Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

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

Appendix 7.7 | LVIA of Section C

July 2025

VOLUME 5: APPENDIX 7.7 – LVIA OF SECTION C

Figures (Volume 3 of this EIA Report)

Figure 7.1-4: Section C Zone of Theoretical Visibility
Figure 7.2-4: Section C Designated and Protected Landscapes
Figure 7.3-4: Section C Landscape Character
Figures 7.4-7 and 7.4-8: Section C Visual Receptors
Figure 7.5-4: Section C Cumulative Sites

Visualisations (Volume 4 of this EIA Report)

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

Appendices (Volume 5 of this EIA Report)

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

7. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT OF SECTION C

7.1 Introduction

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

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

7.2 Scope of Assessment and Methodology

Scope of Assessment

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

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

- Study Area extending to 10 km from the Proposed Development;
- Landscape character assessment, identifying potential effects on Landscape Character Types (LCTs) within the Study Area, with reference to the NatureScot National Landscape Character Assessment[2];
- Landscape assessment of potential effects on the special qualities of designated and/or protected landscapes, specifically the Dornoch Firth National Scenic Area (NSA), Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis Wild Land Area (WLA) and Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie 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 C, this includes effects associated with:
  - Section B and Section D of the Proposed Development (steel lattice tower OHL);
  - Proposed Carnaig 400kV Substation (24/05062/FUL) (subject of a separate planning application);
  - Consented Lairg II Wind Farm Redesign (21/00849/FUL);
  - Consented Garvary Wind Farm (21/01921/S36);
  - Consented Meall Buidhe Wind Farm (20/02659/FUL / PPA-270-2277);
  - Proposed Acheilidh Wind Farm (Lairg III) (24/02094/S36);
  - Scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm (24/04326/SCOP);

[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.

- Scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm (24/04752/SCOP);
- Scoping-stage Balblair Wind Farm (24/01500/SCOP); and
- Scoping-stage Creachan Wind Farm (24/03825/SCOP).

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 **Table 7.1.**

Table 7.1: Viewpoint Locations (Section C)

Number	Location	Grid Reference		
Viewpoint 7-46	Loch Laro	NH	60436	99676
Viewpoint 7-47	A837 (near Inveran)	NH	56765	97590
Viewpoint 7-48	A837 Invershin Cemetery	NH	57604	97153
Viewpoint 7-49	Inveroykel Culrain Road	NH	56793	96426
Viewpoint 7-50	A837 Invershin	NH	57751	96192
Viewpoint 7-51	Carbisdale Castle	NH	57409	95482
Viewpoint 7-52	A836 (west of Balblair)	NH	58237	94557
Viewpoint 7-53	Lower Hilton	NH	56906	93829
Viewpoint 7-54	Clashcoig (Lochbuidhe Road)	NH	64064	94325
Viewpoint 7-55	Airdens	NH	62333	93766
Viewpoint 7-56	Bonar Bridge	NH	60932	91541
Viewpoint 7-57	A949 (south of Swordale)	NH	61899	90222
Viewpoint 7-58	A949 Little Creich	NH	63549	89310
Viewpoint 7-59	A836 Kincardine	NH	60583	89387
Viewpoint 7-60	Gruinards (west of Dounie)	NH	55112	90711

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

Methodology

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

- Understanding the Proposed Development;

[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 Guidance[5];
- Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas - Technical Guidance[6];
- Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing landscape value outside national designations[7];
- Technical Guidance Note 6/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals[8];
- National Landscape Character Assessment (web-based interactive map)[9];
- The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas (Commissioned Report No.374)[10];
- Wild Land Areas Map and Descriptions[11];
- Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes[12];
- Wildness in Scotland's Countryside[13];
- Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas[14];
- Ordnance Survey Land ranger (1:50 000) and Explorer (1:25 000) maps;
- Aerial photography; and
- Site survey (to review landscape character, potential visibility and obtain viewpoint photography, undertaken throughout 2024).

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

Landscape Sensitivity and Impact Magnitude

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

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

- the loss or alteration to key landscape features / elements or characteristics;

[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.

- distance from the Proposed Development;
- duration of effect;
- landscape context of the Proposed Development, including other nearby development or scale features.

Visual Sensitivity and Impact Magnitude

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

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

- distance of view from the Proposed Development;
- duration of effect;
- 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'. 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;
- The LVIA has assessed the design heights of the proposed towers and their location as per the tower schedule provided in **Volume 5**, **Appendix 3.1: Indicative Tower Schedule**. Variations in tower heights and deviations of the final alignment may occur at certain tower locations to account for undulations in the surrounding topography, and to align with best practices. Accordingly, the LVIA accounts for a vertical Limit of Deviation of +/- 9 m with the proposed towers heights and locations detailed in **Volume 5, Appendix 3.1: Indicative Tower Schedule**.
- A horizontal Limit of Deviation of up to 100 m in most cases, where necessary to avoid or minimise environmental impact while remaining consistent with wayleave boundaries. It is also recognised that the horizontal Limit of Deviation would be less than 50 m along some sections of the Alignment.

- The LVIA is undertaken on the assumption that the Proposed Development would be experienced in clear visibility and the assessment is carried out on that basis. Where appropriate, comment is made in relation to lighting and weather conditions, including visibility in winter months during periods of seasonal leaf-fall.
- The LVIA draws on field observations from publicly accessible locations. Accordingly, the assessment of effects at individual residential properties has been undertaken from publicly accessible locations within closest proximity to the dwelling to ensure appropriate representation of potential views, unless stated otherwise where access was granted by the property owner.
- The assessment of operational effects assumes that areas disturbed but not required for the operation of the Proposed Development—such as temporary tracks, laydown and compound areas, and excavations for tower foundations—would be successfully reinstated to reflect, as closely as possible, similar vegetation types and appearance to those present prior to construction. It is important to note that these vegetation types may not necessarily comprise habitat types and values identical to those that were previously present.
- The data used in the completion of the LVIA has some inherent limitations regarding data tolerances and levels of accuracy; however, these limitations have been factored into the assessment.

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

7.3 Baseline Conditions: Landscape

Landscape Overview

7.3.1 Section C extends in an arc though the uplands to the west of the Dornoch Firth. The hill summits and plateaux are characterised by open swathes of moorland and large areas of forestry. Built form and settlement is limited to very localised areas, coinciding with the lower-lying straths that extend through the hills. Within these sheltered river valleys, the landscape exhibits a greater sense of enclosure. The water courses extending along the strath floor form a key focal point, typically abutted by areas of wetland and rough pasture, as well as parcels of woodland and localised tree cover.

Landscape Designations and Protected Landscapes

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

7.3.3 With reference to **Volume 3, Figure 7.2d: Section C Designated and Protected Landscapes**, the Proposed Development does not extend through any landscape designations, hence there would be no direct effects. Landscape designations and protected landscapes within wider parts of the Study Area that may be indirectly impacted by the Proposed Development have been identified as follows:

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

7.3.4 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 Special Qualities is provided below.

Dornoch Firth NSA

7.3.5 The Dornoch Firth NSA is located on the south-eastern part of the Study Area, 4.5 km south-east of the Proposed Development within Section C at the closest point. This encompasses the linear landscape along the Firth, which is enclosed by rounded hills with a ground cover consisting primarily of heather moor and scree. The lower slopes incorporate areas of woodland and plantation forestry, as well as areas of pasture and arable farmland. The coastal landscape is characterised by a series of bays, sandy beaches, flats, shallows and promontories.

Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA

7.3.6 The Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA extends between Ullapool in the north-west to the mountain of Ben Wyvis in the south-east, 2.6 km south-west of the Proposed Development within Section C at the closest point. It encompasses a complex composition of high and steep mountains within the central section, which transitions to cnocan and open peatland hills in the north, and rounded hills and plateaux in the south. The challenging terrain and quiet, uninhabited glens create a sense of isolation and wildness, albeit there are some isolated estate buildings and forestry activity on the outer edges. The area is primarily used for deer stalking, fishing and hydro-electric generation, as well as hill walking. It is also enjoyed in views from adjoining areas, including those from the A837 to the north / northwest.

Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA

7.3.7 The Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA covers an extensive area of mountains and moorland between Loch Glascarnoch and the head of Loch Broom, 8.1 km south-west of the Proposed Development within Section C. This encompasses a combination of rugged terrain, high summits enclosing sheltered glens with plantation and native woodland, as well as upland lochans. There is limited habitation and access, which combine to create a sense of remoteness and solitude. The peaks and ridges in the northern and eastern parts of the SLA are characterised by more extensive areas of gentle slopes and high plateau summits.

7.3.8 The special qualities of the landscape designations and protected landscapes, as identified by the guidance documents listed in Paragraph 7.2.7, are listed below in **Table 7.2.** Special qualities of specific relevance to the Proposed Development are highlighted in bold.

Table 7.2: Special Qualities of Designated and Protected Landscapes

Designation	Description
Dornoch Firth NSA	• **The contrast between the enclosed west and the expansive east.** • **Inhabited surrounds within a wilder backdrop of hills and moors.** • **A wide diversity of woodland cover.** • A rich variety of alluvial lands, dunes and links. The ever-changing Firth. • **The tranquillity of an undeveloped coastline.** • Migdale, a microcosm of the wider Dornoch Firth.
Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA	• **A range of awe-inspiring massive, high rounded hills and plateaux, as well as steep rocky peaks and ridges, offering elevated panoramas.** • Long and deep penetrating glens with steep, arresting side slopes that limit views, some containing access routes and clearly influenced by estate management.

Designation	Description
	• **A very large interior with a strong sense of remoteness and sanctuary that seems even more extensive where appearing to continue into neighbouring wild land areas.** • **Rocky hills, cnocan and peatland slopes that appear simple and awe-inspiring at a broad scale, but harbour intricate features at a local level, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude.**
Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA	**Rugged mountains and lonely glens and spectacular panoramic views.** • Impressive natural features.

Landscape Character

7.3.9 With reference to NatureScot's National Landscape Character Assessment, LCTs within the Study Area are illustrated in **Volume 3**, **Figure 7.3d: Section C 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.

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

- 139 – Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland LCT;
- 145 – Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting LCT;
- 330 – Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty LCT;
- 329 – Rounded Mountain Massif LCT; and
- 146 – Coastal Farmland & Woodlands LCT.

7.3.11 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 7.1d: Section C Zone of Theoretical Visibility**, which illustrates potential visibility 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 greater numbers of steel lattice towers is typically focused across the more elevated slopes and summits, including Meall Eachainn, Sron Ach a' Bhacaidh and Cnoc Breac in the north, Coire as Airde and Breac-Bheinn to the west, and Carn Salachaidh / Carn Bhrain to the south. Lesser numbers of towers would typically be visible for receptors within lower-lying areas, including the Dornoch Firth (in particular the southern side), and the adjoining straths at Kyle of Sutherland and Strathcarron. 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 is increasingly fragmented, particularly towards the north and south-west. Within these areas, potential views of the Proposed Development would be limited to localised summits and typically comprise a lesser number of 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, B-roads and rail lines;
- tourists visiting cultural heritage locations / outdoor locations where enjoyment of the view is one of the principal reasons for being at the location; and
- walkers / cyclists on promoted long-range recreational trails, Core Paths and national cycleways.

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, on the basis that the towers would form the largest and most prominent part of the Proposed Development and would be visible from greater distances. Visual receptors are described in greater detail within **Annex 2**. Their locations are illustrated in **Volume 3, Figure 7.4g-h: Section C Visual Receptors**.

Settlements

7.4.5 Residential settlements within the Study Area are limited and predominantly concentrated along the lower-lying shores and inland glens of the Dornoch Firth / Kyle of Sutherland and Strathcarron. With reference to **Volume 3, Figure 7.4g: Section C Visual Receptors**, those located within the ZTV, where there may be views of the Proposed Development are as follows:

- Culrain (SC-1), 1.0 km to the east;
- Lower Gledfield (SC-2), 3.4 km to the east;
- Ardgay (SC-3), 4.1 km to the east;
- Kincardine (SC-4), 5.2 km to the east; and
- Bonar Bridge (SC-5), 5.5 km to the east.

7.4.6 In addition to the main settlements, there are isolated farmsteads and dwellings scattered across the surrounding landscape. Isolated residential properties within closest proximity to the Proposed Development (within 500m of the Alignment) are listed below. All of these dwellings are located within the low-lying strath at the Kyle of Sutherland.

- Creide (SC-6), this two-storey dwelling is located on a raised hillock on the banks of the Kyle of Sutherland, 230 m to the north-east of the Proposed Development;
- Oak Bank (SC-7), located amongst tree cover on the banks of the Kyle of Sutherland, 340 m to the north-east of the Proposed Development;
- Invershin Farm (SC-8), located amongst tree cover on the banks of the Kyle of Sutherland, 330 m to the north-east of the Proposed Development; and
- The Bungalow, Invershin (SC-9), located amongst tree cover at the side of the A837, 460 m to the north of the Proposed Development.

Transport Routes

7.4.7 Similar to residential settlements, the main transportation routes across the Study Area are generally aligned to the lower lying inland glens, and shores of the Dornoch Firth. With reference to **Volume 3, Figure 7.4h: Section C Visual Receptors** those located within the ZTV, from which there may be views of the Proposed Development are as follows:

- A836 (RC-1), this is a single carriageway road that forms a key, long-distance route north from the A9 at Tain, extending as far as John o' Groats. At its closest point, this road extends directly under the Proposed Development at Invershin (between Towers S21 and S22);
- Far North Rail Line (RC-2), this single-track rail line extends from Inverness to Thurso and Wick. At its closest point it extends under the Proposed Development at Invershin (between Towers S21 and S22);

- A837 (RC-3), this is a single track road that extends west from the A836 towards Lochinver, 110 m to the north of the Proposed Development at the closest point;
- B864 (RC-4), this is a single track road that extends north from the A837 towards Lairg, 1.2 km to the north of the Proposed Development at the closest point; and
- A949 (RC-5), this is a single carriageway road that extends between Bonar Bridge and Clashmore, 5.4 km to the east the Proposed Development at the closest point.

7.4.8 In addition to the above, the A839 is located 6.6 km to the north of the Proposed Development at the closest point. The road is entirely outside the ZTV, hence is not considered further.

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

- Cadh an Tartair Road (RC-6), which along Strathcarron, 720 m south of the Proposed Development in Section C (Tower S37); and
- Culrain – Inveroykel Minor Road (RC-7), which extends along the southern side of the Kyle of Sutherland (between Towers S23 and S24). The alignment would extend over the road in the vicinity of Inverhouse.

Recreational Routes

7.4.10 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 7.4h: Section C Visual Receptors**.

National Cycle Routes

- Inverness to John O' Groats Cycle Trail (RC-8), within the Study Area, this follows the A836 along the Dornoch Firth, as far as Invershin where it diverts along the B864. Accordingly, it extends directly under the Proposed Development at Invershin (between Towers S21 and S22).

Core Paths

- Core Path SU08.02: Carbisdale (RC-9), this extends through forestry at Culrain, on the western side of the Kyle of Sutherland. At its closest point, the route extends directly under the Proposed Development (between Towers S27 and S28);
- Core Path SU03.01: Cornhill – Culrain (RC-10), this extends through areas of forestry and open moorland. At its closest point, the route extends directly under the Proposed Development (near Tower S31);
- Core Path SU08.03: Lochcoire (RC-11), this extends east-west, directly under the Proposed Development (near Tower S30);
- Core Path SU08.01: Culrain to Invershin (RC-12), Short section of path connecting Culrain with Invershin via the viaduct, 1.0 km to the south-west of the Proposed Development at the closest point;
- Core Path SU03.14: Cornhill Curling Pond (RC-13), footpath which forms a loop within East Strathcarron Forest, 925 m to the south-west of the Proposed Development. The route is accessed via Cornhill near the River Carron;
- Core Path SU21.11: Shin Falls Forest Walk, and SU21.12: Shin Falls Circular (RC-14), which forms a loop within mature forestry near Shin Falls (visitor centre) 2.4 km north-west of the Proposed Development;
- Core SU03.06: River Carron footpath (RC-15) which follows the route of the River Carron (Dounie Estate), 780 m to the south of the Proposed Development at the closest point;
- Core Path SU03.11: River Carron (RC-16) footpath which partially follows the route of the River Carron (Dounie Estate) to north of Lower Gledfield, 2.8 km south-east of the Proposed Development. The path connects with route SU03.11;

- Core Path SU05.06: Balblair Wood (RC-17) Invershin, footpath which is routed through Balblair Wood, 1.5 km to the south-east of the Proposed Development, with access point from A836 near Invershin;
- Core path SU05.04, Balblair Forest Walk (RC-18) footpath which forms a loop through Maikle Wood, 3.2 km to the south-east of the Proposed Development, with access point from A836 near Drumliah;
- Core Path SU16.08: Braemore – Achany (RC-19) footpath which connects the A839 with Achany Farm, 4.9 km north-east of the Proposed Development at the closest point;
- SU05.01: Loch Migdale (RC-20), located 6.3 km to the south-east of the Proposed Development at the closest point; and
- Core Path SU21.02: Sika Trail Cycle Route (RC-21), located 7.4 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development at the closest point.

7.4.11 Core Path SU16.03: Ord Hill is located on the cusp of the ZTV at a distance of 8.2 km to the north of the Proposed Development at the closest point. Based on the lack of ZTV coverage and distance of separation, potential views of the Proposed Development would be so limited that this path is not assessed further. Similarly, Core Paths SU16.07: Balloan – Lairg (7.8 km to the north), SU16.02: Gunn's Wood (8.2 km to the north), SU16.06: Clash Breac - Primary School (8.8 km to the north), SU21.01: Ravens Rock Forest Walk (8.6 km to the north-west), SU21.08: Rosehall Estate (9.0 km to the north-west), and SU16.01: Ferry Wood Forest (9.0 km to the north) are all located outside the ZTV and are not considered further in this assessment.

Outdoor Locations

7.4.12 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 7.4g: Section C Visual Receptors**, as listed below:

- Location OC-1 Carbisdale Castle is located approximately 695 m to the south-east of the Proposed Development, near Culrain and the Kyle of Sutherland. This is a private residence that also includes various leisure facilities including accommodation, catering, functions / events, fishing and local walks.
- Location OC-2 The Scap (Angling) is located approximately 600 m to the north-west of the Proposed Development, in the Kyle of Sutherland;
- Location OC-3 Dounie Estate, and is a promoted angling and leisure destination, approximately 900 m to the south-east of the Proposed Development in Section C;
- Location OC- 4 Loch Laro is an angling destination located 1.3 km to the north of the Proposed Development;
- Location OC-5 Loch an Lagain is located within the eastern part of the Study Area, 1.9km to the south-east of the Proposed Development;
- Location OC-6 Balblair Forest is located 3.2 km to the south of the Proposed Development and includes picnic area, parking and trails suitable for mountain biking and walking;
- Location OC-7 Gledfield House and Estate is located near the River Carron, 2.4 km to the east of the Proposed Development and includes various leisure facilities, accommodation, fishing (River Carron) and walks; and
- Location OC-8 Falls of Shin and Shin Forest includes café / visitors centre, picnic area, parking and trails suitable for walking and a viewpoint. The visitor centre is located approx. 2.6km to the north of the Proposed Development adjacent to the B864.

Future Baseline

7.4.13 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.

7.4.14 Conversely, larger scale (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 (21/00849/FUL), which comprises ten turbines, 150 – 200 m to tip, the consented Garvary Wind Farm (21/01921/S36) comprising 25 turbines, up to 180 m to tip, the consented Meall Buidhe Wind Farm (20/02659/FUL / PPA-270-2277) comprising eight turbines, 144.5 – 149.9 m to tip, and the proposed Acheilidh Wind Farm (Lairg III) (24/02094/S36) comprising 12 turbines, 200 – 230 m to tip. These wind farms, would be located across the hillsides and upland plateaux north / west 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. In addition to these schemes, there are further wind farm proposals at pre-planning stages. The potential effects are considered further within the assessment of cumulative effects.

7.5 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects: Landscape

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

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

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

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

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

<u>LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland</u>

7.5.4 The majority of Section C (equating to 11.0 km out of a total 13.5 km length of the alignment) would be located within the 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT, extending from the Substation at Meall Mor in the north, to Strathcarron in the south. There would also be a Special Arrangement (diamond duck under with flat formation towers) where the alignment crosses the existing OHL west of Loch Buidhe. Within the Study Area, the LCT is present in three distinct areas, separated by intervening river valleys. Refer to Viewpoints 7-46 Loch Laro, 7-53 Lower Hilton, and 7-54 (A and B) Clashcoig (Lochbuidhe Road).

