

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

Appendix 7.6 | LVIA of Section B

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7. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT OF SECTION B

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 This appendix presents the findings of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for Section B of the proposed Spittal to Loch Buidhe to Beaully 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 A 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 Assessment²;
- Landscape assessment of potential effects on the special qualities of designated and/or protected landscapes, specifically The Flow Country World Heritage Site (WHS), Ben Klibreck Wild Land Area (WLA), Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth Special Landscape Area and Flow Country and Berriedale Coast Special Landscape Areas (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 B, this includes effects associated with:
 - Section A and Section C of the Proposed Development (steel lattice tower OHL);
 - Proposed Carnaig 400 kV Substation (subject of a separate planning application);
 - Consented Lairg II Wind Farm Redesign (21/00849/FUL);
 - Proposed Acheilidh Wind Farm (Lairg III) (24/02094/S36);
 - Scoping-stage Balblair Wind Farm (24/01500/SCOP); and

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.

- Consented Garvary Wind Farm (21/01921/S36).

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 15 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 the locations listed in **Table 7.22**.

Table 7.1: Viewpoint Locations (Section B)

Number	Location	Grid Reference		
Viewpoint 7-31	A9 (T) Greenhill	NC	91305	06395
Viewpoint 7-32	East Brora	NC	89819	04360
Viewpoint 7-33	A9 (T) Brora	ND	90109	3641
Viewpoint 7-34	A9 (T) Inverbrora	ND	89697	3203
Viewpoint 7-35	South of Killin	ND	85564	6786
Viewpoint 7-36	Loch Brora	ND	85620	07781
Viewpoint 7-37	Balnacoil	ND	82572	10781
Viewpoint 7-38	Dunrobin Castle	NC	85025	00883
Viewpoint 7-39	Ben Bhraggie	NC	81076	01006
Viewpoint 7-40	A839 Rogart	NC	73472	01374
Viewpoint 7-41	An Droighneach	NC	72042	00890
Viewpoint 7-42	Little Torboll	NH	75600	98485
Viewpoint 7-43	A9 (T) Loch Fleet	NH	77475	98163
Viewpoint 7-44	Loch Fleet	NH	78892	96852
Viewpoint 7-45	Skelbo Castle	NH	79278	95352
Viewpoint 7-46	Loch Laro	NH	60436	99676

7.2.5 Two sets of visualisations have been produced, which comply with NatureScot 2017³ guidelines and THC 2016⁴ 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;

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.

- 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 Guidance⁵;
- Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas - Technical Guidance⁶;
- Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing landscape value outside national designations⁷;
- Technical Guidance Note 6/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals⁸;
- National Landscape Character Assessment (web-based interactive map)⁹;
- The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas (Commissioned Report No.374)¹⁰;
- Wild Land Areas Map and Descriptions¹¹;
- Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes¹²;
- Wildness in Scotland's Countryside¹³;
- Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas¹⁴;
- 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.

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.

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.

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; and
- 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;
- 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). Interim ratings, such as Moderate-Minor are also possible. Where the landscape or visual effect is classified as Moderate or greater, this is considered to be 'significant' in the context of the EIA Regulations. 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.

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

7.3 Baseline Conditions: Landscape

Landscape Overview

- 7.3.1 Section B extends from the hills north of Brora in the east to Loch Buidhe in the west. The Section traverses LCTs relating to strath and upland landscapes (**see Volume 3, Figure 7.3c**), exhibiting a distinct contrast between the vast open moorlands and the incised valleys of the lochs and river catchments through which it passes. The moorlands are sparsely settled with limited access and are often associated with sheep grazing, shooting estates and/or windfarm developments. This contrasts with the river valleys and coastal areas with which settlements (for example Brora) and transportation links (for example the A9(T)) are largely concentrated. To the east the coastal plain includes the river estuaries and large areas of managed farmland interspersed by larger coastal settlements.

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 and/or visual resource.
- 7.3.3 With reference to **Volume 3, Figure 7.2c: Section B Designated and Protected Landscapes**, the Proposed Development would extend into the southwestern portion of the Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA for a distance of approximately 1 km. The Proposed Development would not extend through any other designated landscapes.

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 including:

- National Context:
 - Ben Klibreck- Armine Forest Wild Land Area (WLA).
- Regional/ Local Context:
 - Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA

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

Ben Klibreck Armine Forest Wild Land Area (WLA)

7.3.6 The Ben Klibreck- Armine Forest WLA covers an area of approximately 530 km² across central Sutherland between the settlements of Lairg, Altnaharra and Kinbrace. The WLA is situated approximately 6.3 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development at its closest point. The WLA comprises a series of round-topped hills and plateaux with an extensive area of undulating peatland and lochans. It is largely uninhabited except for isolated buildings used for deer stalking and fishing.

7.3.7 Largely viewed from the outside by visitors, receptors include users of A836 including cyclists as part of National Cycle Route 1. Ben Klibreck attracts a high number of hillwalkers, partly due to its Munro status and landmark qualities, whilst others penetrate further into the interior, such as to Loch Choire and the Grahams of Ben Armine and Creag Mhòr. The edge of the WLA varies in its character, being marked sharply by the presence of Ben Klibreck and Ben Armine in the north, and a ridge of hills on the western side running between Meall Meadhonach and Meall a' Chaise. However, the south and eastern margins of the WLA are less clearly defined, with a gradual transition between the area and an increasing prevalence and influence of human elements, such as forestry, wind farm developments and telecom masts.

Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA

7.3.8 The Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA covers an area of approximately 210 km² lying along the east coast of Sutherland. The Proposed Development within Section B east of Cagar Feosaig would extend across the SLA for a distance of approximately 14.8 km.

7.3.9 The SLA stretches from the southern slopes of Strath Ullie in the north to Loch Fleet in the south. The SLA is characterised by a rolling plateau, rounded hills covered by an open mixture of heather and grass moorland. Major straths and glens provide access through the hills and connect the interior to the coast. To the east of the SLA lies a narrow coastal shelf with main road and rail routes, small farms, and settlements. The coastal shelf has a distinctive field pattern of pasture, marked by trees and stone walls. The linear coastal shelf is defined by the edge formed by adjacent hill slopes, providing expansive views both along the coast and across the open sea. Loch Fleet, the most northerly inlet on the east coast, has a sheltered tidal basin fringed with shingle shores and pine woods.

7.3.10 The Special Qualities of the landscape designations and protected landscapes, as identified by the guidance documents listed in paragraph 7.2.6, are listed below in Table 7.22. Special qualities of specific relevance to the Proposed Development are highlighted in bold.

Table 7.22: Key Attributes and Special Qualities of Designated and Protected Landscapes

Designation	Key Attributes and Special Qualities
Ben Klibreck- Armine Forest Wild Land Area (WLA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Awe inspiring simplicity of landform and landcover and a perception of emptiness'; • 'Isolated mountains rise in stark contrast to the surrounding peatland and glens'; • 'A remote interior where access involves long distances via penetrating glens, crossing over or around the rugged landscape and waterbodies'; • 'An extensive area of peatland with a strong sense of naturalness'; and • 'A secluded, elevated and remote interior plateau shielded by an outer rim of hills adding to the sense of remoteness and solitude'.
Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The combination and juxtaposition of the rolling moorland hills, linear glens, the coastal shelf and tidal basin creates a diverse yet connected landscape composition, which is experienced in sequence when travelling along the A9 and from the railway; • The hill area contains straths and glens with differing local character derived from the varying combination of native woodland, forest plantation, moorland and water bodies. Providing sheltered access routes through the hills and physical and visual connections between the interior and the coastal shelf; • Views are obtained from some areas of wind turbines and overhead electricity lines whose large scale and man-made character can seem to diminish the scale of the interior hills and their wildness qualities; • A simple uniform, rolling plateau of interior broad, interwoven rounded hills, clothed by an open mosaic of heather and grass moorland. As this composition is simple and extends throughout the area; • Skelbo Castle is a dominant feature on the south-side of Loch Fleet, sitting atop a hill commanding excellent views of the loch; • The linear coastal shelf, is defined by the edge formed by the adjacent hill slopes, providing expansive views both along the coastal edge and outwards across the open sea. Interior views are limited by the convex nature of the hill slopes; • To the east lies a narrow fertile coastal shelf contains the main road and rail routes in this area, and small farms and settlements. A distinctive field pattern of pasture runs parallel to the coast; and • The Mound is a prominent and man-made causeway over which the main A9 coastal road passes. Engineered by T Telford in 1814 –16.

Landscape Character

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

- 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT; and
- 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland LCT.

7.3.12 In addition, three other LCTs located within the Study Area, that may be indirectly impacted by the Proposed Development have been identified as follows:

- 134 – Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland LCT;
- 145 – Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting LCT; and
- 146– Coastal Farmlands and Woodlands.

7.3.13 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 With reference to **Volume 3, Figure 7.1c: Section B Zone of Theoretical Visibility**, which illustrates the potential visibility of the Proposed Development across the 10 km Study Area, ZTV coverage is relatively widespread within 5 km of the Proposed Development, albeit is more fragmented across northern and eastern areas. Theoretical visibility of a greater number of steel lattice towers is typically focused across the more elevated slopes and summits, including Col-Bheinn, Ben Horn, Ben Lunndaidh and to the east of Loch Buidhe. Fewer towers would typically be visible for receptors within lower-lying areas, including the River Brora and River Fleet valleys. Large areas of ZTV coverage in closest proximity to the towers coincide with blanket forestry that would influence the overall availability of views.
- 7.4.2 At distances beyond 5 km, ZTV coverage becomes increasingly fragmented, particularly towards the north and north-west. Within these areas, potential views of the Proposed Development would be limited to localised summits and typically comprise fewer towers.

Visual Receptors

- 7.4.3 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, minor-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 the National Cycle Route.
- 7.4.4 The following section identifies visual receptors within the Study Area 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. Although the OHLs would also be visible, 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**. Their locations are illustrated in **Volume 3, Figure 7.4: Section B Visual Receptors**.

Settlements

- 7.4.5 Residential settlements within the Study Area are limited and predominantly concentrated along the coastal shelf and inland glens of Strath Fleet and Strath Brora. With reference to **Volume 3, Figure 7.4e: Section B Visual Receptors**, those located within the ZTV, where there may be views of the Proposed Development are as follows:
- Gordonbush / Old Town (SB-1), 1.7 km to the north;
 - Morvich (SB-5), 1 km to the east;
 - East Kinnauld (SB-6), 850 m to the west;
 - West Kinnauld (SB-7), 1.1 km to the west; and
 - Pittentrail & Rogart (SB-8/12/13 & 14), 1.2 km to the west.

7.4.6 In addition to the main settlements, 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 500 m of the Alignment) are listed below.

- Killin (SB-2) farmhouse located to the north of Loch Brora. The property is approximately 200 m to the south of the Proposed Development.
- Carroll Cottage (SB-3) farmhouse located to the south of Loch Brora. The property is approximately 150 m south of the Proposed development.
- Eiden (SB-11) group of residential properties and associated farm buildings, located on the agricultural valley floor or lower slopes. The group is 400m to the north of the Proposed Development.
- Dalnamain (SB-15) farmhouse located north of Strath Carnaig. The property is approximately 300 m to the south and east of the Proposed Development.
- Brae Cottage (SB-16) Individual croft set in open moorland north of Lochbuie Road. The property is approximately 500 m to the north of the Proposed Development.

Transport Routes

7.4.7 The main transportation routes across the Study Area are generally aligned within lower lying areas within glens and within coastal areas. With reference to **Volume 3, Figure 7.4f: Section B Visual Receptors** those located within the ZTV, from which there would potentially be views of the Proposed Development are as follows:

- The A9(T) (RB-1) is the primary road within the region, the carriageway traverses the Study Area between Dornoch and Golspie following a route along the coastal agricultural plains between Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet. The A9(T) forms part of the North Coast 500, a scenic recreational route that starts and ends at Inverness Castle.
- A839 (RB-2) is a single carriageway road which extends west from the Mound to Lairg. At its closest point it extends under the Proposed Development, west of Morvich (between Towers N263 and N264).
- Far North Railway Line (RB-6), this single-track rail line extends from Inverness to Thurso and Wick. At its closest point it extends under the Proposed Development, west of Morvich (between Towers N263 and N264).

7.4.8 Roads that are minor or unclassified but identified as having considerable visibility of the Proposed Development have been included and assessed along with other visual receptors. These comprise:

- Gordonbush Road (RB-3) which follows the Brora River west from Brora, before traversing a number of river valleys to the west of the Study Area towards Pittentrail.
- Dunrobin Glen Road (RB-4) which is accessed from the A9(T) before heading west towards Golspie Burn waterfall and Gorge.
- Lochbuie Road (RB-5) proceeds west from A9(T), south of The Mound, initially through the wooded slopes of The Cambusmore Estate before traversing pasture fields around Little Torboll. The road splits with Lochbuie Road taking a lower elevation while Torboll Street runs parallel to the south.

Recreational Routes

7.4.9 Recreational routes considered within the visual assessment include core paths, long-distance paths, and other commonly used / promoted walking or cycling routes. These routes are listed below in order of distance from the Proposed Development, and illustrated in **Volume 3, Figure 7.4f: Section B Visual Receptors**.

Core Paths

7.4.10 The majority of Core Paths in the Study Area of Section B are located within the coastal plain between Golspie and Brora. Other paths head west from the coast along the river valleys or into the moorland. In these cases,

they are sometimes associated with windfarm access tracks. Some tracks traverse the plantation and natural woodland of the lower valley slopes, for example paths in the vicinity of Pittentrail.

- Core Path SU06.03 (RB-7) Drove Road, 5.5 km long, heading west from east Clyne towards Oldtown. The Proposed Development traverses the track at Oldtown.
- Core Path SU06.14 (RB-8) Doll Bridge- Loch Brora 2.2 km long path heading north-west along the north of the Loch for approximately .2 km. The Proposed Development at the closest point to the path is approximately 1.5 km to the north.
- Core Path SU06.02 (RB-9) Loch Brora West track 9 km long track, heading north-west along the south of the Loch towards Kilbraur for approximately .9 km. The Proposed Development traverses the track at Carroll.
- Core Paths SU12.14, SU12.13 and SU12.19 (RB-10) form a series of connecting paths in the vicinity of Bhraggie Wood. Core Paths SU12.13 and SU12.19 utilise the wind farm track heading north then north-west through Ben Bhraggie Wood and Dunrobbin Glen towards the road traversing the glen towards Farlary. The Proposed Development at the closest point to the path is approximately 1.75 km to the north, through the woodland. Core Path SU12.14 (Golspie Tower- Ben Bhraggie) is a 4 km long track heading in a circular route towards Duke of Sutherland monument within Ben Bhraggie Wood, approximately 3 km from the Proposed Development.
- Core Path SU12.24 (RB-11) Loch Lunndaidh path heading west up to the moorland and Loch Lunndaidh from Drummuie initially through woodland before open moorland at Culinally Burn. At its closest point the Proposed Development is approximately 3 km to the north.
- Core Path SU20.10 (RB-12) Torboll- Eiden 3.3 km long track along the southern edge of the Strath Fleet predominantly a wooded route with open aspects at Eiden and the far west of the track near Inchcape.
- Core Path SU20.02 and SU20.01 (RB-13). Two connecting paths totalling 7.2 km from Eiden climbing towards An Droighneach before heading west towards Meall Mor and Bad an Fheidh.
- Core Path SU09.19 (RB-14) 7.7 km long track heading northwest from Achvaich to Loch Buidhe, the route is predominantly within plantation woodland before opening out at Loch Buidhe. The Proposed Development traverses the track close to the Loch Buidhe sub-station as it cuts through the Meall Mor plantation.

