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5 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This chapter has been prepared by Chartered Landscape Architects at Pegasus Group.

5.1.2 This chapter presents a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of the Proposed Development. The purpose of an LVIA when undertaken in the context of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is to identify any likely significant landscape and visual effects arising as a result of the Proposed Development. An LVIA must consider both:

- effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right (the landscape effects); and
- effects on specific views and visual amenity more generally (the visual effects).

5.1.3 Therefore, this LVIA considers the potential effects of the Proposed Development upon:

- individual landscape features and elements;
- landscape character;
- specific views; and
- people who view the landscape.

5.1.4 In this chapter, landscape and visual effects are assessed separately although the procedure for assessing each of these is closely linked and follows The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3).

5.1.5 The main objectives of the landscape assessment can be summarised as follows:

- to identify, evaluate and describe the baseline landscape character of the Site and its surroundings and also any notable individual landscape features within the Site;
- to determine the nature of the landscape receptor (i.e. the sensitivity of the landscape) through a consideration of its susceptibility to the type of development proposed and any values associated with it;
- to identify and describe any impacts of the Proposed Development in so far as they affect the landscape resource;
- to evaluate the nature of the landscape effects (i.e. the magnitude of change, duration and reversibility of the effect);
- to identify and describe mitigation measures that have been adopted to avoid, reduce and compensate for landscape effects;
- to evaluate the level of residual landscape effects; and
- to determine which landscapes effects, if any, are significant.

5.1.6 The main objectives of the visual assessment are similar and can be summarised as follows:

- to identify, evaluate and describe the baseline visual context of the Site and its surroundings with a focus on both specific views and the more general visual amenity experienced by people who have views of the Site;
- to determine the nature of the visual receptor (i.e. the sensitivity of the viewpoint or person whose visual amenity is affected) through a consideration of the susceptibility of the viewpoint/person to the type of development proposed and any values associated with either the viewpoint or visual amenity experienced;
- to identify and describe any impacts of the development in so far as they affect a viewpoint or views experienced;
- to evaluate the nature of the visual effects (i.e. the magnitude of change, duration and reversibility of the effect);
- to identify and describe mitigation measures that have been adopted to avoid, reduce and compensate for visual effects;
- to evaluate the level of residual visual effects; and
- to determine which visual effects, if any, are significant.

5.1.7 The LVIA also considers any cumulative landscape and visual effects which may arise as a result of the Pro5posed Development in conjunction with other wind farm developments.

5.1.8 The main LVIA presented in this chapter is supported by figures in **Volume 3a**, visualisations in **Volume 3b** and technical appendices in **Volume 4 comprising:**

- Technical Appendix 5.1 - LVIA Assessment Criteria;
- Technical Appendix 5.2 - Visualisation Information;
- Technical Appendix 5.3 - Preliminary Assessment of LCTs and Designations;
- Technical Appendix 5.4 - Preliminary Assessment of Visual Receptors;
- Technical Appendix 5.5 - Viewpoint Assessment;
- Technical Appendix 5.6 - Cumulative Effects of Scoping Sites;
- Technical Appendix 5.7 - Effects on the Special Qualities of NSAs; and
- Technical Appendix 5.8 – Assessment of Effects on a Theoretical Future Baseline.

5.1.9 The location of the Proposed Development and the overall 35 km study area for the LVIA is illustrated on **Figure 5.1** (measured from the outermost turbine). For reference, other operational, consented, and proposed wind farms referred to throughout this chapter are illustrated on **Figure 5.27** within the overall 35 km LVIA study area and on **Figure 5.28** within the 20 km detailed cumulative study area agreed at Scoping stage.

5.1.10 This chapter is structured as follows:

- 1.1 - Non-Technical Summary;
- 1.2 - Introduction;
- 1.3 - Statutory and Planning Context;
- 1.4 - Consultation Undertaken;
- 1.5 - Approach to the Assessment;
- 1.6 - Existing Landscape and Visual Context;
- 1.7 - Predicted Effects;

- 1.8 - Mitigation;
- 1.9 - Summary of Effects; and
- 1.10 - References.