7.5.5 During construction, a **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) effect is predicted within 600-700 m of the works. Within this linear corridor, the construction activity would result in noticeable changes to the existing landscape fabric and land use. This is based on felling of forestry to create a wayleave for the alignment and 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 at Towers S1, S14-S15, S18-S20, S26-S31 and S33-S37, and typically within 400-500 m of the alignment (extending out to a maximum of approximately 700 m from the alignment). The construction works would also involve creation of access tracks, as well as increased vehicular movement and human activity within existing areas of forestry and open moorland. These activities would contrast with the more natural characteristics of the local LCT, albeit would be contained by surrounding plantation forestry along

southern sections of the route (equating to approximately 6.5 km of the total 11.0 km length of Section C within this LCT). As a result, the effects would be most noticeable within the moorland setting at the northern end of Section C. 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).

7.5.6 During operation, the steel lattice towers would represent a new linear element within the landscape. Whilst the towers would represent new elements of infrastructure, the southern parts of the alignment (equating to approximately 6.5 km of Section C) would be located within the context of surrounding commercial plantation. This would limit views to the tops of the towers from surrounding parts of the LCT and ensure that the effects would be focused within parts of the LCT where the more natural / wild characteristics of the LCT are less pronounced. Northerly sections of the alignment would extend through more open moorland (equating to approximately 4.5 km of Section C), where the towers would be broadly similar in terms of design, albeit with taller towers, than the existing 132 kV OHL that extends across this part of the LCT. Within 600-700 m 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).

LCT 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland

7.5.7 This LCT is focused upon the low-lying river valleys extending inland at the western end of the Dornoch Firth. Within the Study Area, this comprises two linear landscape character areas at the Kyle of Sutherland, and Strathcarron. This coincides with very localised sections of the Section C alignment, where it extends directly across these straths. There would also be a Special Arrangement (duck under with wood poles, with live line scaffold provision) where the alignment crosses the existing OHL in the vicinity of Invershin. Refer to Viewpoints 7-47 A837 (near Inveran) to 7-52 A836 (west of Balblair) (within the Kyle of Sutherland), and 7-60 Gruinards (west of Dounie) (in Strathcarron).

7.5.8 Construction works would include localised forestry felling on the upper slopes of the Kyle of Sutherland Area and Strathcarron Area to create a wayleave for the alignment, as well as 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 at Towers S21 and S25 in the Kyle of Sutherland (where it would typically be contained within 200-300 m of the alignment), and between Towers S37-S38 on the northern edge of Strathcarron (extending out to approximately 700-800 m based on local conditions). The construction works would also involve the creation of new (permanent) tracks, and increased human activity / vehicular movement. This would contrast with the existing agricultural land use within the strath floor, although would be restricted by the low-lying nature of the landscape, and the screening influence of intervening tree cover and the landform enclosing the valley sides. A **Major -Moderate Adverse** (significant) effect is predicted within 700-800 m 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).

7.5.9 During operation, the steel lattice towers would represent a new linear element within the LCT that would contrast with the more rural / natural characteristics of the LCT. However, the Section C alignment would extend directly across the Kyle of Sutherland and Strathcarron (rather than along the length of these straths), thereby limiting the number of towers required. Within the Kyle of Sutherland, the alignment would extend approximately 2.1 km in length across the strath and introduce five towers, as well as a short section of permanent access track. Within the Strathcarron Area, the alignment would extend approximately 400 m across the strath and introduce one tower, as well as a short section of permanent access track within surrounding forestry. Within 700-800 m 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).

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 139 – Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland;
- LCT 145 – Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting;
- LCT 330 – Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty;
- LCT 329 – Rounded Mountain Massif; and
- LCT 146 – Coastal Farmland & Woodlands.

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

7.5.12 During construction and operation, **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant) effects are predicted for LCT 145 – Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting (refer to Viewpoints 7-55 Airdens, and 7-56 Bonar Bridge to 7-59 A836 Kincardine), LCT 139 – Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland and LCT 329 Round Mountain Massif, - Ross & Cromarty,

7.5.13 LCT 146 – Coastal Farmland & Woodlands and LCT 330 Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes. are located at greater distance from the Proposed Development (> 6.2 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. **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effects are predicted for The construction activities and new alignment would represent recognisable new features in the wider landscape, they would be unlikely to alter the overriding landscape characteristics of these LCTs.

Assessment of Effects on Designated and Protected Landscapes

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

Dornoch Firth NSA

7.5.15 The Dornoch Firth NSA is located on the south-eastern part of the Study Area, 4.5 km south-east of the Proposed Development. The NSA encompasses the linear landscape along the Firth, comprising a series of bays and sandy beaches, as well as areas of farmland enclosed by rounded hills with a ground cover consisting of woodland / forestry, heather moor and scree. The landscape sensitivity of the NSA is considered to be High-Medium, as identified in the sensitivity analysis for the coinciding LCTs (see **Volume 5, Appendix 7.7: LVIA of Section C: Annex 1: Landscape Character Assessment (Section C)).** This is reflective of the high value of the NSA, coupled with the slightly reduced susceptibility to change based on intervening forestry and OHLs.

7.5.16 There would be no direct, physical change to the landscape within the NSA as a result of the Proposed Development. Instead, potential effects would be indirect based upon the availability of views of the construction activities and new alignment (refer to Viewpoints 7-56 Bonar Bridge to 7-59 A836 Kincardine). The construction activities would be experienced at distance, and would be subject to screening by forestry extending across the upper slopes around the Firth. Once operational, the tops of the towers would be visible on the skyline from more open vantage points within the NSA. The towers would also represent relatively discreet additions to the background landscape enclosing the wider Firth, and would be spatially and geographically separate from the coastline.

7.5.17 During construction and operation, **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effects are predicted for the western parts of the Dornoch Firth NSA (in closest proximity to the Proposed Development). These effects would steadily diminish across more easterly parts of the NSA, at greater distance from the Proposed Development. Large parts of the NSA would be completely unaffected. In summary, there would be no significant effects upon the Special Qualities of the NSA and its integrity would not therefore be compromised.

Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA

7.5.18 The Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA is located 2.6 km south-west of the Proposed Development at the closest point. The WLA encompasses a complex composition of high and steep mountains within central parts, which transitions to cnocan and open peatland hills in the north. The challenging terrain and quiet, uninhabited glens are recognised for their sense of isolation and wildness.

7.5.19 As above, there would be no direct, physical change to the landscape within the WLA as a result of the Proposed Development. Potential views of the construction activities and new steel lattice towers would be restricted to the summits and upper slopes on the northern edge of the WLA, in the vicinity of Cnoc a Bhreac Leathaid, Carn a Chlaiginn, and Carn Salachaidh. The construction works / vehicle movements and the introduction of the towers would contrast with the wild and remote qualities of the landscape. However, the overall influence in each case would be limited by the distance of view, partial screening by intervening landform and forestry, the very large scale of the receiving landscape, and the geographical separation of the Proposed Development on the opposite (northern) side of Strathcarron.

7.5.20 During construction and operation, **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant) effects are predicted for the northern part of the Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA (in closest proximity to the Proposed Development). These effects would reduce abruptly across parts of the WLA south of Carn Salachaidh, including its more remote central areas. Across the vast majority of the WLA, views of the Proposed Development would be almost entirely screened by the intervening landform, and completely absent across lower lying slopes and glens. As a result, across the majority of the WLA the effect would be **Negligible** (not significant). In summary, there would be no significant effects upon the Special Qualities of the WLA, and its integrity would not be compromised.

Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA

7.5.21 The Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA covers an extensive area of mountains and moorland, 8.1 km south-west of the Proposed Development. This encompasses rugged terrain, high summits enclosing sheltered glens with plantation and native woodland, as well as upland lochans. The lack of properties / settlements and access within the SLA is recognised as contributing to its sense of remoteness and solitude.

7.5.22 ZTV coverage across the SLA is extremely limited within the Study Area, and focused on a small number of isolated summits comprising Cnoc na Tuppat and the hillside north of Amat Forest. From these very localised areas, potential views of the temporary construction activities and the towers during the operational phase would be restricted by the distance of view, in combination with the screening influence of intervening mountains and the scale of the receiving landscape.

7.5.23 During construction and operation, **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effects are predicted for the Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA. Across the vast majority of the SLA there would be no views and no effect. In summary, there would be no significant effects upon the Special Qualities of the SLA, and its integrity would not be compromised.

Summary of Landscape Effects

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

Table 7.3: Summary of Effects During Construction

Landscape Receptor	Beneficial Effect						Adverse Effect				
	Major	Major-Mod.	Mod.	Mod-Minor	Minor	Neg.	Minor	Mod-Minor	Mod.	Major-Mod.	Major
LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland								•		**L**	
LCT 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland								•		**L**	
LCT 139 – Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland								•			
LCT 145 – Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting								•			
LCT 330 – Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty							•				
LCT 329 – Rounded Mountain Massif								•			
LCT 146 – Coastal Farmland & Woodlands							•				
Dornoch Firth NSA							•				
Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA								**L**			
Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA							•				

Table 7.4: Summary of Effects During Operation

Landscape Receptor	Beneficial Effect						Adverse Effect				
	Major	Major-Mod.	Mod.	Mod-Minor	Minor	Neg.	Minor	Mod-Minor	Mod.	Major-Mod.	Major
LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland								•		L	
LCT 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland								•		L	

Landscape Receptor	Beneficial Effect						Adverse Effect				
	Major	Major-Mod.	Mod.	Mod-Minor	Minor	Neg.	Minor	Mod-Minor	Mod.	Major-Mod.	Major
LCT 139 – Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland											
LCT 145 – Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting								•			
LCT 330 – Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty							•				
LCT 329 – Rounded Mountain Massif								•			
LCT 146 – Coastal Farmland & Woodlands							•				
Dornoch Firth NSA							•				
Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA								**L**			
Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA							•				

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 likely significant effects.

Settlements (Residential Receptors)

7.6.2 With reference to **Volume 3, Figure 7.4g: Section C Visual Receptors**, four residential properties and five settlements were included in the visual assessment. Likely significant effects are identified for all four of the residential properties, and at one settlement. The key effects are summarised below.

SC-06: Creide

7.6.3 The construction works and new steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity in views to the south, at a distance of approximately 230 m. The views would be experienced against the combination of background sky and landscape, and would be heavily filtered by intervening mature tree cover near the property. Views to more distant parts of the Proposed Development to the east would also be heavily filtered by mature tree cover, and predominantly visible against the background landscape. Overall, the visibility would be more apparent in winter months during leaf fall. This would result in **Major Adverse** effects (significant).

SC-07: Oak Bank

7.6.4 The construction works and new steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity, predominantly back-clothed by the background landscape at a distance of approximately 340 m to the south. These views would be heavily filtered by tree cover adjacent to the curtilage. Overall, the visibility would be more apparent in winter months during leaf fall. This would result in **Major-Moderate Adverse** effects (significant).

SC-08: Invershin Farm

7.6.5 The Proposed Development would be visible at close range, against the background landscape, a distance of approximately 330 m to the south. These views would be heavily filtered by mature tree cover, particularly during summer months. Views to more distant parts of the Proposed Development to the south-west and east would also be heavily filtered by adjacent tree cover. There would be heavily filtered views of the Special Arrangement (duck under with wood poles, with live line scaffold provision intersection) to the south-east, between Towers S22 and S23. The clearest views would be experienced during winter months due to leaf fall. This would result in **Major-Moderate Adverse** effects (significant).

SC-09: The Bungalow, Invershin

7.6.6 Views of the Proposed Development to the south and south-west, at a distance of approximately 460 m, would be heavily filtered by mature vegetation around the property. Views to more distant parts of the Proposed Development to the south-east would be partially screened by landform and filtered by curtilage vegetation. This would result in **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant).

SC-01: Culrain

7.6.7 From this settlement, the Proposed Development would be partially visible in views to the south-west at a distance of approximately 1.0 km, in the context of existing forestry and moorland. Views would consist of the upper parts of the transmission towers, visible against the background sky, with greater visibility of towers that coincide with areas of moorland. Views to more distant parts of the Proposed Development to the north-west are more contained by both landform and forest cover, and would consist of partially screened views of the upper parts of transmission towers. This would result in **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant).

Other Settlements

7.6.8 No significant effects are identified from other settlements due to distance and effect of intervening landform and tree cover. The visual effect experienced by residents within the settlements of Lower Gledfield (SC-02), Ardgay (SC-03), Kincardine (SC-04), and Bonar Bridge (SC-05) has been identified as **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant) in each case during construction and operation. Refer to Viewpoints 7-56 and 7-59 from Bonar Bridge and Kincardine respectively.

Transport Routes

7.6.9 With reference to **Volume 3, Figure 7.4h: Section C Visual Receptors**, seven key transport routes have been included in the visual assessment. Likely significant effects are identified for localised sections of four of these routes, during both construction and operation. Of these four routes, three extend directly under the alignment route, and the other would be located within 110 m of the closest tower. The key effects are summarised below.

A Roads

7.6.10 The A836 (RC-01) and A837 (RC-03) would be located directly under / within 110m of the Proposed Development respectively. From localised sections of these routes, there would be clear, close-proximity views of the construction activities and new steel lattice towers. Refer to Viewpoints 7-52 A836 (west of Balblair), 7-56 Bonar Bridge and 7-59 A836 Kincardine on the A836, and Viewpoints 7-47 A837 (near Inveran), 7-48 A837 Invershin Cemetery and 7-50 A837 Invershin on the A837. There would be heavily filtered views of the Special Arrangement (duck under with wood poles, from A836, with live line scaffold provision intersection) on section of road between Invershin and A837 junction (180 m at the closest point). There would also be views of the Special Arrangement from the A837, to the south and south-west (220 m at the closest point) between A836 and River Shin crossing. This would result in **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) effects across localised sections within 700 – 800 m of the Proposed Development during construction and operation. This accounts for a limited extent of each route, and would be experienced by respective road users for a short duration.

7.6.11 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, 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 A836, the effect would be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction and operation. Across the wider A837, the effect would be **Minor-Negligible Adverse** (not significant) during construction, and **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during operation.

7.6.12 In addition to the above, the A949 (RC-05) would be located at greater distance from the Proposed Development. Views from this route would be subject to screening by roadside vegetation along lengthy sections of the route (refer to Viewpoints 7-57 A949 (south of Swordale) and 7-58 A949 Little Creich). Accordingly, the visual effect for users has been identified as **Moderate-Minor** (not significant) during construction and operation.

B Roads

7.6.13 No significant effects are identified for road users on the B864 (RC-04). This is due to the low-lying nature of the route and its containment by surrounding landform and woodland. Accordingly, potential views of the construction activities and new steel lattice towers would be extremely limited. The effect would be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction and operation

Minor Roads

7.6.14 Two minor roads have been included in the visual assessment on the basis that the Proposed Development would extend directly across them, or within close proximity. From the Culrain – Inveroykel Minor Road (RC-07) within the Kyle of Sutherland there would be clear, close-proximity views of the construction activities and new steel lattice towers (refer to Viewpoint 7-49). These views would be limited to localised sections within 400 – 700 m of the Proposed Development, where road users would experience a **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) effect during construction and operation.

7.6.15 Across wider parts of this minor road (accounting for the majority of the route), potential views of the Proposed Development would be restricted by roadside vegetation / intervening tree cover, in combination with the landform enclosing each strath, and the increasing distance of view. Accordingly, the influence of the construction activities and new steel lattice towers would reduce. Across the wider Culrain – Inveroykel Minor Road, the effect would be **Negligible** (not significant).

7.6.16 Views of Section C of the Proposed Development from the Cadh an Tartair (RC-06) within Strathcarron would be experienced at a distance of 720 m to the north at the closest point. Views would be subject to screening by intervening tree cover within the valley and Strathcarron Wood. The resultant effect would be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant) at most.

Rail Lines

7.6.17 The Proposed Development would extend directly across the Far North Rail Line (RC-02). There would be clear, close-proximity views of the construction activities and new steel lattice towers from localised sections of the line within 300 – 400 m of the Proposed Development, where passengers would experience a **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) effect during construction and operation. There would be heavily filtered views of the Special Arrangement (duck under with wood poles, with live line scaffold provision intersection) on shorth section near Invershin (270 m at the closest point).

7.6.18 The effects would reduce across wider sections of the line based on the screening influence of intervening woodland / trackside vegetation. From more open, distant sections of the route the construction activities and towers would form relatively discreet element within wider views along the hills around the Firth. Accordingly,

the visual effect experienced by passengers would be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction and operation.

Recreational Routes

7.6.19 With reference to **Volume 3, Figure 7.4h: Section C Visual Receptors**, fourteen recreational routes have been identified in the visual assessment (one promoted cycle route and thirteen Core Paths). Likely significant effects are identified for localised sections of seven of these routes, during both construction and operation. Of these seven routes, four would be located directly under the alignment route, and the other three would be located within 1 km of the closest tower. The key effects are summarised below.

RC-08: Inverness to John O' Groats National Cycle Trail

7.6.20 The Proposed Development would extend across this cycle trail near Invershin and the A836, resulting in close range views from a localised section. The construction works and new steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity from the 700 m section south of the route, near Invershin. This would result in **Major Adverse** (significant) effects across localised sections within 700 m of the Proposed Development during construction and operation. This accounts for a limited extent of each route, and would be experienced by respective route users for a short duration.

RC-09: Core Path SU08.02 - Carbisdale

7.6.21 The Proposed Development would extend across this path at two locations, near the lochan at Culrain Burn, which would result in close range views, subject to screening. Views toward the Proposed Development, would be concentrated on sections of path at higher elevation, up to distances of 600-700 m, subject to intervening screening. During construction, tree felling would also be evident and from sections of the path at close range. This would result in **Major Adverse** (significant) effects across localised sections of the path within 600-700 m of the Proposed Development during construction and operation. This accounts for a limited extent of the overall footpath, and would be experienced by route users for a short duration.

RC-10: Core Path SU03.01: Cornhill – Culrain

7.6.22 The Proposed Development would extend across this path at Hilton Wood, where there are large areas of clear fell forestry. The construction works and new steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity from localised parts of the path within approximately 800 m of the Proposed Development (within clear fell and forest management areas). This would result in **Major Adverse** (significant) effects across localised sections within 800 m of the Proposed Development during construction and operation. This accounts for a limited extent of the footpath, and would be experienced by route users for a short duration.

RC-11: Core Path SU08.03: Lochcoire

7.6.23 The Proposed Development would extend directly across this path. As a result, there would be clear views of the construction activities and steel lattice towers from parts of the path within 500-600 m of the Proposed Development. This would result in **Major Adverse** (significant) effects during construction and operation. This accounts for a limited extent of the footpath, and would be experienced by route users for a short duration (refer to Viewpoint 7-53).

Other Recreational Routes

7.6.24 Views from other footpaths within approximately 1 km, in particular RC-12 (Core Path SU08.01: Culrain to Invershin), RC-13 (Core Path SU03.14: Cornhill Curling Pond), and RC-15: Core Path SU03.06: River Carron would result in effects ranging from **Major-Moderate** to **Moderate Adverse** (significant) as described below.

7.6.25 With regard to route RC-12, the elevated nature of the path, which coincides with a raised viaduct, would allow views of the construction activities and new steel lattice towers to the north-west. From Core Path RC-12, there

would also be filtered views of the Special Arrangement north of Invershin where the Proposed Development would extend across an existing 132 kV OHL. This would result in localised alterations to the 132 kV towers to either side of the intersection (forming a duck under with wood poles, with live line scaffold provision). On balance, the effects would be **Moderate Adverse** (significant) during construction and operation.

7.6.26 In terms of route RC13 (SU03.14), there would be views of the Proposed Development to the west, subject to intervening forest screening. The clearest views of the construction activities and steel lattice towers would be experienced from the western-most part of the path, where forestry felling (to create the wayleave for the alignment and a wind-firm edge to the retained forestry) would open up views towards the Proposed Development. The effects along this localised 250 m long section of the path would be **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) during construction and operation. The effects across the path as a whole would be **Moderate Adverse** (significant).

