten its overall susceptibility to alteration. However, existing human interventions, including wood poles, traffic along the A9, forestry plantations, and wind turbines, introduce a degree of tolerance to changes of the type proposed. On balance, landscape sensitivity is assessed as **Medium**.

Baseline Description	
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	The Proposed Development would require forestry felling to create a wayleave through a short section of the forestry plantation at the northernmost part of the route. Temporary access tracks would also be established to facilitate tower construction, leading to increased activity and movement within a small part of this LCT. The steel lattice towers would be constructed across the upper Wick Valley, west of Loch Watten, before descending the southeastern slopes of Spittal Hill toward the B870. Construction activities would be similar to periodic forest management operations in this area. However, given the open character and gently undulating nature of the low-lying, farmed landscape, the works would be noticeable in the short term. Localised linear changes would be particularly apparent at individual tower positions, along temporary access tracks, and within designated compound areas. These changes would include forestry felling, steel lattice tower installation, and the establishment of access tracks. Although existing roads and occasional forestry works already introduce intermittent movement and activity, the construction phase would involve a more concentrated and intensified level of activity. Key effects would be confined to the operation corridor, while vehicular movement could extend up to 750 m at the northernmost end of the alignment. Within these areas, construction activities and vehicle movements would contrast with the existing agricultural land use. However, their visual influence would diminish over greater distances, as the intervening landforms and vegetation would help integrate the works into the broader setting. Once operational, the Proposed Development (Towers N1-N11) would extend across open farmland and moorland, introducing prominent vertical elements into the otherwise tranquil, rural landscape. It would leave a perceptible infrastructure footprint on the landscape, which includes a widened wayleave and minor land-use alterations along permanent access tracks. While forestry felling would result in some fragmentation of tree cover, its impact would be limited in scale and mitigated by the presence of existing forestry plantations and the reinstatement of cleared vegetation in the area. While the immediate surroundings of the towers would experience a more noticeable transformation, broader areas would undergo a more subtle and gradual integration of these elements, ensuring a reduced perceptual and physical change over time. On balance, the key effects would be focused within a linear corridor across a short section of open farmland, within approximately 700-800 m of the alignment. Within this localised part of the LCT the impact magnitude would be **Medium** during construction and operation. Across the wider LCT, at greater distance from the Proposed Development, the impact magnitude would be **Low** or less during construction and operation.
Significance of Effect	Construction works and the installation of steel lattice towers would interrupt the existing skyline within a small part of this LCT, forming a new focal point. Vehicular movement and construction activities would be most prominent in the northernmost part of the Section A alignment, where the landscape consists of open farmland and moorland. The increased activity and presence of workers temporarily reduce the sense of remoteness. While construction would share similarities with periodic forest management, the scale and intensity of work would be increased. Localised changes would occur at tower positions, temporary access tracks, and compound areas. However, these effects would remain confined to a linear corridor of the Section A alignment. Once operational, human activity and vehicle movement would notably decrease. The steel lattice towers and permanent access tracks would form static components within the landscape, introducing a perceptible yet less dynamic change. The widened wayleave and permanent access tracks would alter land use but remain consistent with existing patterns of roads, forestry operations, and agricultural activities. The limited-scale felling would blend with existing forestry works. While the new infrastructure, particularly the steel lattice towers and associated linear elements, would be most noticeable in the immediate vicinity of the alignment, its influence would diminish across the broader landscape, becoming less prominent at greater distances.

Baseline Description	
	In summary, within 700-800 m of the Section A alignment the effects during construction and operation would be **Moderate Adverse** (significant). Across the wider 143 – Farmed Lowland Plain LCT, the effects would be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) or less during construction and operation.

Table 5: Effects on LCT 144 – Coastal Crofts & Small Farms

Baseline Description	
Description	A short section of the Proposed Development within Section A traverses the outer edge of the Coastal Crofts & Small Farms LCT, specifically at Badnagie, Borgue, and Ousdale. This landscape along the east coast of Sutherland is defined by a narrow coastal shelf, bordered inland by steep hills and seaward by sandy beaches or cliffs. North of Brora, the landscape consists of well-managed pastures and rough grasslands on a raised beach terrace, enclosed by rolling hills. Further into Caithness, the terrain opens up to include moorland, with pale stone buildings creating a distinctive rural character. Settlements such as Brora and Helmsdale are situated near river estuaries, where crofting fields follow a linear pattern, maintaining a strong connection with traditional land use. The area is also historically significant, featuring sites that reflect the long history of settlement.
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	The LCT intersects with a substantial portion of the Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA and the Loch Fleet, Brora & Glen Loth SLA
Key Characteristics	• The landscape is defined by a narrow, settled coastal fringe with varied topography, including coastal shelves, raised beaches, and pockets at river mouths; • Agricultural land consists of pastures and occasional arable fields, divided by post and wire fences. Woodland is limited along the exposed east and north Caithness coasts, but small woodlands are present in sheltered areas; • Settlements are primarily situated at river mouths along the east coast, often near larger farms and crofts, typically at bridging points and strath junctions. Croft houses and outbuildings are generally clustered on terraces or ridges, while a more dispersed settlement pattern is observed north of Brora. • The A9 and the railway line serve as major transport routes, shaping connectivity across the region while offering a complex visual composition of houses, fields, and the backdrop of hills and sea; and • The area contains numerous historic sites, including churches, castles, mills, and cemeteries, adding cultural depth to the landscape.
Landscape Value	The LCT is highly valued for its rural setting, extensive views, and strong historic continuity, as evidenced by numerous archaeological and historical sites, including cairns, brochs, castles, mills, standing stones, stone rows, churches, and cemeteries. Traditional crofting settlements, with their modest, small-scale architecture, illustrate a deep-rooted connection to both land and sea. Historic settlements such as Brora and Helmsdale preserve culturally significant land-use patterns, particularly the linear alignment of croft houses and crofting strip fields.

Baseline Description	
	Distinctive agricultural patterns, comprising managed pastures and occasional arable fields, are visually distinguished by subtle variations in crop colour rather than physical boundaries, enhancing the landscape's visual diversity. Although woodland cover is limited, it is strategically located in sheltered areas, complementing the more open and exposed coastal settings. The region's habitats, including rough pasture, heather moorland, and small-scale woodland, contribute to ecological variety and scenic richness. The eastern and northern coasts are defined by a strong sense of openness and exposure, accentuated by the pale hues of stone, buildings, and field walls, which reinforce the distinctive sense of place. Overall, the landscape character is shaped by the dynamic interplay of human settlements, land management, natural formations, and expansive coastal views, creating a setting that is varied, intricately detailed, and rich in both cultural and natural heritage. Landscape value is considered **High**.

Assessment of Effects	
Possible Landscape Receptors	**Potential Effects**
The landscape is defined by a narrow, settled coastal fringe with varied topography, including coastal shelves, raised beaches, and pockets at river mouths.	The Proposed Development would exert direct effects on the character and composition of the LCT, albeit confined to short sections at Badbagie, Borgue, and Ousdale. The new elements would intensify human intervention and increase the presence of infrastructure within the broader landscape.
The landscape is exposed to major roads and the railway, offering a complex visual composition of houses, fields, and the backdrop of hills and sea.	Construction works and the steel lattice towers could interrupt the existing skyline along the coastal fringe, creating a new focal point against the established backdrop. This alignment would be particularly evident in areas close to the A9 (T) at Borgue, where the existing OHL would be closely associated with the new infrastructure.
Agricultural land consists of pastures and occasional arable fields, divided by post and wire fences. Woodland is limited along the exposed east and north Caithness coasts, but small woodlands are present in sheltered areas.	Construction works and the steel lattice towers would affect a localised section of land cover following a linear corridor. There would be small-scale felling of forestry north of Ousdale to facilitate the construction process.
Settlements are primarily situated at river mouths along the east coast, often near larger farms and crofts, typically at bridging points and strath junctions. Croft houses and outbuildings are generally clustered on terraces or ridges, while a more dispersed settlement pattern is observed north of Brora.	There would be no direct change to the pattern and occurrence of crofts and buildings throughout the LCT. However, the new elements would increase the prevalence of energy transmission infrastructure across the surrounding landscape. The alignment would broadly align with the existing OHL, maintaining a consistent linear corridor that has already been refined.
The area contains numerous historic sites, including churches, castles, mills, and cemeteries, adding cultural depth to the landscape.	The alignment avoids direct effects on historic features, albeit would be visible from some archaeological or historic points of interest.

Baseline Description	
Landscape Sensitivity	The landscape features diverse landform, which includes narrow coastal fringes, raised beaches, enclosed coastal shelves, small river-mouth settlements, and dune-confined areas. The minimal human intervention, sparse settlement patterns, and dispersed farmsteads contribute to its largely unaltered character. Rich historical and cultural features, such as prehistoric and historic sites, traditional cottages, and small harbours, contribute to the landscape's cultural significance and heritage value. The enclosed nature of the setting is defined by surrounding hills, woodlands, rolling landforms, and dunes; any alteration would be distinctly noticeable within the intricate visual composition. The tranquil and remote rural character, reinforced by meandering rivers, traditional cottages, and grazing fields, creates a calm and secluded environment. Daily interactions with this setting by receptors indicate that any change could disrupt the deeply ingrained sense of place and scenic continuity. On balance, landscape sensitivity is assessed as **High**.
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	The construction works would be dispersed across geographically separate areas of the LCT. While the works would resemble routine landscape management practices along the coastal fringe, albeit more intensive in nature, their influence on the broader LCT would be limited. This limitation is due to the low-lying nature of the landscape, the enclosed coastal landforms, and the screening effect provided by tree cover. Once operational, the Proposed Development would extend directly across the LCT rather than following its length, thereby confining its influence within a short section of linear corridor. Towers would be positioned at Badnagie (Towers N78–N83), Borgue (Towers N95–N99), and Ousdale (Towers N125–N128). Their prominence within the broader landscape would be largely tempered by the presence of extensive woodland and forestry and elevated landforms that restrict outward views, and/or the presence of the existing 132 kV OHL, which helps to integrate the new infrastructure into the setting. Towers positioned along the upper slopes enclosing the LCT would appear against the skyline. Across wider LCT areas, the skylining effect of the Proposed Development would diminish with distance. No discernible views of Section A would be experienced from parts of the LCT that coincide with the Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA, ensuring minimal changes on the designated and protected landscape. On balance, the effects would be focused within a linear corridor north of Dunbeath, 2.2 km in length. The key effect would be focused within 100-200 m of the alignment to the northwest, and within 800-900 m to the southeast. Within this localised part of the LCT the impact magnitude would be **High** during construction and operation. Across the wider LCT, at greater distance from the Proposed Development, the impact magnitude would be **Low** or less during construction and operation.
Significance of Effect	Construction works and the installation of steel lattice towers would establish a new focal point within a small portion of this LCT, subtly altering the existing skyline. Vehicular movement and construction activities would be most evident in the more exposed sections of the Section A alignment, particularly around Badnagie and Borgue, where the landscape primarily comprises open grazing fields bordered by gently sloping moorland hills. The heightened activity and presence of workers would temporarily reduce the area's sense of remoteness and tranquillity. While construction activities would share similarities with periodic land management, the scale and intensity of the works would be greater. Localised changes would occur at tower positions, temporary access tracks, and compound areas, yet these effects would remain confined within a linear corridor, limiting their impact on the broader landscape. Once operational, human activity and vehicle movement would considerably decrease. The steel lattice towers and permanent access tracks would form static components within the landscape, subtly altering land use patterns but remain in line with existing roads, forestry operations, and agricultural activities. While the new

Baseline Description	
	infrastructure, particularly the steel lattice towers and associated linear elements, would be most prominent in the immediate vicinity of the alignment, its influence would gradually diminish across the broader landscape, becoming imperceptible at greater distances. In summary, within 800-900 m to the southeast and 100-200 m to the northwest of the Section A alignment, the effects during construction and operation would be **Major Adverse** (significant). Across the wider 144 – Coastal Crofts & Small Farms LCT, the effects would be **Moderate Adverse** (significant) or less during construction and operation. This includes the spatially separate LCT area at Ousdale.