5.2 Statutory and Planning Policy Context

European Landscape Convention, Adopted 2000

5.2.1 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) is the first international convention to focus specifically on the landscape as a resource in its own right. The convention promotes landscape protection, management and planning, as well as European co-operation on landscape issues. Signed by the UK Government in February 2006, the ELC became binding from March 2007. It applies to all landscapes, towns and villages, as well as open countryside; the coast and inland areas; and ordinary or even degraded landscapes, as well as those that are afforded protection.

5.2.2 The UK Government has stated that it considers the UK to be compliant with the ELC's requirements and in effect the principal requirements of the ELC are already enshrined in the existing suite of national policies and guidance on the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

5.2.3 The ELC defines landscape as:

*"*An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.' (Council of Europe 2000*)."*

5.2.4 It is important to recognise that the ELC does not require the preservation of all landscapes although landscape protection is one of the core themes of the convention. Equally important though is the requirement to manage and plan future landscape change.

5.2.5 The ELC highlights the importance of developing landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and planning of landscapes. In this regard, NatureScot and A&BC have a suite of landscape character assessment and landscape capacity studies which enables decisions to be made with due regard to landscape character, as promoted by the ELC.

Planning Policy

5.2.6 A full and detailed consideration of national and local planning policy is contained in **Chapter 5: Planning Policy Context** of this EIA Report and in the accompanying Planning and Sustainable Place Statement. Policies relevant to the Site and landscape and visual matters are outlined in turn bellow.

National Planning Framework 4

5.2.7 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), the national development plan for Scotland, was adopted on 13 February 2023.

5.2.8 Policy 4 states that "a) Development proposals which by virtue of type, location or scale will have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment, will not be supported"; "c) Development proposals that will affect a National Park, National Scenic Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest or a National Nature Reserve will only be supported where:

i. The objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the areas will not be compromised; or

ii. Any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance…"; and

"d) Development proposals that affect a site designated as a local nature conservation site or landscape area in the LDP will only be supported where:

i. Development will not have significant adverse effects on the integrity of the area or the qualities for which it has been identified; or

ii. Any significant adverse effects on the integrity of the area are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefit of at least local importance."

5.2.9 Policy 11 states that "e) In addition, project design and mitigation will demonstrate how the following impacts are addressed:

i. Impacts on communities and individual dwellings, including, residential amenity, visual impact, noise and shadow flicker;

ii. Significant landscape and visual impacts, recognising that such impacts are to be expected for some forms of renewable energy. Where impacts are localised and/or appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they will generally be considered to be acceptable…"

Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2 (LDP 2) Written Statement Adopted February 2024

5.2.10 The Site lies within the Argyll and Bute Council (A&BC) administrative area, where the Local Development Plan 2 for the A&BC areas was adopted on 28 February 2024. The lead policy of relevance is:

5.2.11 Policy 30 – The Sustainable Growth of Renewables states that "The Council will support renewable energy developments where these are consistent with the principles of sustainable development and it can be adequately demonstrated that there would be no unacceptable environmental effects, whether individual or cumulative, on local communities, natural and historic environments, landscape character and visual amenity, and that the proposals would be compatible with adjacent land uses".

5.2.12 Other policies of relevance to this chapter which will be taken into account include the following:

- Policy 70 – Development Impact on National Scenic Areas (NSAs); and
- Policy 71 – Development Impact on Local Landscape Areas (LLA).