7.6.27 Similarly, views of Section C of the Proposed Development from route RC-15: Core Path SU03.06: River Carron would be experienced at a distance of 780 m to the north, and would be subject to partial screening by tree cover within the valley and the intervening Strathcarron Wood (refer to Viewpoint 7-60 at the wester end of the path). On balance, the effects would be **Moderate Adverse** (significant) during construction and operation.

7.6.28 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. This includes potential views from routes RC-14, RC-16, RC-17, RC-18, RC-19, RC-20 and RC21. Accordingly, the influence of the construction activities and new steel lattice towers would reduce, and the Proposed Development would represent a discreet element within wider views. Accordingly, the visual effect experienced by recreational receptors using these paths would be **Moderate--Minor** (not significant) during construction and operation.

Outdoor Locations

7.6.29 With reference to **Volume 3, Figure 7.4g: Section C Visual Receptors,** eight outdoor locations have been identified in the visual assessment. Likely significant effects are identified for three locations, during both construction and operation. The key effects are summarised below.

<u>OC-1: Carbisdale Castle</u>

7.6.30 Carbisdale Castle is located on an area of high ground, approximately 695 m to the east / south-east of the Proposed Development, adjacent to the Kyle of Sutherland. The elevated location affords open and panorama views to north and north-west along the Kyle of Sutherland and Achany Glen (refer to Viewpoint 7 49). Views to the east and south include extensive areas of woodland and plantation forestry at Invershin and Balblair. To the north-east the Proposed Development would be partially visible against a combination of background sky and landscape, in the context of existing plantation forestry. This would result in **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) effects. Views to the west and north west would be fully screened by mature woodland. It should be noted that views are contained by woodland at the approach road and a large proportion of the associated footpaths adjacent to the castle, are located within mature woodland.

<u>OC-2: The Scap (Angling)</u>

7.6.31 This promoted angling location is located on the Kyle of Sutherland, approximately 600 m to the north-west of the Proposed Development near Oak Bank (north-west of Carbisdale Castle). There would be heavily filtered views of the Proposed Development to the south-east, predominantly visible against the background landscape. This would result in **Moderate Adverse** effects (significant).

OC-3: Dounie Estate

7.6.32 This estate is located 900 m to the south-east of the Proposed Development in Section C, towards the eastern end of Strathcarron. There would be partial views of the construction activities and steel lattice towers to the north-west, beyond intervening tree cover, including Strathcarron Wood. The clearest views would be experienced in winter months, resulting in a **Moderate Adverse** (significant) effect.

OC-4: Loch Laro

7.6.33 There would be views of the Proposed Development, located at a distance of 2.5 km to the south-west, predominantly experienced against the background sky. However, a large proportion of the Proposed Development is screened by landform. There would be views of the Special Arrangement (diamond duck under with flat formation towers) to the south-east, (3.5 km at the closest point). This would result in a **Moderate-Minor Adverse** effect (not significant).

Other Outdoor Locations

7.6.34 Potential views of the Proposed Development from other Outdoor locations would be restricted by intervening landform, tree / forest cover and the increasing distance of view. This includes Loch an Lagain (OC-5), Balblair Forest (OC-6), Gledfield House and Estate (0C-7), and the Falls of Shin and Shin Forest (OC-8). Accordingly, the influence of the construction activities and new steel lattice towers would reduce, and the Proposed Development would represent a discreet element within wider views. Accordingly, the visual effect experienced by recreational visitors at Loch an Lagain (OC-5) would be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction and operation. The effects at Balblair Forest (OC-6), Gledfield House and Estate (OC-7), and the Falls of Shin and Shin Forest (OC-8) would be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant).

Summary of Visual Effects

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

Table 7.5: Summary of Effects During Construction

Visual Receptor	Beneficial Effect					Adverse Effect					
	Major	Major-Mod.	Mod.	Mod-Minor	Minor	Neg.	Minor	Mod-Minor	Mod.	Major-Mod.	Major
Settlements								6		6	3
Transport Routes							1	2		4 L	
Recreational Routes: NCR							1				1 L
Recreational Routes: Core Paths								6	2	1	3 L
Outdoor Locations							1	3	2	1 L	

Table 7.6: Summary of Effects During Operation

Visual Receptor	Beneficial Effect					Adverse Effect					
	Major	Major-Mod.	Mod.	Mod-Minor	Minor	Neg.	Minor	Mod-Minor	Mod.	Major-Mod.	Major
Settlements								6		6	3
Transport Routes							1	2		4 L	
Recreational Routes: NCR							1				1 L
Recreational Routes: Core Paths								6	2	1	3 L
Outdoor Locations							1	3	2	1 L	

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 consented or proposed within the Study Area (including those at Scoping Stage). These developments are illustrated in **Volume 3, Figure 7.5d: Section C Cumulative Sites**. 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 C, this includes:
  - Section B and Section D of the Proposed Development (steel lattice tower OHL);
  - Proposed Carnaig 400 kV Substation (Associated Development which is the subject of a separate planning application – ref: 24/05062/FUL, comprising main platform 530 x 324 m, and associated infrastructure, including Synchronous Condenser Buildings up to 14.5 m in height).
- Scenario 2: Including, in addition, other unrelated development proposals (considered during the operation phase only). For Section C, this includes:
  - Consented Lairg II Wind Farm Redesign (21/00849/FUL) (ten turbines, 150-200 m to tip);
  - Consented Garvary Wind Farm (21/01921/S36) (25 turbines, up to 180 m to tip);
  - Consented Meall Buidhe (20/02659/FUL / PPA-270-2277) (eight turbines, 144.5 – 149.9m);
  - Proposed Acheilidh Wind Farm (Lairg III) (24/02094/S36) (12 turbines, 200-230 m to tip);
  - Scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm (24/04326/SCOP) (up to 29 turbines, max height undisclosed);
  - Scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm (24/04752/SCOP) (17 turbines, 220 m to tip);
  - Scoping-stage Balblair Wind Farm (24/01500/SCOP) (nine turbines, 180 m to tip); and
  - Scoping-stage Creachan Wind Farm (24/03825/SCOP) (21 turbines, 220 m to tip).

7.7.3 In addition to the above, the consented Achany Wind Farm Extension (21/03695/S36) (comprising 18 turbines, 149.9 m to tip) will be located to the north-west of the Proposed Development. The wind farm site boundary extends into the Study Area. However, the closest turbine will be located > 10 km from the Section C alignment and is therefore not considered further.

7.7.4 As it is likely that Scenario 1 development would be constructed concurrently with the Proposed Development in Section C, 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

7.7.5 LVIAs of Section B and Section D of the Proposed Development have been completed and are included in this EIA Report as **Volume 5, Appendix 7.6** and **Volume 5, Appendix 7.8**. These LVIAs identified effects to the following receptors which have been identified within the Study Area for Section C. Given the location of the proposed Carnaig 400kV Substation at the transition of Section B and Section C, the receptors listed below are also considered to include those potentially affected by the Substation.

- Landscape effects
  - LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland;
  - LCT 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland;
  - LCT 145 – Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting;
  - LCT 146 – Coastal Farmland & Woodlands;
  - LCT 139 – Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland;
  - LCT 330 – Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty;
  - LCT 329 – Rounded Mountain Massif;
  - Dornoch Firth NSA;
  - Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA; and
  - Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA.
- Visual effects
  - Residential receptors SC3 – Ardgay;
  - Road and Rail users RC1 – RC2 and RC6;
  - Recreational Route receptors RC8, RC10, RC13, RC15, and RC16; and
  - Receptors at Outdoor Locations OC3 and OC7.

7.7.6 The predicted effects on these receptors, as identified within the Section B LVIA (**Volume 5, Appendix 7.6**), Section D LVIA (**Volume 5, Appendix 7.8**), and Section C LVIA (this Appendix) are detailed in **Table 7.7** 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.

7.7.7 Review of the LVIA for the Carnaig 400kV Substation (undertaken as part of a separate planning application – ref: 24/05062/FUL) identified that key landscape effects would be focused across localised parts of LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland in the vicinity of the Substation site. Potential visual effects would be extremely limited, and restricted to localised sections of nearby minor roads.

Table 7.7: Individual Effects on Cumulative Receptors

LCT / Designated or Protected Landscape	Section C Effect Rating	Section B or D Effect Rating	Included in Cumulative
LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) (locally Major-Moderate Adverse, significant)	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) (locally Major-Moderate Adverse, significant) There would also be localised effects based on the addition of the Proposed Carnaig 400 kV Substation (Associated Development).	Yes
LCT 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) (locally Major-Moderate Adverse, significant)	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant) (locally Major-Moderate Adverse, significant)	Yes
LCT 145 – Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	Yes
LCT 146 – Coastal Farmland & Woodlands	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse	No
LCT 139 – Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) (locally Major Adverse, significant)	Yes
LCT 330 – Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) (locally Major-Moderate Adverse, significant)	No
LCT 329 – Rounded Mountain Massif	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) (locally Major Adverse, significant)	No
Dornoch Firth NSA	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)	Yes
Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA	Construction and Operation: Negligible (locally Moderate-Minor Adverse, not significant)	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) (locally Major-Moderate Adverse, significant)	Yes
Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse	No
Visual Receptor	**Section C Effect Rating**	**Section B or D Effect Rating**	**Included in Cumulative**

Ardgay (SC-3)	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	Yes
A836 (RC-1)	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) (locally Major-Moderate Adverse, significant)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse	No
Far North Rail Line (RC-2)	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) (locally Major-Moderate Adverse, significant)	Construction: Minor Adverse (not significant) (locally Major-Moderate Adverse, significant) Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant) (locally Moderate Adverse, significant)	Yes
Cadh' an Tain Road (RC-6),	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant) (locally Major-Moderate Adverse, significant)	Yes
Inverness to John O' Groats Cycle Trail (RC-8)	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (locally Major Adverse, significant)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant	No
Core Path SU03.01: Cornhill – Culrain (RC-10)	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) (locally Major Adverse, significant)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	Yes
Core Path SU03.14: Cornhill Curling Pond (RC-13)	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant) (locally Major-Moderate Adverse, significant)	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant)	Yes
Core SU03.06: River Carron footpath (RC-15)	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (not significant)	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant) (locally Major Adverse, significant)	Yes
Core Path SU03.11: River Carron (RC-16)	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse (not significant)	No
Location OC-3 Dounie Estate	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant)	Construction and Operation: Moderate Adverse (significant)	Yes
Location OC-7 Gledfield House and Estate	Construction and Operation: Moderate-Minor Adverse	Construction and Operation: Minor Adverse	No

Cumulative Scope: Scenario 2

7.7.8 All of the consented and proposed developments associated with Scenario 2 would be located on the northern side of the Dornoch Firth and would potentially affect the same receptors as Section B of the Proposed Development. The Scoping Stage developments would encompass parts of the landscape to the north and west of the Dornoch Firth.

7.7.9 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

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

Table 7.8: Cumulative Effects

Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland	Scenario 1: • Section B and D of the Proposed Development; • Proposed Carnaig 400 kV Substation.	The Carnaig 400 kV substation would result in notable, albeit localised effects on landscape character around the main platform. Sections B and D of the Proposed Development both extend 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. 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 700 m). The effects would reduce across the wider LCT, and would be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant).
	Scenario 2: • Consented Lairg II Wind Farm Redesign; • Consented Garvary Wind Farm; • Consented Meall Buidhe Wind Farm; • Proposed Acheilidh Wind Farm (Lairg III); • Scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Balblair Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Creachan Wind Farm..	The consented and proposed wind farm developments would be located within LCT 135 and merge to form a single, combined array of wind turbines on the hills to the north, and distant west, of the Proposed Development. These would be augmented by the scoping-stage Wind Farms, which would extend across additional geographic areas of the LCT to the north and west of the Proposed Development (extending in closer proximity to the Section C alignment). The exception to this would be the scoping-stage Creachan Wind Farm, which would be located to the distant south (outside the LCT), resulting in indirect effects on landscape character. 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. 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.
	Scenario 1:	Sections B and D of the Proposed Development both extend through very localised parts of the LCT, where the alignment extends across intervening straths. Similarly to Section C, 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

Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
LCT 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland	• Section B and D of the Proposed Development.	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 700-800 m). The effects would reduce across the wider LCT, which encompasses an extensive geographic area, and would be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant).
	Scenario 2: • Consented Garvary Wind Farm; • Consented Meall Buidhe Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Balblair Wind Farm.	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. Within the most open views, the wind turbines would represent elements in a geographically separate landscape context, outside the strath. Accordingly, the cumulative effect is not predicted to vary from that described in relation to Scenario 1.
LCT 145 – Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting	Scenario 1: • Section B and D of the Proposed Development.	Potential cumulative effects on this LCT would be indirect. The influence of Sections B and D would be very limited due to the intervening landform and presence of forestry / woodland, in combination with the distance of view. The construction activities and new steel lattice towers would represent background elements within wider vistas across the Dornoch Firth and surrounding hillsides. There would be no notable increase in relation to the effects described within the main assessment. The cumulative effect would be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction an operation.
	Scenario 2: • Consented Lairg II Wind Farm Redesign; • Consented Garvary Wind Farm;	There are no other energy-related proposals within the LCT. However, from the elevated, northern edge of the LCT there would be potential views of the scoping-stage wind farms, resulting in potential indirect effects on landscape character. The scoping-stage Balblair Wind Farm would be located in the hills to the north, and the scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm and Braelangwell Wind Farm would be located in the distant hills to the west. From wider parts of the LCT, potential views would be restricted by their spatial separation, in

Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
	• Proposed Acheilidh Wind Farm (Lairg III); • Scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm; Scoping-stage Balblair Wind Farm.	combination with the screening influence of the intervening landform and tree cover. As such, the effects on the existing characteristics would be limited. Potential views of the other (consented and proposed) wind farms would be extremely limited, and experienced in the background landscape behind the scoping-stage Balblair Wind Farm. In summary, the cumulative effect across the LCT is predicted to be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant) based on partial views of the Proposed Development in combination with views of the scoping-stage wind farms located across the wider surrounding hillsides.
LCT 139 – Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland	Scenario 1: • Section D of the Proposed Development.	Section D of the Proposed Development would extend across the landscape within the eastern-most edge of the LCT. The construction activities and new steel lattice towers would represent notable linear features within parts of the LCT in closest proximity. However, the influence of these elements would diminish at increased distance. Across wider parts of the LCT, the construction works and new towers would represent relatively discreet elements within a broad scale landscape context. On balance, the cumulative effect would be **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) across localised parts on the LCT in closest proximity to the Proposed Development during construction and operation (within approximately 700-800 m). This is based primarily on close proximity views of Section D during construction and operation. The effects would reduce across the wider LCT, and would be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant).
	Scenario 2: • Consented Lairg II Wind Farm Redesign; • Consented Garvary Wind Farm; • Consented Meall Buidhe Wind Farm; • Proposed Acheilidh Wind Farm (Lairg III); • Scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm;	There are no energy-related proposals within the LCT. However, from the more elevated slopes and summits on the northern edge of the LCT there would be views of these wind farms. In particular, the consented Meall Buidhe Wind Farm, scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm, and scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm would be located in the landscape to the north (on the opposite side of Strathcarron), and the scoping-stage Creachan Wind Farm would be located in the hills to the south. Due to the vertical scale of the turbines, these developments would exert notable effects in their own right across localised parts of the LCT. The other wind farms would be located at greater distance, on the opposite side of the Dornoch Firth / Kyle of Sutherland, beyond Braelangwell Wind Farm and behind the Section C alignment. As such, their influence on existing landscape character would be limited. In summary, the cumulative effects on the LCT would be slightly increased from those described above in relation to Scenario 1, due to the addition of proposed wind farms to the view (in combination with partial views of the Proposed Development). Accordingly, across the LCT within the Study Area, the cumulative effect is predicted to be **Moderate Adverse** (significant).

Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
	• Scoping-stage Balblair Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Creachan Wind Farm.	
Dornoch Firth NSA	Scenario 1: • Section B and D of the Proposed Development.	Potential cumulative effects on the NSA would be indirect. The influence of Sections B and D would be very limited across the NSA due to the intervening landform and presence of forestry / woodland, in combination with the distance of view. The construction activities and new steel lattice towers would represent background elements within wider vistas across the Dornoch Firth and surrounding hillsides. The cumulative effect would be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction an operation.
	Scenario 2: • Consented Lairg II Wind Farm Redesign; • Consented Garvary Wind Farm; • Proposed Acheilidh Wind Farm (Lairg III); • Scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Balblair Wind Farm.	There are no energy-related proposals within the NSA. From the northern edge of the NSA there would be potential views of the scoping-stage wind farms; the Balblair Wind Farm would be located in the hills to the north, whilst Inveroykel Wind Farm and Braelangwell Wind Farm would be located in the hills to the west. However, from wider parts of the NSA, visibility would be restricted by the spatial separation of these developments from the NSA, in combination with the screening influence of the intervening landform and tree cover. As such, the effects on the existing characteristics and special qualities are predicted to be limited. Potential views of the other (consented and proposed) wind farms would be extremely limited due to their spatial separation from the NSA, in combination with the screening influence of the intervening landform and tree cover. As such, they would exert very limited cumulative influence on the NSA. In summary, the cumulative effect across the NSA is predicted to be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant) based on the partial views of the Proposed Development and scoping-stage wind farms located across the wider surrounding hillsides.
Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA	Scenario 1: • Section D of the Proposed Development.	Section D of the Proposed Development would extend across the landscape to the east of the WLA. From the easterly-facing slopes and summits on the eastern edge of the WLA the construction activities and new steel lattice towers would be visible at relatively close proximity (< 1 km). As described in the main assessment, views of Section C would be predominantly limited to the northern edge of the

Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
		WLA. As such, cumulative visibility of Sections C and D would be limited to localised areas, in the vicinity of Creag na Ceapaich, Carn a' Chlaiginn and Carn an Liath-bhaid (on the north-eastern edge of the WLA). The effects attributed to Sections C and D would be limited to localised geographic parts of the WLA, and would not notably detract from the more remote interior areas. The cumulative effect would be **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) across localised parts on the outer north-eastern edge of the WLA. This is based primarily on close proximity views of Section D during construction and operation, as well as partial views of Section C. However, the effects would reduce across the wider WLA, in particular the more remote interior. On balance, the cumulative effect across parts of the WLA within the Study Area would be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant).
	Scenario 2: • Consented Lairg II Wind Farm Redesign; • Consented Garvary Wind Farm; • Consented Meall Buidhe Wind Farm; • Proposed Acheilidh Wind Farm (Lairg III); • Scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Balblair Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Creachan Wind Farm.	The scoping-stage Creachan Wind Farm would be located on the north-eastern edge of the WLA and result in significant effects on the local landscape in its own right due to the vertical scale of the turbines (currently proposed at up to 220 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 on the northern edge of the WLA. There are no other energy-related proposals within the WLA. From the more elevated slopes and summits on the northern edge of the WLA there would be potential views of the other consented and proposed wind farms, in particular the consented Meall Buidhe Wind Farm and scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm, which would be located in the landscape to the north (on the opposite side of Strathcarron). The other wind farms would be located at greater distance, behind these wind farms and the Section C alignment, reducing their influence on existing landscape character. In summary, the cumulative effects on the LCT would be slightly increased from those described above in relation to Scenario 1, due to the addition of proposed wind farms. In particular, the scoping-stage Creachan Wind Farm, which would exert direct effects on the landscape within the WLA. Accordingly, the cumulative effect is predicted to be **Major Adverse** (significant) across the north-eastern edge of the WLA based primarily on Creachan Wind Farm. The cumulative effect would diminish across other parts of the WLA located further to the west (including its remote interior). Across wider parts of the WLA the cumulative effect would be consistent with that described in relation to Scenario 1, and would be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant).
Visual Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
Ardgay (SC-3)	Scenario 1:	Section C would be partly visible in the distance in northerly views across the Dornoch Firth. Potential views of Section D in the landscape to the west / south-west would be restricted by intervening tree cover and landform, in combination with the distance of view.

Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
	• Section D of the Proposed Development.	As a result, there would be no notable change to the level of effect reported within the main assessment. The cumulative effect would be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction and operation.
	Scenario 2: • Consented Lairg II Wind Farm Redesign; • Consented Garvary Wind Farm; • Proposed Acheilidh Wind Farm (Lairg III); • Scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Balblair Wind Farm.	Potential views of the scoping-stage wind farms in the landscape to the north and west would be restricted by the intervening landform. The consented / proposed wind farms would be located at greater distance, beyond the scoping-stage Balblair Wind Farm, and exert extremely limited influence on views to the north (on the opposite side of the Dornoch Firth). Based on partial views of the Proposed Development and the scoping-stage wind farms, the cumulative effect is predicted to be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant).
Far North Rail Line (RC-2)	Scenario 1: • Section B of the Proposed Development.	There would be sequential views of Sections B and C from spatially separate sections of this long-distance rail route. In each case the effects across localised sections in closest proximity to the Section B and C alignments (within 2 km and 400 m respectively) would be **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) at most. However, from all other sections of the route potential views would be screened by a combination of landform and vegetation, and tempered by increasing distance. Views would be fully screened along more enclosed sections. Across the route as a whole the cumulative effect would be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction and operation.
	Scenario 2: • Consented Lairg II Wind Farm Redesign; • Consented Garvary Wind Farm; • Proposed Acheilidh Wind Farm (Lairg III);	Views of these wind farms along the route would be restricted by intervening tree cover and landform. As such, views would be predominantly limited to the scoping-stage wind farms, which would typically be part-screened, and experienced in a sequential manner along different sections of the route. Within more open views the wind turbines would form new elements on the skyline around the Dornoch Firth / Kyle of Sutherland. Potential views of the other (consented and proposed) wind farms would be extremely limited, and as such they would exert very limited cumulative influence on views from the road.

Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
	• Scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Balblair Wind Farm.	In summary, based on partial views of the Proposed Development and the scoping-stage wind farms, the cumulative effect across parts of the route within the Study Area is predicted to be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (significant). However, there would be no effect across wider sections of this long-distance route.
Cadh' an Tain Road (RC-6),	Scenario 1: • Section D of the Proposed Development.	There would be close proximity views of the construction activities and new steel lattice towers associated with the northern end of Section D (where it adjoins Section C). These elements would be experienced within the strath, and the slopes that enclose its southern side. Views would gradually diminish at greater distance from Section D due to the screening influence of intervening tree cover and landform. The cumulative effect would be **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) on views from localised parts on the road in closest proximity to the Proposed Development during construction and operation. As per the main assessment, these effects would reduce in views from more distant sections of the route. Across the wider route, the effects would be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant).
	Scenario 2: • Consented Meall Buidhe Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm.	Views of the consented Meall Buidhe Wind Farm and scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm would be focused across western parts of the route between Amatnatua and Culeave (west of the Proposed Development). The wind turbines would be subject to partial screening by the rising landform along the northern side of the strath in combination with intervening forestry. However, in more open views the turbines would form recognisable elements on the skyline to the north / north-west. Potential views of all other Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. Based on partial views of the Proposed Development in combination with the consented Meall Buidhe Wind Farm and scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm, the cumulative effect on views from this route is predicted to be **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant).
Core Path SU03.01: Cornhill – Culrain (RC-10)	Scenario 1: • Section D of the Proposed Development.	There would be close proximity views of the construction activities and steel lattice towers associated with Section C, where it would extend across this path. However, views would be limited to localised sections of the path in close proximity, due to the screening influence of surrounding forestry. Section D would be located in the landscape to the south, and would also be filtered by intervening tree cover, restricting views to more open sections of the path. In summary, the cumulative effect would be **Major Adverse** (significant) across localised sections of the path within closest proximity to Section C. The overall cumulative effect across wider parts of the path network would be **Minor Adverse** (not significant). Section D would exert limited influence.

Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
	Scenario 2: • Consented Lairg II Wind Farm Redesign; • Consented Garvary Wind Farm; • Consented Meall Buidhe Wind Farm; • Proposed Acheilidh Wind Farm (Lairg III); • Scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Balblair Wind Farm.	There would be potential views of the scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm and Braelangwell Wind Farm in the landscape to the west. These views would be subject to screening by intervening tree cover / woodland, particularly across eastern sections of the route. The consented Meall Buidhe Wind Farm would be located within the same field of view, albeit at greater distance, and exerting more limited influence on the experience of walkers. Potential views of the other wind farms would be experienced at greater distance to the north-east, on the opposite side of the Kyle of Sutherland. Accordingly, they would exert limited influence on the view. Based on partial views of the Proposed Development and the scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm and Braelangwell Wind Farm, the cumulative effect is predicted to be **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) based on the most open views. The cumulative effects would be reduced along other parts of the route due to increased levels of intervening screening.
Core Path SU03.14: Cornhill Curling Pond (RC-13)	Scenario 1: • Section D of the Proposed Development.	Views of Section C would be restricted by surrounding forestry / tree cover along the path. This would limit visibility and temper cumulative simultaneous visibility with Section D. The clearest views would be experienced from the western-most part of the path (250 m in length) where forestry felling (to create the wayleave for the alignment and a wind-firm edge to the retained forestry) would open up views towards the Proposed Development. From this localised part of the path, there would be partial views of Section C and Section D in the landscape to the west, resulting in **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) cumulative effects during construction and operation. The cumulative influence would be reduced along other parts of the route due to increased levels of intervening screening.
	Scenario 2: • Consented Lairg II Wind Farm Redesign; • Consented Garvary Wind Farm; • Proposed Acheilidh Wind Farm (Lairg III);	Potential views of the scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm and Braelangwell Wind Farm in the landscape to the west would be subject to screening by intervening tree cover / woodland. The clearest views would be experienced from the western-most part of the path (250 m in length) where there would be a more open outlook beyond areas of forestry felling. The wind turbines would be visible in the landscape beyond the Proposed Development, albeit exerting a notable influence on views in their own right due to their vertical scale. Potential views of the other wind farms would be experienced at greater distance to the north-east, on the opposite side of the Kyle of Sutherland. Accordingly, they would exert limited influence on the view.

Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
	• Scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Balblair Wind Farm.	Based on partial views of the Proposed Development and the scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm and Braelangwell Wind Farm, the cumulative effect is predicted to be **Major Adverse** (significant). These cumulative views would be limited to very localised western parts of the path. The cumulative influence would be reduced along other parts of the route due to increased levels of intervening screening.
Core SU03.06: River Carron footpath (RC-15)	Scenario 1: • Section D of the Proposed Development.	From the western end of the path there would be close proximity views of the construction activities and new steel lattice towers associated with the northern end of Section D (where it adjoins Section C). These elements would be experienced within the strath, and the slopes that enclose its southern side. Across eastern parts of the path, views would be restricted by intervening woodland and riparian tree cover. The cumulative effect would be **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant) on views from localised parts on the path in closest proximity to the Proposed Development during construction and operation. As per the main assessment, these effects would reduce in views from more distant easterly sections of the route. Across the wider route, the effects would be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant).
	Scenario 2: • Consented Meall Buidhe Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm.	Views of the consented Meall Buidhe Wind Farm and scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm would be restricted by the landform on the northern side of Strathcarron in combination with woodland and riparian tree cover along the path. Within more open views, experienced from localised areas at the western end of the path, Braelangwell Wind Farm would be experienced on the opposite (northern) side of Strathcarron. The wind turbines would form recognisable elements on the skyline to the north. Meall Buidhe Wind Farm would be located at greater distance in the hills to the north-west and exert lesser influence on the view. Potential views of all other Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform. Based on partial views of the Proposed Development in combination with Meall Buidhe Wind Farm and Braelangwell Wind Farm, the cumulative effect on views from this route is predicted to be **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant). However, there would be no effect across more enclosed parts of the path, where the route extends though more dense woodland.
Location OC-3 Dounie Estate	Scenario 1: • Section D of the Proposed Development.	Section D of the Proposed Development would be experienced in the landscape to the west, subject to partial screening by intervening tree cover. As a result, views of the Section D construction activities would be limited. Once operational, there would be views of the upper parts of the steel lattice towers. The cumulative effects during construction would be **Moderate Adverse** (significant). The cumulative effects during operation would be **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant).
	Scenario 2:	The scoping stage Braelangwell Wind Farm would be experienced on the opposite (northern) side of Strathcarron. The wind turbines would form recognisable elements on the skyline to the north, behind the Proposed Development. The consented Meall Buidhe Wind

Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Developments	Predicted Cumulative Effects
	• Consented Meall Buidhe Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm; • Scoping-stage Balblair Wind Farm.	Farm and scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm would be located at greater distance in the hills to the north / north-west and exert lesser influence on the view. The scoping-stage Balblair Wind Farm would be located to the north-east and exert very limited cumulative influence due to the distance of view and intervening tree cover. Potential views of all other Scenario 2 cumulative developments would be restricted by the intervening landform and spatial separation. Based on views of the Proposed Development and the scoping-stage Braelangwell Wind Farm, consented Meall Buidhe Wind Farm and scoping-stage Inveroykel Wind Farm, the cumulative effect is predicted to be **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant).

7.8 Mitigation

7.8.1 Principal mitigation measures throughout Section C 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. This includes avoidance of direct effects on landscape designations (the closest being the Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA, which is located at minimum distance of 2.6 km from the Section C alignment), as well as the avoidance of more prominent summits, and more populated lowland areas with a higher proportion of visual receptors.

7.8.2 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. This would be achieved through the use of existing tracks where possible, and / or use of temporary tracks where conditions allow (which would be re-instated on completion).

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

Design Mitigation during Construction Phase

7.8.4 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

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

7.9.2 Specific mitigation recommendations as outlined in paragraph 7.8.5 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

The landscape assessment has identified that there would be temporary significant adverse effects on localised parts of two LCTs during the construction phase, namely the 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland LCT and 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland LCT. These effects would be based upon the focussed corridor of construction activity within valued and sensitive landscape areas. However, due to the generally low-lying nature of construction activities, these temporary effects would be primarily focused within 600-700 m and 700-800 m of the Proposed Development respectively.

7.10.1 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 600-700 m and 700-800 m of the Proposed Development respectively. At greater distances, the influence of the Proposed Development would reduce, and the effects would not be significant.

7.10.2 In terms of landscape designations, the landscape assessment has concluded that there would be no significant effects upon the character or Special Qualities of the Dornoch Firth NSA, Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA, or the Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA and as a result the integrity of these designations would not be compromised.

Visual Effects

7.10.3 During construction and operation, significant adverse effects were identified for four residential properties located within close proximity of the Proposed Development, and at the settlement of Culrain. There would also be significant effects applicable to localised sections of seven recreational routes (comprising the Inverness to John O' Groats National Cycle Trail and six Core Paths) and three outdoor locations (Carbisdale Castle, The Scap, and Dounie Estate). In terms of road / rail users, there would be significant effects on views from localised sections of four transport routes comprising the Far North Rail Line, A836, A837, and the Culrain – Inveroykel Minor Road.

Cumulative Effects

7.10.4 The LVIA has identified that there would be significant effects on localised parts of the landscape and select visuals receptors as a result of Section C of the Proposed Development, in combination with other parts of the Proposed Development (Sections B and D), Associated Development, and / or other proposed unrelated developments.

7.10.5 In terms of landscape character, the LVIA has identified that there would be significant cumulative effects applicable to three Landscape Character Types (LCT 135 – Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland, LCT 142 – Strath - Caithness & Sutherland & LCT 139 – Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland) at a local level.

7.10.6 In terms of landscape designations, the LVIA has identified that there would be significant cumulative effects applicable to very localised parts of the Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA. These would be focused on the north-eastern edge due to the scoping-stage Creachan Wind Farm, in combination with parts of the Proposed Development (primarily Section D). These effects would diminish across the wider WLA and would

not be significant across other parts, including the more remote interior. As such, across the majority of the WLA the effects would not be significant.

7.10.7 In terms of visual receptors, significant cumulative effects would be applicable to localised sections of three recreational routes (RC-10, RC-13, and RC-15) and one minor road (RG-6 Cadh' an Tain Road). There would be localised significant effects on views from the long-distance Far North Rail Line, based on sequential cumulative views of Sections B and C from spatially separate sections of the line, albeit the effects would be very limited (not significant) along the majority of the route. In addition, significant effects would be applicable to one outdoor location at Doune Estate (OC-3). There would be no significant cumulative effects on other receptors within the Section C Study Area.

Conclusions

7.10.8 The LVIA has concluded that there would be temporary significant adverse 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 views from a small number of routes and outdoor destinations.

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

VOLUME 5: APPENDIX 7.7: ANNEX 1 – LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT SECTION C

1. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT SECTION C

1.1.1 This Annex provides the detailed assessment of potential effects on landscape character as a result of the Proposed Development (Section C). Landscape Character Types (LCTs) that have been identified for consideration within the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), that fall within the Study Area, are listed below. The location and extents of the LCTs relative to the Proposed Development are illustrated in **Volume 3**, **Figure 7.3-4: Section C Landscape Character**.

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

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

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

- 139 – Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland LCT;
- 145 – Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting LCT;
- 330 – Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes - Ross & Cromarty LCT;
- 329 – Rounded Mountain Massif LCT; and
- 146 – Coastal Farmland & Woodlands LCT.

1.1.4 The assessment of potential effects on these LCTs is set out in Tables 1 – 7. The assessment makes reference to the key characteristics specific to each LCT as described within the National Landscape Character Assessment[1].

[1] NatureScot. 2019. National Landscape Character Assessment in Scotland

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

Baseline Description	
Description	This LCT encompasses extensive parts of Caithness and Sutherland. The vast majority of the Section C alignment would be located within the LCT, extending from the Substation at Meall Mor in the north, to Strathcarron in the south. Within the Study Area, the LCT is present in three distinct areas, separated by intervening river valleys. At the northern end of Section C (across parts of the LCT north-east of the Kyle of Sutherland), the landscape comprises open, smoothly rolling moorland, occasionally forming small, rounded hills or crags separated by small glens. The existing Lairg to Loch Buidhe 132 kV OHL is a noticeable linear feature within this landscape. Further south, across parts of the LCT between the Kyle of Sutherland and Strathcarron, the Section C alignment extends through a landscape that is characterised by swathes of woodland and forestry. Access is limited to forestry tracks. The southern-most area of the LCT is located on the southern side of Strathcarron. This area comprises a mix of forestry, woodland and open, rolling moorland. The Section C alignment would not extend across this spatially separate area, limiting its influence to indirect effects based on potential views of the Proposed Development.
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	The Dornoch Firth NSA encompasses the low-lying landscape along the firth. This coincides with the LCT across a very localised area at Church Hill on the southern side of the Firth (south-east of the alignment). The vast majority of the LCT is outside this NSA. In addition, the Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA, and the Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA encompass parts of the LCT across higher ground within the south-western part of the Study Area. The Section C alignment would be spatially separate from each of these areas.
Key Characteristics	• Rolling hills forming broad, subtly rounded summits but with some more pronounced hills also occurring, these often featuring steeper slopes along the coast or where truncated by deep glens. • Hills cut by numerous narrow burns and small lochans lie within dips, corries and on plateau summits. • Predominantly dense heather ground cover and moorland grasses, but also some areas of bog. • Fragments of broadleaf woodland in inaccessible locations. • Scarcely settled with a largely uninhabited interior and widely scattered crofts and farms on lower slopes adjoining straths and farmed landscapes. • Narrow glens and lower hill slopes often rich in archaeology with features such as standing stones, brochs and medieval townships. • Wind farms located in more accessible and generally lower rolling hills, either close to extensive forestry or the high voltage transmission line aligned broadly parallel to the south-east Sutherland coast. • Convex character of hill slopes limiting distant visibility and views of the hill tops when travelling through the landscape. • Views into the interior of the hills very restricted. • Strong sense of wild character can be experienced within the more remote and little modified parts of this landscape.

Landscape Value	The LCT is sparsely settled, and incorporates several historical and archaeological sites. The rolling hills, steep coastal slopes, and natural features contribute towards its aesthetic qualities. It is also valued for its strong wild character and sense of remoteness, albeit these are most pronounced across south-western parts of the Study Area. 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**
Rolling hills forming broad, subtly rounded summits but with some more pronounced hills also occurring.	Construction works or the steel lattice towers could interrupt the existing skyline in the vicinity of more 'pronounced hills' forming a new focus.
Fragments of broadleaf woodland in inaccessible locations.	The Proposed Development extends through areas of existing plantation forestry from Loch Leisgain in the north (on the eastern side of the Kyle of Sutherland), to Strathcarron in the south. There would be localised felling of forestry to facilitate construction of Section C. This includes clearance to facilitate the alignment, as well as additional felling to ensure a wind-firm edge to the retained forestry in the surrounding area. On the eastern side of the Kyle of Sutherland, this additional felling would be focused at Towers S1, S14-S15, and S18-S20. On the south-western side of the Kyle of Sutherland, this additional felling would be focused at Towers S26-S31 and S33-S37. However, the felling activities would primarily avoid areas of broadleaved woodland.
Scarcely settled with a largely uninhabited interior.	Construction works and the steel lattice towers would represent new elements of human activity / presence within the landscape.
Rich in archaeology with features such as standing stones, brochs and medieval townships	The alignment avoids direct impacts upon archaeological features, albeit may be visible from some archaeological points of interest.
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	Construction works and the steel lattice towers would represent new elements of human activity / presence within the landscape. The northern end of the Section C alignment would extend broadly parallel to the existing 132 kV OHL between the Kyle of Sutherland and the substation at Meall Mor.
Convex character of hill slopes limiting distant visibility and views of the hill tops when travelling through the landscape.	The landform would temper views of the Proposed Development from wider parts, and lower-lying areas within the LCT.
Views into the interior of the hills very restricted.	As above, the landform would temper views of the Proposed Development from lower-lying surrounding areas.

Strong sense of wild character.	Construction works and the 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.
Landscape Sensitivity	The LCT encompasses extensive geographic areas. Localised parts of the LCT coincide with nationally and regionally valued landscapes. However, the Proposed Development avoids these areas. Instead, Section C would be focused across parts of the LCT that are influenced by plantation forestry (between Loch Leisgain and Strathcarron), and existing 132 kV OHL (between the Kyle of Sutherland and Meall Mor). These elements reduce the susceptibility of the LCT to the Proposed Development. 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 Susceptibility is Medium. Landscape sensitivity to development of the type proposed is assessed as **Medium**.
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	Refer to viewpoints 7-46 Loch Laro, 7-53 Lower Hilton, and 7-54 (A and B) Clashcoig (Lochbuidhe Road). Construction works would involve forestry felling to create a wayleave for the alignment, and additional felling to ensure a wind-firm edge to the retained forestry in the surrounding area. As described above, this additional felling would be focused at Towers S1, S14-S15, S18-S20, S26-S31 and S33-S37. The additional felling would typically be contained within 400-500 m of the alignment, albeit would vary according to local conditions (extending out to a maximum of approximately 700 m from the alignment). The construction works would also involve the establishment of temporary access tracks to facilitate construction of the new towers. Across northern parts of Section C, these tracks would extend across open moorland, and areas of forestry. Further south (between the Kyle of Sutherland and Strathcarron), these tracks would be predominantly enclosed by surrounding plantation forestry. Existing forestry tracks would be utilised 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 at the northern end of Section C. Conversely, works within the areas of forestry (comprising the majority of Section C) would be more enclosed, limiting visibility from wider surrounding areas. Within more open views the activities would appear similar to other forest management works which would be expected to take place within these areas. Once operational, the Proposed Development would introduce steel lattice towers, representing a new linear element within the landscape. The northern part of Section C (in particular Towers S1-S13) would extend across open moorland. The towers would be broadly similar in terms of design, albeit with taller towers, than the existing 132 kV OHL that extends across the moorland further to the north. The surrounding hillsides would restrict views of the towers from wider parts of the LCT. Within the most open views from the 'scarcely settled' and 'largely uninhabited interior' of the LCT, the Proposed Development would be experienced behind the existing OHL. Across more southern parts of Section C, the towers would be partly-screened by the surrounding plantation forestry, typically restricting views to the upper part of the towers (in particular Towers S14-S20 and S26-S36). Whilst these towers would represent new elements of infrastructure, they would be located within the context of surrounding commercial plantation. Accordingly, the effects would be focused within parts of the LCT where the 'sense of wild character' is less pronounced. On balance, the key effects would be focused within a linear corridor 600-700 m from the alignment (reducing where this extends through forestry). This represents a localised section of the LCT, where the impact 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.
Significance of Effect	As described above, the construction stage effects would vary along Section C in accordance with the extent of enclosure by surrounding landform and tree cover. Vehicular movement and works activities would be most visible across the northern section coinciding with open moorland. The increased movement and presence of

	people would reduce the sense of remoteness. However, this would account for a localised part of Section C. Further south, the Section C alignment would extend through areas of forestry, the construction phase activities (including felling and vehicular movement) would not appear out of place within this managed landscape. 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 C would be experienced in the context of surrounding plantation, and / or the existing 132 kV OHL, limiting its influence upon more remote parts of the LCT. In summary, within 600-700 m of the alignment the effects during construction and operation would be **Major-Moderate** (significant). Across the wider 135 – Rounded Hills – Caithness & Sutherland LCT, the effects would be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction and operation.