Long Distance Routes

- NCN (RB-15) National Cycle route travelling through the Shin Valley between Invershin and Lairg along B864.
- North Coast 500 (RB-16) National Cyle Route, within the Study Area, the route shares the A9(T). Traversing the coastal valley between The Mound and Brora.

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 7.4f: Section B Visual Receptors**, as listed below:

- Location OB-1 The Duke of Sutherland Monument occupies a prominent position on the summit of Ben Bhraggie. The summit affords panoramic views in all directions. The monument is located approximately 5 km to the south and approximately 2.5 km to the south east of the Proposed Development. A representative view from the Monument is provided in **Volume 3, Figure 7.4e Viewpoint 37**.

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. 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, wind energy development has been identified with the potential to exert more notable influence on the future landscape and baseline resource within the Study Area. This comprises the consented Lairg II Wind Farm, and the proposed Acheilidh Wind Farm (Lairg III), and consented Garvary Wind Farm, which would be located across the hillsides and upland plateaux north of the Dornoch Firth. 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/or protected landscapes during construction, operation, and decommissioning phases, following the significance of effects criteria outlined in the methodology (**Volume 5, Appendix 7.2: LVIA Methodology.**) The assessment begins with LCTs which inform the evaluation of effects on designated and/or 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 five separate LCTs. Likely significant effects have been identified across localised parts of the following:
- LCT 135 Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland; and
 - LCT 142 Strath - Caithness & Sutherland.

LCT 135 Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland

- 7.5.4 At the northern end of Section B (across parts of the LCT north-east of Brora), the landscape comprises open, smoothly rolling moorland, occasionally forming small, rounded hills or crags separated by small glens. Small lochs and plantation woodlands are noticeable features within this landscape. Further south, across parts of the LCT between Loch Brora and Aberscross Hill, the Section B alignment extends through a landscape that is characterised by open moorland with peaks and small Lochs. Two existing OHLs are noticeable linear features within this landscape. Vehicular access is limited to forestry or windfarm access tracks. Core paths provide access to the Duke of Sutherland Monument and Loch Lunndaidh. The southern-most area of the LCT is located on the west side of Creag Dail na Meine. This area comprises a mix of forestry, woodland and open, rolling moorland extending towards Loch Buidhe.
- 7.5.5 During construction a **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) effect is predicted within 1 km of the works. Within this linear corridor, the construction activity would result in noticeable changes to the existing landscape fabric and land use. Tree cover to the southern sections around Loch Buidhe towards Meall Mor provides a contrast to the moorland terrain which most of the section traverses in the LCT. Vehicular movement and works activities would be most visible across the open moorland, especially given Buidhe Road in the southern sections. The increased movement and presence of people would reduce the sense of remoteness. Further

south, the Section B alignment would extend through areas of forestry, the construction phase activities including felling to the wayleave and vehicular movement in addition to additional felling to ensure a wind-firm edge to the retained forestry in the surrounding area. As described within **Annex 1**, this additional felling would be focused between Towers N282 to N297. 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** (not significant) or less.

- 7.5.6 During operation, the steel lattice towers would represent a new linear element within the landscape however there would be a reduction in 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 increase in built form and accessibility would contrast with the more remote / uninhabited characteristics of the LCT and the sense of wildness that is most prevalent across its interior. However, the majority of Section B would be experienced in the context of, and in close proximity to, the existing 132 kV OHLs, limiting the extension of influence upon more remote parts of the wider LCT. Within 2 km of the alignment a **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) effect is predicted. Across the wider LCT 135 – Rounded Hills – Caithness & Sutherland, the effects would reduce to **Moderate-Minor Adverse** or less.

LCT 142 Strath - Caithness & Sutherland.

- 7.5.7 Within Section B, the Strath LCT encompasses three low-lying river valleys extending inland from Brora towards Loch Brora in the north (refer to Viewpoints 7-36 and 7-37) to Dunrobin Glen (Golspie Burn) in the centre of Section B to the River Fleet valley (refer to Viewpoints 7-40 and 7-43) to the southern end of Section B.
- 7.5.8 The construction stage activities and vehicle movements would contrast with the agricultural land use within the strath landscapes. However, this would account for a localised area within the Golspie Burn valley given the commercial plantations. For the River Fleet and Loch Brora valleys, the wider valley floor and pastoral agriculture enables longer-range views towards the activities. A **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) effect is predicted within 1 km of the works. 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** (not significant) or less.
- 7.5.9 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 towers would represent new elements in views channelled within the valleys that would contrast with the more rural / natural characteristics of the LCT. However, the alignment would take the shortest route across each valley, reducing its physical footprint upon the LCT. The influence of the Proposed Development would diminish across wider parts of the LCT at greater distance. Within 1 km of the alignment, a **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) effect is predicted. At greater distances, the alignment would typically represent a more discreet element in the background landscape. Accordingly, across the wider LCT, the effects would be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant) or less.

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

- 7.5.10 Landscape effects for all other LCTs within the Study Area have been identified as not significant during construction and operation. This includes:
- LCT 134 – Sweeping Moorland & Flows LCT;
 - LCT 145 – Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting LCT, and
 - LCT 146– Coastal Farmlands and Woodlands.

- 7.5.11 In each case, these LCTs are spatially separate from the Proposed Development within Section B, and would result in no direct, physical change to the landscape features which define the LCT. 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 including woodland and topography.
- 7.5.12 During construction and operation, effects on the existing characteristics of LCT 146– Coastal Farmlands and Woodlands would be extremely limited based on its spatial separation from the Proposed Development, in combination with the very limited areas from which there would be views of the alignment, and the discreet nature of the Proposed Development within the intervening landscape. The overall effect would be **Negligible** at most (not significant).
- 7.5.13 All other LCTs are located at greater distance from the Proposed Development (>5 km), and typically exhibit more limited ZTV coverage, meaning that large areas would be completely unaffected as a result of the construction activities or the new alignment. As a result, a **Minor** (not significant) effect is predicted for LCT 134 – Sweeping Moorland and Flows and **Negligible** for LCT 145 – Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting.

Assessment of Effects on Designated and Protected Landscapes

- 7.5.14 The detailed assessment of designated and protected landscapes has considered three distinct areas, with reference to their Key Attributes and/or Special Qualities. The identified effects are summarised below.

Ben Klibreck-Armie Forest Wild Land Area (WLA).

- 7.5.15 The Ben Klibreck-Armie Forest Wild Land Area (WLA) is located on the northern part of the Study Area, 6 km north of the Proposed Development. The WLA comprises peatland and hills that, at a broad level, seem very simple in both their form and ground cover. Given these extend over a large area, there is an impression of extreme simplicity and openness which results in a strong sense of awe, as well as a perception of ‘emptiness’ and solitude across the interior. The landscape sensitivity of the WLA is considered to be High-Medium, as identified in the sensitivity analysis for the coinciding LCTs (see **Annex 1**). This is reflective of the high value of the WLA, coupled with the slightly reduced susceptibility to change based on intervening landform and OHLs.
- 7.5.16 The effects on the WLA and its Key Attributes and Qualities would be limited based on its spatial separation from the Proposed Development, in combination with the limited ZTV coverage, which reflects the screening influence of the intervening mountains. In summary, the construction activities and new steel lattice towers would represent extremely discreet additions to the background landscape to the south. The overall effect would be **Negligible** (not significant) during construction and operation. Across the vast majority of the WLA there would be no views and no effect. As such, the integrity of the WLA would not be compromised.

Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA

- 7.5.17 The Proposed Development would extend across the Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA for a distance of approximately 14.8 km. The SLA encompasses an area of rolling moorland hills, punctuated by a series of south-east orientated glens, straths and lochs, and edged by a narrow strip of farmed coastal shelf. The character of this area is distinguished by its composition of contrasting landscape features. Views towards the Proposed Development would be pronounced both from the moorland and from within the valleys (refer to Viewpoints 7-36, 7-43, and 7-35). These would be reduced in places by intervening landform and vegetation cover, the most open views occurring from hilltop locations.
- 7.5.18 During construction the erection of the towers would provide a noticeable change across the moorland, which is characterised by its wild characteristics. The open character of the moorland would result in multiple towers

being visible in any view across the SLA elevated sections. Within the valleys, the vegetation coverage along with topography would reduce long-range visibility across the alignment of the Proposed Development, however localised effects would be observed as the towers are constructed and from compound areas as well as localised tree felling for some locations.

- 7.5.19 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. However, the influence of Section B 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-west. 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.

Summary of Landscape Effects

- 7.5.20 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 3.3: Summary of Effects During Construction

Landscape Receptors	Beneficial Effect						Adverse Effect					
	Major	Major-Mod	Mod	Mod-Minor	Minor	Neg / None.	Negligible	Minor	Minor-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-Major	Major
LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland									X		L	
LCT 142 – Strath – Caithness & Sutherland										X	L	
LCT 134 – Sweeping Moorland and Flows								X				
LCT 145 – Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting							X					
LCT 146– Coastal Farmlands and Woodlands							X					
Ben Klibreck-Armint Forest Wild Land Area (WLA).									X			
Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA												L

Table 7.4: Summary of Landscape Effects During Operation

Landscape Receptors	Beneficial Effect						Adverse Effect					
	Major	Major-Mod	Mod	Mod-Minor	Minor	Neg / None.	Negligible	Minor	Minor-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-Major	Major
LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland									X		L	
LCT 142 – Strath – Caithness & Sutherland										X	L	
LCT 134 – Sweeping Moorland and Flows								X				
LCT 145 – Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting							X					
LCT 146– Coastal Farmlands and Woodlands							X					
Ben Klibreck-Armint Forest Wild Land Area (WLA).									X			
Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA											L	

7.6 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects: Visual

- 7.6.1 The detailed assessment of effects on the visual amenity of residential 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.

Settlements (Building Based Receptors)

- 7.6.2 Four residential properties and five small settlements were included in the visual assessment. Significant effects are identified for all four of the residential properties, and the five settlements. The key effects are summarised below.

SB-01 Gordonbush / Old Town

- 7.6.3 During construction, the erection of the towers along with vehicle movements and compound areas would be viewed at distance across the Loch. Although clearer views will be experienced on the west side of the loch, woodland would obscure some activity on the eastern bank. The Proposed Development is predominantly visible against the background landscape. Overall, the visibility would be more apparent in winter months during leaf fall. This would result in **Major-Moderate Adverse** effects (significant).
- 7.6.4 During operation, the towers would remain a visible feature albeit at distance and set against the panoramic vista of the Loch and Valley, the woodland would continue to filter views to the Proposed Development on the eastern banks. The overall effect would be reduced to **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant).

SB-02 Killin

- 7.6.5 The construction works and new steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity. The Proposed Development would be visible at close range in views to the north. The views would be experienced against the combination of background sky, vegetation and landscape. The Proposed Development would be visible as it climbs up to the moorland north of the property. Overall, the visibility would be more apparent in winter months during leaf fall. This would result in **Major Adverse** effects (significant). The proximity of the Proposed Development to the property would restrict mitigation measures during operation. This would result in **Moderate-Major Adverse** effects remaining (significant).

SB3 Carroll Cottage

- 7.6.6 Given the wide views north towards the Proposed Development the construction works and new steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity. The Proposed Development would be visible as it crosses the valley and climbs up to the moorland north of the property. Overall, the visibility would be more apparent in winter months during leaf fall. This would result in **Major Adverse** effects (significant). The proximity of the Proposed Development to the property would restrict mitigation measures during operation. This would result in **Moderate-Major Adverse** effects remaining (significant).

SB-05 Morvich

- 7.6.7 Construction activity would be visible west of Morvich in the middle ground of the view, however intervening topography and vegetation on the slopes and along the river valley would reduce the extent of visibility westwards. Visibility would increase as the Proposed Development ascends the valley to the Moorland. Some localised tree felling would be necessary on the western slopes and would be a visible change. Construction traffic along the A839 along with temporary compound areas would be a noticeable change for the properties. Effects are reduced during the summer months given the extent of vegetation which would filter views. This

would result in **Major Adverse** effects (significant) during construction. The effects would diminish during operation to **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant).

SB-06 East Kinnauld

- 7.6.8 The Proposed Development would replicate the alignment of the existing OHL to the east, construction work including site clearance tower erection and additional traffic would be visible from the small collection of properties, in the case of the property south of the railway the alignment is located in fields to the east. Temporary access tracks in the valley floor would also be visible but offset by intervening vegetation. This would result in **Major Adverse** effects (significant) during construction. During operation the Proposed Development would be visible in conjunction with the existing OHL, the temporary tracks would have been removed and mitigation measures completed. The effects would diminish to **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant).

SB-07 West Kinnauld

- 7.6.9 The construction of the Proposed Development on the northern valley slopes would be partially visible across pasture fields towards the moorland slopes (Refer to Viewpoint 7-40 A839 Rogart). Tower construction work as well as the creation of access tracks would alter the baseline view. Views of construction activity within the valley floor would be restricted by vegetation south of the properties, but some taller activities may be visible. This would result in **Moderate-Minor Adverse** effects (not significant) during construction. During operation, the overall effect would be **Minor Adverse** effects (not significant).

SB-08/12/13 & 14 Pittentrail & Rogart

- 7.6.10 From Pittentrail and Rogart, views towards the Proposed Development to the east would be filtered by mature vegetation and landform of the glen. Views to more distant parts of the Proposed Development, as it climbs the valleys southern slopes would be partially screened with some views of the upper parts of the transmission towers. The overall effect for the settlement would be **Minor Adverse** effects (not significant).