Guidance

Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study, August 2017

5.2.13 The Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (ABLWECS), referred to in **Section 5.3** of **Planning & Sustainable Place Statement** which supports this application was undertaken in March 2012 and updated in August 2017. It aimed to inform strategic planning for wind energy development in line with Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and to

also provide guidance on the appraisal of individual wind farm and wind turbine proposals in Argyll and Bute. However, NPF4 supersedes the ABLWECS and does not give spatial advice for onshore wind outside National Parks or National Scenic Areas (NSAs). The current **Statutory and Policy Framework** is set out in **Chapter 4**. As stated in Paragraph 5.3.1 of the **Planning & Sustainable Place Statement**, the study is non statutory and is a relevant consideration. It does not displace EIA and should not be used to determine applications.

5.2.14 The ABLWECS is a useful starting point for assessing the relative sensitivity of different landscapes in relation to wind development within Argyll and Bute. It considers key sensitivities related to landscape character, visual amenity and on the value placed on the landscape in the form of scenic designations and other recognised interest and provides a starting point from where these provide information for LVIAs relative to the part of the landscape and specifics of the project under consideration.

5.2.15 Four development typologies were considered which are principally categorised on the basis of turbine height. As the Proposed Development is for turbines of up to 149.5 m in height, the Proposed Development would be considered under the 'very large' turbines (turbines over 130 m high) typology within the ABLWECS.

5.3 Consultation Undertaken

5.3.1 Throughout the scoping exercise, and subsequently during the ongoing EIA, relevant organisations were contacted with regards to the Proposed Development. **Table 5.1** below outlines the consultation responses received in relation to landscape and visual matters.

Table 5.1 - Consultee Responses

Consultee	Comments received/ issues raised	Response
ECU – on behalf of Scottish Ministers **Scoping Opinion 7th October 2022**	The Scottish Ministers are satisfied with the scope of the EIA set out in the scoping report and have made comments on the following: • Aviation Lighting • Cumulative landscape impact assessment • National Scenic Areas • Study area – landscape and visual • Wild Land Areas	<u>Aviation Lighting</u> The height of the proposed turbines has been kept below the 150 m threshold at which aviation lighting is required. <u>Cumulative landscape impact assessment</u> The cumulative landscape impact assessment includes assessments on the cumulative effects on the qualities of Beinn Bhuidhe Wild Land Area and Ben Starav Wild Land Area. <u>National Scenic Areas</u> Assessments identify potential impacts on Lynn of Lorn National Scenic Area (NSA) and Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA. <u>Study area – landscape and visual</u> NatureScot advised that the study area should be increased from 20 km as mentioned in the scoping report, to 25 km. On account of the reduced number and height of turbines with no aviation lighting, further feedback was provided from NatureScot outwith the ECU scoping response. NatureScot confirmed the following in an e-mail to RSK dated 14/02/23: “Based on the ZTV for the most recent 12 turbine layout we are content with a detailed study area radius of 20km”.

Consultee	Comments received/ issues raised	Response
		Wild Land Areas Assessments have been undertaken to identify potential impacts of the Proposed Development on Loch Etive Mountains Wild Land Area (WLA) and Ben Lui WLA.
Argyll & Bute Council (A&BC) (Scoping Consultation Response 25th May 2023)	Argyll & Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (LWECS) 2017– The Capacity Study is a material consideration in the determination of wind farm proposals and it is recommended that it is considered fully in the LVIA process, taking into account adjacent Landscape Character Types (LCTs) impacted by the proposal as well as the receiving LCT. The proposed turbines in the scoping layout lie within the boundary of the ABLWECS LCT 7: Craggy Upland. The guidance on development within this LCT states that: "There is considered to be no scope to accommodate very large turbines in this landscape due to potential effects on Loch Awe and its smaller scale and often scenic settled fringes, the Craggy Upland with Settled Glens (7a) and Craggy Coasts and Islands (7b). Replacement of the operational wind farm developments of Carraig Gheal, An Suidhe and Beinn Ghlas with turbines > 130m high would be likely to incur significant effects on key sensitivities. Cumulative Landscape impact assessment It is considered that cumulative impact will be a significant material consideration in the final determination of any future application. The Applicant needs to fully address this issue in their EIAR. Given the level of commercial scale wind energy development in the area, this proposed development will be seen in	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) The potential effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character and visual amenity has been assessed through Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA), which follows GLVIA, 3rd Edition and NatureScot advice / guidance on good practice for landscape and visual assessment of wind farm proposals. The landscape and visual assessment determines the potential for significant effects to be caused by the Proposed Development. Cumulative impact Cumulative development impacts have been fully addressed in the EIA Report.