Table 6: Effects on LCT 138 – Lone Mountains

Baseline Description	
Description	The Lone Mountains LCT is located approximately 3 km to the west of the Section A alignment at the closest point. The LCT is defined by steep, sweeping concave slopes, giving them a graceful and elegant appearance. Despite variations in height, even smaller peaks appear imposing due to their isolation and steep-sided profiles. Their rocky summits and sparse dwarf vegetation gradually transition into surrounding moorland, while broadleaf scrub woodland lines the many watercourses tumbling through steep glens. The landscape is largely uninhabited, enhancing a strong sense of remoteness, though some peaks attract hillwalkers during the summer. These summits provide expansive panoramic views, overlooking the vast, watery landscapes of the Flow Country.
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	The LCT is entirely within the Causeymire-Knockfin Flows WLA and Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA
Key Characteristics	• Individual mountains forming landmarks seen widely and at considerable distance across expansive lower-lying Sweeping Moorland and Flows and Cnocan – Caithness & Sutherland; • Mountains possess a distinctive profile, usually comprising steep, sweeping, concave slopes, making them look quite elegant and graceful; • Height of mountains varies, but even the smaller mountains can appear high because of their isolation, steep-sided profiles and when seen in juxtaposition with lower-lying Sweeping Moorland and Flows; • Peaks generally topped by exposed rock and sparse dwarf vegetation which gradually merges into the moorland surrounds; • Ribbons of broadleaf scrub woodland associated with the many water courses that tumble down steep glens; • Largely uninhabited, creating a distinct sense of remoteness, although some of its peaks attract significant numbers of hill walkers, especially during the summer months; and • Peaks offer extensive views of the surrounding area including the distinctive watery landscapes of the Flows.

Baseline Description	
Landscape Value	The Lone Mountains stand out for their steep slopes, prominent summits, and isolated forms, creating striking landmarks within the vast moorland of Caithness and Sutherland. Their visual prominence is heightened by their solitary presence, while rocky summits and sparse vegetation enhance their scenic and ecological value. Riparian broadleaf scrub woodlands along watercourses provide important biodiversity habitats, enriching the landscape's natural character. These mountains are popular among hillwalkers and climbers, offering expansive panoramic views and an immersive sense of remoteness and tranquillity. Their lack of habitation deepens the connection to nature, making them cherished destinations for recreation and scenic appreciation. Landscape value is considered **High**.

Assessment of Effects	
Possible Landscape Receptors	**Potential Effects**
Individual mountains act as prominent landmarks, visible from considerable distances across the expansive lower-lying Sweeping Moorland and Flows and Cnocan – Caithness & Sutherland. These peaks provide extensive views of the surrounding area, including the characteristic watery landscapes of the Flows.	Construction works and steel lattice towers could disrupt the existing skyline when viewed from the coastal fringe towards the prominent hills. While the Proposed Development would avoid directly encroaching on the LCT, it would increase the presence of energy transmission infrastructure when viewing the extensive peatland from the hilltops.
Mountains feature a distinctive profile with steep, sweeping, concave slopes, giving them an elegant and graceful appearance. Their height varies, but even smaller mountains can appear tall due to their isolated, steep-sided profiles and their contrast with the lower-lying Sweeping Moorland and Flows.	The Proposed Development would remain spatially separated from the mountains within the LCT, avoiding direct effects on their profile and wild character.
Largely uninhabited, creating a distinct sense of remoteness, although some of its peaks attract significant numbers of hill walkers, especially during the summer months.	The Proposed Development would increase the prevalence of energy generation infrastructure beyond the LCT as a distant addition, subtly influencing the sense of remoteness.
Landscape Sensitivity	The LCT is entirely within the Causeymire-Knockfin Flows WLA, Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA, and Flow Country WHS, featuring distinctive, isolated mountain profiles with steep, elegant slopes and prominent peaks that contrast sharply with the lower-lying moorlands. Largely uninhabited, the area is defined by sparse vegetation and minimal human intervention, reinforcing a sense of remoteness and isolation. Any new infrastructure or development would disrupt this character. With its prominent landscape profile and isolated positioning, these mountains serve as major focal points, visible across expansive distances. Their scenic quality is further enhanced by striking geological formations, dramatic silhouettes, and panoramic views, attracting visitors and hillwalkers. Their tranquil and remote nature heightens sensitivity to intrusion, meaning even minor alterations could significantly impact the wilderness perception and scenic integrity of the landscape. On balance, landscape sensitivity is assessed as **High**.
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	The Section A alignment would remain spatially separate from the LCT, avoiding direct interaction with its valued features and character. ZTV coverage would primarily be concentrated across the summits of the LCT, where views of the construction works in the distance would be possible from the south, southeast, and east. The associated construction activities, including forestry felling, would be a relatively distant addition within the broader landscape context. Once operational, the Proposed Development

Baseline Description	
	would introduce steel lattice towers, creating a new linear element within the setting. However, its influence would likely be imperceptible due to the distance and intervening landforms. The landform would predominantly restrict potential views from remote coastal areas, resulting in limited or no visibility of the summits from the coastal fringe. In summary, the Proposed Development would exert limited influence on the existing landscape character within the LCT. The Impact Magnitude would be **Negligible** during construction and operation.
Significance of Effect	As described above, there would be limited or no discernible effects on the existing characteristics of the LCT 138 – Lone Mountains. The overall effect would be **Minor** Adverse at most (not significant) during construction and operation.

Table 7: Effects on LCT 140 – Sandy Beaches and Dunes;

Baseline Description	
Description	The Sandy Beaches and Dunes LCT stretches along the east Sutherland coast, particularly between the Dornoch Firth and Brora, with additional areas in Caithness. The nearest distance from the LCT to the Section A alignment is approximately 2.5 km to the southeast. This landscape is defined by extensive sandy beaches, shingle ridges, dunes, and sandbanks within the Study Area for Section A. Settlement is sparse, primarily consisting of small crofting communities, while historic landmarks like Skibo Castle and Dunrobin Castle reflect the area's cultural significance. The coastline serves as a hub for recreation, with caravan parks and golf courses concentrated in more accessible locations. The landscape's distinct contrasts, with white and pink sands set against darker cliffs, contribute to its wild and remote character, fostering a strong sense of solitude and natural beauty.
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	The Loch Fleet, Brora & Glen Loth SLA overlaps with a substantial portion of the LCT north of Brora.
Key Characteristics	• Post-glacial raised shorelines and narrow sandy beaches north of Brora; • Recreation focuses on campsites and caravan parks near accessible coastal areas, along with golf courses; • Small crofting communities located near beaches • Historic sites include castles, gardens, prehistoric structures, and a strong sense of space and visibility along the beaches; and • The overall character of wildness, particularly pronounced on remote beaches.
Landscape Value	The LCT in the Study Area for Section A is distinguished by its high scenic quality, with white or pale pink sands contrasting against darker cliffs and moorland. Expansive beaches and sea views enhance its scenic appeal. The LCT is also a popular leisure destination, offering recreational opportunities such as golf courses, campsites,

	caravan parks, and car parks north of Brora. In contrast, the more remote coastal areas towards Crakaig Beach, with minimal development, limited accessibility, and exposure to natural scenery, foster a strong sense of wildness. Landscape value is considered **High**.
Assessment of Effects	
Possible Landscape Receptors	**Potential Effects**
Post-glacial raised shorelines and narrow sandy beaches north of Brora.	The Proposed Development would remain spatially separate from the LCT, ensuring no direct effect on its coastal components or defining characteristics. However, glimpses of the construction works or steel lattice towers may be possible from specific location along the shore, introducing a discrete element that subtly contrasts with the natural landscape backdrop.
Recreation focuses on campsites and caravan parks near accessible coastal areas, along with golf courses.	There would be no direct effect on the pattern and occurrence of these recreational components.
Small crofting communities located near beaches.	The Proposed Development would not encroach on the crofting communities, thereby exerting no direct influence on their pattern or occurrence.
The overall character of wildness, particularly pronounced on remote beaches.	The absence of ZTV presence across much of the area ensures that the landscape remains largely unaffected. The Proposed Development would unlikely affect the wilderness character of the LCT due to the intervening landforms, vegetation, and the distance to the alignment.
Landscape Sensitivity	The LCT is characterised by unobstructed shorelines, narrow sandy beaches, and contrasting dunes against darker cliffs, creating a visually striking landscape. The combination of long, open beaches and cliff backdrops enhances its scenic quality, while features like shingle ridges, dunes, and sandbanks add visual complexity. The coastline already serves as a hub for recreational activities, with facilities like caravan parks, campsites, and golf courses in more accessible areas. These beaches and dunes offer ample opportunities for outdoor recreation, such as walking and wildlife watching. Wildness is another key feature, especially in remote areas like Crakaig Beach, where coastlines remain largely undeveloped and inaccessible. The post-glacial shorelines and dunes, combined with limited human activity, create an intensely wild environment. This wildness and remoteness are highly sensitive to development, as any developments would undermine the sense of isolation that is so highly valued by both visitors and residents. On balance, landscape sensitivity is assessed as **High**.
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	ZTV coverage for Section A within the LCT is minimal, primarily focused on a localised area north of Brora. Due to the screening effect of intervening landform and the geographic separation distance, there would be no discernible change in landscape characteristics or components. In summary, the Proposed Development would exert very limited influence upon the existing landscape character within the LCT. The Impact Magnitude would be **Negligible** during construction and during operation.
Significance of Effect	As described above, there would be limited or no discernible effects anticipated on the existing characteristics of the LCT 140 – Sandy Beaches and Dunes. The overall effect would be **Negligible** at most (not significant) during construction and operation.