SB-11 Eiden

- 7.6.11 The Proposed Development would introduce a second OHL within the valley. Given the wide views, construction activities would be visible particularly in regards to vegetation clearance and construction of the towers. During construction tower erection, localised tree clearance, temporary access points and construction traffic would all be noticeable changes in the wide view across the valley floor to the northeast of the properties.
- 7.6.12 Construction activity would be visible as the Proposed Development ascends the northern slopes. Topography and vegetation would restrict views of construction to the southeast. This would result in **Major Adverse** effects (significant) during construction. During operation the Proposed Development would be visible in conjunction with the existing OHL, the temporary tracks would have been removed and mitigation measures completed. The effects would diminish to **Major-Moderate Adverse** effects (significant).

SB-15 Dalnamain

- 7.6.13 The Proposed Development would run parallel and to the east northeast of the existing OHLs towards Eiden. It would be visible along the moorland before descending into the valley, where tree cover, and topography restricts visibility. As the alignment rises out of the valley northwest of Morvich some views of the towers would be possible but viewed from distance and in the context of the wider moorland landscape.
- 7.6.14 During construction, activities would be evident south from Craeg a Bhlair including tower erection, temporary tracks, construction movement and compounds, as the Proposed Development heads southwest parallel to the

existing OHL towards the property at distances up to 1 km this would result in **Major-Moderate Adverse** effects (significant). During operation, the alignment would follow the route of the existing OHL and in the wide views of the moorland this would remain a perceptible change to the baseline view. At distances up to 1 km this would result in **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant).

SB-16 Brae Cottage

7.6.15 Brae Cottage is orientated towards the south-east and will experience views towards the alignment of the Proposed Development as it runs parallel to the two existing OHLs approximately 500 m from the property. The Proposed Development will be positioned on elevated ground, south of the existing OHLs. Construction work will be visible both in proximity of the house and to the east and west up to distances of 2 km. The high ground of Creag Dail na Meine restricts longer views as the existing OHL and the Proposed Development head northeast towards Eiden.

7.6.16 Construction activity including tree felling, tower erection, construction traffic, compounds and crane work will result in **Major-Moderate Adverse** effects (significant). During operation the addition of a third OHL will increase the built elements within the near ground view and its location on higher ground adds layering to the built elements. The duplicity of OHLs will be visible across the moorland plateau for 2km with some topographical mitigation. This would result in **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant).

Other Settlements

7.6.17 No significant effects are identified from other settlements due to distance and effect of intervening landform and tree cover.

Transport Routes

7.6.18 Six key transport routes have been included in the visual assessment this includes two A roads, three groups of B or unclassified roads within the two valley catchments and the Far North Railway. Five of the routes extend directly under the alignment route, and the other would be located within 4 km of the closest tower. Significant effects are identified for localised sections of five of these routes, during construction and during operation. The key effects are summarised below.

A Roads

7.6.19 Views from the A9(T) (RB-1) (Refer to Viewpoints 7-31, 7-34, 7-33, and 7-43) would be restricted due to vegetation and intervening topography as well as distance from the road to the Proposed Development. Some distant views of construction works may be possible as the road approaches and crosses Loch Fleet at the Mound but given intervening vegetation and the topography this would be fleeting. As the road heads north, the topography will restrict views of the construction works. Given the prominence of the road, construction traffic is likely to have a visual presence along with new access tracks, compounds. This would result in **Minor-Negligible Adverse** effects (not significant). During operation, views from the road towards the Proposed Development will be limited due to topography resulting in **Negligible Adverse** effects (not significant).

7.6.20 The Proposed Development crosses the A839 (RB-2) route west of Morvich between towers N263 and N264. From localised sections, there would be clear, close-proximity views of the construction activities and new steel lattice towers (Refer to Viewpoint 7-40 A839 Rogart). This would result in **Major-Moderate Adverse** effects (significant). During operation, views from the road towards the Proposed Development will be **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant).

- 7.6.21 Across wider parts of these routes, potential views of the Proposed Development would be more restricted based on the presence of roadside vegetation / intervening tree cover and topography, in combination with the increasing distance of view. Accordingly, the influence of the construction activities and new steel lattice towers would reduce. Across the wider A839, the effect would be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction and operation.

B Roads and Minor Roads

- 7.6.22 Users of Gordonbush Road (RB-3) would experience views of the Proposed Development crossing the glen (Refer to Viewpoints 7-36, 7-37 and 7-35). During construction, the tower erection, crane work, construction traffic and compounds would all be visible within the valley, given the open character of the valley, at these distances, the construction activities would be prominent within the field of view. This would result in **Major-Moderate Adverse** effects (significant) within 3 km during construction. During operation the Proposed Development would remain a visual built element within a wide landscape with limited manmade features resulting in **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant) within 3 km.
- 7.6.23 Dunrobin Glen road (RB-4) long-distance views towards the construction work would be experienced from elevated sections of the road across the moorland from the east and west. Along the route, the woodland blocks are often offset from the road enabling long-distance views, although at times views are reduced due to the woodland blocks as well as topography. In sections of the alignment where the Proposed Development dissects the woodland, localised tree-felling would be a visible activity and this would be experienced alongside crane works, tower erection and storage compounds. Given the broad open and wide scale of the landscape the alignment will be viewed in a broad vista both north and south from the road. This would result in **Major-Moderate Adverse** effects (significant) within 3 km during construction. During operation the Proposed Development would remain a visual built element within a wide landscape with limited manmade features resulting in **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant) within 3 km.
- 7.6.24 From Lochbuie Road (RB-5) Tower erection, access tracks, crane activity and compound storage will all be noticeable elements of construction within the wide vista of the open moorland Refer to Viewpoint 7-42 Little Torboll and Viewpoint 7-54 Clashcoig (Lochbuidhe Road)). The alignment crosses the road to the west of Dalnamain, before proceeding, roughly parallel to the road west towards Loch Buidhe. Here, the existing two OHLs are a prominent linear feature, and the Proposed Development runs parallel to the existing OHLs, just skirting the north of the plantation forestry blocks. In the open expansive moorland this will be a significant duplication of the built elements. As a result, within 2 km of the Proposed Development the effect during construction is **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant). Given the vegetation coverage further west and the alignment heading in a northeastern direction away from the route this would result in **Moderate-Minor Adverse** effects (not significant). During operation, the alignment west of Dalnamian will remain a prominent visual element as it traverses the moorland in parallel with the existing OHL, although this is tempered by its location on the edge of the plantation blocks. East of Dalnamain, the alignment runs parallel with the existing OHL and will be visible until it descends into the River Fleet valley. This would result in **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant) within 2 km during operation.

Railway Lines

- 7.6.25 The Proposed Development would extend directly across the Far North Rail Line (RB-6). The construction works and new steel lattice towers would be experienced at proximity from the section in closest proximity to the Proposed Development (between Pittentrail and Morvich) and in distances up to 2 km east. As the route traverses north alongside the A9 between the Mound and Golspie, views would be predominantly screened by intervening woodland. This would result in **Major-Moderate Adverse** effects (significant) within 2 km of the Proposed Development. During operation, the Proposed Development will be viewed in conjunction and

running parallel with the existing OHL. The OHL will be a visible built element within the landscape, especially as the alignment ascends the valley slopes and given the open pastoral landscape within 2 km of the alignment. This would result in **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant).

Core Paths

- 7.6.26 Six core-path groups are identified within the Study Area (RB-7 to RB-12), of these three are considered to have direct effects. The key effects are summarised below.

RB-7- Drove Road SU06-03

- 7.6.27 The Drove Road is considered to have direct effects, as the Proposed Development traverses the route, west of Killin as it descends into the Loch Brora valley. The path has clear views towards the Proposed Development once it has climbed from West Clyne and follows a level plateau across the open moorland. Apart from the lower elevations between west and east Clyne the Proposed Development will form a distinctive element within the view and construction activity will be prominent across the elevated length of the path. Construction activity will be visible as the alignment heads east across An Dubh- Lochan. This would result in **Major-Moderate Adverse** effects (significant) during construction. During operation, the alignment will remain a visible built element within a wide view that, apart from forestry plantation, has limited visible signs of human activity. The effects would therefore remain as **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant).

RB-8 Doll Bridge- Loch Brora SU06.14

- 7.6.28 This path follows a predominantly vegetated route north of the river, with views restricted until the far northern sections. From 2 km distance the construction activities will be visible as the footpath clears the woodland and opens to expansive views northwards across the valley. This would result in **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant) during construction. During operation, the Proposed Development would remain a significant element within the view from the footpaths along the southern bank effects would remain **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant).

RB-9 Loch Brora West Track SU06.02

- 7.6.29 This path on the southern bank affords clearer views towards Killin and the alignment of the Proposed Development as it descends and then crosses the valley. From 2 km distance the construction activities will be visible as the footpath clears the woodland and opens to expansive views northwards across the valley. This would result in **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant) during construction. During operation, the Proposed Development would remain a significant element within the view from the footpaths along the southern bank effects would remain **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant).

RB-10 Wind Farm Track SU12.19, SU12.14 Golspie Tower- Ben Bhraggie, and SU12.13

- 7.6.30 This group of paths traverses the vegetated southern slopes of the Golspie valley, each is considered to have indirect effects as the alignment of the Proposed Development is located north of the paths (Refer to Viewpoint 7-39 Ben Bhraggie). This would result in **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant) during construction works to the north. Except for SU12.14 the vegetated nature of the tracks reduces visibility towards the Proposed Development and therefore effects during construction and operation would be considered as **Minor Adverse** (not significant) SU12.14 is a 4 km track heading in a circular route towards Duke of Sutherland monument often within Ben Bhraggie Wood it does open out to open moorland. The Proposed Development at the closest point is c.3 km to the north. From the open moorland, views towards the construction work will be expansive between Aberscross Hill to the west and Loch nan Caorach in the east, the tower erection, construction movement, crane activity and compounds will all be key visible elements within the view, tempered by the distance and the expansive skyline view from the path. This would result in **Moderate Adverse** effects

(significant) during construction. During operation the Proposed Development would remain a visible entity within the view, however its impact would diminish given the expansive nature of the view, this would result in **Minor-Moderate Adverse** effects (not-significant).

RB-11 SU12.24 Loch Lunndaidh

7.6.31 A short path which once clear of the Culmally Plantation has views northwards towards the Proposed Development as it traverses across the moorland towards Loch Lunndaidh. At its closest point the path is 3 km south of the Proposed Development but the alignment on elevated ground of Benn Lunndaidh enhances its visibility.

7.6.32 During construction the activity will be visible from the length of the path as users look northwards. Despite the broad open character of the view this would result in **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant). During operation the Proposed Development would remain a visible entity within the view, however its impact would diminish given the expansive nature of the view, this would result in **Moderate-Minor Adverse** effects (not-significant).

RB-12 SU 20.10

7.6.33 This track follows a vegetated route towards Eiden views across the valley towards the Proposed Development alignment will be intermittent, however during construction the taller activities such as tower erection could be visible within the valley and would be visible as the alignment traverses north up the slopes (Refer to Viewpoint 7-41). This would result in **Major Adverse** effects within 500 m for both construction and operation and **Minor Adverse** effects (not significant) for both construction and operational phases across the wider path route.

RB-13 SU20.02 and SU20.01

7.6.34 The two paths combine to form a longer track that traverses the southern slopes of the Fleet Valley from Eiden towards Inchcape. SU20.02 is a short section of path that climbs up towards the moorland at Eiden, the Proposed Development is located just to the east of the route and the existing OHL and would involve tree clearance (Refer to Viewpoint 7-41 An Droighneach). Clear views of the construction work would be experienced at close range as the alignment climbs south out of the valley. Distant views of the construction activities within the valley and on the northern slopes would be experienced as well as views from the top of the path across the moorland as the Proposed Development heads southwest towards Dalnamain.

7.6.35 During construction this would result in **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant) for distant views rising to **Major Adverse** effects (significant) within 500 m of the path. During operation the presence of a second OHL increases the built elements within the view and would result in **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant) for views within 500 m.

7.6.36 SU20.01 follows a route across the moorland on the southern edge of plantation woodland. As the path heads west, it rises towards An Droighneach and Meall Mor. Views north are restricted by the woodland and views south are partially contained by the moorland south of Meall Mor. Views towards the Proposed Development diminish as the track heads west and the Proposed Development heads southwest. Within 500 m clear views of construction work will be evident as the alignment progresses across the moorland. From the eastern 500 m of the path, views towards the Proposed Development up to 2 km, would be experienced, with Dalnamain visible to the south.

7.6.37 As a result, in a range up to 500 m the effects during construction would be **Major Adverse** effects (significant), during operation this would result in **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant). For western sections of the track the intervening topography results in **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant) reducing to **Minor Adverse** (not significant) beyond 500 m and then **Negligible** as the track descends towards Bad an Fheidh.

RB-14 SU09.19 Achvaich- Loch Buidhe

- 7.6.38 Views towards the Proposed Development would be experienced at the northern end of the path as it clears the woodland south of Loch Buidhe. The alignment will result in tree clearance as the Proposed Development progresses west over Meall Mor and east towards Meall Chaorainn. Tree cover would reduce visibility of the Proposed Development as users traverse the path, but once the path approaches the cleared sections of the woodland, the construction work would be visible along the linear alignment of the Proposed Development. As a result, within 500 m of the Proposed Development the effects during construction would be **Major-Moderate Adverse** effects (significant). During operation, the cleared section of woodland would enable long-range views of the Proposed Development alignment both east and west of the path, the effects would be **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant).

Other Core-paths

- 7.6.39 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 intervening landform, tree / forest cover and the increasing distance of view. 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 **Negligible** (not significant) during construction and operation.

Recreational Routes

RB-13 NCN Route 01

- 7.6.40 Given the vegetation cover of the Shin valley, the distances from the Proposed Development and intervening topography, views towards the east from the route, south of Lairg are generally restricted. Construction traffic may utilise the existing road network and track access towards the windfarms. At Invershin, the closest point to the Proposed Development, views towards the construction of Section B of the Proposed Development will be limited, given the confines of the valley, tree cover and the distance of 7km, as a result the effects during construction and operation would be **Negligible Adverse** (not significant).

Long-Distance Routes

RB-14 North Coast 500

- 7.6.41 Within the Study Area the long-distance route is aligned with the A9(T), which has been addressed in RC01 (Refer to Viewpoints 7-31, 7-34, 7-33, and 7-43). Given the speeds of cyclists and other recreational users of the route, alongside utilisation of the lay-bys and viewing areas along the A9(T) it is expected that views towards the Proposed Development would be more apparent than that of commuters using the A9(T). However, across the study area the topography and vegetation would restrict views towards the Proposed Development. Fleeting, and distant views westwards from The Mound towards Morvich may be perceived through the vegetation. Construction traffic utilising the A9(T) would be apparent for slower road users. This would result in **Minor Adverse** effects (not significant). During operation, views from the road towards the Proposed Development will be limited due to topography and vegetation resulting in **Negligible Adverse** effects (not significant).