Consultee	Comments received/ issues raised	Response
	combination with other wind energy developments, and this issue needs to be fully addressed. Up to date records of wind energy planning applications and scoping records for the area should be checked to ensure all potential wind energy developments are taken into account and common viewpoints and sensitive receptors identified and assessed. It is recommended that consultation is undertaken with the Energy Consents Unit to identify any other S36 schemes which may advance at the same pace as this proposal. E.g. Eredine, Ladyfield, Blarghour Variation, An Carr Dubh.	
	Designated Landscapes – An assessment of the impacts of the proposal on landscape should assess the impacts on any landscapes designated at a national and local scale. NatureScot will advise on nationally important landscape designations and wild land areas. Impacts on Garden & Designed Landscape should also be considered. In addition to National Scenic and Wild Land Areas, it is evident from the ZTV that there will be visibility from within locally designated Argyll & Bute Areas of Panoramic Quality (North Argyll and North West Argyll) and it is expected that these will be considered in the LVIA.	These have been included within the assessment (see **Figures 5.9 - 5.11**).
	Viewpoint Selection – it is recommended that viewpoint selection for other wind farms in Kintyre informs the final viewpoint selection. Water based viewpoints should also be considered/included as important receptors in this landscape e.g. water based recreation.	The final list of viewpoints and visualisations were agreed following discussion between with A&BC, NatureScot and Historic Environment Scotland (HES). An additional viewpoint has been included at Bonawe Jetty, Taynuilt, to include water-based recreation.
	Visible Aviation Lighting – due to the height increase, aviation lighting will be required, it is recommended that	At the time of Scoping, the Proposed Development was for a maximum of 18 wind turbines, each at maximum blade tip height of 180 m. The final proposal is for a

Consultee	Comments received/ issues raised	Response
	this, as well as any potential cumulative effects with other wind farms are fully assessed in accordance with the requirements of NatureScot.	reduced scheme of 7 wind turbines at a maximum height of 149.9 m, which falls below the required threshold for aviation lighting.
NatureScot **(Scoping Consultation Response 30th August 2022)**	<u>Extent of visibility</u> The ZTVs show that there would be visibility of the Proposal over the following areas: - South-western extents of the Loch Etive Mountains Wild Land Area (WLA 09) and over Loch Etive, Glen Etive and Ben Starav between around 7km to 22km from the Proposal; - Western and northern extents of the Ben Lui Wild Land Area (WLA 06) around 17km from the Proposal; - South-eastern extents of the Lynn of Lorn NSA between 15km and 20km from the Proposal; and - Western extents of the Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA around 15km distant. <u>Effects on National Scenic Areas (NSAs)</u> Visibility over the south-western extents of Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA. In the first instance a wireline from this area would assist us in gaining and understanding of any additional effects on the NSA as a result of the Proposal, as follows: - Southern extent of Glen Etive around the head of Loch Etive. **We advise that further consideration is given to the inclusion of a wireline where there is visibility of the Proposal over the Ben Nevis and Glen Coe and NSA.** <u>Effects on Wild Land Areas (WLAs)</u> Given the predicted additional visibility of the Proposal over the Ben Lui and Loch Etive Mountains WLAs, potential effects will require to be fully understood. It would therefore be helpful, in the first instance, to see	<u>Extent of visibility</u> An additional viewpoint has been provided at Ben Starav (Viewpoint 17), which lies within the Loch Etive Wild Land Area (WLA 09) and within the Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA. <u>Effects on NSAs and WLAs</u> Consultation was undertaken with NatureScot in February 2023 regarding these matters. In a response from Ruari Dunsmuir (NatureScot) the following points were made: We are content that a Wild Land Impact Assessment need not be required given the siting and design changes made since the original scoping layout; Similarly, the reduction in turbine height negates the need for a WLA night time assessment; The wireline from Ben Starav illustrating the new 12 turbine layout confirms that assessment of impacts on the Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA will not be required. We would however welcome the addition of a viewpoint from Ben Starav to be included for within the application LVIA; and