Table 8: Effects on LCT 141 – High Cliffs and Sheltered Bays

Baseline Description	
Description	The High Cliffs and Sheltered Bays LCTwithin the Study Area for Section A is located approximately 860 m to the southeast of the Section A alignment, near Badbea. This LCT features high cliffs and small inlets, creating a striking contrast along an intricate coastline marked by ravines, caves, and sea stacks. Moorland abuts the cliffs, with sparse vegetation covering the cliff tops and small ledges, while some cliffs are partially vegetated with bracken, gorse, and grasses. Tiny harbours are tucked between the cliffs and are accessible by narrow roads or stone steps, while settlements are perched above the cliffs.
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	A short section of the Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA coincides with the High Cliffs and Sheltered Bays LCT, specifically between Berriedale and Badbea.
Key Characteristics	• The east Caithness coast has harbours associated with settlements above the cliffs; • The landscape is characterised by open, sweeping moorland; • The cliff tops offer exhilarating views and a sense of vastness; and • The remote coastal stretches have minimal development, contributing to a natural, wild landscape character.
Landscape Value	The LCT is partially designated between Berriedale and Badbea, and features high cliffs, small inlets, ravines, caves, and sea stacks, creating a visually striking and dynamic coastline. This combination of rugged landforms evokes a sense of grandeur and beauty, making it an iconic landscape in the area. The contrasts between the cliffs and coastal features enhance the sense of depth. The remote coastal stretches, with minimal development, emphasise the wild and natural character of the area, offering a highly valued sense of isolation and tranquillity. Settlements perched above the cliffs provide exhilarating views and a sense of vastness, offering opportunities for visual engagement with the landscape. The sweeping moorland, dramatic cliffs, sheltered bays, and natural isolation create a landscape with a strong sense of place, making it a compelling destination for visitors who value natural beauty, tranquillity, and adventure. Landscape value is considered **High**.
Assessment of Effects	
Possible Landscape Receptors	**Potential Effects**
The east Caithness coast has harbours associated with settlements above the cliffs.	The Proposed Development would not encroach on the coastline or associated settlements, thereby exerting no direct influence on their pattern or occurrence.
The landscape is characterised by open, sweeping moorland; the cliff tops offer exhilarating views and a sense of vastness.	The Proposed Development would remain spatially separated from the LCT, ensuring no direct effect on its coastal components or defining characteristics. However, glimpses of the construction works or steel lattice

Baseline Description	
	towers may be possible from specific location along the shore, introducing a discrete element that subtly contrasts with the natural landscape backdrop.
The remote coastal stretches have minimal development, contributing to a natural, wild landscape character.	The absence of ZTV presence across much of the area ensures that the landscape remains largely unaffected. This outcome results from the combined influence of intervening landform and the distance to the Proposed Development.
Landscape Sensitivity	The LCT encompasses extensive geographic areas and exhibits scenic qualities based upon its combination of natural features, albeit is predominantly undesignated. The combination of rugged landforms and dramatic coastal features creates an iconic, visually dynamic landscape, enhancing depth and grandeur. The remote, minimally developed stretches emphasise the wild and natural character, valued for its sense of isolation and tranquillity. The exhilarating cliff-top views and immersive natural environment attract visitors seeking beauty, adventure, and serenity. The area's sweeping moorland, cliffs, and sheltered bays foster a strong sense of place, which could be compromised by any developments. On balance, landscape sensitivity is assessed as **High**.
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	ZTV coverage within the LCT for Section A is minimal, focusing on a localised area along the shore. The construction of steel lattice towers would be a distant addition to the wider landscape, with towers similar in design but taller than the existing 132 kV OHL. Due to the screening effect of tree cover, landform, and the geographic separation from the alignment, limited or no discernible change would result from the Proposed Development. In summary, the Proposed Development would exert limited influence upon the existing landscape character within the LCT. The Impact Magnitude would be **Negligible** during construction and during operation.
Significance of Effect	As described above, there would be no discernible effects on the existing characteristics of the 141 – High Cliffs and Sheltered Bays LCT. The overall effect would be **Minor** Adverse at most (not significant) during construction and operation.

Table 9: Effects on LCT 146 – Coastal Farmland and Woodlands

Baseline Description	
Description	This LCT is located 9.7 km to the south-west of the Section A alignment at the closest point, encompassing the low-lying agricultural landscape along the northern side of the Dornoch Firth via Loch Fleet.
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	The LCT does not coincide any designated and/or protected landscape within the Study Area for Section A.
Key Characteristics	• Rolling landform to the west within the Dornoch Firth where this landscape tapers and is constrained to the north by a steep-sided densely wooded ridge.

Baseline Description	
	• Gently undulating landform to the east of Skibo and Loch Fleet. • Flat or gently sloping plain north of Loch Fleet. • Well-wooded landscape with coniferous forests, often fringed by broadleaf trees, planted on steeper slopes, and capping small ridges and knolls on the shores of the Dornoch Firth in the west. • Policy plantings associated with estates with areas of parkland, tree avenues and ornamental plantings of broadleaves and tall conifers. Plantings of beech common along roadsides on northern lower slopes of Dornoch Firth, with a strong geometric framework of woodlands and mature trees contain large fields in this area. • Medium to large fields of fertile soils, with a high proportion of arable cropping in some areas. • Large castles, estate buildings and grand houses on the shores of the Dornoch Firth, as well as the visually prominent and architecturally distinct Dunrobin Castle on the coast north of Golspie, whose turrets and grand tree-lined avenue can be seen from the A9, as well as its lodges, gatehouses and buildings in and around Golspie associated with the Sutherland Estate. • Dispersed farms throughout the area and occasional clusters of crofts, often on the edge of woodland and associated with smaller pastures on higher slopes at the transition with the Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofts or close to the coast at Skelbo; and • High visibility from the east coast railway and coastal trunk roads, as well as the network of other roads which cross this area.
Landscape Value	The LCT encompasses areas of farmland, woodland, and policy plantings, which contribute towards its aesthetic qualities. The scenic qualities of the LCT are augmented by recognised elements of built heritage including historic houses / castles and gardens. Its combination of natural beauty and historical features increase the underlying landscape value of the LCT. Landscape value is considered **High**.

Assessment of Effects	
Possible Landscape Receptors	**Potential Effects**
Well-wooded landscape with coniferous forests, often fringed by broadleaf trees, planted on steeper slopes, and capping small ridges and knolls on the shores of the Dornoch Firth in the west.	Potential views would be restricted by tree cover, landform, and separation distance. The settlement pattern within the LCT would remain unchanged
Policy plantings associated with estates with areas of parkland, tree avenues and ornamental plantings of broadleaves and tall conifers. Plantings of beech common along roadsides on	There would be no direct effect on these landscape elements. Instead, areas of policy planting would restrict potential views of the Proposed Development

Baseline Description	
northern lower slopes of Dornoch Firth, with a strong geometric framework of woodlands and mature trees contain large fields in this area.	
Large castles, estate buildings and grand houses on the shores of the Dornoch Firth.	The Proposed Development would not directly affect the coastal estates, leaving their patterns and occurrence unchanged. Potential views of construction works and steel lattice towers from these assets would be largely restricted by intervening woodland, forestry, landform, and the separation distance.
Dispersed farms throughout the area and occasional clusters of crofts, often on the edge of woodland and associated with smaller pastures on higher slopes at the transition with the Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofts or close to the coast at Skelbo.	The Proposed Development would not encroach upon the coastline or the associated farmsteads and crofting township, thereby having no direct effect on their pattern or occurrence. Visibility from these properties towards the alignment would be heavily filtered and limited or no discernible view is expected.
High visibility from coastal trunk roads, as well as the network of other roads which cross this area.	The A9 and other routes that coincide with the LCT fall outside the ZTV.
Landscape Sensitivity	None of the LCT within the Study Area for Section A coincides with designated or protected landscapes. The susceptibility of this area to the Proposed Development is tempered by extensive woodland, forestry, and policy planting, which limit outward visibility in certain areas, with intermittent views of the North Sea. The settlement pattern predominantly comprises dispersed farmsteads and properties at Golspie, with minimal presence of large-scale infrastructure. In addition to its natural aesthetic qualities, this LCT also holds recreational value, supported by a network of Core Paths. On balance, landscape sensitivity is assessed as **Medium-High**.
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	ZTV coverage across parts of the LCT within the Study Area for Section A is minimal and focused upon a very localised area north of the Loch Fleet that coincides with Dunrobin Wood. There would be no discernible views of the Proposed Development from this enclosed area due to the screening by intervening tree cover in combination with the geographic separation from the alignment. Accordingly, there would be no discernible influence on landscape character. In summary, the Proposed Development would exert very limited influence upon the existing landscape character within the LCT. The Impact Magnitude would be **Negligible** during construction and during operation.
Significance of Effect	As described above, there would be no discernible effects on the existing characteristics of the 146 – Coastal Farmland and Woodlands LCT. The overall effect would be **Negligible** (not significant) during construction and operation.