Outdoor Locations

OB-01 Duke of Sutherland Monument

- 7.6.42 The monument is accessed via core-path SU12.14, which is part of the group of paths RB-09. The Proposed Development at the closest point is approximately 3 km to the north (Refer to Viewpoint 7-39 Ben Bhraggie).

From the open moorland, views towards the construction work will be visible between Aberscross Hill to the west and Loch nan Caorach in the east. Visitors to the monument would perceive the construction work tempered by the distance and the expansive skyline view from the monument.

- 7.6.43 This would result in **Major-Moderate Adverse** effects (significant) during construction. During operation the Proposed Development would remain a visible entity within the view, however its impact would diminish given the expansive nature of the view, this would result in **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant).

Summary of Visual Effects

- 7.6.44 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 Receptors	Beneficial Effect						Adverse Effect					
	Major	Major-Mod	Mod	Mod-Minor	Minor	Neg / None	Negligible	Minor	Minor-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-Major	Major
Settlements								1	1	1	2	4
Transport Routes								1			5L	
Recreational Routes										4	1	3
Outdoor Locations										1		
Totals							0	2	1	5	8	7

Table 7.6: Summary of Effects During Operation

Visual Receptors	Beneficial Effect						Adverse Effect					
	Major	Major-Mod	Mod	Mod-Minor	Minor	Neg / None	Negligible	Minor	Minor-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-Major	Major
Settlements								4		3	2	
Transport Routes							1			5		
Recreational Routes									2	4	1	1
Outdoor Locations								1				
Totals							1	5	2	12	3	1

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 B, this includes:
 - Section A and Section C of the Proposed Development (steel lattice tower OHL);
 - Proposed Carnaig 400 kV Substation (subject of a separate planning application).
- Scenario 2: Including, in addition, other unrelated development proposals (considered during the operation phase only). For Section B, this includes:
 - Consented Lairg II Wind Farm Redesign (21/00849/FUL) (ten turbines, 150-200 m to tip);
 - Proposed Acheilidh Wind Farm (Lairg III) (24/02094/S36) (12 turbines, 200-230 m to tip);
 - Scoping-stage Balblair Wind Farm (24/01500/SCOP) (nine turbines, 180 m to tip); and
 - Proposed Garvary Wind Farm (21/01921/S36) (25 turbines, up to 180 m to tip).

7.7.3 As it is likely that Scenario 1 development would be constructed concurrently with the Proposed Development in Section B, 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 LVIAs of Section A and Section C of the Proposed Development have been completed and are included in this EIA Report as **Volume 5, Appendix 7.5** and **Volume 5, Appendix 7.7**. These LVIAs identified effects to the following receptors which have been identified within the Study Area for Section B.

- Landscape effects
 - LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT;
 - LCT 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland LCT;
 - LCT 134 – Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland LCT;
 - LCT 145 – Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting LCT;
 - LCT 146 – Coastal Farmlands and Woodlands; and.
 - Loch Fleet, Loch Brora, and Glen Loth SLA.
- Visual effects
 - Residential receptors SB1- SB3, SB5-8, SB11-16;
 - Road and Rail users RB1 – RB6;
 - Recreational Route receptors RB7 – RB15; and
 - Receptors at Outdoor Locations OC1.

7.7.5 The predicted effects on these receptors, as identified within the Section A LVIA (**Volume 5, Appendix 7.5**), Section C LVIA (**Volume 5, Appendix 7.7**), and Section B LVIA (**this Appendix**) are detailed in **Table 7.77** 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, unless it is predicted that the effects of the Carnaig 400kV Substation would be greater than Negligible.

Table 7.7: Individual Effects on Cumulative Receptors

LCT / Designated or Protected Landscape	Section B Effect Rating	Section A Effect Rating	Section C Effect Rating	Included in Cumulative
LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) Locally Major-Moderate Adverse (significant)	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) (locally Major-Moderate Adverse, significant)	Yes
LCT 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Adverse (significant)	Construction and Operation: Moderate- Adverse (significant) Locally Major-Moderate Adverse (significant)	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) (locally Major-Moderate Adverse, significant)	Yes
LCT 139 Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland	Construction and Operation: Minor (not significant)	No effect	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)	No
LCT 145 Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting	Construction and Operation: Negligible (not significant)	No effect	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)	No
LCT 146 – Coastal Farmland & Woodlands	Construction and Operation: Negligible (not significant)	Construction and Operation: Negligible Adverse (not significant)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	No
Ben Klibreck- Armine Forest Wild Land Area (WLA)	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)	No effect	No effect	No
The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA	Construction and Operation: Negligible	Construction and Operation:	No effect	No

LCT / Designated or Protected Landscape	Section B Effect Rating	Section A Effect Rating	Section C Effect Rating	Included in Cumulative
	(locally Moderate-Minor Adverse, not significant)	Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) during construction Moderate Adverse (significant) during operation		
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	No effect	Yes
Old Town/ Gordonbush (SB-1)	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant)	No effect	No effect	No
Killin (SB-2),	Construction and Operation: Major-Moderate Adverse (significant)	No effect	No effect	No
Carroll Cottage (SB-3)	Construction and Operation: Major-Moderate Adverse (significant)	No effect	No effect	No
Morvich (SB-5)	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant)	No effect	No effect	No
East Kinnauld (SB-6)	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant)	No effect	No effect	No
West Kinnauld (SB-7)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	No effect	No effect	No
Pittentail-Rogart (SB-8/12/13/14)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	No effect	No effect	No
Eiden (SB-11)	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant)	No effect	No effect	No
Dalnamain (SB-15)	Construction and Operation: Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) (local)	No effect	No effect	No

LCT / Designated or Protected Landscape	Section B Effect Rating	Section A Effect Rating	Section C Effect Rating	Included in Cumulative
Brae Cottage (SB-16)	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant)	No effect	No effect	No
A9 (T) Dornoch to Brora (RC-1)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	No effect	No effect	No
A839 The Mound to Lairg (RB-02)	Construction and Operation: (locally Moderate Adverse, significant)	No effect	No effect	No
Minor Roads River Brora catchment area (RB-03)	Construction and Operation: (locally Moderate Adverse, significant)	No effect	No effect	No
Minor Roads Golspie Burn Catchment (RB-04)	Construction and Operation: (locally Moderate Adverse, significant)	No effect	No effect	No
Lochbuie Road (RB-05)	Construction and Operation: (locally Moderate Adverse, significant)	No effect	Construction and Operation: Negligible	No
Far North Railway (RB-06),	Construction and Operation: (locally Moderate Adverse, significant)	Construction and Operation: Major Adverse (significant) within 500 m at Marrel Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider route	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)	No
Core Path SU06.03 (RB-07)	Construction and Operation: (locally Major-Moderate Adverse, significant)	No effect	No effect	No
Core Path SU06.11 (RB-08)	Construction and Operation: (locally Moderate Adverse, significant)	No effect	No effect	No
Core Path SU12.14/13/19 (RB-09)	Construction and Operation: (locally Minor-Moderate Adverse, not significant)	No effect	No effect	No
Core Path SU12.24 (RB-10)	Construction and Operation: Minor-	No effect	No effect	No

LCT / Designated or Protected Landscape	Section B Effect Rating	Section A Effect Rating	Section C Effect Rating	Included in Cumulative
	moderate Adverse (not significant)			
Core Path SU20.01, .02,.10 (RB-11)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant) (locally Major Adverse, significant)	No effect	No effect	No
Core Path SU09.19 (RB-12)	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant)	No effect	No effect	No
Duke of Sutherland Monument (OB-01)	Construction and Operation: Minor-Moderate Adverse (not significant)	No effect	No effect	Yes

7.7.6 Given the location of the proposed Carnaig 400 kV Substation at the transition of Section B and Section C, the above receptors are also considered to comprise those potentially affected by the Substation. Accordingly, this is also described within the following assessment of cumulative effects for Scenario 1 in **Table 7.88**.

7.7.7 Cumulative Scope: Scenario 2

7.7.8 The developments associated with Scenario 2 would be located to the north of the Proposed Development around An Stoc Bheinn. 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

7.7.9 The cumulative assessment for the above receptors is presented below in **Table 7.888**. 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 7.88: Cumulative Effects

Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland	Scenario 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section A and C of the Proposed Development; Proposed Carnaig 400 kV Substation. 	<p>The Carnaig 400 kV substation would result in notable, albeit very localised effects on landscape character due to its limited footprint and height.</p> <p>Section A of the Proposed Development extends through upland parts of the LCT. Similar to Section C, 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.</p> <p>On balance, the cumulative effect would be Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) across localised parts on the LCT in closest proximity to the Proposed Development during construction and operation (typically within</p>

Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
		approximately 2 km). The effects would reduce across the wider LCT and would be Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) or less.
	<p>Scenario 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consented Lairg II Wind Farm Redesign; Consented Garvary Wind Farm; Proposed Acheilidh Wind Farm (Lairg III); Scoping-stage Balblair Wind Farm. 	<p>The consented and proposed wind farm developments would merge to form a single, combined array of wind turbines on the hills to the north of the Proposed Development. The wind farms would individually and collectively exert significant effects on local landscape character in their own right due to the vertical scale of the turbines (currently proposed at up to 230 m to tip) and the movement of the rotors. However, these effects would diminish at greater distance and accordingly would account for a relatively focused geographic area within an expansive LCT.</p> <p>Should all of the proposals go ahead, the cumulative effect across the LCT as a whole is predicted to be Moderate Adverse (significant). This is based primarily on the combined presence of large-scale wind turbines across the LCT. As noted above for Scenario 1, the effects of the Proposed Development would be more localised, and accordingly its contribution to cumulative effects across the LCT would be relatively limited.</p>
LCT 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland	<p>Scenario 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section A and C of the Proposed Development Proposed Carnaig 400 kV Substation. 	<p>Section C of the Proposed Development extends through very localised parts of the LCT, where the alignment extends across intervening straths. Similarly to Section B, the Proposed Development extends 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 (significant) across localised parts on the LCT in closest proximity to the Proposed Development during construction and operation (typically within approximately 1 km). The effects would reduce across the wider LCT and would be Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) or less.</p>
	<p>Scenario 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consented Lairg II Wind Farm Redesign Acheilidh Wind Farm (Lairg III) Garvary Wind Farm 	<p>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 restricted by the landform along the strath sides. Accordingly, the cumulative effect is not predicted to vary from that described in relation to Scenario 1.</p>
Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA	<p>Scenario 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sections A and C of the Proposed Development Proposed Carnaig 400 kV Substation 	<p>Visibility towards the proposed Carnaig substation and section C of the Proposed development would be restricted to the higher slopes on the western edge of the SLA and viewed over distance with intervening topography and vegetation diminishing visibility.</p> <p>On balance, the cumulative effect across parts of the WLA within the Study Area would be Minor Adverse (not significant).</p> <p>Section A of the Proposed Development would be visible across the eastern sections of the SLA and would be a prominent feature across the elevated moorland. The cumulative effect across parts of the WLA within the Study Area would be Major-Moderate Adverse (significant).</p>
	Scenario 2:	<p>From the more elevated slopes and summits on the western edge of the SLA there would be views of these proposed wind farms. These would be located in the distance across the River Fleet valley, this would limit the</p>

Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consented Lairg II Wind Farm Redesign Acheilidh Wind Farm (Lairg III) Garvary Wind Farm 	influence on the existing landscape character. Consequently, it is predicted that the cumulative effects would align to those for Scenario 1.
Visual Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
Duke of Sutherland monument (OB-01)	Scenario 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section C of the Proposed Development Proposed Carnaig 400 kV Substation 	Visibility towards the proposed Carnaig substation and section C of the Proposed development would be restricted to the higher slopes on the western edge of the SLA and viewed over distance with intervening topography and vegetation diminishing visibility. On balance, the cumulative effect across parts of the WLA within the Study Area would be Minor Adverse (not significant).
	Scenario 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consented Lairg II Wind Farm Redesign Acheilidh Wind Farm (Lairg III) Garvary Wind Farm 	Potential views of Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. There would be no change to the cumulative effect described in relation to Scenario 1.

7.8 Mitigation

7.8.1 Principal mitigation measures throughout Section B 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 construction compound 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.

7.9 Residual Effects

- 7.9.1 The assessment of operational effects considers 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 two LCTs during construction namely the LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT and 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland LCT. 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 as well as intervening vegetation or topography, these temporary effects would be primarily focused within 1 km of the Proposed Development within LCT 142 and 2 km within LCT 135.
- 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 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT and 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland LCT. These effects would be based upon the addition of the proposed steel lattice towers, which would represent new vertical features within the local landscape. The key effects would remain focussed within 1 km of the Proposed Development within the valleys and 2 km on the moorland. At greater distances, the influence of the Proposed Development would reduce, and the effects would not be significant.

Visual Effects

- 7.10.3 During construction, significant adverse effects were identified for eleven residential properties located within close proximity of the Proposed Development, the number is reduced to seven during operation.
- 7.10.4 There would also be significant effects applicable to localised sections of six recreational Core Paths routes and one outdoor location (Duke of Sutherland Monument). In terms of road / rail users, there would be significant

effects on views from localised sections of five transport routes comprising the Far North Rail Line, minor roads within the valleys and the A839.

Cumulative Effects

- 7.10.5 The LVIA has identified that there would be significant effects on localised parts of the landscape and select visual receptors as a result of Section B of the Proposed Development, in combination with other parts of the Proposed Development (Sections A and C), related works, and / or other proposed unrelated developments.
- 7.10.6 In terms of landscape character, the LVIA has identified that there would be significant cumulative effects from Section C of the Proposed Development applicable to LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland and LCT 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland at a local level. Significant cumulative effects are identified for Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA in combination with Section A of the Proposed Development.
- 7.10.7 In terms of visual receptors, there would be no significant cumulative effects on receptors within the Section B Study Area.

Conclusions

- 7.10.8 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 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 significant effects on visual receptors relating to views of Sections A and C.

VOLUME 5: APPENDIX 7.6: ANNEX 1 –LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT SECTION B

1.	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT SECTION B	1
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1. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT SECTION B

1.1.1 This Annex provides the detailed assessment of potential effects on landscape character as a result of the Proposed Development (Section B). Landscape Character Types (LCTs) that have been identified for consideration within the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and 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, Figure 7.3-3: Section B Landscape Character**.

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

- 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT; and
- 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland LCT.

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

- 134 – Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland LCT;
- 145 – Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting LCT, and
- 146 – Coastal Farmlands and Woodlands.

1.1.4 The assessment of potential effects on these LCTs is set out in Tables 1 – 5. The assessment refers to the key characteristics specific to each LCT as described within the National Landscape Character Assessment¹.