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

Baseline Description	
Description	This LCT is focused upon the low-lying river valleys extending inland at the western end of the Dornoch Firth. This coincides with very localised sections of the Section C alignment, where it extends across the Kyle of Sutherland and Strathcarron. Given the physical and spatial separation of these two straths, the LCT essentially forms two discrete landscape character areas; namely the Kyle of Sutherland Area, and the Strathcarron Area. In both cases, the enclosed strath landscapes comprise areas of woodland, farmland and scattered settlement (primarily isolated dwellings and farmsteads) aligned along the central watercourse. Along each strath, the degree of enclosure varies with the height and steepness of surrounding hills.
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	The eastern-most edge of the LCT abuts the Dornoch Firth NSA. Across wider western parts of the LCT, there is a very localised overlap with the Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA within Strathcarron. However, the vast majority of the LCT is outside any landscape designation.
Key Characteristics	• Straths range from fairly straight deeply incised troughs to more winding valleys with a number of minor side glens. • River terraces and hummocky lower side slopes a common feature. • Water is a key characteristic with straths accommodating a central river meandering across the floodplain, often traced by clumps of birch and alder. • Lochs in some straths, where a string of small lochs add to the scenic richness of the lower strath. • Areas of wetland often present on the strath floors. • Smooth and fairly large pastures the predominant land cover on the floodplains of the straths, commonly enclosed by wire fences. • Semi-improved pastures, heather and grass moorland and coniferous plantations covering lower side slopes. • Increasing extent of moorland and woodland generally further up the straths, where the floodplain narrows and settlement is sparser.

	• Smaller strip-fields present on often hummocky, lower side slopes and associated with croft houses arranged in linear groups raised on terraces above the floodplain and sometimes backed by woodland. • Some crofts within the Straths more randomly dispersed or staggered on lower hill slopes. • Occasional small farms located in the broader and more fertile parts of the straths. • Settlement generally denser within the lower reaches of many straths, especially at bridging points, on the coast and close to major roads. • Many areas rich in archaeology with cairns, roundhouses, brochs and old field systems, usually found on side slopes. • Abandoned crofts, particularly within the upper straths and in narrow side glens. • Focus in views from roads provided by a number of estate shooting lodges, and clustered, predominantly 19th Century, often estate style buildings. • Narrow roads, commonly aligned along the edge of the floodplain, from which views are strongly channelled by the side slopes. • Rounded Hills often forming prominent edges to the straths with shapely well-defined hills, providing a distinctive skyline and scenic backdrop. • Highly scenic backdrop of mountains often revealed in some of the upper reaches of these straths.
Landscape Value	The LCT comprises a mix of natural features, including meandering rivers, wetlands, lochs and woodlands. These elements are complemented by cultural features such as archaeological sites, crofting landscapes, and estate shooting lodges, and experienced within a backdrop created by the rounded hills that envelope the LCT to either side. These features contribute towards its aesthetic value, albeit the LCT is almost entirely undesignated. On balance, Landscape Value is Medium.

Assessment of Effects	
Possible Landscape Receptors	**Potential Effects**
Lochs in some straths, where a string of small lochs add to the scenic richness of the lower strath.	The Proposed Development would extend across the landscape, directly above the existing watercourse within the Kyle of Sutherland and Strathcarron. Based on the height of the towers, the Proposed Development would potentially form a new focus within views along the strath.
Semi-improved pastures, heather and grass moorland and coniferous plantations covering lower side slopes.	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 C. This includes clearance of existing plantation forestry to facilitate the alignment, as well as additional felling to ensure a wind-firm edge to the retained forestry in the surrounding area. Within the Kyle of Sutherland, this additional felling would be focused at Towers S21 and S25. On the northern edge of Strathcarron, this additional felling would be focused between Towers S37-S38. However, the alignment aims to avoid broadleaved woodland.
Settlement generally denser within the lower reaches of many straths, especially at bridging points, on the coast and close to major roads.	The Section C alignment would cross the LCT within an area incorporating localised settlement, including the A836 and Far North Line (with the Kyle of Sutherland). The steel lattice towers would represent new elements of

	infrastructure within the local landscape. However, the landscape within the Kyle of Sutherland is already influenced by the existing 132 kV OHL between Arday and Invershin.
Many areas rich in archaeology with cairns, roundhouses, brochs and old field systems, usually found on side slopes.	The alignment avoids direct impacts upon archaeological features, albeit may be visible from some archaeological points of interest.
Focus in views from roads provided by a number of estate shooting lodges, and clustered, predominantly 19th Century, often estate style buildings.	Construction works or the steel lattice towers could form new elements within such views.
Narrow roads, commonly aligned along the edge of the floodplain, from which views are strongly channelled by the side slopes.	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.
Rounded Hills often forming prominent edges to the straths with shapely well-defined hills, providing a distinctive skyline and scenic backdrop.	Construction works or the steel lattice towers could interrupt the existing skyline to either side of the Strath, forming a new focus against the existing backdrop.
Highly scenic backdrop of mountains often revealed in some of the upper reaches of these straths.	Construction works and the 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	The LCT exhibits scenic qualities based upon its combination of natural features, albeit is predominantly undesignated. Its susceptibility to the Proposed Development would be increased by the smaller-scale enclosed nature of the strath. However, this is tempered by the presence of the existing OHL extending along the Kyle of Sutherland, which suggests the LCT is tolerant of some degree of change based on the type proposed. On balance, Landscape Susceptibility is Medium. Landscape sensitivity to Proposed Development is **Medium**.
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	Refer to viewpoints 7-47 A837 (near Inveran) to 7-52 A836 (west of Balblair) (within the Kyle of Sutherland), and 7-60 (in Strathcarron) Gruinards (west of Dounie). Construction works would include localised forestry felling on the upper slopes of the Kyle of Sutherland Area and Strathcarron Area, as well as additional felling to ensure a wind-firm edge to the retained forestry in the surrounding area. As described above, this additional felling would be focused at Towers S21 and S25 in the Kyle of Sutherland (where it would typically be contained within 200-300 m of the alignment), and between Towers S37-S38 on the northern edge of Strathcarron (extending out to approximately 700-800 m based on local conditions). The construction works would also involve the creation of new (permanent) tracks. The influence of the tracks would be reduced by surrounding forestry, which would screen / back-cloth the associated vehicle movements. The most open views of the works would be focused upon the more open strath 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. Once operational, the Section C alignment would introduce five towers to the LCT area in the Kyle of Sutherland (Towers S21-S25), as well as a short section of permanent access track in the context of existing forestry on the north-eastern side of the valley. The towers would be broadly similar in terms of design, albeit with taller, than the existing 132 kV OHL that extends across the strath. The Section C alignment would terminate on the northern edge of the Strathcarron Area, introducing one tower (Tower S37), as well as a short section of permanent access track within surrounding forestry.

	In both cases, the Proposed Development would form a new element within views along the valley. However, the Section C alignment would extend directly across the LCT, rather than along its length, thereby limiting its influence to localised areas. As the Section C alignment extends across the upper slopes that enclose the LCT, the towers would be located on the skyline, albeit in the context of surrounding commercial forestry. On balance, the key effects would be focused within a linear corridor across the Kyle of Sutherland Area and Strathcarron Area, 700-800 m from the alignment. Within these localised parts of the LCT the impact magnitude would be **High** during construction and operation. Across the wider LCT, at greater distance from the Proposed Development, the impact magnitude would be **Low** during construction and operation.
Significance of Effect	As described above, the construction stage activities and vehicle movements would contrast with the agricultural landuse within the straths. However, this would be focused within a very localised area within the Kyle of Sutherland Area and Strathcarron Area. During operation, the level of human activity and vehicle movement would reduce. The towers and sections of permanent access track would form new components within the landscape. The towers would represent new elements in views channelled along the straths that would contrast with the more rural / natural characteristics of the LCT. However, the alignment would take the shortest route across each strath, reducing its physical footprint upon the LCT. The influence of the Proposed Development would diminish across wider parts of the LCT at greater distance. In summary, within 700-800 m of the alignment the effects during construction and operation would be **Major-Moderate Adverse** (significant). Across the wider 142 – Strath – Caithness & Sutherland LCT, the effects would be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction and operation.

Table 3: Effects on LCT 139 – Rugged Mountain Massif – Caithness & Sutherland

Baseline Description	
Description	This LCT is located 2.0 km to the south of the Section C alignment at the closest point. In addition, there is a second, spatially separate area located 8.5 km to the south-west of the alignment at the closest point. This more distant area is outside the ZTV within the Study Area and accordingly is not considered further. The LCT comprises high rugged mountains that rise up on the southern side of Strathcarron, extending across a geographic area that encompasses the summit of Carn Salachaidh (at 647 m AOD), 5.5 km south-west of Section C.
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	The LCT coincides with the Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA. In addition, the Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA extend across western parts of the LCT. Together, these designations encompass extensive parts of the LCT in closest proximity to the Proposed Development.
Key Characteristics	• Mountains with very steep slopes which are often covered in scree and commonly feature narrow rocky ridges, buttresses, crags and pronounced peaks. • High, generally lying above 800m. • Different geology associated with each mountain group influencing their character. • Deeply indented sea lochs of Lochs Glendhu and Glencoul and a number of sheer sided glens, cut into the mountains of north-west Sutherland, generally orientated on long north-west to south-east fault lines. • Dark, narrow lochs within some of the north-west Sutherland mountain glens. • Mountain peaks form landmarks, rising above the interlocking mass of lower slopes and distinguished by their height, distinctive and recognisable profile. • Largely uninhabited and difficult to access. The small number of settlements and roads which do exist tend to be located at the edges of this character type and at the intersection of a strath or loch. • Interior of this landscape is mainly visited by hill walkers and deer stalkers. • Limited visibility within the glens which lie between or at the foot of these mountains, due to their steepness of slope and immense size. • Extensive views of the surrounding landscape and an exhilarating experience of openness and exposure from mountain ridges and summits. • Natural unmodified character of the high mountains, with their remoteness, ruggedness, and difficulty of access, creating a strong wild character.
Landscape Value	The LCT is defined by its mountainous terrain and untamed natural character. The rugged peaks, narrow ridges, scree slopes, and deep glens create a wild and remote environment, underpinned by a complex geological heritage. The underlying landform results in panoramic views from mountain summits and ridges, contrasting with the enclosed steep-sided glens. The scenic nature and relative rarity of these characteristics contribute towards the value of this landscape. This is underpinned by its widespread inclusion within the Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA, and the Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA. Accordingly, Landscape Value is High.
Assessment of Effects	
Possible Landscape Receptors	**Potential Effects**

Mountain peaks form landmarks, rising above the interlocking mass of lower slopes and distinguished by their height, distinctive and recognisable profile.	From open vantage points, the construction works and steel lattice towers would represent new elements of human activity / presence within the landscape to the north. However, the Section C alignment would be spatially separate from the mountain peaks within the LCT and exert limited influence on their profile.
Largely uninhabited and difficult to access.	The Section C alignment and associated access tracks would represent new elements of built form and means of access across the landscape to the north. However, there elements would be spatially separate from the LCT.
Interior of this landscape is mainly visited by hill walkers and deer stalkers.	There would be views of the construction works and the steel lattice towers from elevated vantage points, representing new elements of human activity / presence within the landscape to the north.
Extensive views of the surrounding landscape and an exhilarating experience of openness and exposure from mountain ridges and summits.	As above, from elevated vantage points there would be views of the construction works and the steel lattice towers. These would account for a relatively narrow angle of view within open, large-scale, panoramic views.
Natural unmodified character of the high mountains, with their remoteness, ruggedness, and difficulty of access, creating a strong wild character.	Construction works and the steel lattice towers associated with Section C would represent new elements of human activity / presence within the neighbouring landscape to the north, with the potential to erode the sense of remoteness and wildness. However, the effects would be tempered by the spatial separation of the LCT from the Section C alignment, and the relatively narrow angle of view affected within wider panoramic vistas.
Landscape Sensitivity	The LCT area in closest proximity to Section C of the Proposed Development is located almost entirely within the Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA. Its susceptibility to the Proposed Development is increased by the wild character of the LCT, in the absence of existing settlement / infrastructure, and limited access. Accordingly, the landscape exhibits reduced tolerance to change of the type proposed. On balance, Landscape Susceptibility is High, and the landscape sensitivity to development of the type proposed is assessed as being **High**.
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	ZTV coverage is focused across the summits and northerly facing slopes of the LCT. From these areas, the construction works would be visible in the landscape to the north. The vehicular movement and works activities would contrast with the more natural and wild characteristics of the LCT. However, they would be experienced at a minimum distance of 2.0 km, on the opposite side of the Strathcarron valley. Accordingly, they would be spatially and geographically separate from the LCT, reducing their influence on existing landscape character. Once operational, Section C of the Proposed Development would represent a new linear element within the wider landscape to the north. As above, the steel lattice towers would contrast with the more natural and wild characteristics of the LCT. However, in the context of the large scale of the receiving landscape and the extensive panoramic views across surrounding mountains, the influence of the towers would be relatively limited. On balance, the Impact Magnitude would be **Low-Negligible** during construction and **Low-Negligible** during operation.

Significance of Effect	The effects of the Proposed Development on the existing characteristics of the 139 – Rugged Mountain Massif – Caithness & Sutherland LCT would be relatively limited. This is based on its spatial and geographic separation from Section C of the Proposed Development (on the opposite side of the Strathcarron Valley), in combination with the large scale of the receiving landscape, and the expansive 360-degree vistas from the most open vantage points. On balance, the overall effect would be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** (significant) during construction and operation.

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

Baseline Description	
Description	This LCT is located 3.3 km to the south-east of the Section C alignment at the closest point, encompassing the hill slopes along the Dornoch Firth. A further, geographically separate part of the LCT is located 4.5 km to the north, near Loch Shin. This landscape comprises a mosaic of conifer plantations, semi-natural woodlands, moorland, farmland, and occasional elevated basins. It forms a transition between the fertile, low-lying farmland of the Coastal Farmland and Woodlands LCT and the steep, moorland-covered slopes of the Rounded Hills – Caithness & Sutherland LCT. Loch Migdale, near Bonar Bridge, is a key feature, nestled between parallel ridges. Settlement is sparse, with crofts and small farms clustered in valleys and broader basins, particularly around Bonar Bridge, Lairg, and Dornoch. Historic features include cairns, battlefields, and ancient field systems. The wooded nature of this landscape influences the visual experience, and creates attractive glimpses of the surrounding hills and Dornoch Firth. Infrastructure within the LCT includes an existing 132 kV OHL, which extends across its western edge in the vicinity of Bonar Bridge (on the northern side of the firth), and Kincardine (on the southern side).
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	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, and the slopes of Church Hill on the southern side. This coincides with a notable area of the LCT to the south-east of the alignment.
Key Characteristics	• 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. • 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	The coastal landscape, comprising extensive areas of woodland, backed by rounded hill slopes contribute towards the aesthetic quality of this landscape. This is recognised in the national-level designation (Dornoch Firth NSA) that encompasses a large proportion of the LCT to the south-east of the alignment. The natural features of the landscape are augmented by its recreational potential as evident by the network of Core Paths that are focused along Loch Migdale and the nearby landscape further to the east. Accordingly, the LCT also has added value as a destination for outdoor activities. As a result, Landscape Value is High.

Assessment of Effects	
Possible Landscape Receptors	**Potential Effects**
North-west/south-east grain of the landform of ridges and valleys.	Based on the grain of the landscape, views to the north-west are focused along the Dornoch Firth towards the Kyle of Sutherland. Within these views, the construction works or the steel lattice towers could be visible where they extend across the Kyle of Sutherland, creating a new element within longer-distance views.
Loch Migdale sitting within a dip between parallel steep-sided ridges in the west of this Landscape Character Type.	The ZTV illustrates potential views of the Proposed Development from the open waters of Loch Migdale, albeit these would be subject to screening by intervening woodland and restricted by spatial separation from the alignment.
Elevated undulating basins lie at the foot of the Rounded Hills – Caithness & Sutherland above Lairg and Bonar Bridge.	From more open vantage points, the construction works and steel lattice towers would represent new elements of human activity / presence within the landscape to the west.
High proportion of woodland cover, with extensive conifer forest on ridges.	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.
Density of housing increasing close to the larger settlements.	From residential settlement at Bonar Bridge and Kincardine, the construction works and steel lattice towers would represent new elements of human activity / presence within the landscape to the west.
Semi-enclosed character of this well-wooded landscape with occasional views.	The landform would temper views of the Proposed Development to the north. However, there would be clearer views of construction works and the steel lattice towers in the wider landscape to the west / north-west, subject to screening by intervening woodland.
Attractive views from small roads high up the slopes, giving views to the Rounded Hills – Caithness & Sutherland and glimpses of the Dornoch Firth.	As above, the landform would temper views of the Proposed Development to the north. However, the Proposed Development would be visible in some longer-distance, elevated view across the Dornoch Firth.
Landscape Sensitivity	As described above, the scenic qualities of this LCT contribute towards its underlying value. However, its susceptibility to the Proposed Development is tempered by the presence of extensive woodland that restricts outward views from many areas, in combination with 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), and Kincardine (on the southern side). This OHL exerts an existing influence on localised parts of the LCT, and would be present in the foreground of the Proposed Development from parts of the LCT in closest proximity to it. As a result, Landscape Susceptibility is Medium.

	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**.
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	Refer to viewpoints 7-55 Airdens, and 7-56 Bonar Bridge to 7-59 A836 Kincardine. The Proposed Development would be located in the context of the wider landscape, 3.3 km to the north-west of the LCT at the closest point. The construction activities, including felling of forestry and temporary access track / site traffic, would be located in geographically separate parts of the background landscape. The influence of these activities would be tempered by the distance of view, and the presence of intervening screening elements in the form of woodland / tree cover within the LCT. Similarly, the steel lattice towers associated with the operational stage of the Section C alignment would represent a relatively distant addition to the wider landscape at the western end of the Dornoch Firth. Views of the Proposed Development would be fragmented across the LCT due to the screening influence of intervening woodland / tree cover that forms a key characteristic of the landscape. Within more open views, the alignment would typically be experienced beyond the existing OHL that extends through the LCT area on the southern side of the Firth, and the western edge of the LCT area on the northern side of the Firth. The Proposed Development would be broadly similar in terms of design, with taller towers, albeit more distant. In summary, the Proposed Development would exert limited influence upon the existing landscape character within the LCT. The Impact Magnitude would be **Low-Negligible** during construction and during operation.
Significance of Effect	As described above, effects on the existing characteristics of the 145 – Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting LCT would be limited based on its spatial separation from the Proposed Development, in combination with the presence of intervening woodland and tree cover that would restrict potential views of the alignment. The overall effect would be **Moderate - Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction and operation.