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

VOLUME 5: APPENDIX 7.5: ANNEX 2– VISUAL RECEPTOR ASSESSMENT SECTION A

1. VISUAL RECEPTOR ASSESSMENT SECTION A

Table A.1: Residential

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
SA-01 (Refer to Figure 7.4-1)	Lanergill Farm Receptors of this location include residents and visitors of properties off the B870.	The principal views from Lanergill Farm are focused to the north, north-west, and north-east, with wider views across the open grazing field curtailed by landform at higher elevation and partially screened by farm outbuildings. To the south and west, views are reduced by foreground planting, with views over the plantation forestry (Moss of Toftingall) set against a backdrop of distant wind turbines, limiting wider views to the direct south. Based on the value of existing views from the properties and their susceptibility to the proposed development change, the sensitivity is assessed as High.	High	Views of the construction works and the introduction of the steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity, forming a significant portion of north-westerly and south-westerly views across the farmstead. To the south-west, the nearest tower (Tower N12) would be viewed at an oblique angle at approximately 230 m distance, partially visible through gaps in curtilage trees in the foreground. There would also be close-range views of the Proposed Development in views to the west and north-west, with Tower N11 being the closest at approximately 380 m distance. In wider views to the south, beyond Moss of Toftingall (at distances of up to	230 m	High	High	**Major Adverse** (significant)	**Major Adverse** (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
				730 m), the Proposed Development would be visible predominantly against the background sky. The sightline would run nearly parallel to the proposed alignment as it extends southward, where this alignment visually converges with distant wind turbines. Due to the broadleaved nature of the surrounding tree cover, there would be a reduction in its filtering effect during the winter months.					
SA-02 (Refer to Figure 7.4-1)	Lydias House, Toftingall Farm Residents and visitors of Lydias House, a modern single-storey farmhouse.	The main orientation of views is to the south-west, south, and south-east towards Moss of Toftingall, where open views are obtained, with wind turbines visible on the horizon. However, plantation forestry at Moss of Toftingall restricts wider views in these directions. To the north and north-west, views are contained	High	Views of the construction works and the introduction of the steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity to the south and south-east, towards Moss of Toftingall. Tower N12, the closest structure, would be viewed at an oblique angle at approximately 330 m to the south-east, contrasting with	330 m	High	High	**Major Adverse** (significant)	**Major Adverse** (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
		by landform, elevated plantation forestry, and scattered trees, while visibility to the east is limited by plantation forestry in the immediate foreground. Based on the value of existing views from the properties and their susceptibility to the proposed development change, the sensitivity is assessed as High		the surrounding open fields and background sky. While forestry to the east provides strong screening, the open fields in the foreground leave much of the view exposed. Due to the coniferous nature of the surrounding tree cover, there would be minimal reduction in its filtering effect during the winter months.					
SA-03 (Refer to Figure 7.4-1)	Farmstead at Halsary Residents and visitors of a farmstead at Halsary.	The main orientation of views is to the south-east over the Flow Country, with trees on the curtilage in the foreground and to both sides of the property, providing a degree of screening. To the south-west, west, and north-west, wind turbines, power lines, and pylons introduce a strong infrastructure presence amidst the surrounding tree cover. In contrast, views to the east and south	High	Views of the construction works and the introduction of the steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity to the north-east, east, and south-east, partially filtered by intervening trees. In these directions, the Proposed Development would be visible at close range. Tower N29 is the closest and would be directly viewed at approximately 256 m distance.	256 m	High	High	**Major Adverse** (significant)	**Major Adverse** (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
		encompass expansive peatland and rolling hills, with minimal infrastructure elements present into the broader landscape. Based on the value of existing views from the property and susceptibility to proposed development change the sensitivity of the receptor is adjudged to be High.		In wider views to the south, beyond Halsary (at distances of up to 3.3 km), the Proposed Development, specifically Towers N30 to N37, would be partially visible against the background sky. Due to the broadleaved nature of curtilage tree cover, there would be a reduction in the filtering effects of tree cover in winter months.					
SA-04 Refer to Figure 7.4-1	Farmsteads and cottages along the A9(T) Residents and visitors to properties off the A9 (Refer to Viewpoint 7-12 A9 (Loch Rangag))	Views from farmsteads and cottages along the A9 (T) are primarily oriented towards the west across the open peatlands, and distant hills. Partially screened views of a distant wind farm are available to the north-west, while transmission infrastructure across the moorland hills to the east of the road, running in a north–south direction, is visible at approximately 90–	High	There would be views of the Proposed Development at close range to the north-east, east, and south-east, with towers partially visible against the background landscape. Towers N40–N46 and N56–N58 would be visible in various degree from properties in the area based on the proximity and viewing angle. Achavanich Farm, located approximately 198 m from	198 m	Medium	Medium	**Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant)	**Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
		250 m from the properties, extending into the distance. Views toward the eastern hills are subject to varying degrees of filtering by curtilage trees, whereas most properties retain open, uninterrupted views to the north-west, west, and south-west. Based on the value of existing views from the property and susceptibility to proposed development change the sensitivity of the receptor is adjudged to be High.		Tower N46, and Corrie View, approximately 280 m from Tower N57, would experience the nearest and most direct views of the Proposed Development. Views toward the peatland landscapes to the west of the A9 (T) remain largely undisturbed, with the sense of remoteness and the uniformity of the expansive sky preserved. Due to the broadleaved nature of curtilage tree cover, there would be a reduction in the filtering effects in winter months; the overall visibility would be more apparent in winter.					
SA-05 (Refer to Figure 7.4-1)	Single-storey cottage (Braehungie) and mobile home (Mountain View) west of the A9 (T) Residents and visitors associated with a single-	Properties in this location benefit from wide, panoramic westerly views, with unobstructed sightlines toward designated and protected landscapes. Views to the south-east, east, and north-east are more contained due to	High	Views of the construction works and the introduction of the steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity. At Braehungie, views to the north and east would be partially screened by intervening landform and	178 m	High	High	**Major Adverse** (significant)	**Major Adverse** (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
	storey cottage (Braehungie) and a static caravan (Mountain View), situated to the west of the A9 (T).	rising terrain, though the upper sections of existing transmission infrastructure are intermittently visible against the background sky. Based on the value of existing views from the property and susceptibility to proposed development change the sensitivity of the receptor is adjudged to be High.		trees, while wide, open views remain to the north-west, west, and south-west. Filtered views would become less effective in winter due to the broadleaved nature of surrounding tree cover. At Mountain View, easterly views would be more contained by elevated ground; however, views to the south and south-west would be more exposed, increasing visibility of the Proposed Development. Towers N61 and N62, located approximately 213 m from Braehungie and 178 m from Mountain View respectively, would appear prominent in the foreground, set against a combination of background landscape and open sky.					
SA-06 (Refer to Figure 7.4-1)	Crofting township at Smerral Residents and visitors to	The township is located within Houstry Valley, which is enclosed by higher	High	Along ridgelines and elevated areas, construction works, and the introduction of steel lattice towers would be visible	334 m	Medium - Low (based on proximity and proportion of the view	Medium - Low (based on proximity and proportion of the view	**Moderate Adverse** (significant) for properties in south of	**Moderate Adverse** (significant) for properties in south of township. **Major-Moderate Adverse**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
	properties at Smerral.	ground to the east and west. Open and expansive views are available from parts of the settlement situated on elevated ground, particularly in the north-east, south-west, and south-east, overlooking the strath and extending across rolling fields and distant hills toward the horizon. In other areas, background hills enclose the views, limiting the visibility of the broader landscape setting. Infrastructure elements, including wind turbines, power lines, and agricultural outbuildings, are primarily visible in the north-west, west, and south-west directions. While most properties experience minimal visual obstruction, some views from lower-lying parts of the settlement are partially contained by a combination		where they contrast with the natural landform and background sky. Visibility of the Proposed Development would be most pronounced near the farmstead north of Boultach, located approximately 334 m from Tower N69. Wider views toward Towers N61 to N71 would be available from properties located at higher elevations in the north-eastern part of the settlement, including Achnacloich, Boultach, Homeland, and Boultach Farm, at distances ranging from approximately 530 m to 2.3 km. In the south-eastern and south-western parts of the settlement, the Proposed Development would generally be perceptible in the distance, viewed against the backdrop of the landscape and sky. With increasing distance, the		occupied) Medium for properties in north of township, reducing to low for southern properties.	occupied) Medium for properties in north of township, reducing to low for southern properties.	township. **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) for properties at the northern end of Smerral (based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied)	(significant) for properties at the northern end of Smerral (based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
		of buildings, landforms, and tree cover. Based on the value of existing views from the property and susceptibility to proposed development change, the sensitivity of the receptor is adjudged to be High.		towers would blend more into the skyline, although they would remain distinguishable within the landscape where direct sightlines are obtained. Due to the absence of surrounding tree cover, there would be no seasonal reduction in visibility, and filtering effects would remain limited throughout the year.					
SA-07 (Refer to Figure 7.4-1)	Scattered properties at Badnagie Residents and visitors to properties at Badnagie.	Isolated dwellings and farm structures are scattered throughout the area. Westerly and north-westerly views from these properties are generally open and expansive, broadly channelled along the Dunbeath Strath toward a vast, rural landscape of rolling hills, open moorland, and pastoral fields. Views to the east and north-east are partially contained by elevated landforms, notably the Hill	High	Views of the construction works and the introduction of steel lattice towers would result in varying degrees of visual change. Views channelled along the strath would generally be wide and open, with Towers N77–N84 visible at varying distances—some partially screened by intervening tree cover or landform. In contrast, views to the east and north-east would be more contained by elevated hill slopes.	726 m	Negligible-Low / Medium-High (based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied)	Negligible-Low / Medium-High (based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied)	**Moderate to Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant) / **Major to Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) (based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied)	**Moderate to Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant) / **Major to Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) (based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
		of Lychrobbie and Cnoc Breac. Rolling terrain and intervening vegetation provide varying degrees of filtering across these properties, with dense shrubs and occasional tree clusters contributing to localised screening. Based on the value of existing views from the property and susceptibility to proposed development change, the sensitivity of the receptor is adjudged to be High.		The overall visual contrast would be most pronounced against the background sky when viewed from lower elevations within 1 km of the Proposed Development, particularly in areas where vegetation is sparse, and the expansive sky dominates the foreground. Ballentink, located approximately 726 m from Tower N80, would be the closest property to the Proposed Development, with direct visibility of the infrastructure. Due to the broadleaved nature of the surrounding vegetation, seasonal variation would have minimal effect, and visibility is expected to remain relatively consistent throughout the year.					
SA-08 (Refer to Figure 7.4-3)	Achorn House Residents and visitors to Achorn House.	The main orientation of views is to the south-east, towards Balnabruich, with plantation forestry in the foreground at	High	Views of the construction works and the introduction of steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity to the south-west,	365 m	High	High	**Major Adverse** (significant)	**Major Adverse** (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
		approximately 250 m distance. The property is positioned on elevated ground overlooking Dunbeath Strath, complemented by riparian tree belts, moorland expanses, and farmland visible in the north and north-east, offering a broad panoramic view. Views to the south are more contained by moorland hills, which limit wider visibility across the broader landscape. There are also partially screened views of an isolated wind farm to the north, contrasting with expansive areas of wilderness. Based on the value of existing views from the property and its susceptibility to change resulting from the Proposed Development, the sensitivity of the receptor is assessed as High.		west, and north-west, extending toward the horizon in a north-westerly direction with minimal filtering. This would be particularly noticeable where the towers cross the background landscape in views to the west and south-west. Tower N87 is the closest to the property and would be visible to the north-west at an oblique angle, approximately 365 m away. In wider views to the north-west, beyond Dunbeath Water and extending toward Braehungie at distances of up to 5.7 km, the Proposed Development (Towers N71–N86) would remain visible, predominantly against the moorland and background sky. However, with increasing distance and the moorland backdrop, the towers are expected to					