¹ NatureScot. 2019. National Landscape Character Assessment in Scotland

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

Baseline Description	
Description	<p>This LCT encompasses extensive parts of Caithness and Sutherland. Much of the Section B alignment would be located within the LCT, extending from Col-bheinn in the north to Loch Buidhe and the Substation at Meall Mor in the south. Within the Study Area, the LCT is present in four distinct areas, separated by intervening river valleys.</p> <p>At the northern end of Section B (across parts of the LCT north-east of Brora), the landscape comprises open, smoothly rolling moorland, occasionally forming small, rounded hills or crags separated by small glens. Small lochs and plantation woodlands are noticeable feature within this landscape.</p> <p>Further south, across parts of the LCT between the Loch Brora and Aberscross hill, the Section B alignment extends through a landscape that is characterised by open moorland with peaks and small Lochs. Two existing OHLs are noticeable linear features within this landscape. Vehicular access is limited to forestry or windfarm access tracks. Core paths provide access to the Duke of Sutherland Monument and Loch Lunndaigh.</p> <p>The southern-most area of the LCT is located on the west side of Creag Dail na Meine. This area comprises a mix of forestry, woodland and open, rolling moorland extending towards Loch Buidhe.</p>
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA coincides with the northern sections of the LCT to Loch Fleet.
Key Characteristics	<p>Rolling hills forming broad, subtly rounded summits but with some more pronounced hills also occurring, these often feature steeper slopes along the coast or where the hills are truncated by deep glens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hills cut by numerous narrow burns and small lochans lie within dips, corries and on plateau summits. • 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.

Baseline Description	
Landscape Value	The LCT is sparsely settled and incorporates several historical and archaeological sites. The rolling hills, Lochs and natural features contribute towards its aesthetic qualities. It is also valued for its strong wild character and sense of remoteness. Its combination of natural beauty, historical significance, and recreational potential for outdoor activities also contribute towards its perceived value. On balance, Landscape Value is High-Medium.
Assessment of Effects	
Possible Landscape Receptors	Potential Effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rolling hills forming broad, subtly rounded summits but with some more pronounced hills also occurring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction works or new steel lattice towers could interrupt the existing skyline in the vicinity of more 'pronounced hills' forming a new focus.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fragments of broadleaf woodland in inaccessible locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Proposed Development extends through areas of existing plantation forestry from Carrol in the north (on the eastern side of the Kyle of Sutherland), to Loch Buidhe in the south. There would be localised felling of forestry to facilitate construction of Section B. However, this primarily avoids broadleaved woodland.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scarcely settled with a largely uninhabited interior. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction works and the new steel lattice towers would represent new elements of human activity / presence within the landscape.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rich in archaeology and heritage with features such as Duke of Sutherland Monument, standing stones, brochs and medieval townships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The alignment avoids direct impacts upon archaeological features, albeit may be visible from some archaeological/ heritage points of interest.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction works and the new steel lattice towers would represent new elements of human activity / presence within the landscape. The northern end of the Section B alignment would extend broadly parallel to the existing 132 kV OHLs from north and east and the substation at Loch Buidhe.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convex character of hill slopes limiting distant visibility and views of the hill tops when travelling through the landscape. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The landform would temper views of the Proposed Development from wider parts, and lower-lying areas within the LCT.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views into the interior of the hills very restricted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above, the landform would temper views of the Proposed Development from lower-lying surrounding areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong sense of wild character. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction works and the new steel lattice towers would represent new elements of human activity / presence within the landscape, with the potential to erode the sense of wildness across localised areas.

Baseline Description	
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>The LCT encompasses extensive geographic areas. Localised parts of the LCT coincide with regionally valued landscapes. The Proposed Development traverses these areas. in combination with Section C. Lengths of Section B cross part of the LCT that are influenced by plantation forestry (between Dalnamain and Loch Buidhe), and existing 132 kV OHL (from the north and west towards Loch Buidhe). These elements reduce the susceptibility of the LCT to the Proposed Development.</p> <p>This landscape exhibits characteristics that may tolerate a degree of change of the type proposed with this Development. This is due to the presence of existing OHL infrastructure and wind farm developments, as well as the undulating hilly terrains, which may locally reduce the susceptibility to change.</p> <p>However, the scenic qualities and the openness of this highly valued peatlands landscape suggest it may be susceptible to relatively small changes particularly given the proximity to existing industrial elements associated to wind farms and transmission lines.</p> <p>On balance, the composition of landscape features and overall characteristics are assessed as being tolerant of some degree of change of the type proposed. Accordingly, landscape sensitivity to development of the type proposed is assessed as Medium.</p>
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	<p>Construction works would involve localised forestry felling which would create a wayleave for the alignment, for example west of Dunrobin Glen temporary access tracks would be constructed to facilitate the erection of the new towers. Across northern parts of Section B, these tracks would extend across open moorland after initially utilising the Gordonbush windfarm access tracks.</p> <p>Further south (between Carrol and Aberscross Hill), the Kilbraur windfarm tracks would be utilised before extending across open moorland around Loch Horn</p> <p>Existing forestry tracks would be utilised to provide construction access where practicable to reduce the extent of new tracks required. As a result, the construction works are likely to be most noticeable within the moorland setting across Section B. Conversely, works within the areas of forestry between Dalnamain and Loch Buidhe would be more enclosed, limiting visibility from wider surrounding areas. Within more open views the activities would appear like other forest management works which would be expected to take place within these areas.</p> <p>Once operational, the Proposed Development would introduce new steel lattice towers, representing a new linear element within the landscape. Most of Section B would extend across open moorland. The towers would be broadly similar in terms of design, albeit with taller towers, than the existing 132 kV OHLs that extend across the moorland towards Loch Buidhe. The surrounding hillsides would restrict views of the towers from wider parts of the LCT. Within the southern sections of the LCT, the Proposed Development would be experienced in conjunction with the existing OHL.</p> <p>Accordingly, the effects would be focused within parts of the LCT where the 'sense of wild character' is less pronounced.</p> <p>On balance, the key effects would be focused within an area extending up to 2 km from the alignment (reducing where this extends through forestry). This represents a localised section of the LCT, where the effect magnitude would typically be High 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 be Low during construction and operation.</p>
Significance of Effect	<p>The construction effects would be largely consistent along Section B in accordance with the extent of enclosure by surrounding landform. Tree cover to the southern sections around Loch Buidhe towards Meall Mor provides a contrast to the moorland terrain which most of the section traverses in the LCT. Vehicular movement and works activities would be most visible across the open moorland, especially given Buidhe Road in the southern sections. The increased movement and presence of people would</p>

Baseline Description	
	<p>reduce the sense of remoteness. Further south, the Section B alignment would extend through areas of forestry, the construction phase activities (including felling and vehicular movement) would not necessarily appear out of place within this managed landscape.</p> <p>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 increase in built form and accessibility would contrast with the more remote / uninhabited characteristics of the LCT and the sense of wildness that is most prevalent across its interior. However, the majority of Section B would be experienced in the context of the existing 132 kV OHLs, limiting its influence upon more remote parts of the LCT.</p> <p>In summary, within 1000m of the 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) during construction and operation.</p>

Table 2: Effects on LCT 142 – Strath – Caithness & Sutherland

Baseline Description	
Description	<p>This LCT encompasses the three low-lying river valleys extending inland from Brora towards Loch Brora in the north to Dunrobin Glen (Golspie Burn) in the centre of Section B to the River Fleet valley to the southern end of Section B.</p> <p>Given the physical and spatial separation of these valleys, the LCT essentially forms three discrete landscape character areas.</p> <p>In each, the enclosed strath landscapes comprise areas of woodland, farmland and scattered settlement (primarily isolated dwellings and farmsteads) aligned along the central watercourse. Local and strategic roads are located within the valleys. In the River Fleet valley this also incorporates the mainline railway from Lairg. Along each strath, the degree of enclosure varies with the height and steepness of surrounding hills.</p>
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	<p>The eastern sections of the north and southern LCT valleys and all the middle valley coincide with The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA.</p>
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

Baseline Description	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 on views from roads provided by several 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.
Landscape Value	<p>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, albeit the LCT is almost entirely undesignated. On balance, the Landscape Value is Medium.</p>
Assessment of Effects	
Possible Landscape Receptors	Potential Effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lochs in some straths, where a string of small lochs add to the scenic richness of the lower strath. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Proposed Development would extend across the landscape, directly above the Golspie Burn, River Fleet and Loch Brora. Based on the height of the towers, the Proposed Development would potentially form a new focus within views along the strath.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-improved pastures, heather and grass moorland and coniferous plantations covering lower side slopes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The steel lattice towers would represent new elements of infrastructure within the landscape. The existing landscape features would represent potential scale indicators. • There would be localised felling of forestry to facilitate construction of Section B. However, the alignment seeks to avoid areas of broadleaved woodland.

Baseline Description	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settlement generally denser within the lower reaches of many straths, especially at bridging points, on the coast and close to major roads. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Section B alignment would cross the River Fleet section of the LCT within an area incorporating localised settlement of Pittentail and Rogart. This valley includes the A839 and Far North Line. The steel lattice towers would represent new elements of infrastructure within the local landscape. However, the landscape within the Fleet Strath is already influenced by the existing 132 kV OHL.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many areas rich in archaeology with cairns, roundhouses, brochs and old field systems, usually found on side slopes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The alignment avoids direct impacts upon archaeological features, albeit may be visible from some archaeological points of interest.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus in views from roads provided by a number of estate shooting lodges, and clustered, predominantly 19th Century, often estate style buildings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction works or steel lattice towers could form new elements within such views.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow roads, commonly aligned along the edge of the floodplain, from which views are strongly channelled by the side slopes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The enclosing landform at either side of the Strath would temper views of wider sections of the Proposed Development. Views would be predominantly focused on the short sections extending across / within the Strath.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rounded Hills often forming prominent edges to the straths with shapely well-defined hills, providing a distinctive skyline and scenic backdrop. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction works or new steel lattice towers could interrupt the existing skyline to either side of the Strath, forming a new focus against the existing backdrop.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly scenic backdrop of mountains often revealed in some of the upper reaches of these straths. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction works and the new steel lattice towers would represent new elements of human activity / presence within the landscape, with the potential to encroach upon more distant views to the higher ground outside the Strath.
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>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 valleys. However, this is tempered by the presence of the existing OHL within the River Fleet valley, which suggests the LCT is tolerant of some degree of change based on the type proposed.</p> <p>On balance, landscape sensitivity to Proposed Development is Medium.</p>
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	<p>Construction works would include localised forestry felling within the straths, including at Loch Brora, south of Killin and Carrol. Within the Golspie Burn catchment, tree felling would occur north of Bridge of Horn. Within the River Fleet valley, the Proposed Development is aligned to the existing OHL and tree clearance will be minimal.</p> <p>The most open views of the works would be focused upon the more open valley floor. Within these areas, the construction activities and vehicle movements would contrast with the existing agricultural landuse. However, the influence of these activities on the wider LCT would be restricted by the low-lying nature of the landscape, and the screening of views based on intervening tree cover and the landform enclosing the valley sides.</p>

Baseline Description	
	<p>Once operational, the Section B alignment would introduce new towers into the LCT area. Within the Fleet valley, the towers mirror the alignment of the existing OHL and replicate the design, although taller.</p> <p>In the three valleys of the LCT, the Proposed Development would form a new element within views along the valley. However, the Section B alignment would extend across the LCT, rather than along its length, thereby limiting its influence to localised areas. As the Section B alignment extends across the upper slopes that enclose the LCT, the towers would be located on the skyline, albeit often in the context of surrounding commercial forestry.</p> <p>On balance, the key effects would be focused within a linear corridor across the three glens up to 1 km 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.</p>
Significance of Effect	<p>As described above, the construction stage activities and vehicle movements would contrast with the agricultural landuse within the valleys. However, this would result in a localised effect within the Golspie Burn valley given the commercial plantations. For the River Fleet and Loch Brora valleys, the wider valley floor and pastoral agriculture enables longer-range views towards the activities.</p> <p>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 towers would represent new elements in views channelled within the valleys that would contrast with the more rural / natural characteristics of the LCT. However, the alignment would take the shortest route across each valley, reducing its physical footprint upon the LCT. The influence of the Proposed Development would diminish across wider parts of the LCT at greater distance.</p> <p>In summary, within 1 km 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.</p>

Table 3: Effects on LCT 134 – Sweeping Moorland and Flows

Baseline Description	
Description	<p>This LCT is located 2km to the north of Section B alignment at the closest point, north of Brora River towards Ben Armine Forest. This landscape comprises a mosaic of conifer plantations, semi-natural woodlands, moorland, and river valleys forming a flat, gently undulating and generally smooth landform.</p> <p>Kilbraur windfarm and associated OHL are noticeable features within the landscape and is located approximately 3km north of the Proposed Development.</p>
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	<p>The Ben Klibreck Armine Forest WLA coincides with areas of the LCT including the area closest to the alignment of the Proposed Development.</p>

Baseline Description	
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gently sloping or undulating landform which lies generally below 350 metres. Occasional isolated hills of limited height form local landmark features. Lochs and mature, meandering rivers. Very distinct flora, dominated by sphagnum mosses, produced by the wetness and infertility of the flows. Areas of peat cuttings and haggings. Pockets of improved grazing, mainly within the outer fringes of sweeping moorland. Coniferous forest forming a dominant characteristic within some parts of this landscape character type. Ribbons of broadleaf woodland occasionally run along the water courses and loch edges. Very sparsely settled with dispersed crofts, farms and estate buildings largely found on the outer edges of this landscape or near a strath. Vehicular tracks within parts of the landscape. Wind farms, transmission lines, the A9 and a network of minor roads are key features within the more modified outer fringes within Caithness. Long, low and largely uninterrupted skylines offering extensive views across this landscape and result in a feeling of huge space. Consistent views to the distant Lone Mountains and Rugged Mountain Massif – Caithness & Sutherland. Great sense of exposure on areas of flat peatland on upland plateau. A strong sense of remoteness is associated within the largely uninhabited, inaccessible core flows and moorlands of this landscape.
Landscape Value	<p>The landscape, comprising areas of blanket bog, supports a range of wet heath, grassland and mire. The hills contrast with the lower-lying moorland. Within the study area access across the LCT is limited to the River Brora valley and from Rogart in the south. There are few core-paths. The Kilbraur windfarm track provides access to the moorland closest to the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Through the valleys, the LCT also has added value as a destination for outdoor activities, particularly Ben Klibreck Forest this is restricted on the moorland closest to the Proposed Development. On balance, Landscape Value is Medium.</p>
Assessment of Effects	
Possible Landscape Receptors	Potential Effects
Gently sloping or undulating landform	The landform will restrict visibility towards the Proposed development.