Consultee	Comments received/ issues raised	Response
	wirelines from the following locations to better understand the potential effects of this visibility on the WLAs. This would also allow us to advise further on if a wild land assessment will be required. - Beinn Bhuidhe (WLA 06); and - Ben Starav (WLA 09). **We advise that further consideration is given to additional viewpoints where there is visibility of the Proposal from WLA 06 and WLA 09. This is to allow for additional effects on the Wild Land Areas to be better understood.** <u>Aviation lighting</u> **…** a comprehensive night-time wild land assessment of potential landscape and visual effects will be required along with proposed mitigation of effects from turbine lighting, given the potential for effects on the Ben Lui and Loch Etive Mountains WLAs… <u>Cumulative effects</u> There are a number of wind farms within close proximity of this Proposal and we advise that a cumulative impact assessment (CLVIA) is undertaken to consider cumulative effects on the qualities of WLA 06 and WLA 09. This should be presented within the wild land assessment, should it be deemed that this is required. When considering which proposals to include within the cumulative assessment, we consider that Argyll and Bute Council are best placed to provide advice. Noting that the baseline for EIA should consider projects that are operational and/or have been approved, we recommend that the existing operational Beinn Ghlas turbines to be decommissioned/ removed are included in the cumulative assessment baseline, as per scoping	Based on the ZTV for the most recent 12 turbine layout we are content with a detailed study area radius of 20km. Since the date of this consultation, the layout has been reduced to seven turbines. <u>Aviation lighting</u> Since Scoping, the final proposal is for a reduced scheme at a maximum height of 149.9 m, which falls below the required threshold for civil visible aviation lighting. <u>Cumulative effects</u> The issue of cumulative development impacts have been fully addressed in the EIA Report. On account of the reduced number and height of turbines with no aviation lighting, a 20 km study area is considered proportionate.

Consultee	Comments received/ issues raised	Response
	report Figure 5.2.4, and as per the below advice on visualisations. <u>Visualisations</u> In summary, we advise that the 'baseline panorama and wireline' visuals should show the existing wind farm turbines (to be repowered), but that these turbines should not be included in the single page wireline or the final photomontage visual.	<u>Visualisations</u> 'Baseline panorama and wireline' will show the existing wind farm turbines (to be repowered), but these turbines will not be included in the single page wireline or final photomontage visual.
Mountaineering Scotland (Scoping Consultation Response 12th August 2022)	Our main concern at this stage is ensuring that the proposed viewpoints and other information will allow a full assessment of the proposed development with regard to mountaineering/hillwalking interests should a planning/S.36 application be made. We endorse proposed viewpoints 9, 14, and 15. The visual penetration along the Loch Etive trough is potentially significant and we recommend that an additional viewpoint be located at Beinn Trilleachan (NN086439) to enable better assessment of this. As well as being of mountaineering interest, Beinn Trilleachan is in the Etive Mountains WLA and the Ben Nevis and Glencoe NSA. In calibrating judgements of visual impact of any proposed scheme against the existing windfarm, which can be observed in operation in the field, hub and blade-tip ZTVs directly comparing the two schemes would be valuable.	An additional viewpoint located at Ben Starav rather than Beinn Trilleachan was added to enable a better assessment of impacts to be conducted. Comparative blade tip ZTVs have been produced and are included within the EIA at **Figures 5.3 and 5.4**. As explained in **Table 5.1** it should be noted that there are several limitations to the use of ZTVs. For a discussion of these limitations please refer to Visual Representation of Wind farms – Version 2.2 (NatureScot).