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
				appear more recessive within the landscape. From elevated ground to the south, south-east, and south-west, views of the Proposed Development (Towers N87–N94) would be limited to approximately 2.5 km due to intervening landform. In the absence of intervening vegetation, there would be no seasonal reduction in visibility, and filtering effects would remain minimal throughout the year.					
SA-09 (Refer to Figure 7.4-3)	Borgue: Residents and visitors to properties at Borgue.	The main orientation of views from farmsteads and cottages along the A9 is eastward, towards the north-east, east, and south-east, over the North Sea. These properties benefit from expansive, unobstructed sea views, framed by rising moorland hills to the north (Clais-caim Hill), west (Creagan Reamhar), and south-west	High	Views of the construction works and the introduction of steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity from elevated ground on north-west, west, and south-west-facing properties, where the infrastructure would be visible against the background landscape and sky.	431 m	Low-Medium	Low-Medium	**Major to Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant)	**Major to Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
		(Beinn nan Coireag). Coastal crofting fields gently slope toward the sea along the coastal fringe, creating a well-defined foreground and limiting wider views inland. An existing OHL is visible across the elevated ground, with the nearest point of proximity to the A9 (T) located west of Borgue, approximately 50 m south-east of Burnside. Based on the value of existing views from these properties and their susceptibility to change resulting from the Proposed Development, the sensitivity of the receptor is assessed as High.		Tower N98 is the closest to Redlesburn House and would be viewed at an oblique angle at a distance of approximately 431 m. In contrast, views to the north-east, east, and south-east would remain unaffected, preserving the openness and integrity of the key landscape character in those directions. In wider views to the south-west, beyond Beinn nan Coireag (at distances of up to 2.7 km), the Proposed Development would be predominantly visible against the background sky. Similarly, in views to the west and north-west, up to 3 km in distance, the infrastructure would be partially visible before the alignment ascends over Clais-caim Hill. Seasonal changes in vegetation would provide only limited screening. Leaf-					

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
				on conditions in spring and summer may obscure lower sections of the infrastructure, while leaf-off conditions in autumn and winter would increase visibility from various angles.					
SA-10 (Refer to Figure 7.4-3)	Badrinsary (Rose Cottage and an unnamed house) Residents and visitors to properties at Badrinsary.	At Badrinsary, the front of the properties faces south-west, overlooking Berriedale Strath. Views to the north-west, north, and north-east are often screened by tree belts, woodland, and the rolling terrain at the foothills of Beinn nan Coireag, while preserving a largely undisturbed foreground. Open sea views are available from certain angles to the south-east and east, extending over farmland toward the coastal shelf. Based on the value of existing views from these properties and their susceptibility to change	High	Views of the construction works and the introduction of steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity to the north-west, north, and north-east. These views would be partially screened by intervening landform and woodland, with the towers generally appearing against the background landscape and sky. Oblique views of the Proposed Development would be available in these directions, with Tower N106, the closest structure, located approximately 343 m away and intermittently visible through gaps in the trees.	343 m	Low	Low	**Moderate Adverse** (significant)	**Moderate Adverse** (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
		resulting from the Proposed Development, the sensitivity of the receptor is collectively assessed as High.		Key sea views to the south-east and east, extending over farmland toward the coastal shelf, would remain unaffected, with the expansive sky continuing to dominate the outlook in these directions. In wider views to the south-west, beyond Berriedale Strath (up to approximately 4.6 km), the Proposed Development would be partially visible along the shoreline, appearing primarily against the sky. Seasonal vegetation would offer a degree of screening during spring and summer; however, visibility is expected to increase in autumn and winter due to the loss of foliage.					
SA-11 (Refer to Figure 7.4-3)	Langwell Gardens, Langwell Kennels, and Keepers House: Residents and visitors to Langwell	Langwell Gardens and nearby properties have enclosed and filtered views, particularly to the south-west, where the outlook over Berriedale Strath is defined by rolling hills and	High	Views from Langwell Gardens, Langwell Kennels, and Keepers House would experience visual changes due to the construction works and the introduction of steel lattice	386 m	Low	Low	**Moderate Adverse** (significant)	**Moderate Adverse** (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
	Gardens and nearby cottages. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-20)	dense woodland. While occasional openings provide glimpses of the broader landscape, channelled by the strath, overall visibility is limited by intervening landform and vegetation. There is potential for very limited sea views to the east and north-east, though these are heavily screened by terrain variation and curtilage vegetation. These features shape visual boundaries and result in narrow, filtered sightlines toward distant hill slopes. Based on the value of existing views from these properties and their susceptibility to change from the Proposed Development, the sensitivity of the receptor is collectively assessed as High.		towers at close proximity. These properties are likely to undergo changes in their north- and north-west-facing views, similar to those observed at nearby Badrinsary. However, visibility would be heavily filtered by intervening landform and tree cover, owing to their proximity to the alignment. At distances ranging from approximately 386 to 520 m from Langwell Gardens and nearby properties, close-range views of tower tops (Towers N113–N114) would be intermittently visible through gaps in the trees. In more distant views, the Proposed Development would be partially visible to the west and south-west, following the inland course of the strath and appearing against both the background landscape and sky. The lower sections of the towers would often be					

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
				obscured by vegetation and rolling hills, particularly around Creagan Cosach and Cadha Fhionn. With increasing distance, infrastructure elements would appear more recessive within the landscape, while views towards the sea would remain unaffected, maintaining their characteristic open skyline. Seasonal vegetation would provide effective screening during spring and summer; however, as foliage diminishes in autumn and winter, visibility around these properties would increase.					
SA-12 (Refer to Figure 7.4-3)	The Bungalow, Ousdale, and Keepers Cottage Residents and visitors to properties west of Badbea.	Views from the cottages and farmhouses in this area feature a rural landscape of rolling hills, open fields, and scattered tree clusters. Ousdale Farm and The Bungalow benefit from more expansive, panoramic	High	There would be oblique views of the construction works and the introduction of steel lattice towers to the north-west, west, and south-west. Some views would be experienced at close proximity, partially	187 m	Low	Low	**Moderate Adverse** (significant)	**Moderate Adverse** (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
		views, while Keepers Cottage has a more enclosed outlook due to surrounding terrain and vegetation. The front elevations of The Bungalow and Ousdale Farm face north and south, overlooking gently sloping grazing fields. Keepers Cottage is situated at the southern foothills of Braigh na h-Eaglaise, with views in all directions heavily contained by forested hills at higher elevations. Existing overhead power lines are visible following the rural track connecting the properties or crossing distant hills to the east. Based on the value of existing views from these properties and their susceptibility to change from the Proposed Development, the sensitivity of the receptor is assessed as High.		filtered by intervening forestry plantations. The towers, particularly the upper sections (Towers N124–N129), and tall construction equipment would be visible against the backdrop of the isolated, rounded moorland hill of Braigh na h-Eaglaise and the skyline. Keepers Cottage, located approximately 187 m from Tower N127, would experience the closest and most direct views. In wider views to the west and north-west, beyond the forestry and following the contours of Cnoc Coir'a'Phuill (at distances of up to 2.5 km), the Proposed Development would remain partially visible, predominantly set against the background sky. In contrast, views to the north-east would be extremely limited due to the dense					

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
				and continuous tree cover surrounding the area.					
SA-13 (Refer to Figure 7.4-3)	Marrel and scattered cottages along the A897 Residents and visitors to properties along the A897. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-25 A897 (Caen), Viewpoint 7-26 Marrel and Viewpoint 7-27 A897 (East of Kilphedir))	The property is situated entirely within the valley, bordered by mature woodland and scattered trees on the surrounding hill slopes, which predominantly extends to the north-west, north-east, and south-west from the A897. The primary orientation of views from these properties is to the north-west and south-east, overlooking the Strath of Kildonan, with woodland and riparian forest forming the immediate foreground. Open and expansive views are intermittently available from parts of the settlement located on higher ground; however, these are enclosed by the background hills of Eldrable Hill and Caen Hill, which	High	Properties at Marrel, along the A897, and on the surrounding hill slopes would experience varying degrees of visibility of the Proposed Development, influenced by intervening topography and vegetation cover. Within the Strath of Kildonan, construction works and steel lattice towers would generally be screened by a combination of woodland and landform. However, more open oblique views may be available from localised parts of the elevated slopes north of Creag Marail, particularly where tree cover is sparse. While views of the towers and overhead lines would be largely contained within	470 m	Medium (based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied)	Medium-Low (based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied)	**Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) (based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied)	**Major-Moderate to Moderate Adverse** (significant) (based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
		channel sightlines along the River Helmsdale. Intervening landform and vegetation filter much of the visibility, limiting broader views across the surrounding landscape. Based on the value of existing views from the property and its susceptibility to change resulting from the Proposed Development, the sensitivity of the receptor is assessed as High.		the strath, limiting their extent in the wider landscape, their presence may appear more noticeable in close-range views where direct sightlines exist. Towers N147–N150 would be visible from several nearby properties, with the most pronounced views occurring at the closest locations. Craig Brae, located near the River Helmsdale to the south-east of the alignment, lies approximately 470 m away, while Saluscraggie, east of Kilphedir, is situated around 1.58 km from the alignment.					

Table A.2: Outdoor Locations

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
OA-01 (Refer to Figure 7.4-3)	**Dunbeath Castle** Dunbeath Castle is a prominent coastal estate situated on a cliffside overlooking the North Sea. Receptors at the castle are primarily visitors and tourists.	The estate fronts north-west, with a narrow access road and mature trees forming a natural buffer that adds a sense of enclosure. Views toward the inland north-west, north, and west are heavily filtered by tree cover, while open sea views to the east and south-east remain unobstructed. Receptors at this location are of **High** sensitivity, given the context of receptor activity adjudged against susceptibility.	**High**	No visibility of the Proposed Development is predicted, as natural screening limits direct sightlines.	2.75 km	None	None	None	None
OA-2 (Refer to Figure 7.4-3)	**Hill walk - Scaraben:** Receptors consist primarily of hill walkers to the peak of Scaraben, which offers expansive views across the Flow Country, coastal hills, and the North Sea. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-17 East Scaraben)	Views from Scaraben are expansive in every direction, extending across Caithness and Sutherland. The hill summit offers a blend of vast, open coastal shelf, rolling plains, isolated summits (Morven and Maiden Pap), and extensive peatlands, all characterised by minimal human intervention. The openness and scale of the landscape contribute to a strong sense of remoteness and natural	**Medium**	Construction works and the introduction of steel lattice towers (Towers N94–N146) would be obliquely visible from the north-east, east, and south-east, appearing on the lower hilltops as distant elements and closely associated with other existing infrastructure. These towers would be positioned at distances ranging from 4.8 km to 9 km, predominantly set against a	4.6 km	**Low**	**Low**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant)	**Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
		beauty, with uninterrupted vistas enhancing the perception of wilderness. Considering the value of existing panoramic views from this outdoor location and the susceptibility to visual change resulting from the Proposed Development, the sensitivity of the receptor is assessed as **High.**		backdrop of vast seascape and moorland. The nearest tower (Tower N108) would be approximately 4.8 km from the peak of Scaraben. While structural details may be identifiable at closer distances, they would become less perceptible when viewed from further away. Given the absence of intervening vegetation, the overall number of visible towers would be relatively high. As a result, seasonal variation in filtering effects would be limited across the lower moorland expanses, maintaining consistent visibility throughout the year.					
OA-3 (Refer to Figure 7.4-3)	**Berriedale Braes Viewpoint** Receptors at the Berriedale Braes Viewpoint are primarily visitors and tourists.	The Berriedale Braes Viewpoint provides an elevated, unobstructed vantage point, offering open views across the hills on the coastal fringe, Berriedale Water and Scaraben to the north-west, and expansive views across the North Sea to the east.	**Medium-High**	Construction works and the introduction of steel lattice towers would be visible in views to the north-west to the fore of Scaraben. Filtered views of the towers would be possible in views to the south-west where direct sightlines exist, albeit occupying only a minor portion of the view. Views across	1.4 km	**Medium**	**Medium**	**Moderate Adverse** (significant)	**Moderate Adverse** (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
	(Refer to Viewpoint 7-18 A9 (T) Berriedale Braes)	The A9 winds through the foreground, partially filtered by intervening landforms and trees. Pylons and overhead lines are intermittently visible across the hill slopes and within the deep glen. Receptors at this location are of **High** sensitivity, given the context of receptor activity adjudged against susceptibility.		the North Sea would be unaffected by the Proposed Development. Dense woodland and landform would screen much of the Proposed Development. Towers N106–N110 would appear in mid-range views (approximately 1.4 km from Tower N109 at the closest point). Seasonal variation would influence visibility, with reduced screening in winter due to leaf loss, resulting in slightly increased visibility from broadleaf trees within the mixed forested landscape.					
OA-4 (Refer to Figure 7.4-3)	**Badbea Historic Clearance Village:** Receptors consist primarily of visitors and tourists to the Badbea Historic Clearance Village. Badbea is a historic clearance village located on the east coast of Caithness. The village was built on steep, exposed	Views from Badbea Historic Clearance Village are predominantly oriented to the south and south-east, providing uninterrupted views across the North Sea while the location experiences limited visibility towards inland areas. The historic site is situated on an exposed cliff, bordered by raised moorland hills that extend to the south-west and **north-east**.	**Medium**	Views of the construction works and the introduction of steel lattice towers from Badbea Historic Clearance Village and the associated car park area would be fully obscured due to intervening landform and dense forestry plantations. However, visitors would experience views of the works from the access track.	895 m	**Medium-Low** (based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied) None from the village remains	**Medium-Low** (based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied) None from the village remains	**None** from village remains **Moderate-Minor** Adverse (not significant) from access track	**None** from village remains **Moderate-Minor** (not significant) from access track