Baseline Description	
<p>which lies generally below 350 metres.</p> <p>Occasional isolated hills of limited height form local landmark features.</p>	
<p>Great sense of exposure on areas of flat peatland on upland plateau.</p>	<p>As above, the landform would temper views of the Proposed Development to the east and southeast. However, the Proposed Development would be visible in some longer-distance, elevated views.</p>
<p>Very sparsely settled with dispersed crofts, farms and estate buildings largely found on the outer edges of this landscape or near a strath</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would not be visible from the dispersed settlements and properties due to intervening vegetation and topography.</p>
<p>Coniferous forest forming a dominant characteristic within some parts of this landscape character type</p>	<p>There would be no impacts upon woodland within this LCT. Conversely, the existing tree cover would restrict potential views of the Proposed Development from localised areas.</p>
<p>Landscape Sensitivity</p>	<p>Large proportions of the LCT within the Study Area coincide with Ben Klibreck Armine Forest WLA. The landscape has a strong sense of naturalness and remoteness away from the settled valley.</p> <p>Within the Study Area its susceptibility to the Proposed Development is tempered by the existing windfarm and OHL that extends across the southern parts of the LCT. This windfarm and OHL exert an existing influence on localised parts of the LCT although this is tempered by landform.</p> <p>On balance, the LCT is assessed as being tolerant of some degree of change of the type proposed. Landscape sensitivity to development of the type proposed is High-Medium.</p>
<p>Nature of change and Impact Magnitude</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would be viewed within the context of the wider landscape. At the closest point it is 2km to the south of the LCT. The construction activities, including tower erection/ temporary access track / site traffic, would be located in geographically separate parts of the background landscape. The influence of these</p>

Baseline Description	
	<p>activities would be tempered by the distance of view, and the presence of intervening topography and screening elements in the form of woodland / tree cover within the LCT.</p> <p>The lattice tower OHL associated with the operational stage of the Section B alignment would represent a distant addition to the wider landscape at the River Brora valley. Views of the Proposed Development would be fragmented across the LCT due to the screening influence of intervening landform woodland / tree cover that forms a key characteristic of the landscape.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would exert limited influence upon the existing landscape character within the LCT. The Impact Magnitude would be Low during construction and during operation.</p>
Significance of Effect	<p>As described above, effects on the existing characteristics of the 134 – Sweeping Moorland and Flows LCT would be limited based on its spatial separation from the Proposed Development, in combination with the presence of intervening landform, woodland and tree cover that would restrict potential views of the alignment.</p> <p>The overall effect would be Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) during construction and operation.</p>

Table 4: Effects on LCT 145 – Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting

Baseline Description	
Description	<p>This LCT is located 4 km to the south-east and southwest of the Section B alignment west of River Fleet valley at the closest point, Within the Study Area the LCT extends from the northern side of the Dornoch Firth across the lowland plain towards Loch Fleet. The LCT extends inland from the firth, where it incorporates a mix of woodland and pasture agriculture interspersed with settlements and individual properties.</p>
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	<p>The Dornoch Firth NSA encompasses the low-lying landscape along the firth. This coincides with the parts of the LCT in the vicinity of Western Fearn and Easter Fearn. In addition, Skibo Castle GDL is located within the LCT. These designations / protected landscapes accounts for a small proportion of the overall LCT.</p>
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rolling hill slopes and ridges cut by a number of valleys which radiate down from the Rounded Hills – Caithness and Sutherland to the coast. • North-west/south-east grain of the landform of ridges and valleys. • Loch Migdale sitting within a dip between parallel steep-sided ridges in the west of this Landscape Character Type. • Elevated undulating basins lie at the foot of the Rounded Hills – Caithness & Sutherland above Lairg and Bonar Bridge. • High proportion of woodland cover, with extensive conifer forest on ridges.

Baseline Description	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Particularly rough and coarse-textured landscape on upper hill slopes, comprising extensive mixed semi-natural woodland and fragments of heath and wetter moss. Small farms and crofts located in the broader valleys in the east, commonly set above long strip pastures, fenced or occasionally enclosed by boulder walls. Numerous prehistoric and historic environment features. The pattern of crofts and access roads reflecting the grain of the landform of ridges and valleys with croft houses located on valley sides below the lower forest margin. Pockets of pasture appear as if 'carved out' of woodlands in places. Density of housing increasing close to the larger settlements. Semi-enclosed character of this well-wooded landscape with occasional views. Attractive views from small roads high up the slopes, giving views to the Rounded Hills – Caithness & Sutherland and glimpses of the Dornoch Firth.
Landscape Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within the LCT there are large areas of woodland on the slopes north of A949 and west of A9. Pasture agriculture occupies areas between the roads and the coast as well as the area around Birichen. The aesthetic qualities of the LCT are recognised in the national-level designation (Dornoch Firth NSA) that encompasses localised southern parts. There is a strong contrast between the coastal orientation and the areas closest to the hills. The value of the landscape is diminished in places by the presence of road infrastructure. On balance, Landscape Value is Medium.
Assessment of Effects	
Possible Landscape Receptors	Potential Effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High proportion of woodland cover, with extensive conifer forest on ridges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There would be no impacts upon forestry within this LCT. Conversely, the existing tree cover would restrict potential views of the Proposed Development from localised areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small farms and crofts located in the broader valleys in the east, commonly set above long strip pastures, fenced or occasionally enclosed by boulder walls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Proposed Development would not impact with the more traditional elements of built form within the LCT.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Particularly rough and coarse-textured landscape on upper hill slopes, comprising extensive mixed semi-natural woodland and fragments of heath and wetter moss. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction works and the steel lattice towers would represent additional new elements of human activity / presence within the wider landscape however given the distances as well as intervening topography and vegetation would reduce the likelihood of an effect on the LCT within the study area.
Landscape Sensitivity	Large proportions of the LCT within the Study Area coincide with the nationally valued Dornoch Firth NSA. In addition to its natural beauty, this LCT exhibits elements of recreational value with reference to its network of Core Paths.

Baseline Description	
	<p>Its susceptibility to the Proposed Development is slightly tempered by the existing 132 kV OHL that extends across parts of the LCT in the vicinity of Bonar Bridge (on the northern side of the firth). This OHL exerts an existing influence on localised parts of the LCT</p> <p>On balance, the LCT is assessed as being tolerant of some degree of change of the type proposed. Landscape sensitivity to development of the type proposed is Medium-High.</p>
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	<p>The proposed development is located 4km from the closest section of the LCT. ZTV coverage across the LCT is fragmented and primarily focused north of Bonor Bridge.</p> <p>The coastal landscape along the Dornoch Firth will have minimal views towards the Proposed Development due to intervening landform and topography.</p> <p>In summary, the construction and operation stages associated within Section B of the Proposed Development would exert extremely limited influence on existing landscape character. The Impact Magnitude would be Negligible during construction and operation.</p>
Significance of Effect	<p>As described above, the construction and operational stages of the Proposed Development would exert very limited influence upon the existing characteristics of the LCT due to its spatial separation, localised nature of visibility, and the presence of intervening OHL infrastructure. The overall effect would be Negligible (not significant) during construction and operation.</p>

Table 5: Effects on LCT 146– Coastal Farmlands and Woodlands

Baseline Description	
Description	<p>This LCT is located 7.5 km to the south-east of the Section C alignment at the closest point, encompassing the low-lying agricultural landscape along the northern side of the Dornoch Firth.</p> <p>A separate portion of the LCT is located between the northern edge of Loch Fleet and east of Golspie along the coastal plain.</p>
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	<p>The Dornoch Firth NSA encompasses the low-lying landscape along the firth, extending inland to encompass Loch Migdale and the surrounding landscape on the northern side.</p> <p>Dunrobin Castle (GDL00160); Cairn Laith Broch (SM90060, GDL0016) and Skibo Castle (GDL00343) are located within the LCT and within the study area.</p>
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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.

Baseline Description	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 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. This is recognised in the national-level designation (Dornoch Firth NSA) that encompasses a large proportion of the LCT within the Study Area. 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.
Assessment of Effects	
Possible Landscape Receptors	Potential Effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential views would be restricted by tree cover, landform and separation distance. The settlement pattern within the LCT would remain unchanged
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There would be no direct effect on these landscape elements. Instead, areas of policy planting would restrict potential views of the Proposed Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flat or gently sloping plain north of Loch Fleet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The A949, railway and A9 extend parallel to the coast within the LCT. Intervening topography and vegetation would likely effect views of the LCT from this route.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large castles, estate buildings and grand houses on the shores of the Dornoch Firth and north of Loch Fleet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential views of construction works and the new steel lattice towers from heritage assets would be restricted by intervening topography, woodland and tree cover, in combination with landform and the separation distance from the Proposed Development.

Baseline Description	
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>Parts of the LCT within the Study Area coincide with the nationally valued Dornoch Firth NSA. In addition to its natural beauty, this LCT exhibits elements of recreational value with reference to its network of Core Paths.</p> <p>North of Loch Fleet the presence of the railway line and A9 exert an influence on localised parts of the LCT.</p> <p>On balance, the LCT is assessed as being tolerant of some degree of change of the type proposed. Landscape sensitivity to development of the type proposed is Medium-High.</p>
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	<p>ZTV coverage across parts of the LCT within the Study Area is extremely limited, given the vegetated slopes, the intervening topography as well as the distance from the Proposed Development</p> <p>Section B of the Proposed Development would exert extremely limited influence on existing landscape character.</p> <p>The Impact Magnitude would be Negligible during construction and operation. The vast majority of the LCT would be completely unaffected.</p>
Significance of Effect	<p>As described above, effects on the existing characteristics of the 146– Coastal Farmlands and Woodlands LCT would be extremely limited based on its spatial separation from the Proposed Development, in combination with the very limited areas from which there would be views of the alignment, and the discreet nature of the Proposed Development within the intervening landscape. The overall effect would be Negligible at most (not significant) during construction and operation.</p>

**VOLUME 5: APPENDIX 7.6: ANNEX 2–VISUAL RECEPTOR ASSESSMENT
SECTION B**

1. VISUAL RECEPTOR ASSESSMENT SECTION B

Table B.1: Residential

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Closest Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
SB-1 (Refer to Figure 7.4–5)	Gordonbush / Old Town Small cluster of properties on the northern bank of Loch Brora. Set within a large pasture field close to tributary feeding the Loch. One property set back from the Loch within a wooded plot	Some panoramic views from the properties closest to the Loch. Distant views to the east and south-east are restricted in places by vegetation and topography, especially beyond the valley floor and moving up the slopes. Based on the value of existing views from these properties and susceptibility to proposed development change the sensitivity of the receptor is	High	During construction, the erection of the towers along with vehicle movements and compound areas would be viewed at distance across the Loch, clearer views would be experienced on the west side of the loch, woodland would obscure some activity on the eastern bank. During operation the Proposed Development would be predominantly visible against the background valley landscape. The towers would be visible descending	1.7 km	Medium	Low	Major-Moderate (adverse) (significant)	Moderate (adverse) (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Closest Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
		adjudged to be High.		the valley sides and crossing Loch Brora.					
SB-2 (Refer to Figure 7.4–5)	Killin Isolated farmhouse located to the north of Loch Brora. West of the Proposed development. The property is located on flat agricultural ground with expansive views across the Loch towards the north and south.	The front of the house faces south, encompassing views over Loch Brora. Views to the east extend across the glen. Based on the value of existing views from these properties and susceptibility to proposed development change the sensitivity of the receptor is adjudged to be High.	High	During construction, the works and new steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity. The Proposed Development would be visible at close range in views to the north. The views would be experienced against the combination of background sky, vegetation during the summer and landscape. During operation, the Proposed Development would be visible as the	147 m	Large	Large-medium (adverse)	Major (adverse) (significant)	Major-Moderate (adverse) (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Closest Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
				alignment climbs up to the moorland north of the property. Visibility would be more apparent in winter months during leaf fall.					
SB-3 (Refer to Figure 7.4–5)	Carroll Cottage Isolated farmhouse located to the south of Loch Brora. Northwest of the Proposed development. The property is located at the interface of flat agricultural ground and the valley slopes towards Carrol Broch.	The property has expansive views across the Loch towards the north and south. Views towards the valley slopes at Carrol Broch are restricted by plantation vegetation on the western slopes of the valley. Based on the value of existing views from these properties and susceptibility to proposed development change the	High	The Proposed Development would be visible as it crosses the valley and climbs up to the moorland north of the property. During construction, the works and new steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity. The Proposed Development would be visible at close range in views to the north. The views would be experienced against the combination of	207 m	Large	Medium	Major (adverse) (significant)	Major-Moderate (adverse) (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Closest Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
		sensitivity of the receptor is adjudged to be High.		background sky, vegetation during the summer and landscape. During operation, the Proposed Development would be visible as the alignment climbs up to the moorland north of the property. Visibility would be more apparent in winter months during leaf fall.					
SB-5 (Refer to Figure 7.4–5)	Morvich Small group of residential properties set within the wooded area to the north of A839. The Morvich Guest Lodge is located on the roadside and has views across the valley, but it is orientated away from the Proposed Development. Series of commercial buildings to the roadside.	The vegetation and the commercial buildings partially obscure views however views from the guest lodge are more open and it is afforded expansive panoramic views of the glen. Properties within the woodland have	High	During construction, activity would be visible in the middle ground of the view to the west of Morvich as the Proposed Development descends into and crosses the valley floor, however intervening vegetation along the river combines with	1 km	Large	Large-medium	Major (adverse) (significant)	Moderate (adverse) (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Closest Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
		<p>limited visibility of the wider surroundings.</p> <p>Based on the value of existing views from these properties and susceptibility to proposed development change the sensitivity of the receptor is adjudged to be High.</p>		<p>the topography of the valley slopes to reduce the extent of visibility within the valley. Visibility would increase as the Proposed Development ascends the valley to the Moorland. Some localised tree felling would be necessary on the western slopes and would be a visible change.</p> <p>Construction traffic along the A839 along with temporary compound areas would be a noticeable change for the properties.</p> <p>Effects are reduced during the summer months given extent of vegetation.</p> <p>During operation the Proposed</p>					