Consultee	Comments received/ issues raised	Response
	We appreciate that the turbine layout in the Scoping Report is somewhat notional. However, we are concerned that the highest turbines AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) on the scoping layout could be incongruent with the highest altitude blade-tips of Carraig Gheal (c.120m lower) and the scoping Musdale wind farm (c.60m lower even with 200m turbines). We were surprised that Musdale windfarm, at scoping, was not mentioned at all in the Scoping Report given that it abuts the Beinn Ghlas site. 9. We recommend that layouts be tested that avoid turbine bases higher than 420m AOD (assuming 180m BTH turbines), to achieve the most harmonious fit with the proposed Musdale and operational Carraig Gheal wind farms.	At the time of Scoping, the Proposed Development was for a maximum blade tip height of 180 m. The final proposal is for a reduced scheme at a maximum height of 149.9 m. So, although three of the seven turbine bases in the final layout are higher than the recommended 420 m AOD, the total blade tip height of only one turbine (T6) would reach slightly above the combined total of 180 m plus 420 m AOD. Musdale Wind Farm is included in **Technical Appendix 5.6 Cumulative Effects of Scoping Sites**.
Argyll & Bute Council (A&BC) (email correspondence 28th May 2025)	An updated list of cumulative sites was shared with the Council in advance of the completion of the LVIA. A request was made for two further sites to be added to the cumulative assessment - Eredine (in planning) and Creag Dubh (approved).	The detailed cumulative assessment area for the LVIA is 20km. The Creag Dubh site is located around 25km away, so had been excluded on that basis. On further review it was established that part of the Eredine scheme did lie within 20 km, so it was agreed to add this into the assessment.

5.4 Approach to the Assessment

Types of Impacts Considered in the LVIA

5.4.1 The primary source of best practice for LVIA in the UK is GLVIA3. The LVIA presented in this chapter has been undertaken in accordance with the principles established in GLVIA3. It must however be acknowledged that GLVIA3 establishes guidelines not a specific methodology. The preface to GLVIA3 recognises that:

"This edition concentrates on principles and processes. It does not provide a detailed or formulaic 'recipe' that can be followed in every situation – it remains the responsibility of the professional to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the task in hand."

5.4.2 The methodology for this assessment has therefore been developed specifically for this LVIA to ensure that it is appropriate and fit for purpose (see **Technical Appendix 5.1 LVIA Assessment Criteria**).

5.4.3 Consideration has also been given to the following documents:

- Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Guidance (Methodology), (2022), NatureScot;
- Guidelines for Landscape Character Assessment, (2002) Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH);
- Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments, (2021) NatureScot;
- Siting and Design of Wind farms in the Landscape, Version 3a (August 2017) SNH;
- Visual Representation of Wind farms – Version 2.2 (February 2017), SNH;
- General pre-application and scoping advice for onshore wind farms. Guidance. (September 2020) NatureScot;
- LI Technical Guidance Note 2/19. Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) (March 2019) Landscape Institute;
- LI Advice Note 02/17 Visual representation of development proposals (March 2017) Landscape Institute; and
- LI Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing landscape value outside of national designations.

Scope of the Assessment

5.4.4 The LVIA assesses both the long-term effects relating to the operational lifetime of the Proposed Development and the short-term temporary effects associated with the decommissioning of the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines and the construction of the Proposed Development. It is possible that the construction of the Proposed Development will occur simultaneously with the decommissioning of the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines, although whether this is feasible will be subject to site investigations and other factors yet to be determined. The assessment of effects, therefore, adopts a baseline where the existing turbines remain in situ until the construction of the Proposed Development commences. However, an assessment of effects against a baseline where the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines are not in the landscape, is set out at **Technical Appendix 5.8**.