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
	cliffs off the A9(T), south of Berriedale. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-21 A9 (T) Badbea Historical Village and Viewpoint 7-22 Badbea))	The access track connecting Badbea to the carpark accessed from the A9(T) follows a gently rising landform, gradually opening up more expansive views across the moorland to the south-west, west, and north-west. Further south along the track, views become more contained by roadside forestry plantations near the car park, particularly in the north-facing direction. These plantations effectively channel sightlines along the transport route in a west-east direction. An existing overhead OHL runs parallel to the carriageway, positioned to the north and south of the car park, with the closest pylon approximately 140 m to the north-east. Overall, the landscape composition naturally directs views toward the open sea when walking along the path. While occasional distractions from traffic and existing transmission infrastructure may intermittently occur, inland		From the track, filtered views of the Proposed Development (Towers N116–N135) would be possible at varying angles to the north and north-west. In these instances, the towers would appear against a combination of the background sky and the landscape.					

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
		visibility remains limited due to the elevated moorland and dense forestry near the road. Receptors at this location are considered to have **Medium** sensitivity, based on the context of receptor activity evaluated against susceptibility.							
OA-5 (Refer to Figure 7.4-3)	**Hill walk location at Creag Thoraraidh:** Creag Thoraraidh is a hillwalking destination near Berriedale and Dunbeath, close to the A9. Receptors consist of hill walkers. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-24 Creag Thoraraidh	The summit of Creag Thoraraidh offers expansive views across the surrounding landscape and the North Sea to the east. In the foreground, wooden poles and power lines are predominantly positioned towards the north-west, north, and **north-east**, introducing a slight visual contrast. Despite this infrastructure, the remote terrain remains largely unspoiled, highlighting open moorland and isolated mountains, including Morven and Maiden Pap, as key focal points. In the distance to the south and south-east towards the sea, clusters of offshore wind farms are discernible on the horizon.	**High**	Views of the construction works and the introduction of steel lattice towers (Towers N94–N171) would be visible intermittently and obliquely to the south-west, west, north-west, and north at distances ranging from 517 m to 12.9 km. The towers would appear on the lower hillsides to the fore of views towards the interior landscapes. Views to the east across the North Sea and to the south would be unaffected. In close-range views, some of the towers would be partially obscured by landforms at their lower sections. The nearest tower (Tower N139) would be approximately 517 m from the peak of Creag Thoraraidh.	517 m	**Medium**	**Medium**	**Moderate Adverse** (significant)	**Moderate Adverse** (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
		Views from this location are expansive, capturing the Caithness region's wide, open coastal shelf, rolling plains, isolated summits, and extensive peat bogs, all characterised by minimal human intervention. The openness and scale of the landscape create a strong sense of remoteness and natural beauty, with uninterrupted vistas reinforcing the perception of wilderness. Receptors at this location are assessed to have **High** sensitivity, considering the context of receptor activity and the susceptibility to visual change introduced by the Proposed Development.		Due to the absence of intervening vegetation, the number of visible towers would be relatively high. Consequently, seasonal variation in filtering effects would be minimal across the lower moorland expanses, maintaining consistent visibility throughout the year.					
OA-6 (Refer to Figure 7.4-3)	**Emigrants Memorial, Helmsdale:** Receptors consist primarily of visitors and tourists to the Helmsdale Emigrants Memorial. The memorial is located in Couper Park above	The Helmsdale Emigrants Memorial is situated on elevated ground above the River Helmsdale, offering open views in all directions. To the north-west, views extend up the narrow river valley of Strath Ullie/Strath Kildonan. overlooked by the prominent backdrop of	**High**	The construction works and steel lattice towers would introduce new infrastructure elements into inland views to the north-west where the Proposed Development descends Caen Hill. These features would be partially noticeable from the memorial, particularly where their silhouettes contrast with the	2.2 km	**Low**	**Low**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant)	**Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
	the River Helmsdale. positioned in a prominent location, overlooking the village of Helmsdale, the mouth of the Strath of Kildonan, and the North Sea. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-28 Helmsdale)	Creag Marail. To the north-east, views extend across the town, and to the east across the North Sea. Receptors at this location are of **High** sensitivity, given the context of receptor activity adjudged against susceptibility.		background sky, albeit limited to a short section of the alignment. The overall visibility would be substantially restricted due to the distance (approximately 2.2 km from the nearest Tower N152) in combination with intervening vegetation and landforms. Views across the North Sea would be unaffected.					

Table A.3: Transport Routes

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
RA-01-1 (Refer to Figure 7.4-2)	**A9 (T)** Receptors include travellers using the A9 between Achalone and Spittal. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-5 A9 (Achalone))	This section of A9 (T) is located within a patchwork of open fields with low lying vegetation, interspersed by blocks of woodland. Views to the south-west, west, and north-west extend across open fields and rolling hills.	**Low-Medium**	The Proposed Development would be located to the east of the road and viewed within an open pastoral landscape, before been seen to extend south within the woodland plantations surrounding Loch Toftingall. During construction, users would perceive machinery and temporary structures at close-range (600–750 m) of Towers N1–N2, before the alignment becomes partially obscured by forestry and terrain near Spittal. Once operational, steel lattice towers and overhead lines would be prominent within close-range views, blending into the skyline at mid-range. This change would alter the landscape from rural to one with a more structured industrial character.	630 m	**Low**	**Low**	**Minor Adverse** (not significant)	**Minor Adverse** (not significant)
RA-01-2 (Refer to Figure 7.4-2)	**A9 (T)** Receptors include travellers using the A9 between Spittal and Mybster.	Views extend across an open landscape interspersed with wind turbines and overhead lines, contrasting with the rural surroundings and expansive sky. Forestry plantations and roadside	**Low**	Road users along this section would experience filtered, intermittent views of the Proposed Development. Intervening forestry and spatial separation would obscure	2 km	**Negligible**	**Negligible**	**Minor Adverse** (not significant)	**Minor Adverse** (not significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
		tree lines provide intermittent screening, resulting in the turbines and power lines to appear and disappear intermittently along the route. Expansive peatlands and rolling hills dominate the south-western horizon.		construction activity between Spittal and Mybster. The section of the route would be 2 km from the Proposed Development (Tower N11) at the closest point, consequently, the towers recede into the distance.					
RA-01-3 (Refer to Figure 7.4-2)	**A9(T)** Receptors include travellers using the A9 between Mybster and South of Moss of Toftingall. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-10 A9 (T) Lay-by (Bad a Cheo))	Travellers will experience expansive views of largely open landscapes, forestry, peatlands, and distant hills, reinforcing a sense of travel on the edge of a less accessible landscape. Turbines and power lines are prominent features in the foreground to the north, partially obscured by terrain and tree cover. South-eastern views are more enclosed by forestry, rough grass, and heather moorland.	**Negligible-Low**	As the route moves south, views open, revealing existing infrastructure and the alignment of the Proposed Development. During construction, the existing industrial presence would be heightened by machinery and vehicle activity. South of the Moss of Toftingall, close-range views—particularly near Tower N36, located less than 145 m from the A9—would make the structures a prominent visual feature. Once operational, towers would be visible in views to the north-east, east, and south-east, especially along the western edge of the Moss of Toftingall. although the towers are semi-transparent and muted colours, they would be prominent across much of this section.	145 m	**Low-Medium**	**Low-Medium**	**Minor Adverse** (not significant)	**Minor Adverse** (not significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
RA-01-4 (Refer to Figure 7.4-1)	**A9 (T)** Receptors include travellers using the A9 between South of Moss of Toftingall and Rumster. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-12 A9 (Loch Rangag))	Users travelling this section of the A9(T) experience open, expansive views to the west across the expansive peatland landscapes of the Flow Country. Wind turbines are visible in views to the north-west however they do not dominate the broad panoramic views. To the east, existing OHL's follow the profile of the moorland hills largely running parallel to the road.	**Low-Medium**	During construction, large infrastructure elements would be introduced along elevated moorland hill slopes parallel to existing OHL's. Crossing low-lying fields at Braehungie. The proposed Development would be viewed in combination with the wind turbines. Cranes, machinery, and temporary structures would expand the infrastructure footprint. Towers N61 and N62, located approximately 130 m and 100 m from the route, before traversing the route. Once operational, in westerly views from Braehungie, the towers would occupy a large portion of the visual field. To the east, towers and lines would form a noticeable linear feature. However, semi-transparent forms, muted colours would help integrate the new structures, especially across lower-lying areas.	At its closest point, the route extends under the Proposed Developm ent west of Rumster Forest.	**Medium**	**Medium**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant)	**Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant)
RA-01-5 (Refer to	**A9 (T)** Receptors include travellers using the	This section of the A9 is largely aligned along the coast, offering open sea views framed by inland	**Medium**	During construction, large infrastructure such as cranes, machinery, and temporary structures would be intermittently visible from inland-facing views, particularly	300 m	**Negligible**	**Negligible**	**Minor Adverse** (not significant)	**Minor Adverse** (not significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
Figure 7.4-4)	A9(T) between Rumster and Brora. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-13 A9 (north east of Guidebest), Viewpoint 7-15 A9 (T) Laidhay Croft Museum, Viewpoint 7-19 A9 (T) south-west of Berriedale, Viewpoint 7-21 A9 (T) Badbea Historical Village, Viewpoint 7-28 Helmsdale and Viewpoint 7-31 A9 (T) Greenhill)	hills and fields. The existing OHL have localised visual impact. Inland views are enclosed by woodlands, topography, and forestry. The route crosses diverse landscapes, straths, cliffs, moorland, and grazing fields, with rolling pastureland, rivers, and traditional cottages reinforcing the rural, tranquil, and remote character.		when travelling across the strath or elevated terrain. Intervening landforms, roadside trees, and existing infrastructure would reduce much of the direct visibility and visual dominance. Once operational, views would remain largely consistent with those during construction. At Ousdale, approximately 300 m from Tower N127, views would be most prominent through forestry gaps. The structures would blend into the broader landscape with increasing distance. The towers would alter the perceived scale and openness of the skyline. However, due to spatial separation, skylining effects would be confined to localised areas.					
RA-2 (Refer to Figure 7.4-2	**A882 Clayock to Haster:** Receptors include travellers using the A882 between Clayock and Haster.	Views from the A882 are predominantly rural, defined by open fields, rolling hills, water features, and an agricultural backdrop. Telcommunication poles and farm outbuildings create occasional visual interruptions. The route offers expansive, uninterrupted views, particularly **north-east**, east, and	**Low-Medium**	No visibility of the Proposed Development is predicted, as intervening landforms limits direct sightlines.	2.3 km	None	None	None	None