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Closest Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
				Development would remain visible within the valley view and would be seen in conjunction with the existing OHL.					
SB-6 (Refer to Figure 7.4–5)	East Kinnauld East Kinnauld is a small cluster of dwellings along the A839 east of Rogart, it includes a farmhouse located south of the railway line that is adjacent to both the alignment of the Proposed Development, and an existing OHL.	Clear open views south across the valley in places that are often restricted by topography and vegetation. The existing OHL is visible in the foreground, (refer to Viewpoint 38), as it crosses the valley floor and climbs up the southern slope. Based on the value of existing views from these properties and susceptibility to proposed development	High	The Proposed Development would replicate the alignment of the existing OHL to the east. During construction, work including site clearance, tower erection and additional traffic would be visible from the small collection of properties, in the case of the property south of the railway the alignment is located in fields to the east. Temporary access tracks in the valley floor would also be visible but	850 m	Large	Large-medium	Major (adverse) (significant)	Moderate (adverse) (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Closest Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
		change the sensitivity of the receptor is adjudged to be High.		partially filtered by intervening vegetation. During operation, the Proposed development would remain visible within the valley view and would be seen in conjunction with the existing OHL.					
SB-7 (Refer to Figure 7.4–5)	West Kinnauld A small settlement comprising a series of dwellings along the road north from Pittentrail and a second road heading west, serving Little Rogart. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-40 A839 Rogart)	Wide views towards the valley, although at times views south are curtailed by vegetation and landform. Views towards the east are possible from the more elevated properties, including some views of the existing OHL where the Proposed	High	The construction of the Proposed Development on the northern valley slopes would be partially visible across pasture fields towards the moorland slopes. Tower construction work as well as the creation of access tracks would alter the baseline view. Views of construction activity within the valley floor	1.1 km	Low / Medium	Low	Moderate-minor Adverse (not significant)	Minor Adverse (not significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Closest Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
		Development would run parallel. Based on the value of existing views from these properties and susceptibility to proposed development change the sensitivity of the receptor is adjudged to be High.		would be restricted by vegetation south of the properties, but some taller activities may be visible. During operation, the top of the towers as they climb the valley would be visible above the tree line.					
SB-8,12,13 & 14 (Refer to Figure 7.4–5)	Pittentrail- Rogart a series of individual properties along the road from Pittentrail to Rogart, located on elevated positions.	Panoramic views towards the west, views east is constrained by the proximity of the hills Minor Adverse. The 'Red Kite' lodge comprises two tourist accommodation cabins located along a track east of the road with	High	Views towards the Proposed Development east of the properties would be restricted by the intervening vegetated hills, there is limited visibility towards the existing OHL and the alignment of the Proposed Development runs	1.2 km	Low	Negligible	Minor Adverse (not significant)	Minor (adverse) (not significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Closest Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
		open views to the east. Based on the value of existing views from these properties and susceptibility to proposed development change the sensitivity of the receptor is adjudged to be High.		parallel to the east of the existing line. During construction some taller construction elements may be visible, but these would be localised and intermittent. During operation, intervening distance, vegetation and topography would restrict views towards the alignment to the tops of the towers as they climb the valley slopes.					
SB-11 (Refer to Figure 7.4–5)	Eiden South of River Fleet, SW of Morvich Small group of properties including a farmhouse and associated farm buildings, located on the agricultural valley floor, adjacent to the	The properties are orientated to the north and the valley floor, river and northern slopes. The locality has significant vegetation,	High	For the properties the existing OHL is a key element within views towards the east, however this is perceived within the wider context of the valley.	300 m	Large	Medium	Major Adverse (significant)	Major-Moderate Adverse (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Closest Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
	plantation woodland ascending the valley southern slopes. OHL is located to the east of the property. A second residential property is located to the west of the farm, nestled in a vegetated plot adjacent to the river. A third property is nestled within woodland to the south of the access track, this property has restricted views of the valley because of the vegetation.	<p>although the agricultural use of the valley provides expansive views up and down the valley, including towards the OHL, towards Pittentrail and Morvich.</p> <p>Based on the value of existing views from these properties and susceptibility to proposed development change the sensitivity of the receptor is adjudged to be High.</p>		<p>The Proposed Development would introduce a second OHL within the valley and would result in a cumulative change.</p> <p>During construction tower erection, localised tree clearance, temporary access points and construction traffic would all be noticeable changes in the wide view across the valley floor to the northeast of the properties. Construction activity would be visible as the Development rises the northern slopes. Topography and vegetation would restrict views of construction to the southeast.</p>					

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Closest Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
				During operation the Proposed Development would be visible in conjunction with the existing OHL, the temporary tracks would have been removed and mitigation measures completed.					
SB-15 (Refer to Figure 7.4–5)	Dalnamain Isolated farmhouse and associated farm buildings located north of Lochbuie Road and the vegetated stream of Abhainn an r Stratha Charnaig. Positioned 300m southeast of the Proposed Development. The dwelling is orientated to the south but with clear views of the existing OHL	Views would be extensive from the property north and northeast across towards Loch Ruagaidh and the River Fleet valley. Views also extend beyond the valley floor towards the moorland northeast of Morvich. Based on the value of existing views from this property and susceptibility	High	The Proposed Development would run parallel and to the east northeast of the existing OHLs towards Eiden. During construction, the works including tower erection, access tracks and compounds would be visible across the moorland north of the property and south as it crosses Buidhe Road.	300 m	High-Medium	Medium	Up to 1km distance Major-moderate Adverse (significant)	Up to 1km distance Major-Moderate Adverse (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Closest Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
		to proposed development change the sensitivity of the receptor is adjudged to be High.		During operation, as the alignment rises out of the valley northwest of Morvich some views of the towers would be possible but viewed from distance and in the context of the wider moorland landscape. The alignment would be visible along the moorland before descending into the glen, where tree cover, and topography would restrict visibility.					
SB-16 (Refer to Figure 7.4–5)	Isolated farmhouse- Brae Cottage Individual croft set in open moorland to the north of Lochbuie Road. The house is orientated towards the Proposed Development	The house has clear views in all directions across the pen moorland. The house is aligned with principal living rooms facing southeast towards	High	The alignment of the Proposed Development would be visible on elevated ground south of the property. During construction, activity such as	500 m	High-Medium	Medium	Major-moderate (significant)	Moderate Adverse (significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Closest Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
	alignment, with clear views of the existing OHL	the existing OHL and the woodland plantation blocks. Based on the value of existing views from this property and susceptibility to proposed development change the sensitivity of the receptor is adjudged to be High.		vegetation clearance and tower construction would be a visible activity as the alignment runs south of the existing OHL and north of the plantation woodland. During operation the alignment would be visible as a third OHL route on elevated ground as it traverses the moorland towards the sub-station parallel to the house.					

Table B.2: Transport Routes

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
RB-1 (Refer to Figure 7.4–6)	A9(T) Travellers on localised parts of this long-distance link that extends from Stirling to Thurso. Forms part of the North Coast 500. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-31 A9 (T) Greenhill, Viewpoint 7-34 A9 (T) Inverbrora, Viewpoint 7-33 A9 (T) Brora, and Viewpoint 7-43 A9 (T) Loch Fleet)	Within the Study Area the A9(T) traverses the coastal valley between The Mound and Brora. Road users travelling north and south experience close-proximity views of the vegetated moorland slopes which restrict views across the valley in addition to panoramic views across the sea to the east. Whilst views from the Mound are restricted by vegetation some localised tree felling and tower construction could be visible as the road crosses the River Fleet estuary.	Medium	Views would be largely restricted due to vegetation and intervening topography as well as distance from the road to the Proposed Development. During construction some distant views of construction works may be possible as the road approaches and crosses Loch Fleet, at the Mound but given intervening vegetation and the topography this would be fleeting. As the road heads north, the topography would restrict views of the construction works. Given the prominence of the road, construction traffic is likely to have a visual presence along with new access tracks, compounds. During operation views towards the Proposed Development would be minimal, there may be some fleeting views from The Mound towards the towers climbing the valley slopes, however the intervening vegetation would restrict clear views.	1.5 km	Low-Negligible across the wider route	Low-Negligible across the wider route	Minor-negligible Adverse (not significant) across the wider route	Negligible Adverse (not significant) across the wider route
RB-2 (Refer to Figure 7.4–6)	A839 The road traverses the River Fleet valley from Lairg to The Mound and A9. The route forms part of the Moray Forth Route and within the study	The road traverses the intersection of the northern valley slopes and the valley floor north of the river. Views in the direction of the Proposed Development west of Pittentrail		At 2 km, views from the east towards the Proposed Development are possible as the route clears the woodland cover. Views towards the northern sections of the Proposed Development from the west are restricted to distances of 1km due to intervening vegetation	0 m	High	Medium	Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) within	Moderate Adverse (significant) within 2 km, Minor

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance (to the Proposed Developm ent)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Constru ction	Operatio nal (after 10yrs)	Constru ction	Operatio n (after 10yrs)
	area runs parallel to the Far North railway. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-40 A839 Rogart)	are typically restricted by intervening vegetation and topography. West of Pittentrail towards Morvich the wide valley affords expansive views towards the existing OH to the south-east.		and topography. Longer distance views towards the Proposed Development are possible from distances of 3km from the west as it descends the valleys southern slopes. During construction, the tower erection, crane work, construction traffic and compounds would all be visible within the valley, given the open character of the valley, within 2 km , the construction activities would be prominent within the field of view. During operation The Proposed Development would be viewed in conjunction and running parallel with the existing OHL. The OHL would be a visible built element within the landscape, especially as the alignment ascends the valley slopes and given the open pastoral landscape within 2 km of the alignment.				2km, Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider route	Adverse (not significant) across the wider route
RB-6 (Refer to Figure 7.4-6)	Far North Rail Line Passengers on localised sections of this line that extends from Inverness to Thurso and Wick.	The railway line traverses the River Fleet valley. Between Pittentrail and Morvich the valley is wide and given the reduced vegetation affords long-range views. Passengers' short duration, intermittent views of the surrounding landscape. The location within the valley	Medium	The construction works and new steel lattice towers would be experienced at proximity from the section in closest proximity to the Proposed Development (between Pittentrail and Morvich) and in distances up to 2 km east. As the route traverses north alongside the A9 between the Mound and Golspie, views would be predominantly screened by intervening woodland. During operation, The Proposed Development would be viewed in conjunction and running	0 m	High	Medium	Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) within 2km, Minor Adverse (not significant)	Moderate Adverse (significant) within 2 km, Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance (to the Proposed Developm ent)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Constru ction	Operatio nal (after 10yrs)	Constru ction	Operatio n (after 10yrs)
		floor means that longer-distance views from the west (2-3 km) are possible compared to A839. Westbound trains traverse the woodland alongside the A839 and open out into open agricultural landscape at 2 km.		parallel with the existing OHL The OHL would be a visible built element within the landscape, especially as the alignment ascends the valley slopes and given the open pastoral landscape within 2 km of the alignment. The Proposed Development would not impact seaward views available from the transport route as it is only visible from landward facing views.				t) across the wider route	route
RB-3 (Refer to Figure 7.4–6)	Gordonbush Road Travellers including visitors using the stretch of road extending west from the A9(T) at Brora north of the River Brora towards Loch Brora towards Balnacoli and the Balnacoli Estate. Travellers and visitors using the stretch of road extending west from the A9(T) at Brora south of the River Brora towards Loch Brora towards Carrol and the moorland upland. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-36 Loch Brora, Viewpoint 7-37	Within the River Brora valley, both routes run parallel to each other on either bank. The southern route then climbs into the hills at Carrol. Whilst the northern route continues north then west. Given the wide expansive views within the valley and the limited vegetation along the valley floor east of and around the Loch, views are typically open. Vegetation on the southern slopes of the valley around Carrol would obscure some views from the southern section of the route.	Medium	The main view from the road towards the construction works and new steel lattice towers would be across the valley, east of the Loch. The Proposed Development descending into the valley and traverses the Loch before climbing back to the moorland would be a prominent element within the view. Vegetation and landform would restrict longer range views towards the OHL from both north and southeast. Given the alignment, of the Proposed Development views of construction works would be experienced from Gordonbrush but this would be set within the wide expanse of the valley. Given the open character of the valley, south of Gordonbrush towards the southern extent of the Loch, visibility towards the Proposed Development, as it crosses the valley at Killin from the northern route would be experienced	0 m	High	Medium	Major- Moderate Adverse (significant) within 3 km,	Moderate Adverse (significant) within 3k m,

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance (to the Proposed Developm ent)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Constru ction	Operatio nal (after 10yrs)	Constru ction	Operatio n (after 10yrs)
	Balnacoil and Viewpoint 7-35 South of Killin)			<p>from distances of 2km in either direction. The open aspect of the route east of the Loch, towards Carrol, enables views towards the Proposed Development from 3km. The topography northwest of Carrol restricts views to 1km along the southern route.</p> <p>During construction, the tower erection, crane work, construction traffic and compounds would all be visible within the valley, given the open character of the valley, at these distances, the construction activities would be prominent within the field of view.</p> <p>During operation the Proposed Development would be visible within the open valley from distances of approximately 2 km.</p>					
RB-4 (Refer to Figure 7.4–6)	Dunrobin Glen Road Travellers including residents and visitors using the backroad between Backies, Farlary and Knockarthur. Also, recreational users of the Kilbraur Windfarm access track and the Duke of Sutherland Monument access track.	As the route traverses the Golspie Burn valley, potential views would be possible for road users travelling in a north-westerly direction once the vegetation around Backies thins and the wider open valley floor prevails. Similarly, travellers heading east would have long-range views obscured by surrounding woodland.	Medium	<p>Long-distance views towards the construction work would be experienced from elevated sections of the road across the moorland from the east and west. Along the route, the woodland blocks are often offset from the road enabling long-distance views, although at times views are reduced due to the woodland blocks as well as topography. In sections of the alignment where the Proposed Development dissects the woodland.</p> <p>During construction localised tree-felling would</p>	0 km	High	Medium	Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) within 3 km,	Moderate Adverse (significant) within 3km,

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance (to the Proposed Developm ent)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Constru ction	Operatio nal (after 10yrs)	Constru ction	Operatio n (after 10yrs)
		Views from the windfarm track would be restricted by the vegetation coverage east of the alignment, but more open views are possible further west. Views from the Duke of Sutherland monument track are initially restricted by tree cover before opening out to expansive views of the surrounding area from the moorland.		be a visible activity, and this would be experienced alongside crane works, tower erection and storage compounds. Given the broad open and wide scale of the landscape the alignment would be viewed in a broad vista both north and south from the road. During operation the Proposed Development would remain a visual built element within a wide landscape with limited manmade features.					
RB-5 (Refer to Figure 7.4–6)	Lochbuie Road from A9(T) south of The Mound, heading west towards Loch Buidhe via Dalnamain Travellers including residents and visitors using stretch of the road extending from the A9 just south of the Mound heading west across the moorland towards Loch Buidhe. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-42 Little Torboll and Viewpoint 7-54 Clashcoig (Lochbuidhe Road))	The road traverses mature native woodland in the foothills around The Cambusmore Eestate before climbing up into the moorland west of Little Torboll. The road provides recreational access to Loch Buidhe and access to the sub-station. Following the line of the stream Abhainn an r-stratha charnaig it is heavily vegetated to the east with limited long-range views before opening out to open and expansive views within the moorland approaching the Loch. The moorland view from the	Medium	During construction, the works and new steel lattice towers would be visible within the open moorland as the alignment traverses south of the road, in a line often parallel with existing OHL. Tree felling would be visible as the alignment heads south of the substation through plantation blocks The construction activities to the east would be partly screened by existing forestry and woodland within the vegetated alignment of the road as it follows the stream. East of Dalnamain towards Little Torboll vegetation along the road and Abhainn an t-Stratha Charnaig restricts views northwards towards the Proposed Development, as the road traverses west and the alignment heads southwest to the west of Dalnamain visibility	250 m	High	Medium	Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) within 2 km	Moderate Adverse (significant) within 2 km