5.4.5 Where appropriate, the LVIA also considers any residual effects once the proposed wind turbines have been decommissioned and removed (assumed to be 35 years from the date of completed construction). However, although the project will be decommissioned, the effects have been assessed as if permanent.

5.4.6 The LVIA considers both direct and indirect landscape and visual effects. It not only assesses the impacts associated with the turbines, including blade movement, but also any related impacts resulting from the construction compounds, borrow pits, underground cabling, site tracks, substation, and access roads.

5.4.7 Consideration has been given to seasonal variations when assessing the visibility of the Proposed Development.

5.4.8 The LVIA also considers any cumulative effects arising in conjunction with other wind farm schemes in the study area, as defined in the cumulative methodology section below.

Study Area

5.4.9 The initial study area for the LVIA is a 35 km radius from the turbines in all directions. The extent of this study area is illustrated in **Figure 5.1**. Initial site work informed by analysis of preliminary Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTVs) indicated that any significant landscape and visual effects are likely to occur within a much narrower radius from the Site; therefore, the level of assessment work in this LVIA incrementally decreases with distance from the Site, with the greatest focus of assessment being within broadly 20 km of the Site. The intention is that the detail of the LVIA remains proportional to the likely significance of effects, as advocated in GLVIA3.

5.4.10 For the cumulative assessment, consideration was initially given to a 60 km radius from the Site, as recommended by NatureScot best practice guidance. Following this, all other wind energy developments that are operational, under construction, consented or subject to a valid full planning application within 35 km of the Proposed Development were identified and reviewed as part of the cumulative baseline.

5.4.11 The approach adopted in the cumulative LVIA has been to focus on other wind farms which are either operational, under construction, consented or the subject of a full planning application and which have the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects when considered in combination with the Proposed Development. Rather than simply considering every other wind farm within a set distance of the Proposed Development, the approach has been to focus the assessment on those sites which have the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects, and particularly those wind farms within 20 km of the Proposed Development. Further details of this approach are set out in the cumulative impact assessment (**Section 5.8**).

Landscape Assessment Methodology

5.4.12 A baseline landscape assessment was carried out to determine the current features and character of the landscape within and surrounding the Site.

5.4.13 The baseline landscape assessment involved firstly a review of desk material including:

- Ordnance Survey maps at 1:250,000; 1:50,000; 1:25,000 and 1:10,000 scales;
- Aerial photographs of the Site and surrounding area;
- Topography;

- Current & historical land use;
- Geology and soil maps;
- Historic parks and designated landscapes;
- Relevant planning policy;
- Relevant landscape sensitivity/capacity studies;
- Relevant landscape character assessments; and
- Relevant historic landscape character assessments.

5.4.14 Field visits have been conducted in a variety of weather conditions and at different times of the year during the pre-application stage, including May, July, November and December 2022, and after the initial design chill following public consultation in January 2023, and in November 2023.

5.4.15 The baseline assessment identified the existing landscape features on the Site, and in the immediate vicinity, and how these elements combine to give the area a sense of landscape character. Plans and construction details of the Proposed Development were used to determine the impacts of the scheme on landscape features and character.

5.4.16 The LVIA firstly assesses how the Proposed Development would impact directly on any existing landscape features or elements (e.g. removal of trees etc.).

5.4.17 The LVIA then considers impacts on landscape character with reference to landscape character areas / types identified in published landscape character documents. Further details of the assessment criteria that underpins this LVIA are set out in **Technical Appendix 5.1**.

Visual Assessment Methodology

5.4.18 Potential visual receptors of the Proposed Development were identified by interpretation of digitally generated ZTVs (see **Table 5.2** for an explanation of ZTVs and how they were produced).