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
		south-east, highlighting Loch Watten as a key focal point. The landscape holds strong scenic and aesthetic value, especially near Loch Watten and in areas with wide vistas. The long, straight road enhances the immersive experience and tranquil character of this rural corridor.							
RA-3 (Refer to Figure 7.4-4	**A897Carn na Buth to Helmsdale:** Receptors include travellers using the A897 between Carn na Buth and Helmsdale. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-25 A897 (Caen) and Viewpoint 7-27 A897 (East of Kilphedir))	The route follows Strath Ullie from Helmsdale via Marrel. Views from the carriageway are typically channelled north-west and south-east, with landform limiting visibility across the valley landscapes.	**Medium**	Between Marrel and Kilphedir, the road passes directly beneath the Proposed Development, and users would experience close-range views. During construction, the works would be visible along a short stretch often filtered by tree cover. The Proposed Development would be noticeable in views to the north, **north-east**, and north-west, while southern views would be partially screened by intervening tree cover. At greater distances, the Proposed Development would appear as a recessive, linear feature within wider south-east and north-west vistas, set against a backdrop of hills and mountains.	At its closest point, the route extends under the Proposed Development at Marrel.	**High** within 500 m at Marrel, Low-Negligible across the wider route	**High** within 500 m at Marrel, Low-Negligible across the wider route	**Major Adverse** (significant) within 500 m at Marrel, based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied. **Minor Adverse** (not significant) across the wider location significant)	**Major Adverse** (significant) within 500 m at Marrel, based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied. **Minor Adverse** (not significant) across the wider location

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
				During operation, the towers would be visible as they cross the Strath at close distances, this would diminish beyond 500 m due to landform and intervening vegetation.					
RA-4 (Refer to Figure 7.4-2	**A99(T) Milton to Latheron:** Receptors include travellers using the A99 between Milton and Latheron. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-15 A9 (T) Laidhay Croft Museum)	The A99 passes through open countryside with views comprising rolling farmland, distant hills, moorland, and dispersed agricultural built structures. Road users experience wide, open, and far-reaching views—particularly from higher ground or coastal stretches—with direct sightlines to agricultural land, moorland, and the sea, resulting in a high degree of visual exposure.	**Low-Medium**	No visibility of the Proposed Development is predicted, as intervening landforms limits direct sightlines.	3.3 km	None	None	None	None
RA-5 (Refer to Figure 7.4-2	**B870 Glengolly to the junction with B876 north of Kirk:** Receptors include travellers using the B870 between Glengolly and the junction with B876 north of Kirk. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-6 B870 (west of	The B870 crosses a rural landscape defined by expansive farmland, moorland, and occasional forest patches. The flat to gently undulating terrain and low vegetation create open views, enhancing the sense of space and exposure. OHL's and telecommunication lines introduce intermittent linear infrastructure, crossing open skies. The visual experience is shaped by	**Low-Medium**	Road users would experience close views of the Proposed Development as it crosses the road near the Moss of Toftingall. Construction activity and tower erection, particularly Tower N12 (approx. 90 m away), would be noticeable. To the south, the towers and equipment would be partially screened by forestry (approx. 750 m	At its closest point, the route extends under the Proposed Development north of Moss of Toftingall.	**High** within 750 m near Moss of Toftingall, Low across the wider location	**High** within 750 m near Moss of Toftingall, Low across the wider location	**Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) within 750 m north of Moss of Toftingall based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied.	**Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) within 750 m north of Moss of Toftingall based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied.

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
	Houstry of Dunn), Viewpoint 7-7 B870 (Newton)and Viewpoint 7-9 B870 (Westerdale))	the agricultural context and distant enclosing hills. In some directions, particularly south and south-west, distant hills, and upland moor act as visual anchors within the broad, low-lying landscape, with light, weather, and seasonal vegetation changes adding dynamic visual interest.		away), while views to the north are slightly constrained by landform. At greater distances, wider views of tower tops to the north and south would appear against the surrounding landscape backdrop but remain recessive. During operation, the towers would remain visible as the Proposed Development crosses the road. The vegetation would continue to partially obscure towers further away from the road.				**Minor Adverse** (not significant) across the wider location significant)	**Minor Adverse** (not significant) across the wider location significant)
RA-6 (Refer to Figure 7.4-2	**B874 Glengolly to Lochshell:** Receptors include travellers using the B874 between Glengolly and Lochshell. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-1 B874 and Viewpoint 7-2 Halkirk (B874))	The route features predominantly rural views, comparable to those experienced from the A882, with open fields, rolling hills, and water features, including Loch Watten, which serves as a visual focal point.	**Low-Medium**	No visibility of the Proposed Development is predicted, as intervening landforms limits direct sightlines.	4 km	None	None	None	None
RA-7 (Refer to	**B876 Bower to Kirk:** Receptors include travellers using the	Views are generally wide and open across agricultural landscapes, moorland, and distant hills. Hedgerows and low stone walls do not obstruct sightlines, and the flat to	**Low-Medium**	No visibility of the Proposed Development is predicted, as intervening landforms limits direct sightlines.	9.6 km	None	None	None	None

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	**Magnitude**		**Effect**	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
Figure 7.4-2	B876 between Bower and Kirk.	gently rolling topography allows for long-range views. Occasional overhead lines and farm buildings are viewed from the carriageway.							
RA-8 (Refer to Figure 7.4-4	**Far North Railway Line via Helmsdale:** Receptors include passengers on the railway line which runs from Inverness to Thurso and Wick. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-26 Marrel)	The route follows Strath Ullie from Helmsdale via Marrel. Views are typically channelled north-west and south-east between heather-covered slopes.	**Medium**	Similar to views from the A897 near Marrel and the River Helmsdale, the railway passes directly beneath the alignment, offering brief, close-range views of the Proposed Development. At greater distances, the Proposed Development would appear as a recessive, linear element within broader vistas to the south-east and north-west, set against a backdrop of hills and mountains. Construction works would be visible along a short stretch, though partially filtered by surrounding tree cover depending on the angle of view. During operation, the Proposed Development will be visible as it crosses the line within the Strath and at greater distances as the alignment descends or climbs out of the Strath.	At its closest point, the route extends under the Proposed Development at Marrel.	**High** within 500 m at Marrel, Low-Negligible across the wider location	**High** within 500 m at Marrel, Low-Negligible across the wider location	**Major Adverse** (significant) within 500 m at Marrel, based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied. **Minor Adverse** (not significant) across the wider location significant)	**Major Adverse** (significant) within 500 m at Marrel, based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied. **Minor Adverse** (not significant) across the wider location

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
RA-9 (Refer to Figure 7.4-2	**Far North Railway Line between Scotscalder and Wick via Georgemas Junction:** Receptors include passengers on localised sections of the railway line that extends from Scotscalder and Wick. The line between Scotscalder and Wick via Georgemas Junction is part of the Far North Line, which connects Inverness to Wick and Thurso.	The railway travels through open terrain in an east–west direction, crossing the A9 north of the Proposed Development. It offers expansive views of a varied landscape: moorland to the south-west, extending inland; farmland to the north-east, reaching toward the northernmost coastline; and rolling hills predominantly in the south and west, visible in the distance.	**Low-Medium**	No visibility of the Proposed Development is predicted, as intervening landforms limits direct sightlines.	2.5 km	None	None	None	None