Table 5: Effects on LCT 330 – Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes – Ross & Cromarty

Baseline Description	
Description	This LCT is located 6.2 km to the south-east of the Section C alignment at the closest point, where it encompasses the smooth, rounded hills and sweeping moorland slopes on the southern side of the Dornoch Firth. The LCT extends inland from the firth, where it encompasses the broad upland moorland, dissected by high-level unfarmed straths. Existing infrastructure within the LCT includes an existing 132 kV OHL, which extends across its northern parts, either side of Struie Wood.
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	The Dornoch Firth NSA encompasses the low-lying landscape along the firth. This coincides with the northern parts of the LCT in the vicinity of Western Fearn and Easter Fearn. In addition, the Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA encompass spatially separate western parts of the LCT in the vicinity of Garbhan Beag. These designations / protected landscapes accounts for a small proportion of the overall LCT.
Key Characteristics	• Broad, rounded hills and upland moorlands with smooth, gentle slopes down to broad straths, creating an undulating skyline. • Occurs in a large tract which weaves around and between the adjoining Rounded Mountain Massif and Rugged Mountain Massif – Ross & Cromarty and unifies the mountain groups. • Large areas of uniform moorland vegetation with occasional surface detail of rivers, lochs, riparian woodland, woodland patches, and regenerating trees. • Large coniferous forests on accessible lower slopes. • Broad straths with natural, meandering rivers and occasionally highlighted by green, unenclosed, improved pastures and riparian trees. • Occasional major trunk roads curve through the lowest major straths, with very little associated service development. • Small groups of mainly traditional buildings around road junctions and at rail stations. • Man-made structures of pylons, wind farms and reservoirs occur as occasional features within a large-scale landscape. • Many archaeological features on lower ground from prehistoric, medieval and later periods. • Large, remote interior areas of vast scale with wildness characteristics.
Landscape Value	The LCT encompasses large areas of moorland, with scattered archaeological features and parcels of forestry, spread across rolling, rounded hills. These characteristics are relatively common in the local context. The aesthetic qualities of the LCT are recognised in the national-level designation (Dornoch Firth NSA) that encompasses localised northern parts. In addition, the wild characteristics of more remote inland areas to the south-west is recognised by the partial overlap with the Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA. However, the value of the landscape is diminished in places by the presence of existing man-made structures, including existing OHLs, and road infrastructure. On balance, Landscape Value is Medium.
Assessment of Effects	
Possible Landscape Receptors	**Potential Effects**

Broad, rounded hills and upland moorlands with smooth, gentle slopes down to broad straths, creating an undulating skyline.	The alignment avoids direct impacts upon the LCT. However, within views from more open, elevated vantage points, the construction works or the steel lattice towers could interrupt the wider skyline to north-west.
Large coniferous forests on accessible lower slopes.	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.
Small groups of mainly traditional buildings around road junctions and at rail stations.	The Proposed Development would contrast with the more traditional elements of built form within the LCT, albeit Section C of the alignment would represent a distant element, located in a geographically separate landscape context to the north.
Man-made structures of pylons, wind farms and reservoirs occur as occasional features within a large-scale landscape.	Construction works and the steel lattice towers would represent additional new elements of human activity / presence within the wider landscape.
Large, remote interior areas of vast scale with wildness characteristics.	Construction works and the steel lattice towers would represent new elements of human activity / presence within the background landscape to the north. This has the potential to erode the sense of wildness across localised parts of the LCT interior. However, ZTV coverage associated with the Section C alignment is very limited across these areas.
Landscape Sensitivity	The LCT encompasses relatively extensive geographic areas. Localised parts of the LCT coincide with national-level designations / protected landscapes. Its susceptibility to the Proposed Development is tempered by the existing OHLs that extends across northern parts of the LCT in the vicinity of Struie Wood, and by the existing road network (A836 and B9176) in the same area. These elements exert an existing influence on localised northern parts of the LCT in closest proximity to the Section C alignment. On balance, the LCT is assessed as being tolerant of some degree of change of the type proposed. Accordingly, Landscape Susceptibility is Medium. Landscape sensitivity to development of the type proposed is **Medium**.
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	ZTV coverage across the LCT is fragmented and primarily focused across the northern edge, including the coastal landscape along the Dornoch Firth and the rising slopes of Cnoc Thorcaill / Cnoc Leathad na Siorramachd to the south. From these areas, the construction works and steel lattice towers would represent distant additions to the background landscape, typically experienced beyond the intervening OHL within the LCT. Potential views of the Proposed Development from more remote inland areas would be restricted by the intervening landform. There would be no views of the Section C alignment from parts of the LCT that coincide with the Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA. In summary, the construction and operation stages associated within Section C of the Proposed Development would exert extremely limited influence on existing landscape character. The Impact Magnitude would be **Negligible** during construction and operation.
Significance of Effect	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 **Minor** (not significant) during construction and operation.

Table 6: Effects on LCT 329 – Rounded Mountain Massif

Baseline Description	
Description	This LCT is located 6.60 km to the south-west of the Section C alignment at the closest point. The LCT comprises large-scale mountains, including Carn na Gobhlaig beit (660 m AOD), Carn an Lochan (646 m AOD), and Carn Maire (736 m AOD). The landform, in combination with very limited access / settlement, results in a very wild and very large scale landscape.
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	The LCT is located entirely within the Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA. In addition, the Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA abuts the LCT in the landscape to the west.
Key Characteristics	• High, broad-based, smooth sided, lobed mountains found in discrete groups set within, and sweeping down to, smooth, lower hills and high level straths and U-shaped valleys, giving a sense of grandeur. • Well-defined summits with either a rounded or angular profile. Often both occur on the same summit where rounded tops have been sculpted by glacial activity into corries and cliff faces. • Similar height to Rugged Mountain Massif – Ross & Cromarty, but appear lower due to their landform. • Fresh snow lines disclose the true height of the mountains. • Rugged or stony summits and extensive moorland groundcover. • Strong relationship with adjoining Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes – Ross & Cromarty type which unifies the mountain groups into a vast landscape. • Limited settlement, few footpaths or other structures, and little evidence of historic or current land use. • Far reaching views from upper reaches to the mountains, plains and firths in adjacent areas. • Vastness of the landscape due to simple lines of mountain profile, sweeping horizons, undifferentiated ground cover, and few man-made structures to indicate scale. • Wild character over much of the area.
Landscape Value	The LCT is very remote, with limited access and no settlement within the Study Area. In addition to its strong wild character and sense of remoteness, the underlying topography, sense of scale and opportunity for far reaching views also contribute towards the value of the landscape within the LCT. In summary, Landscape Value is High.
Assessment of Effects	
Possible Landscape Receptors	**Potential Effects**

High, broad-based, smooth sided, lobed mountains found in discrete groups set within, and sweeping down to, smooth, lower hills and high level straths and U-shaped valleys, giving a sense of grandeur.	The alignment avoids direct impacts upon the LCT, albeit the Proposed Development may be visible in the background landscape to the north-east from the most elevated peaks.
Strong relationship with adjoining Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes – Ross & Cromarty type which unifies the mountain groups into a vast landscape.	The adjoining Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes – Ross & Cromarty LCT is located on the southern side of the LCT, in the opposite direction to the Proposed Development. This spatial arrangement would temper any potential effects on the relationship between the LCTs.
Limited settlement, few footpaths or other structures, and little evidence of historic or current land use.	Potential views of construction works and the steel lattice towers would represent new elements of human activity / presence within the landscape.
Far reaching views from upper reaches to the mountains, plains and firths in adjacent areas.	The landform would restrict views of the Proposed Development from lower lying areas between the upper-most mountain summits. This is reflected in the ZTV coverage, which is extremely limited.
Vastness of the landscape due to simple lines of mountain profile, sweeping horizons, undifferentiated ground cover, and few man-made structures to indicate scale.	Potential views of construction works and the steel lattice towers would represent new elements of human activity / presence within the landscape. However, ZTV coverage is limited to the highest peaks, where the Proposed Development would represent a very distant element in the background landscape.
Wild character over much of the area.	Construction works and the 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.
Landscape Sensitivity	The LCT is located entirely within the Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis WLA. Its susceptibility to the Proposed Development is increased by the wild character of the LCT, which is predominantly void of settlement and infrastructure. Accordingly, the landscape exhibits reduced tolerance to change of the type proposed. On balance, Landscape Susceptibility is High. Landscape sensitivity to development of the type proposed is assessed as being **High**.
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	ZTV coverage across parts of the LCT within the Study Area is extremely limited, and focused upon the upper-most peaks at Carn an Lochan (8.5 km to the south-west of the closest tower). From this very localised part of the LCT, the Proposed Development would represent a very discreet element in the distant landscape to the north-east. With reference to the vast scale of the intervening landscape, Section C of the Proposed Development would exert extremely limited influence on existing landscape character. The Impact Magnitude would be **Negligible** during construction and operation. The vast majority of the LCT would be completely unaffected.
Significance of Effect	As described above, effects on the existing characteristics of the 329 – Rounded Mountain Massif 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 vast scale of the intervening landscape. The overall effect would be **Moderate-Minor Adverse** at most (not significant) during construction and operation.

Table 7: Effects on LCT 146 – Coastal Farmland and Woodlands

Baseline Description	
Description	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.
Designated / Protected Landscapes within / adjacent to the LCT	The Dornoch Firth NSA encompasses the low-lying landscape along the firth. This coincides with the majority of the LCT within the Study Area. In addition, Skibo Castle GDL is located within the LCT, on the outer edge of the Study Area.
Key Characteristics	• Rolling landform to the west within the Dornoch Firth where this landscape tapers and is constrained to the north by a steep-sided densely wooded ridge. • Gently undulating landform to the east of Skibo and Loch Fleet. • Flat or gently sloping plain north of Loch Fleet. • Well-wooded landscape with coniferous forests, often fringed by broadleaf trees, planted on steeper slopes and capping small ridges and knolls on the shores of the Dornoch Firth in the west. • Policy plantings associated with estates with areas of parkland, tree avenues and ornamental plantings of broadleaves and tall conifers. Plantings of beech common along roadsides on northern lower slopes of Dornoch Firth, with a strong geometric framework of woodlands and mature trees contain large fields in this area. • Medium to large fields of fertile soils, with a high proportion of arable cropping in some areas. • Large castles, estate buildings and grand houses on the shores of the Dornoch Firth, as well as the visually prominent and architecturally distinct Dunrobin Castle on the coast north of Golspie, whose turrets and grand tree-lined avenue can be seen from the A9, as well as its lodges, gatehouses and buildings in and around Golspie associated with the Sutherland Estate. • Dispersed farms throughout the area and occasional clusters of crofts, often on the edge of woodland and associated with smaller pastures on higher slopes at the transition with the Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofts or close to the coast at Skelbo. • 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. In summary, Landscape Value is High.
Assessment of Effects	
Possible Landscape Receptors	**Potential Effects**

Well-wooded landscape with coniferous forests, often fringed by broadleaf trees, planted on steeper slopes and capping small ridges and knolls on the shores of the Dornoch Firth in the west.	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.
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.	As above, there would be no direct effect on these landscape elements. Instead, areas of policy planting would restrict potential views of the Proposed Development.
Large castles, estate buildings and grand houses on the shores of the Dornoch Firth.	Potential views of construction works and the steel lattice towers from heritage assets would be restricted by intervening woodland and tree cover, in combination with landform and the separation distance from the Proposed Development. Skibo Castle GDL is located outside the ZTV for Section C.
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.	As above, potential views would be restricted by tree cover, landform and separation distance. The settlement pattern within the LCT would remain unchanged.
High visibility from the east coast railway and coastal trunk roads, as well as the network of other roads which cross this area.	The A949 extends parallel to the coast within the LCT. Sections of the A949 within the Study Area are outside the ZTV. There would be no effect on views of the LCT from this route.
Landscape Sensitivity	Large proportions of the LCT within the Study Area coincide with the nationally valued Dornoch Firth NSA. In addition, the LCT also encompasses Skibo Castle GDL. Its susceptibility to the Proposed Development is tempered by the extensive woodland, forestry and policy planting throughout the LCT, which restrict outward views from some areas. However, the settlement pattern across parts of the LCT within the Study Area is primarily limited to dispersed farmsteads and properties, in the absence of existing large-scale infrastructure elements. As a result, Landscape Susceptibility is High-Medium. On balance, the landscape sensitivity to development of the type proposed is assessed as being **High**.
Nature of change and Impact Magnitude	ZTV coverage across parts of the LCT within the Study Area is extremely limited and focused upon a very localised area north of the A949 that coincides with established tree cover. There would be no discernible views of the Proposed Development from this extremely localised area due to the screening influence of intervening tree cover in combination with the geographic separation distance from the alignment. Accordingly, there would be no discernible influence on existing landscape character. The Impact Magnitude would be **Negligible** at most during construction and operation. The vast majority of the LCT would be completely unaffected.
Significance of Effect	As described above, there would be no discernible effects on the existing characteristics of the 146 – Coastal Farmland and Woodlands LCT. The overall effect would be **Minor Adverse** at most (not significant) during construction and operation.

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

VOLUME 5: APPENDIX 7.7: ANNEX 2 – VISUAL RECEPTOR ASSESSMENT SECTION C

1. VISUAL RECEPTOR ASSESSMENT SECTION C

Table C.1: Residential

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
SC-06 (Refer to Figure 7.4-7)	**Creide** Residents and visitors to a property at Creide, located to the north of Carbisdale Castle. The property is located on an area of raised ground near the banks of the Kyle of Sutherland.	The front of the house faces east, encompassing views over the Kyle of Sutherland. The views to the east and south are heavily filtered by mature trees located at the edge of the curtilage. Wider views to the east are contained by landform within Invershin Forest. Wider views to the south-west are contained by rising landform at Creag a Choineachan. With reference to the methodology, 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.	**High**	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 south, at approximately 230 m distance (Tower S23) at the closest point. There would be filtered views of construction activities to the south-east, within the Kyle of Sutherland. There would also be partial views of construction activities in the landscape to the east. This would include felling to create a wayleave for the alignment, and additional forestry felling at Invershin Forest to create a wind-firm edge to the retained forestry. Potential views of construction activities to the south / south-west would be restricted by landform and intervening tree cover, in combination with the low-lying nature of construction activities. Once operational, views of the Proposed Development in a southerly direction, Tower S23 would be experienced against the combination of background sky and landscape and afforded some partial filtering by broadleaved trees near the curtilage. Towers S25 and S26 would be visible at longer distances to the south west at distances of between 530 m and 740 m, partially screened by intervening	230 m	**High**	**High**	**Major (adverse) based on proximity and angle of view occupied in winter months**	**Major (adverse) based on proximity and angle of view occupied in winter months**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
				landform and filtered by tree cover on upper slopes of the strath. and would be heavily filtered by mature tree cover near the curtilage. Views to the east would also be heavily filtered by mature tree cover, with the Proposed Development predominantly visible against the background landscape. Views of the Proposed Development to south-west would be partially screened by intervening landform and tree cover within moorland. Due to the broadleaved nature of surrounding tree cover, there would a reduction in the filtering effects of tree cover in winter months. Overall, the visibility would be more apparent in winter, with the Proposed Development occupying a wide extent of the view.					
SC-07 (Refer to Figure 7.4-7)	**Oak Bank** Residents and visitors to a property at Oak Bank, located near the banks of the Kyle of Sutherland. The property is located in plot surrounded by tree cover. In particular, there is a bank of mature of mature woodland to	The main orientation of views is to the south and east over the Kyle of Sutherland, as well as to **north-west.** Wider views to the east are contained by landform within Invershin Forest. Wider views to the **south-west** are contained by rising landform at Creag a Choineachan. Based on the value of existing views from this property and susceptibility to proposed development change the	**High**	The construction works and introduction of the steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity. The Proposed Development would be visible predominantly against the background landscape in views to the south, heavily filtered by tree cover adjacent to the curtilage. There would be filtered views of construction activities to the south-east, within the Kyle of Sutherland. There would also be partial views of construction activities in the landscape to the east. This would include felling to create a wayleave for the alignment, and additional forestry felling at Invershin Forest to create a wind-firm	340 m	**Medium**	**Medium**	**Major / Moderate (adverse) based on proximity and angle of view occupied in winter**	**Major / Moderate (adverse) based on proximity and angle of view occupied in winter**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
	the east aligned to river corridor.	sensitivity of the receptor is adjudged to be High.		edge to the retained forestry. Potential views of construction activities to the south / south-west would be restricted by landform and intervening tree cover, in combination with the low-lying nature of construction activities. Once operational, in views to the south / south-west, the Proposed Development would be visible predominantly against the background sky, at approximately 340 m distance (Tower S24), albeit heavily filtered by mature tree cover. The Proposed Development would be visible predominantly against the background landscape in views to the east, heavily filtered by mature tree cover. Due to the broadleaved nature of surrounding tree cover, there would a reduction in the filtering effects of tree cover in winter months. Overall, the visibility would be more apparent in winter, with the Proposed Development occupying a wide extent of the view.					
SC-08 (Refer to Figure 7.4-7)	**Invershin Farm** Residents and visitors to a property at Invershin Farm, set within a small block of woodland, adjacent to the River Shin and Kyle of Sutherland	Views to the south and east are heavily filtered by mature tree cover adjacent to the curtilage. In addition, views to the south-west are restricted by mature woodland. The existing steel lattice OHL is located to the north-east, approximately 180m at the closest point.	**High**	The construction works and introduction of steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity, heavily filtered by adjacent tree cover. The clearest views of the construction works would be to the south, within the Kyle of Sutherland. Potential views of construction activities and associated felling within the wider landscape to the east and south-west would be restricted by intervening tree cover.	330 m	**Medium**	**Medium**	**Major / Moderate (adverse) based on proximity and angle of view occupied in**	**Major / Moderate (adverse) based on proximity and angle of view occupied in**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
	and accessed via a track from A836. There is also an area of mature woodland centred on Invershin Castle that extends north-east towards the property.	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.		Once operational, the Proposed Development would be visible at close range, against the background landscape, in views to the south, at approximately 330 m distance at the closest point (Tower S23). These views would be heavily filtered by mature cover. There would be heavily filtered views of the Special Arrangement (duck under with wood poles, with live line scaffold provision intersection) to the south-east, between Tower S22 and S23. Views to south-west and east would be heavily filtered by adjacent tree cover. There would be more open views from the property's access track, with the Proposed Development visible at close range, against the background landscape, in views to the south. There would also be wider views of the Proposed Development to east and south-west, against the combination of background sky and landscape. Due to the broadleaved nature of surrounding tree cover, there would a reduction in the filtering effects of tree cover in winter months Overall, the visibility would be more apparent in winter months during leaf fall.					
SC-09 (Refer to Figure 7.4-7)	**The Bungalow, Invershin** Residents and visitors to a property at The	The main views are in a westerly direction across the Kyle of Sutherland. The landform increases in elevation to the east and east of the A836, limiting wider views.	**High**	There would be views of the construction works and introduction of steel lattice towers to the south. Potential views of the construction works and associated felling activities would be restricted by intervening tree cover.	460 m	**Low**	**Moderate (adverse)**	**Moderate (adverse)**	**Moderate (adverse)**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
	Bungalow, located off the A836.	An existing steel lattice OHL is located to the west, approximately 230m at the closest point. 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.		Once operational, views of the Proposed Development to the south and south-west, at approximately 460 m (Tower S22**),** would also be heavily filtered by mature curtilage vegetation and experienced beyond the existing OHL in the foreground. Views to the south-east would be partially screened by landform and filtered by curtilage vegetation. There would be limited change to the predicted visibility during winter, due to the nature of the existing curtilage vegetation which is predominately coniferous.					
SC-01 (Refer to Figure 7.4-7)	**Culrain** Residents and visitors to a small village located at the western edge of the Kyles of Sutherland adjacent to Carbisdale Wood.	Views to the north, north-east and north-west are contained by intervening landform and tree cover within Carbisdale Wood. Views are more open to south and south-west. An existing OHL is located at close range, following the river corridor, and visible in views to the south-east. Based on the value of existing views from this settlement and susceptibility to proposed development change the sensitivity of the receptor is adjudged to be High.	**High**	The Proposed Development would be partially visible in views to the south-west, in the context of existing forestry and moorland. Views of the construction activities and associated felling (including additional forestry felling to create a wind-firm edge to the retained forestry in the surrounding landscape) would be limited by distance and intervening landform / tree cover. The clearest views of the construction works would be focused upon localised sections in open moorland. Once operational, views would consist of the upper parts of the transmission towers, visible against the background sky with greater visibility within areas of moorland. The clearest would be focused within localised sections on open moorland to the south-west. Potential views to the north-west would be more contained by both landform and forest cover, and	1.0 km	**Low**	**Low**	**Moderate (adverse)**	**Moderate (adverse)**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
				consequently would consist of partially screened views of the upper-most parts of the towers.					
SC-02 (Refer to Figure 7.4-7)	**Lower Gledfield** Residents and visitors to a small settlement set within farmland adjacent to the River Carron.	Views in a westerly and north-westerly direction would be heavily filtered by intervening tree cover. With wider views across the River Carron contained by land form at Strathcarron Hill (East Strathcarron Wood). Views to the south-west would be heavily filtered by intervening tree cover. With wider views contained by land form at Cnoc a Moine. An existing OHL passes to the west, south and north-west of the settlement. Based on the value of existing views from this settlement and susceptibility to proposed development change the sensitivity of the receptor is adjudged to be High.	**High**	The construction works (including forestry felling) and introduction of steel lattice towers would represent distant elements in the background landscape to the north-west. Potential views of the construction activities and associated felling would be predominantly screened due to the combination of intervening landform and tree cover. Once operational, the Proposed Development would be partially visible in views to the north-west, heavily filtered by mature tree cover located within Gledfield House and River Carron corridor. Views would be restricted to upper parts of transmission towers, which would be experienced in the distance, beyond the existing OHL in the foreground. In addition, potential views would be partially screened by built features within the settlement, and consequently would be more apparent to those residencies located at the settlement edge.	3.4 km	**Negligible**	**Negligible**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**
SC-03 (Refer to	**Ardgay** Residents and visitors to a small settlement set within farmland at	The principal views are aligned toward the Kyle of Sutherland to the east and south-east, including wider coastal visibility along the Dornoch Firth.	**High**	The Proposed Development would be partially visible at a distance of 4.1 km in views to the north-west, partially screened by landform and tree cover around Strathcarron. Views would be more apparent to those	4.1 km	**Negligible**	**Negligible**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
Figure 7.4-7)	the Kyle of Sutherland / Dornoch Firth estuary. •	There are also wider views to the north-west along Strathcarron. Two existing lattice tower OHL are present within views to the west / north-west. Based on the value of existing views from this settlement and susceptibility to proposed development change the sensitivity of the receptors is adjudged to be High.		residents located at the western and northern edge of the settlement. Views of the construction activities (including forestry felling) would be very limited due to intervening screening and the distance of view. Once operational, potential views of the Proposed Development would be restricted to upper parts of transmission towers, which would be experienced in the distance, beyond the two existing OHL in the foreground.					
SC-04 (Refer to Figure 7.4-7)	**Kincardine** Residents and visitors to a small coastal settlement (Dornoch Forth) located on the A836. Refer to viewpoint 7-59 A836 Kincardine.	There are expansive views to the east and north-east over the Kyle of Sutherland estuary. These expansive views also extend north-west aligned along the Kyle of Sutherland. Views to the west are restricted in part by intervening landform with forestry. Two existing lattice tower OHLs are present within views to the west and south-west. Based on the value of existing views from this settlement and susceptibility to proposed development change the sensitivity of the receptor is adjudged to be High.	**High**	The construction works and introduction of steel lattice towers would represent distant elements in the background landscape. Potential views of the construction activities and associated felling would very limited due to the separation distance from the settlement in combination of intervening landform and tree cover. Once operational, the Proposed Development would be partially visible at a distance of 5.2 km in views to the west north-west, where the towers would be experienced against the background landform. Views of the Proposed Development to the north would be experienced at longer distance, approximately 7.6 km, in which the Proposed Development would be visible against the background landscape and represent a very minor element in the background landscape.	5.2 km	**Negligible**	**Negligible**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)
SC-05 (Refer to Figure 7.4-7)	**Bonar Bridge** Residents and visitors to a small coastal settlement. Refer to viewpoint 7-56 Bonar Bridge.	The principal views are aligned to the Kyle of Sutherland, to the south, north-west and south-east. Views to north and east are contained by landform. One existing lattice tower OHL is present within views to the north-west. Based on the value of existing views from this settlement and susceptibility to proposed development change the sensitivity of the receptor is adjudged to be High.	**High**	The construction works (including associated felling) and introduction of steel lattice towers would represent distant elements in the background landscape. Potential views of the construction activities and associated felling would very limited due to the separation distance from the settlement, in combination of intervening landform and tree cover. Once operational, the Proposed Development would be partially visible in views to the north-west in the context of surrounding forestry, and experienced against a combination of the background sky and landform. Potential views would be subject to screening by intervening built features within the settlement. Accordingly, views would be more apparent from residencies at the western and northern settlement edge and properties located at higher elevation. However, the Proposed Development would exert very limited influence on existing views.	5.5 km	**Negligible**	**Negligible**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**