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance (to the Proposed Developm ent)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Constru ction	Operatio nal (after 10yrs)	Constru ction	Operatio n (after 10yrs)
		road is crossed by an existing OHL.		<p>towards the Proposed Development increases as the vegetation thins before clearing, within 1km there would be clear views towards the construction activities. From this vicinity the alignment would be visible as it progresses both west and east. Tower erection, access tracks, crane activity and compound storage would all be noticeable elements of construction within the wide vista of the open moorland. The alignment crosses the route west of Dalnamain before proceeding roughly parallel to the road westward towards Loch Buidhe. Here, the existing two OHLs are a prominent linear feature, and the Proposed Development runs parallel to the existing alignment, just skirting the north of the plantation forestry blocks. In the open expansive moorland this would increase the prominence of manmade elements in the landscape.</p> <p>During operation, the alignment west of Dalnamian would remain a prominent visual element as it traverses the moorland in parallel with the existing OHL, although this is tempered by its location on the edge of the plantation blocks. East of Dalnamain, the alignment runs parallel with the existing OHL and would be visible until it descends into the River Fleet valley.</p>					

Table B.3: Recreational Routes

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
RB-7 (Refer to Figure 7.4–6)	Core path SU06.03- The Drove Road This footpath heads westward from East Clyne and rises to elevated moorland at West Clyne before traversing northwest towards Old Town.	A range of views would be experienced initially between East and West Clyne the track is located on the edge of agricultural fields along the valley slopes. The track climbs towards the elevated moorland with panoramic long-distance views in all directions. At lower elevations, the existing OHL forms a visible feature within the foreground of the route.	High	The Proposed Development intersects the route on the moorland and would be a prominent visible feature within the broad panoramic views for users of the route. During construction, the works and new steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity from the 500m from either direction of the route. The lower elevation sections of the route would be screened by intervening landform. During operation, the towers would continue to be seen in close proximity as the path crosses the Proposed Development. Landform and vegetation would continue to screen along the lower sections of the path.	0 m	High within 2 km Negligible on lower elevations	High within 2 km Negligible on lower elevations	Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) within 500 m, Negligible (not significant) lower elevations	Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) within 500 m, Negligible (not significant) lower elevations

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
RB-8 (Refer to Figure 7.4–6)	Core path SU06.14 Doll Bridge- Loch Brora valley Users of the Core Path which head west from ford along the northern bank	The eastern section follows the line of the river through woodland before opening out at the southern end of the Loch.	High	<p>Views towards the Proposed Development would be restricted to the east because of the dense woodland cover and the topography of the landform.</p> <p>Once west of the tree cover, long-range views would be possible. The path would view the alignment as it descends into the valley, crosses the loch and climbs back up to the moorland.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would be viewed against a combination of the background landscape and the sky.</p> <p>During construction tree felling on the western slopes would also be evident in conjunction with tower erection and material movement at the route intersections and from sections of the route at close range.</p> <p>During operation within 2 km the Proposed Development the towers will be a prominent feature within the valley adjacent to the loch once beyond the tree cover of the river.</p>	2.5 km	Medium within 2km, Low-Negligible across the wider route	Medium within 2km, Low-Negligible across the wider route	Moderate Adverse (significant) within 2k m, Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider route	Moderate Adverse (significant) within 2km, Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider route

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
RB-9 (Refer to Figure 7.4–6)	Core Path SU06.02 Loch Brora valley West track Users of the Core Path which head west from ford along the southern bank towards Kilbraur.	There are a variety of views obtained from this route; the eastern section follows the line of the river through the agricultural coastal plain. Views to the west are restricted by woodland. The path travels through dense native woodland before opening out to the wide valley around the Loch. The route has long range views of the valley as it clears the woodland and skirts the lower slopes of the valley sides.	High	Views towards the Proposed Development would be restricted to the east because of the dense woodland cover and the topography of the landform. Once west of the tree cover, long-range views would be possible. The path would view the alignment as it descends into the valley, crosses the loch and climbs back up to the moorland. The Proposed Development would be viewed against a combination of the background landscape and the sky. During construction, tree felling on the western slopes would also be evident in conjunction with tower erection and material movement at the route intersections and from sections of the route at close range. During operation within 2 km the Proposed Development the towers will be a prominent feature within the valley adjacent to the loch once beyond the tree cover of the river.	0 m	Medium within 2km, Low-Negligible across the wider route	Medium within 2km, Low-Negligible across the wider route	Moderate Adverse (significant) within 2k m, Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider route	Moderate Adverse (significant) within 2km, Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider route

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
RB-10 (Refer to Figure 7.4–6)	<p>Core Path network west of Backies and Golspie, SU12.14, SU12.13, SU12.19</p> <p>Ben Bhraggie (Duke of Sutherland monument) SU12.14</p> <p>Loch Lunndaigh SU12.24</p> <p>Recreational users of a series of footpaths which connect the coastal settlement of Golspie and the small community of Backies. footpaths traverse the woodland on the slopes of Ben Bhraggie and Golspie Burn. All routes climb from the coastal plain towards the elevated moorland including the Duke of Sutherland Monument.</p>	<p>Views from the coastal plain and around Backies are heavily influenced by the concentration of plantation forestry.</p> <p>Views are varied across the route and influenced by route elevation, intervening landform and degree of forest cover.</p> <p>Views are expansive from more elevated sections of the route, particularly around the Monument and footpath SU12.24 as it approaches Loch Lunndaigh</p> <p>The existing steel lattice OHL is visible within the context of the plantation</p>	High	<p>The woodland cover restricts views to the Proposed Development, however distant views from open and elevated footpath sections around the Monument and adjacent to Loch Lunndaigh would be experienced.</p> <p>The alignment traverses north of Loch Lunndaigh (approximately 2km) and the Monument (approximately 3km)</p> <p>During construction works, the new steel lattice towers would be experienced given the open expansive views around the Monument and the Loch.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would be visible against a combination of the background sky and landscape.</p> <p>During operation, the towers would remain a prominent feature within open areas of the glen and within 1 km of Glen Cottage.</p>	3 km	Medium across the wider route	Medium-small across the wider route	Moderate Adverse (significant) across the wider route	Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider route

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
	(Refer to Viewpoint 7-39 Ben Bhraggie)	woodlands between Backies and Drummie and from elevated sections of the paths as the OHL route progresses west towards the A839.							
RB-11 (Refer to Figure 7.4–6)	SU12.24 Loch Lunndaigh	The core path ascends to the moorland through Culmaily Plantation before heading across moorland towards the Loch. Views northwards across the moorland will be expansive towards Aberscross Hill	High	In open moorland the Proposed Development will be visible, but at distance, across the moorland and in conjunction with the existing OHL. During construction, the taller elements of the work including crane works will be visible. During operation, the alignment will be visible at distance across the moorland. Intervening peaks would restrict some views towards the towers.	4 km	Medium across the wider route	Medium-small across the wider route	Moderate Adverse (significant) across the elevated sections	Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) across the elevated sections
RB-12 (Refer to	Core Path SU20.10: Torboll-Eiden Recreational users of this footpath which	The eastern section of the path has intermittent views across the River Fleet valley including	High	The footpath intersects the Proposed Development and would result in open views of the Proposed Development at	0 m	High within 500 m,	High within 500 m, Low-Negligible	Major Adverse (significant) within 500 m,	Major Adverse (significant) within 500 m,

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
Figure 7.4–6)	<p>connects Little Torboll to Eiden before progressing westerly towards Inchcape</p> <p>The route is located within plantation forestry predominantly at lower elevations, with some views towards the moorland from the lower valley slopes.</p> <p>(Refer to Viewpoint 7-41 An Droighneach)</p>	views towards the existing OHL around Eiden and towards Rogart.		<p>close range out to distances of approximately 2 km.</p> <p>East of Eiden, intermittent views would be possible as the alignment traverses the River Fleet valley adjacent to Morvich, running parallel to the existing OHL.</p> <p>Visibility of the Proposed development west of Eiden would be restricted by topography of the moorland.</p> <p>During construction, at distances within 500 m, views of construction activity on both slopes and within the valley would be prominent within the view. This would include the tower erection, tree clearance and construction traffic movement.</p> <p>During operation, at distances of 500 m, the Proposed Development is viewed in conjunction with the existing OHL as it crosses the valley and ascends the southern slopes.</p>		Low-Negligible across the wider route	across the wider route	Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider route	Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider route

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
RB-13 (Refer to Figure 7.4–6)	Core Path SU20.02 and SU20.01 (Refer to Viewpoint 7-41 An Droighneach)	The existing steel lattice OHLs are visible in views to the south as they traverse towards Loch Buidhe. There are long-range views across the wider landscape are from the core paths. The elevated moorland of Creag Dail na Meine and north of Loch Buidhe would restrict views west of Dalnamain.		West of Eiden, the route alignment is set on higher elevations, and the Proposed Development would be visible in conjunction with the existing OHL as it climbs from the valley towards Dalnamain and Loch Buidhe. During construction, the activities would be viewed in close proximity as the path climbs out of the valley, this would include woodland clearance, the tower erection and construction activity. As the distance from the path to the alignment increases the construction activities would be viewed in the wider moorland context. During operation, the Proposed Development would be viewed in conjunction with the existing OHL as they climb out of the valley in close proximity. As the distance increases, the alignment will be viewed in the wider moorland context.	0 m	High within 500 m, Low-Negligible across the wider route	High within 500 m, Low-Negligible across the wider route	Major Adverse (significant) within 500 m, Moderate Adverse (significant) across the wider route	Moderate Adverse (significant) within 500 m, Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider route

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
RB-14 (Refer to Figure 7.4–6)	<p>Core Path SU09.19: Achvaich to Loch Buidhe</p> <p>Footpath heading northeast from Achvaich via ford Achormlarie towards Loch Buidhe via the forested slopes of Beinn Domhnaill and Meall Mor</p>	Most of the route is located within the plantations south of Loch Buidhe, with only a short section east of the sub-station set in an open landscape. At this point there are close views towards existing OHL, the sub-station and the moorland beyond Loch Buidhe.	High	<p>The Proposed Development is aligned on the northern edge of the plantation woodland, running parallel to the existing OHL.</p> <p>During construction, works including tree felling and new steel lattice towers would be experienced at close distance as the path clears the plantation. To the east of the path the alignment runs parallel to the existing OHL adding to the cumulative effect of the introduced elements within the foreground of the view. To the west of the path the alignment follows a route to the southwest through the plantation woodland before descending towards Lochbuie Road and Clashban.</p> <p>During operation, the Proposed Development at close distances would be viewed within the context of cleared woodland and in conjunction with existing OHL's as they approach the sub-station.</p>	0m	High within 500 m	Medium within 500 m	Major - Moderate (adverse)	Moderate (adverse)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
RB-15 (Refer to Figure 7.4–6)	NCN Route 01 National Cycle route travelling through the Shin Valley between Invershin and Lairg along B864.	Most of the route is located within the wooded valley of the River Shin. Views to the east will be restricted by topography and vegetation within the valley.	High	<p>The Proposed development is located as 7 km east of the route. Given the confines of the valley, and the extent of tree cover visibility towards the Proposed Development will be restricted.</p> <p>During construction, where there are gaps in the tree cover along the B864 some traffic may be noticeable along the A836, however such views would be fleeting given the dense wooded valley.</p> <p>During operation, no views of the Proposed Development will be possible given the dense vegetation and topography of the valley coupled with the distances from the Proposed Development.</p>	7 km	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
RB-16 (Refer to	North Coast 500 Promoted route sharing the A9 within the Study Area.	Within the Study Area the North Coast 500 traverses the coastal valley	Medium	Views would be largely restricted due to vegetation and intervening topography as well as distance from	1.5 km	Low-Negligible across the	Low-Negligible across the wider route	Minor Adverse (not significant)	Negligible Adverse (not significant)

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance (to the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
Figure 7.4–6)	(Refer to Viewpoint 7-31 A9 (T) Greenhill, Viewpoint 7-34 A9 (T) Inverbrora, Viewpoint 7-33 A9 (T) Brora, and Viewpoint 7-43 A9 (T) Loch Fleet)	<p>between The Mound and Brora.</p> <p>Road users travelling north and south experience close-proximity views of the vegetated moorland slopes which restrict views across the valley in addition to panoramic views across the sea to the east.</p> <p>Whilst views from the Mound are restricted by vegetation some localised tree felling and tower construction could be visible as the road crosses the River Fleet estuary.</p>		<p>the road to the Proposed Development.</p> <p>During construction some distant views of construction works may be possible as the road approaches and crosses Loch Fleet, at the Mound but given intervening vegetation and the topography this would be fleeting. As the road heads north, the topography would restrict views of the construction works. Given the prominence of the road, construction traffic is likely to have a visual presence along with new access tracks, compounds.</p> <p>During operation views towards the Proposed Development would be minimal, there may be some fleeting views from The Mound towards the towers climbing the valley slopes, however the intervening vegetation would restrict clear views.</p>		wider route		across the wider route	across the wider route

Table B.4: Receptors at Outdoor Locations

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance (from the Proposed Development)	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
OB-1 (Refer to Figure 7.4–5)	The Duke of Sutherland Monument The monument occupies a prominent position on the hills west of Golspie, accessed via the Kilbraur Windfarm Road and the Golspie Tower - Ben Bhraggie Track. (Refer to Viewpoint 7-39 Ben Bhraggie)	Visitors to The Duke of Sutherland monument experience panoramic views in all directions across open moorland and the North Sea to the east. The views can be restricted by elevated peaks within the moorland and plantation woodland as it ascends from the valleys, views north and to the west from the foot of the monument itself restricted by the summit of the Ben Bhraggie.	Medium-High	<p>The alignment would be visible to the north and west of the Monument, however, woodland plantations would reduce wider views to the east.</p> <p>During construction, activities around multiple tower locations would be visible including erection, compounds and crane activity. Existing access tracks to the monument would be utilised but additional tracks would be needed further west.</p> <p>During operation the Proposed Development would be visible across the open moorland as it traverses to the north of the monument. The towers would be viewed within the context of the open moorland and broad skies. Seaward views would be unchanged.</p>	3 km	Medium	Medium	Major-moderate Adverse (significant)	Moderate adverse (significant)