Table A.4: Recreational Routes

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	**Magnitude**		**Effect**	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
RA-10 (Refer to Figure 7.4-2	Recreational users of the core path, including CA06.08 The Old Quarry.	A short gravel footpath, 0.9 km across an old quarry east of the A9. Open views to the west including the wind turbines to the south and west. Undulating and open aspect with long range views in all directions, which are tempered by commercial woodland plantations. Existing OHL and telecommunication lines are prominent features within the view, running parallel to the A9 and adjacent to the path alignment.	Medium	The Proposed Development would be located to the east of the path and the A9. There would be views across the open landscape from the path towards the Proposed Development until the alignment enters the area around Loch of Toftingall and associated plantation woodland. During construction, given the open character of the landscape, construction activity would be prominent from the path, including crane activity, tower erection construction traffic and the storage of materials. During operation, the towers would be visible as the alignment heads south towards the Loch and the woodland.	1.9 km	Medium	Medium	**Moderate Adverse** (significant)	**Moderate Adverse** (significant)
RA-11 (Refer to Figure 7.4-2	A loop track winding through Causeymire Wind Farm: Recreational users of the core path, including CA06.04 Causeymire Wind Farm.	The Causeymire / Halsary wind farm cluster is located either side of the A9 (T), south of Loch of Toftingall. The footpath forms a loop around the western turbines around Bad a' Cheo, west of the trunk road. The landscape is open and expansive	Low	The proposed Development would be located east of the A9 and the footpath to the east of the windfarm. As the alignment heads south, it would run parallel and close to the road its closest distance to the footpath is approximately 2 km.	2 km	Medium	Medium	**Moderate Adverse** (significant)	**Moderate Adverse** (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	**Magnitude**		**Effect**	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
		with long range views beyond the turbines and existing OHL towards western hills including around Loch More and eastwards towards Wick. The landscape is influenced by the built structures of turbines, OHL, Halsary substation and telecommunication lines. Plantation forestry blocks both in close proximity and further away are striking features within the wide views.		Given the open and undulating nature of the landscape close to the path views across towards the alignment would be possible to the south-east following the felling of plantation woodland around Toftingall Loch. During construction, the crane movement as well as tower erection, traffic movement and material storage would all be visible from the footpath, albeit at a distance, in context of the wind farm and against the wide expansive landscape. During operation, the towers would remain prominent visual elements within the landscape but set within the context of multiple turbines existing OHL's.					
RA-12 (Refer to Figure 7.4-2	A track leading to Munsary via Loch Stemster: Recreational users of the core path, including CA10.11 Achavanich and Munsary.	The track heads north from Loch Stemster then turns east towards Munsary. Views are expansive, occasionally restricted by plantation blocks or the undulating landform. The existing OHL is a visible linear feature to the west of the path, running parallel to the A9 (T). The turbines of the	Medium	As the path heads north from the minor road, it would run parallel to the A9 (T) and the alignment of the Proposed Development. This section of the path would be closest to the Proposed Development at approximately 346 m. The existing OHL is visible, and the Proposed Development would add to the built elements within the western view as	346 m	Medium-high	Medium	**Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant)	**Moderate Adverse** (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	**Magnitude**		**Effect**	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
		windfarms to the west and east are visible in the middle distance.		it heads south parallel to the existing OHL. During construction, the crane movement as well as tower erection, traffic movement and material storage would all be visible from the footpath. During operation, the towers would remain prominent visual elements within the landscape but set within the context of multiple turbines and existing OHL's.					
RA-13 (Refer to Figure 7.4-2	A collection of forest tracks at Rumster: Recreational users of the core path, including CA10.03 Rumster Mast Loop, CA10.04 Rumster, and CA10.07 Rumster to A99.	The paths are generally aligned within the plantation woodland of Rumster forest, which is west of the elevated Ben-a-Chielt which is east of A9 (T). Rumster transmitting station is a prominent feature in the landscape on the elevated peak. Views across to the A9 (T) are restricted by the topography.	Medium	Due to the intervening topography and the plantation woodland, views to the east towards the Proposed Development would be curtailed. At the closest point, the Proposed Development is approximately 1.1 km to the west. The alignment would proceed southwards parallel to the A9 (T). Along the southern sections of the path, out of the woodland blocks views towards the Proposed Development. During construction, some taller elements of the tower erection would be visible through the woodland blocks and over Ben-a-chielt. On the	1.1 km	Low	Low	**Minor Adverse** (not significant)	**Minor Adverse** (not significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	**Magnitude**		**Effect**	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
				southern portion, views across the construction work, traffic and compounds would be visible across the flatter and open terrain. During operation, the towers would be visible from the southern section of the path. Further north they would be obscured by the topography and the plantation woodland.					
RA-14 (Refer to Figure 7.4-4	A collection of tracks at Dunbeath: Recreational users of the core path, including CA04.01 Dunbeath Strath, CA04.02 Coopers Path, CA04.04 Achnaclyth Track by Toutnagoul, CA04.06 Footbridge Link, CA04.07 Post Office Path, CA04.08 Balcladich and the Sandy Pools, CA04.09 Back Path, CA04.10 Milton Track, CA04.11 A9 Roadside Link, CA04.12 Old Road Link, CA04.13 Old Road by the Driveway	A linked group of paths, heading west from Ballachly towards Achnaclyth. CA04.04 traverses the valley of Dunbeath Water on the northern bank. The route traverses' scrub and tree planting but generally has an open characteristic with some long-range views across to the west. Further west the alignment of the path enters elevated ground and open moorland towards Cnoc Fuarain. The southern bank of the shallow valley comprises larger density of woodland towards Achorn Broch and Achorn house.	Medium	The Proposed Development traverses the path west of Balcraggie Lodge, at this point, the path alignment would traverse scrub planting enabling views across towards the west and the Proposed Development. During construction, at distances of 500 m, the activities including crane work, material storage and construction traffic would be a prominent feature within the view. The Proposed Development would be visible as it crosses the path but also to the north which would have clear views towards Braehiller. As the alignment proceeds south-west, the increased tree cover of the	At its closest point, the route extends under the Proposed Development at Dunbeath.	High within 500 m Low across the wider location	High within 500 m Low across the wider location	**Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) within 500 m based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied. **Minor Adverse** (not significant) across the wider location significant)	**Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) within 500 m based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied. **Minor Adverse** (not significant) across the wider location

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	**Magnitude**		**Effect**	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
	to Dunbeath Castle, CA04.16 Clashvalley Track, CA04.17 Portormin Beach, CA04.18 Camel Humps, and CA04.19 Balintra Wood. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-16 Achorn Road)			southern bank would restrict visibility. During operation, the Proposed Development would remain a prominent feature within 500 m, at greater distances, intervening vegetation would restrict visibility, to the tops of the towers.					
RA-15 (Refer to Figure 7.4-4	A collection of gravel paths stretching from Berriedale to Langwell: Receptors include recreational users of the core path, including CA04.15 Langwell Woodland and CA04.14 Berriedale Pier.	The paths follow a route located within woodland at Skurley Rock before following Langwell Water west towards the Keepers House. Given the woodland location, and the route lying low in the river valley, views outwards are restricted.	Medium	The Proposed Development would be located to the north of the footpath; at its closest point it is approximately 560 m away. The alignment would traverse the elevated ground north of Langwell Plantation before heading south at Turnal Rock. During construction, taller elements such as crane work or tower construction may be visible above the tree line but given the topography and vegetation, visibility is expected to be intermittent. The likelihood of visibility would increase during winter months. During operation, the tops of the towers may be visible from the footpath, especially in winter	560 m	Low	Low	**Minor Adverse** (not significant)	**Minor Adverse** (not significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	**Magnitude**		**Effect**	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
				months. But given topography and vegetation this is expected to be limited.					
RA-16 (Refer to Figure 7.4-4	Gravel track off A9 that leads to Badbea Historic Village: Recreational users of the core path, including CA04.03 Badbea. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-21 A9 (T) Badbea Historical Village)	A short track heading towards the Badbea historic village monument from A9 (T). Open views across to the sea from the footpath. Views to the north from the carpark are restricted by roadside plantation. From the monument there are long-range views to the north with the moorland visible behind the trees. An existing OHL is located to the south of A9 (T) and is a visible entity within views from the footpath.	Medium	The Proposed Development would be located on elevated ground north of the roadside plantation woodland. In a parallel alignment to the existing OHL. at the closest point it is located approximately 360 m north of the carpark. During construction, from the carpark views would be restricted by the vegetation to the taller activities including crane works. At the monument, construction activities would be visible above the tree line and viewed in conjunction with the existing OHL. During operation, the Proposed Development would be visible from the monument on the elevated ground north of the A9 (T) and would be seen in conjunction with the existing OHL.	360 m	Medium	Low	**Moderate Adverse** (significant)	**Minor Adverse** (not significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	**Magnitude**		**Effect**	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
RA-17 (Refer to Figure 7.4-4	A collection of tracks at Helmsdale: Recreational users of the core path, including SU13.01 Lobster Ponds – Navidale, SU13.02 St Johns Well, SU13.03 Helmsdale River Bank, SU13.04 Simpson Crescent, SU13.05 Old Helmsdale - Old Caithness Road, SU13.05 Navidale Cycle Path, SU13.06 Old Helmsdale - East Helmsdale, SU13.07 Playing Fields – West Helmsdale, and SU13.09 Navidale Farm Track/Seaweed Road.	Linked footpaths to the north of Helmsdale heading north along the northern bank of river Helmsdale. Generally running parallel to A897 towards Helmsdale Rock. Open terrain with pasture fields to the south and west of the river, scrub hillside to the east of A897.	Medium	At the closest point, the Proposed Development would be located approximately 1.2 km to the north of the footpath. The topography would restrict visibility towards the alignment as it traverses the valley west of Caen. Some visibility towards the Proposed Development on the hills either side of the valley would be possible from the footpath given the open terrain along the riverbank. During construction, crane movement associated with the tower erection on the hilltops would be visible as the alignment heads east from Caen Hill. During operation, the Proposed Development would remain visible east of Caen Hill and as it descends into the valley before being obscured by the topography around Marrel.	1.2 km	Medium-Low	Low	**Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant)	**Minor Adverse** (not significant)
RA-18 (Refer to Figur	A hill walk winding through rolling hills at Gartymore: Recreational users of the core path, including	Short track west of Gartymore with an open aspect towards the sea. Inland views are often restricted by topography as it climbs steeply	Medium	The proposed Development would be located approximately 2.1 km at its closest point on elevated ground to the north of the path. The topography and vegetation restrict	2.1 km	Low	Low	**Minor Adverse** (not significant)	**Minor Adverse** (not significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	**Magnitude**		**Effect**	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
e 7.4-4	SU13.08 Portgower Inn Road – Gartymore.	towards the moorland. With some long-range views to the west. An existing OHL traverses the path and is a visual feature within views from the path towards the sea.		views towards the Proposed Development which is located on the slopes of Creag a Choire and Creag an Taghain. During construction, the works would be visible from locations across the path including crane work, material, and plant movements. Visibility would be tempered by the topography and vegetation. During operation views towards the Proposed Development would be possible along the path but these would remain restricted by vegetation and topography.					
RA-19 (Refer to Figure 7.4-4	North Coast 500: Travellers on localised parts of the long-distance link of North Coast 500, a scenic route that runs almost parallel to the Proposed Development between Latheron and Brora.	This section of the route coincides with the A9 (T) It is aligned along the coast, offering expansive ocean views framed by inland hills and fields. The existing OHL have localised visual impact. Inland views are enclosed by woodlands, topography, and forestry. The route crosses diverse landscapes, straths, cliffs, moorland, and grazing fields, with rolling pastureland, rivers, and traditional	Medium	At the closest point, the Proposed Development would be located 3 km to the north of the A9 (T). It is located on moorland hills; some distance from the road. Consequently, topography and vegetation would restrict visibility towards the Proposed Development albeit with the potential for occasional and fleeting vies as the alignment crosses the valleys and straths.	3 km	Low	Low	**Minor Adverse** (not significant)	**Minor Adverse** (not significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	**Magnitude**		**Effect**	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
		cottages reinforcing the rural, tranquil, and remote character.		During Construction users of the road may witness construction traffic including materials movement. Occasional glimpses of the crane work may be visible in the distance, but this is dependent upon topography and vegetation. During operation, views across towards the Proposed Development are unlikely given distances and the topography.					