Table C.2: Transport Routes

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
RC-1 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	**A836** Travellers on localised parts of this long-distance link that extends from Tain to John o' Groats. Refer to viewpoints 7-52 A836 (west of Balblair), 7-56 Bonar Bridge and 7-59 A836 Kincardine.	Varying views based on intervening landform and tree cover. From more southerly sections, the road extends along the Kyle of Sutherland / Dornoch Firth between Easter Fearn and Kincardine, where there would be more open views across the open water. From more northerly sections, views would drop-off due to the screening influence of intervening woodland.	**Medium**	The road extends directly under the alignment in the vicinity of Invershin, where road users travelling north and south would experience close-proximity views of the construction works, including localised tree felling. This includes views of felling to facilitate the alignment, as well as filtered views of additional forestry felling to create a wind-firm edge to the retained forestry in the vicinity of Tower S21. Road users would also experience close-proximity views of the steel lattice towers. The clearest views would be experienced at close proximity from the 700 m section south of the junction with the A837, near Invershin. (Tower S22 would be the closest, at approximately 15 m). There would also be heavily filtered views of the Special Arrangement (duck under with wood poles, with live line scaffold provision intersection) on section of road between Invershin and A837 junction (180 m at the closest point). From wider sections of the road to the north, views would be predominantly screened by intervening woodland.	0 m	**High within 700 m, Low-Negligible across the wider locations**	**High within 700 m, based on winter views. Low-Negligible across the wider locations**	**Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) within 700 m, Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider locations**	**Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) within 700 m, Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider locations**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
				From wider sections of the road to the south, the Proposed Development would be experienced at greater distance. Views would be intermittent, subject to screening by intervening roadside vegetation. The construction activities would exert limited influence on views due to their low-lying nature and the presence of intervening forestry along the intervening hillsides. Similarly, the introduction of steel lattice towers would form a relatively discreet, linear element within wider views along the hills around the firth. There would be a reduction in the filtering effects of tree cover in winter months. Overall, the visibility would be more apparent in winter.					
RC-2 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	**Far North Rail Line** Passengers on localised sections of this line that extends from Inverness to Thurso and Wick.	The railway corridor extends directly under the alignment in the vicinity of Invershin (to the east of the A836 described above). Varying views based on intervening landform and tree cover. From more southerly sections, views are restricted by trackside vegetation. The most	**Medium**	Passengers would experience close-proximity views of the construction works, including localised tree felling from localised sections where the route intersects the alignment. This includes views of felling to facilitate to facilitate the alignment, as well as filtered views of additional forestry felling to create a wind-firm edge to the retained forestry in the vicinity of Tower S21. Once operational, passengers would also experience close-proximity views of the new steel	0 m	**High within 300-400 m, Low-Negligible across the wider**	**High within 300-400 m, Low-Negligible across the wider**	**Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) within 300-400 m, Moderate-Minor Adverse (not**	**Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) within 300-400 m, Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider route**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
		open views are experienced from sections of the track extending along the southern side of the Dornoch Firth.		lattice towers from a very localised section, focused within 300-400m of the Proposed Development, south of Inveran (Tower S22 is the closest, at approximately 115 m). There would be heavily filtered views of the Special Arrangement (duck under with wood poles, with live line scaffold provision intersection) on shorth section near Invershin (270 m at the closest point). From wider sections of the route to the north, views would be predominantly screened by intervening woodland, hence potential views would drop-off abruptly. From wider sections of the route to the south, views would be predominantly limited to more open sections of the route on the southern bank of the Dornoch Firth, 1.4 km to the east of the alignment. At this distance the construction activities would exert limited influence on views due to their low-lying nature and the presence of intervening forestry along the intervening hillsides. Similarly, the introduction of steel lattice towers would form a relatively discreet, linear element within wider views along the hills around the firth.					

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
RC-3 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	A837 Refer to viewpoints 7-47 A837 (near Inveran), 7-48 A837 Invershin Cemetery and 7-50 A837 Invershin.	Varying views based on intervening landform and tree cover. Potential views are subject to screening by roadside vegetation along localised sections of the route, in particular in the vicinity of Inveran. From sections of the route further to the north-west, roadside vegetation is typically more sporadic. However, views are partly contained by the intervening landform enclosing the Kyle of Sutherland.	**Medium**	The main views of the construction works (including localised forestry felling) and introduction of steel lattice towers would be focused within localised sections between Inveran and the junction with the A836 (within 700-800 m of the Proposed Development). Tower S22 is the closest, at approximately 110 m, near the intersection with A836. There would be views of the Special Arrangement (duck under with wood poles, with live line scaffold provision intersection) to the south and south-west (220 m at the closest point) between A836 and River Shin crossing. Due to the orientation of the route, potential views would be limited to road users travelling in a south-easterly direction only, towards the A836, near Inveran. From wider sections of the route to the north-west, the Proposed Development would be experienced at greater distance. Views would be restricted by the intervening landform along the southern side of the Kyle of Sutherland. As such, the construction activities would exert limited influence on views due to their low-lying nature. Once operational, the tops of the towers would be partly visible on the hillside to the south-east. The overall number of	110 m	**High within 700-800 m, Negligible across the wider locations**	**High within 700-800 m, Low-Negligible across the wider locations**	**Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) within 700-800 m, based on close proximity views in winter months. Minor-Negligible Adverse (not significant) across wider locations**	**Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) within 700-800 m, based on proximity and angle of view occupied in winter months. Minor Adverse (not significant) across wider locations**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
				towers visible would be limited in number, and would represent a relatively discreet, linear element within wider views along the hills around the strath. Due to the broadleaved nature of tree cover within the road corridor and intervening farmland, there would a reduction in the filtering effects of tree cover in winter months. Overall, the visibility would be more apparent in winter.					
RC-4 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	**B864** Travellers using the road between Inveran and Lairg.	The road is located within Achany Glen following the River Shin, and views are restricted in part by rising landform to the west and east. There are also large tracts of forest cover within the glen (Shin Forest).	**Medium**	Potential views of the construction works and introduction of steel lattice towers would be almost fully screened along the entire length of the route due to the intervening tree cover and landform. Accordingly, the Proposed Development would be barely discernible. Due to the orientation of the road, potential views would be limited to road users travelling in a southerly direction only, towards Inveran.	1.2 km	**Negligible**	**Negligible**	**Minor Adverse (not significant)**	**Minor Adverse (not significant)**
RC-5 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	**A949 (Dornoch Road)** Travellers using stretch of road extending along	Views to the south and south-east are open and expansive across Kyes of Sutherland, although views are subject to screening by roadside vegetation along lengthy	**Medium**	The construction works and introduction of steel lattice towers would represent distant elements in the background landscape within more open views from the A949.	5.4 km	**Low-Negligible**	**Low-Negligible**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
	northern side of the Dornoch Firth. Refer to viewpoints 7-57 A949 (south of Swordale) and 7-58 A949 Little Creich.	sections of the route. As a result, views are intermittent, there are more open views from sections of the road in the vicinity of Little Creich.		The low-lying nature of the construction activities means that they would be partly screened by existing forestry extending across the intervening hillsides. Potential views of associated forestry felling (as a wayleave for the alignment and additional felling to create a wind-firm edge) would also be limited due to intervening screening and distance from the road. Once operational, the towers would form a relatively discreet, linear element within wider views across the firth to the large-scale hills and mountains in the distance. Due to the orientation of the route, views would be limited to road users travelling in a westerly direction only, towards Bonar Bridge.					
RC-6 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	**Cadh an Tartair** Travellers on minor road extending along Strathcarron	Views are channelled along Strathcarron valley floor which contains a high concentration of tree cover in the form of mature shelterbelts, pockets of deciduous woodland, scrub and mature hedgerows. The landform adjacent to strath would restrict wider views in	**Medium**	The construction works and new steel lattice towers would be experienced at distances of between 720 m and 1. 5 km (Tower S37 is the closest to the road at 720 m to the north). Views would be heavily filtered by tree cover within the valley and Strathcarron Wood, although there would be partial views of associated forestry felling to create the wayleave for the alignment and additional felling to create a wind-firm edge to the	720 m	**Low**	**Low**	**Moderate -Minor Adverse (not significant)**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
		northerly and southerly direction. The existing OHL is visible in views to the east along Strathcarron.		retained forestry on the northern slopes of the strath. From wider sections of the road the Proposed Development would be experienced at greater distance and subject to screening by intervening roadside vegetation and the rising landform that contains the strath. The overall number of towers visible would be limited in number, and would represent a relatively discreet, linear element within wider views around the strath. Due to the broadleaved nature of tree cover within the road corridor and intervening farmland, there would a reduction in the filtering effects of tree cover in winter months. Overall, the visibility would be more apparent in winter.					
RC-7 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	**Culrain – Inveroykel Minor Road** Travellers, on minor road extending along southern side of the Kyle of Sutherland	Views are focused within the Kyle of Sutherland, encompassing open farmland across the strath floor, which transitions towards larger parcels of woodland and forestry on the sloping landform that encloses the strath to the north and south.	**Medium**	The construction works (including localised forestry felling) and new steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity from sections of the route within 700 m to the north and 400 m to the south of the Proposed Development. From wider sections of the route, the Proposed Development would be experienced at greater distance. Views would be intermittent and subject to screening by intervening roadside vegetation / woodland along lengthy sections. As a result, the	0 km	**High within 400 - 700 m, Negligible across the wider**	**High within 400 - 700 m, Negligible across the wider**	**Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) within 400 - 700 m. Negligible (not significant)**	**Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) within 700 m. Negligible (not significant) for wider route**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
	Refer to viewpoint 7-49 Inveroykel Culrain Road.	The alignment would extend over the road in the vicinity of Inverhouse, where road users would experience close-proximity views of the construction works (including localised tree felling at either side of the strath) and the new steel lattice towers (in particular Tower S24, located to the south of the road). From wider sections of the route at greater distance, views would drop-off due to the screening influence of intervening woodland, and the landform containing the strath.		construction activities and new steel lattice towers would exert limited influence on existing views.					

Table C.3: Recreational Routes

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Angle and Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
RC-8 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	**Inverness to John O' Groats National Cycle Trail** Recreational users of this cycle routed within the Study Area between Kincardine in the south-east and Achany.	A range of views are experienced generally channelled along the Dornoch Firth and Kyle of Sutherland. With more enclosed views within the Achany Glen. From more southerly sections, the trail extends along the Kyle of Sutherland / Dornoch Firth, where there are more open views across the open water.	**High**	The construction works and introduction of the steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity from the 700 m section south of the route, near Invershin (Tower S22 is the closest, at a distance of approximately 15 m). From this section of the route, there would be views of construction activities within the Kyle of Sutherland, as well as filtered views of associated forestry felling on the outer edges of the strath. Once operational, there would be clear views of the Proposed Development where it intersects the route near Invershin and the A836. There would also be heavily filtered views of the Special Arrangement (duck under with wood poles, with live line scaffold provision intersection) on the section of road between Invershin and the A837 junction (180 m to the west at the closest point). At greater distance to the south, there would be elevated views the Proposed Development from the localised section of the route at the Shin Railway Viaduct. The towers would be experienced in the context of tree cover / forestry in the landscape to the north, at a distance of approx. 1.05 km.	0 m	**High within 700 m. Negligible across the wider locations**	**High within 700 m, Negligible across the wider locations**	**Major Adverse (significant) within 700 m, Moderate- Minor (not significant) for wider locations**	**Major Adverse (significant) within 700 m, Moderate- Minor (not significant) for wider locations**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Angle and Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
				Views from sections of the route between Culrain and Arday (further to the south) would be partially screened by intervening landform and heavily filtered by intervening tree cover. Accordingly, the Proposed Development would exert very limited influence upon existing views.					
RC-9 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	**Core Path SU08.02: Carbisdale** Recreational users of this footpath which forms a circular loop within Carbisdale Wood, and accessed at the village of Culrain. The elevation of the route varies between 21m (Culrain) and 120m AOD (near Culrain Burn). This path also provides a wider link to Core Path	There are variety of views obtained from this path, with visibility in a north and westerly direction, partially enclosed by woodland / forestry. There are more opens views from sections of the path at higher elevation, subject to intervening screening. The existing steel lattice OHL is visible in views to the east and south-east.	**High**	Two sections of the route intersect the Proposed Development, near the lochan at Culrain Burn, which would result in close range views, subject to screening levels. The construction works would be experienced at close proximity from western parts of the circuit, where the path intersects the alignment. This includes views of forestry felling to create the wayleave for the alignment, as well as additional forestry felling to create a wind-firm edge to the retained forestry in the surrounding area. The felling in particular would result in more open views from western parts of the circuit, within 600-700 m of the alignment. Once operational, the steel lattice towers would be experienced at close proximity (Tower S28 abuts the path and Tower S27 is located at a distance of approximately 130 m).	0 m	**High within 600-700 m, Low-Negligible across the wider locations**	**High within 600-700 m, Low-Negligible across the wider locations**	**Major Adverse (significant) within 600-700 m, based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied. Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider locations**	**Major Adverse (significant) within 600-700 m, based on proximity and proportion of the view occupied. Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider locations**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Angle and Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
	SU03.01: Cornhill – Culrain.			Views toward the Proposed Development, would be concentrated on western sections of path at higher elevation, up to distances of 600-700 m subject to intervening screening. The Proposed Development would be viewed against a combination of the background landscape and sky and heavily filtered by tree cover. Across eastern sections of the path, potential views of the towers would be at least partly screened by intervening tree cover / forestry.					
RC-10 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	**Core Path SU03.01: Cornhill – Culrain** Recreational users of this footpath which connects Cornhill (near the River Carron) with Core Path SU08.02: Carbisdale. The elevation of the route varies between 29m (Cornhill) and 144m AOD (near	Views are heavily influenced by the concentration of plantation forestry, with large areas affected by forest management measures (Hilton Wood). Views are varied across the route and influenced by route elevation, intervening landform and degree of forest cover. Views are expansive from more elevated sections of the route, in areas under forest management, with open views to the east, north-east and south-east. The existing steel lattice OHL is visible in views to the north-east and south-east.	**High**	The path intersects the Proposed Development between Towers S31 and S32. The northern end of the path also extends in close proximity to the alignment, between Towers S27 and S28. The construction works would be experienced at close proximity from the northern end of the path, and the central section near Lon na Sunachur (where the route intersects the alignment). The clearest views would be experienced from sections of the path within approximately 800 m, where there would be views of vehicle movement and upgraded tracks, as well as forestry felling to create the wayleave, and additional felling to create a	0 m	**High within 800 m, Low-Negligible across the wider route**	**High within 800 m, Low-Negligible across the wider route**	**Major Adverse (significant) within 800 m, based on proximity and location with forest management zone. Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider route**	**Major Adverse (significant) within 800 m, based on proximity and location with forest management zone. Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) across**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Angle and Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
	Culrain Burn). Large sections of the path are located within mature forestry (East Strathcarron Wood, Viewfield Wood & Hilton Wood).			wind-firm edge to the retained forestry in the surrounding area. Once operational, the steel lattice towers would also be experienced at close proximity from the same sections of the path. From the northern end of the path, Tower S27 and S28 would be visible at distances of 130 m and 270 m respectively. From the central section at Lon na Sunachur Tower S31 would be the closest to the path, at approximately 90 m to the north, and Tower S32 would be located at approximately 130 m to the south. The clearest views would be experienced within approximately 800 m of the alignment, where the Proposed Development would be visible against a combination of the background sky and landscape.					
RC-11 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	**Core Path SU08.03: Lochcoire** Recreational users of this short section of footpath which connects a minor road near Hilton with Core Path SU03.01.	There are views to the east and north-east over the Kyle of Sutherland. There are elevated views to the north and west. Existing forestry limits views to the south, near Hilton. The existing steel lattice OHL is visible in views to the north-east and east.	**High**	The footpath intersects the Proposed Development in the vicinity of Tower S30. There would be close range views of the Proposed Development from localised sections of the path within approximately 500-600 m. This includes views of construction works, including vehicle movement and associated felling / forestry management (to create a wayleave for the alignment and a wind-firm edge to the surrounding forestry).	0 m	**High within 500-600 m, Low-Negligible across the**	**High within 500-600 m, Low-Negligible across the wider route**	**Major Adverse (significant) within 500-600 m. Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider**	**Major Adverse (significant) within 500-600 m. Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant) across the wider**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Angle and Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
	The elevation of the route varies between 95 m and 132 m AOD. The route is located within a combination of open moorland and plantation forestry. Refer to viewpoint 7-53 Lower Hilton.			Once operational, there would be close proximity views of the steel lattice towers, in particular Tower S30, which abuts the footpath on its northern side. The main views would be experienced from the western end of the path, extending out to approximately 500-600 m to the south-east, where the Proposed Development would be visible predominantly against background sky, in views to the north-west. There would also be views the Proposed Development at longer range to the north-east, predominantly against the background landscape.					
RC-12 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	**Core Path SU08.01: Culrain to Invershin** Short section of path connecting Culrain with Invershin via the viaduct	Views from this short section of path (Viaduct) are contiguous with those assessed in relation to Inverness to John O' Groats National Cycle Trail.	**High**	Construction works and steel lattice towers would be partly visible in the landscape to the north / north-west. The clearest views would be experienced from the elevated section of the route at the Shin Railway Viaduct, where the Proposed Development would be located approximately 1.0 km the north / northwest. There would also be filtered views of the Special Arrangement within the Kyle of Sutherland where the Proposed Development intersects the existing OHL (comprising a duck under with wood	1.0 km	**Low**	**Low**	**Moderate Adverse (significant)**	**Moderate Adverse (significant)**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Angle and Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
				poles, with live line scaffold provision intersection).					
RC-13 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	**Core Path SU03.14: Cornhill Curling Pond** Recreational users of this footpath which forms a loop within East Strathcarron Forest. The route is accessed via Cornhill near the River Carron. The eastern parts of the route are located within a combination of open moorland and forest management. The elevation of the route varies between 25 m and 96 m AOD.	Views are open and extensive from elevated sections of the route, to the south and south-west over Strathcarron. There are also views to the south-east channelled along Strathcarron. Views to the north are north-east are contained by Invercharron Hill.	**High**	From the majority of the route, including central and eastern sections, the Proposed Development would be subject to screening by intervening landform and forestry. From the western-most end of the loop, there would be more open views of the construction activities. In particular the associated forestry management felling to create a wind-firm edge to the retained forestry following creation of the wayleave. This would open up views towards the west (which are currently contained by forestry), where there would be views of associated construction activities such as vehicle movement. These views would be focused on the western-most 250 m section of the path. Once operational, there would be views of the steel lattice towers to the west and north-west from the same 250 m section of the path. Tower S37 would be the closest, at a distance of 925 m to the west). Potential views from other sections of the path would remain limited	925 m	**Medium from western-most 250 m section. Low across the wider route**	**Medium from western-most 250 m section. Low across the wider route**	**Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) from western-most 250 m section. Moderate Adverse (significant) across the wider route**	**Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) from western-most 250 m section. Moderate Adverse (significant) across the wider route**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Angle and Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
				due to the screening influence of intervening forestry.					
RC-14 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	**Core Path SU21.11: Shin Falls Forest Walk, and SU21.12: Shin Falls Circular** Recreational users of this footpath which forms a loop within mature forestry near Shin Falls (visitor centre). The elevation of the routes varies between 58 m and 115 m AOD.	Views are contained by woodland and forestry from path (SU21.12) near the visitor centre. The wider path (SU21.11) which extends south-west is partially located within areas of moorland and forest management. This would afford wider views to the south, south-west and south-east	**High**	The construction works and steel lattice towers would represent distant elements in the background landscape to the south-east, experienced within more open views from western path sections. Views of the Proposed Development would be contained by woodland and forestry along the majority of path (particularly along Core Path SU21.12). There would be limited views from elevated south-western sections of the path (SU21.11), subject to screening. From these localised sections the Proposed Development would be partly visible in views to the south-east against the background sky, subject to intervening tree cover and forestry. The Proposed Development would also be partly visible in views to the south and south-west against a combination of background landscape and sky, subject to screening by intervening forestry.	2.4 km	**Negligible**	**Negligible**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Angle and Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
RC-15 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	**Core Path SU03.06: River Carron** Recreational users of this footpath which follows the route of the River Carron (Dounie Estate). The path is accessed in the east from the minor road near Lon Dialtaig. The path is accessed in the west from the minor road near Dounie. Refer to viewpoint 7-60 Gruinards (west of Dounie).	Views are channelled east-west along Strathcarron valley floor which contains a high concentration of tree cover in the form of mature shelterbelts, pockets of deciduous woodland, scrub and mature hedgerows. There is also mature tree cover within the river corridor. The Section C alignment would be located in the landscape to the north. The existing OHL is visible in views to the east along Strathcarron.	**High**	The construction works and steel lattice towers would be experienced at distances of between 780 m and 1. 5 km at the western section of the footpath (Tower S37 is the closest to the footpath). Views of the construction activities would be limited by the rising landform on the northern side of the strath, in combination with the lower lying nature of construction activities. There would be partial views of forestry felling (including that to create the wayleave for the alignment, and additional felling to create a wind-firm edge to the surrounding forestry). These views would be filtered by intervening tree cover within the strath. Once operational, views of the towers would be restricted to those at the southern end of Section C, which would be heavily filtered by tree cover within the valley and Strathcarron Wood. Potential views of the towers located further north would be contained by the enclosing landform along the strath side. From wider sections of the route, the Proposed Development would be experienced at greater distance. Views would be intermittent and subject to screening within river corridor and intervening farmland. As above, these views	780 m	**Low**	**Low**	**Moderate Adverse (significant)**	**Moderate Adverse (significant)**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Angle and Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
				would be restricted to the towers at the southern end of Section C. In summary, the construction activities and steel lattice towers would exert limited influence on existing views.					
RC-16 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	**Core Path SU03.11: River Carron** Recreational users of this footpath which partially follows the route of the River Carron (Dounie Estate) to north of Lower Gledfield. The path connects with route SU03.11.	This path is located at the eastern end of Strathcaron, where it meets the Kyle of Sutherland / Dornoch Firth. Views are channelled along Strathcarron valley floor which contains a high concentration of intervening tree cover within farmland. There is also mature tree cover within the river corridor.	**High**	The construction works and steel lattice towers would represent distant elements in the background landscape to the west / north-west. The low-lying nature of the construction activities means that they would be predominantly screened by the intervening landform, in combination with existing woodland within the river corridor and forestry extending across the intervening hillsides. Once operational the Proposed Development would be partly visible in views to north-west, albeit heavily filtered by tree cover within the valley and Strathcarron Wood and screened by the intervening landform. Conversely, views of the existing OHL would be experienced at close range, as walkers travel west near the railway corridor. Views would be heavily filtered subject to intervening screening levels.	2.8 km	**Negligible**	**Negligible**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse** (not significant)	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Angle and Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
RC-17 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	**Core Path SU05.06: Balblair Wood – Invershin** Recreational users of this footpath which is routed through Balblair Wood, with access point from A836 near Invershin. Connects to another footpath SU05.04.	Large sections of the route are located within mature forestry. Where there are areas of forest management, views are focused in south and south-easterly direction across Kyle of Sutherland and Dornoch Firth. Views in a northerly direction are contained by landform. The existing steel lattice tower OHLs are visible across the Kyle of Sutherland and to the south-east.	**High**	The construction works and introduction of steel lattice towers would represent distant elements in the background landscape, where there are gaps in the woodland and forestry. There would be no views of the Proposed Development for large sections of the route due to screening effect of forestry. Where there are localised gaps in surrounding forestry along the path (due to areas of forest management), the Proposed Development would be partly visible in views to the west and south-west.	1.5 km	**Negligible**	**Negligible**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**
RC-18 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	**Balblair Forest Walk (Bonar Bridge SU05.04** Recreational users of this footpath which forms a loop through Maikle Wood, with access point from A836 near Drumliah. Connects to	Large sections of the route are located within mature forestry. Where there are areas of forest management, views are focused in south and south-easterly direction across Kyle of Sutherland and Dornoch Firth. Views in a northerly direction are contained by landform.	**High**	There would be no views of the Proposed Development from the majority of the route due to containment by surrounding forestry. Where there are localised gaps in the forest (or areas of forest management) along the path, construction works and introduction of steel lattice towers would represent distant elements in the background landscape in views to the west and north-west. Once operational, the towers would form a relatively discreet, linear element within wider	3.2 km	**Negligible**	**Negligible**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Angle and Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
	another footpath SU05.06.	The existing steel lattice tower OHLs are visible across the Kyle of Sutherland and to the south-east.		views across the firth to the large-scale hills and mountains in the distance.					
RC-19 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	**Core Path SU16.08: Braemore – Achany** Recreational users of this footpath which connects the A839 with Achany Farm.	Views are contained by surrounding landform from large sections of the route. There are wider more expansive views to the south-east and north-west from elevated sections of the path.	**High**	There would be no views of the Proposed Development for large sections of the route due to screening effect of the intervening landform. From the most open vantage points, there would be restricted, distant views of the Proposed Development to the south-east, subject to intervening screening.	4.9 km	**Negligible**	**Negligible**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**
RC-20 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	**Core Path SU05.01: Loch Migdale** Recreational users of this footpath which follows the northern bank of the loch between Badbeithe and minor road near Spinningdale Burn.	Views are focused in southerly direction across the loch, filtered by existing woodland, with wider views to the west and north-west, with large-scale hills and mountains in the distance.	**High**	There would be partially screened and filtered views of the Proposed Development in views to the west and north-west beyond intervening tree cover. The construction works (and associated felling activities) would represent distant elements in the background landscape, and exert very limited influence on existing views. Once operational, the towers would form a relatively discreet, linear element within wider views across the firth to the large-scale hills and mountains in the distance. Southerly	6.3 km	**Negligible**	**Negligible**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Angle and Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
				views across Loch Migdale would be unchanged.					
RC-21 (Refer to Figure 7.4-8)	**Core Path SU21.02: Sika Trail Cycle Route** Forest trail route forming a loop via Achany Wind farm, accessed from the A839.	Expansive views to the south-west from more elevated route locations. With lower route sections located with forestry.	**High**	The construction works and new steel lattice towers would represent distant elements in the background landscape to the south-east. The construction works would exert very limited influence on existing views due to their low-lying nature, in combination with intervening forestry and the distance of view. Once operational, the towers would form a relatively discreet, linear element within wider views to the south-east against the backdrop of large-scale hills and mountains in the distance.	7.4 km	**Negligible**	**Negligible**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**	**Moderate-Minor Adverse (not significant)**

Table C.3: Receptors at Outdoor Locations

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
OC-1 (Refer to Figure 7.4-7)	**Carbisdale Castle** This castle is located on an area of high ground, adjacent to the Kyle of Sutherland. The castle is private residence that also facilitates promoted leisure activities, including visitor accommodation, catering, functions / events, fishing and local walks. Refer to viewpoint 7-51 Carbisdale Castle.	The elevated location affords open and panorama views to north and north-west along the Kyle of Sutherland and Achany Glen. Views to the east and south include extensive areas of woodland and plantation forestry at Invershin and Balblair. An existing OHL is visible to the east, south-east and north, routed within the Kyle of Sutherland and linking to a substation, adjacent to Shin Power Station. Other OHL lines are visible to north and north, which also connect the substation at Shin.	**High**	There would be open views of the Proposed Development to the north, including construction activities and the steel lattice towers. The construction activities would be experienced in the context of agricultural fields in the foreground. There would also be more limited, distant views of the works (including associated felling), on the slopes on the opposite side of the Kyle of Sutherland, subject to screening by intervening landform and tree cover. Once operational, the towers would be predominantly visible below the skyline, back-clothed by the background landscape. To the north-east the Proposed Development would be partially visible against a combination of background sky and landscape and experienced in the context of existing plantation forestry. Views to the west and north-west would be fully screened by mature woodland.	695 m	**Medium**	**Medium**	**Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) applicable to views near the castle with most open outlook**	**Major-Moderate Adverse (significant) applicable to views near the castle with most open outlook**
OC-2 (Refer to Figure 7.4-7)	**The Scap (Angling)** This promoted angling location is located on the Kyle of Sutherland to the north-west of the Proposed Development near	The main orientation of views is to the south and east over the Kyle of Sutherland, as well as to north-west. Wider views to the east are contained by landform within Invershin Forest. Wider views to the south-west are contained by rising landform at Creag a Choineachan.	**Medium**	The construction works and introduction of the steel lattice towers would be partly visible in views to the south-east, heavily filtered by intervening tree cover within the river corridor. The construction activities would be experienced in the low-lying strath floor within the Kyle of Sutherland, beyond intervening tree cover. There would also be partial views of the works on the slopes along the	600 m	**Medium**	**Medium**	**Moderate Adverse (significant) based on proximity and**	**Moderate Adverse (significant) based on proximity and**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
	Oak Bank (north-west of Carbisdale Castle).	Receptors at this location are of Medium sensitivity, given the context of their activity adjudged against susceptibility.		strath sides (including felling activities along the wayleave, and additional felling to create a wind-firm edge to the surrounding forestry). These elements would be subject to screening by intervening landform and tree cover. Once operational, the Proposed Development would be visible predominantly against the background landscape in views to south-east. To the east, the Proposed Development would be partially visible against the background sky, in views over Inversshin Forest. In views to the south-west, the Proposed Development would be partially visible against the background sky. There would be a reduction in the filtering effects of tree cover (within the river corridor) during winter months.					
OC-3 (Refer to Figure 7.4-7)	**Dounie Estate** This estate is located approx. 900 m to the south-east of the Proposed Development, near the River Carron and is a promoted angling and leisure destination.	Views are channelled along Strathcarron valley floor which contains a high concentration of intervening tree cover within farmland. There is also mature tree cover within the river corridor. Receptors at this location are of High sensitivity, given the context of their activity (promoted within a scenic location) adjudged against susceptibility.	**High**	The construction works and introduction of steel lattice towers would be visible at distances of between 900 m and 1.5 km to the north / north-east. Ground based construction activities would be partly screened by the intervening landform and tree cover. There would be partial views of felling activities on the opposite side of Strathcarron (including felling along the wayleave for the alignment, and additional felling to create a wind-firm edge to the retained forestry). These works would be spatially separated from Dounie Estate by the intervening strath, which would reduce their influence on existing northerly views.	900 m	**Low**	**Low**	**Moderate Adverse (significant) based on winter views**	**Moderate Adverse (significant) based on winter views**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
				Once operational, the Proposed Development would be partially visible in views to the north / north-west. The towers at the southern end of the Section C alignment would be experienced against the background landscape. The towers located further north would be increasingly screened by the intervening landform. From wider parts of the Estate, the Proposed Development would be experienced at greater distance. Views would be intermittent and subject to screening by tree cover and the landform. As a result, the steel lattice towers would exert limited influence on existing views. Due to the broadleaved nature of surrounding tree cover, the clearest views would be experienced during winter months.					
OC-4 (Refer to Figure 7.4-7)	**Loch Laro** Recreational users of this loch located to the east of Shin Falls, within open moorland and accessed from the west via the A836. The location is promoted by Kyle of Sutherland Angling Association.	The views are partially contained by surrounding landform within moorland, in particular, Sron Ach A Bhacaidh hill limits wider views in a southerly direction. An existing steel lattice tower OHL is located approximately 1.2 km to the south. Receptors at this location are of Medium sensitivity, given the context of receptors activity adjudged against susceptibility.	**Medium**	There would be views of the Proposed Development to the south-west, at a distance of approximately 2.5 km. This includes views of the construction activities extending over open moorland, as well as localised areas of forestry felling to the south-west and south-east. Once operational, the towers would be experienced predominantly against the background sky. There would also be more distant views of the Special Arrangement (diamond duck under with flat formation towers) to the south-east (3.5 km at the closest point).	1.3 km	**Low**	**Low**	**Moderate -Minor Adverse (not significant)**	**Moderate- Minor Adverse (not significant)**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
				The Proposed Development would be located behind the existing OHL that extends east-west across the moorland to the south of the Loch. A large proportion of the Proposed Development would be screened by landform.					
OC-5 (Refer to Figure 7.4-7)	**Loch an Lagain** Located within the eastern part of the Study Area, to the south-east of the Proposed Development near Meall Moraig. The location is promoted by Kyle of Sutherland Angling Association.	The views are partially contained by surrounding landform within moorland, in particular, Meall Mhor to the north and Creag a Ghobhair to the south. There are two existing OHL in the vicinity, located 1.6 km to the west, and 2.3 km to the north-west. Receptors at this location are of Medium sensitivity, given the context of receptor activity adjudged against susceptibility.	**Medium**	There would be partially screened views of the Proposed Development to the north-west, at a distance of 2.5 km. Potential views of construction activities would be tempered by the intervening landform and low-lying nature of the works. Once operational, views of the towers would also be limited, comprising the tops of the towers against the background sky, and occupying a small proportion of the view. The Proposed Development would be located behind the existing OHL to the west of the Loch. A large proportion of the Proposed Development would be screened by intervening landform.	1.9 km	**Negligible**	**Negligible**	**Minor Adverse (not significant)**	**Minor Adverse (not significant)**
0C-6 (Refer to Figure 7.4-7)	**Balblair Forest** Recreational users of forest are mainly walkers and cyclists (mountain bikes). Footpaths SU05.06 and SU05.04 located within Balblair Forest.	Large sections of the footpaths within Balblair Forest are located within mature forestry. Where there are areas of forest management, views are focused in south and south-easterly direction across Kyle of Sutherland and Dornoch Firth.	**High**	The Proposed Development would be subject to screening by surrounding forestry. Where there are localised gaps in the forest or areas of forest management, the construction works and steel lattice towers would represent distant elements in the background landscape in views to the west and north-west.	3.2 km	**Negligible**	**Negligible**	**Moderate -Minor (not significant)**	**Moderate -Minor (not significant)**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
		Views in a northerly direction are contained by landform. Existing steel lattice tower OHLs are visible across the Kyle of Sutherland and to the south-east. Receptors at this location are of High sensitivity, given the context of receptor activity adjudged against susceptibility.		Once operational, the towers would form a relatively discreet, linear element within wider views across the firth to the large-scale hills and mountains in the distance. However, there would be no views of the Proposed Development from many locations due to intervening forestry. As such, there would be very limited influence on the experience of recreational visitors.					
OC-7 (Refer to Figure 7.4-7)	**Gledfield House and Estate** The house and estate is located within Strathcarron, set within mature woodland, adjacent to the River Carron. Gledfield House is a leisure and holiday destination.	Views within Strathcarron to the west and east are characterised by mature broadleaved woodland with a filtered backdrop of hills around the strath. Wider views to the north over the River Carron are contained by landform at Inver Charron Hill (East Strathcarron Wood). Receptors at this location are of High sensitivity, given the context of receptor activity adjudged against susceptibility.	**High**	Potential views of the Proposed Development would be heavily filtered in a westerly direction due to intervening tree cover within the estate and intervening farmland. Accordingly, views of the construction works (and associated forestry felling) would be restricted to localised parts of the estate with a more open outlook. Within the most open views, the influence of the construction activities would be remain limited due to their low lying nature, and the distance of view. Once operational, views of the steel lattice towers would also be limited. Where there are breaks in the woodland, the Proposed Development would represent a relatively discreet, linear element within wider views along the hills around the strath. The overall number of towers visible would be limited in number, views would be more apparent in winter during leaf fall.	2.4 km	**Negligible**	**Negligible**	**Moderate -Minor (not significant)**	**Moderate -Minor (not significant)**

Reference	Location / Type / Context	Nature of Main View	Sensitivity	Nature of Change	Distance	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operational (after 10yrs)	Construction	Operation (after 10yrs)
OC-8 (Refer to Figure 7.4-7)	**Falls of Shin and Shin Forest** Includes café / visitors centre, picnic area, parking and trails suitable for walking and a viewpoint.	Views from the Falls of Shin and visitor Centre are restricted by surrounding woodland. Views from the forest trails are contiguous with those assessed for RC-14 (Core Path SU21.11: Shin Falls Forest Walk, and SU21.12: Shin Falls Circular).	**High**	There would be no views of the construction activities or operational towers due to the screening influence of the intervening landform and tree cover.	2.6 km	**No change**	**No change**	**No effect**	**No effect**