Table 5.2 - Production of ZTVs

Production of Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Maps
A ZTV illustrates the extents from which a feature would theoretically be visible within a defined study area. ZTVs are generated assuming a 'bare ground' terrain model. This means that the ZTVs presented within this LVIA have been generated from topographical data only and they do not take any account of vegetation or the built environment which may screen views of the development. It is, as such, a 'worst case' zone of visual influence and considerably over-emphasises the actual visibility of the proposed scheme. In reality trees, hedges and buildings may restrict views of the development from many of the areas rendered as within the ZTV. A further assumption of the ZTV is that climatic visibility is 100 % (i.e. visibility is not impeded by moisture or pollution in the air). In reality, such atmospheric conditions are relatively rare in this part of the country. Mist, fog, rain and snow are all common weather occurrences, which would regularly restrict visibility of the Proposed Development from some of the areas within the ZTV; this being an incrementally more significant factor with distance from the site. Atmospheric pollution is not as significant as it is in other parts of the country but is still present and would also restrict actual visibility on some occasions, again more so with distance from the site.

Production of Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Maps
The ZTVs were generated using GIS. The programme used topographical height data (OS Terrain 5) to build a terrain model. The programme then renders the model using a square grid to illustrate whether the turbines would be visible in each 5 m x 5 m square on the grid for a specified distance in every direction from the site. ZTVs have been prepared to illustrate the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development for the 35 km study area. Two sets of ZTVs have been produced, the first shows visibility of the turbines to blade tip when the blade is at its highest possible position, the second, the visibility of the turbines at hub height. Enlargements of the ZTVs have also been produced. Cumulative ZTVs have been produced to show locations where the ZTVs of two or more operational, consented, or proposed wind farms overlap (in certain cases a number of wind farms which are at the same stage in development have been grouped together). In the cumulative ZTVs, one colour has been used to illustrate the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development and a second colour to illustrate the visibility of a second site. Where the ZTVs of the two sites overlap a third colour has been used to illustrate this potential cumulative visual influence. It should be noted that there are several limitations to the use of ZTVs. For a discussion of these limitations please refer to Visual Representation of Wind farms – Version 2.2 (NatureScot). In particular, it should be noted that the ZTV plans simply illustrate theoretical visibility and do not imply or assign any level of significance to those areas identified as being within the ZTV. The ZTVs are a tool to assist the Landscape Architect to identify from where the site would potentially be visible. The assessment of landscape and visual effects in this chapter does not rely solely on the accuracy of the ZTVs. The ZTVs have been ground proofed and professional judgement has been used to evaluate the significance of effects.

5.4.19 A selection of viewpoints was identified and agreed with statutory consultees to represent a range of views and viewer types, as per guidance in Visual Representation of Wind Farms – Version 2.2 (NatureScot, 2017) and in paragraphs 6.16-6.20 of GLVIA3.

5.4.20 The viewpoints cover a variety of different character areas, are in different directions from the Site and are at varying elevations. Some of the viewpoints are intended to be representative of the visual experience in a general location whereas other viewpoints illustrate the view from a specific or important vantage point. The viewpoints are located at a range of distances from the Proposed Development to illustrate the varying magnitude of visual impacts.

5.4.21 Visualisations were produced for each of the viewpoints; these are presented in **Volume 3b** of this EIA Report. An explanation of how they were produced and information to be read in conjunction with the visualisations is provided in **Volume 4, Technical Appendix 5.2**.

5.4.22 Each of the representative viewpoints was visited to gain an understanding of the sensitivity of the viewpoint receptors and to make professional judgements on the likely visual effects arising from the Proposed Development.

5.4.23 The viewpoints were used as the starting point for considering the effects on visual receptors within the entire study area. The visual assessment does not rely solely on the viewpoint assessments to determine the significance of effects on different visual receptor groups throughout the study area. It should be recognised that the viewpoints illustrated in the LVIA simply represent a series of snapshots from a small selection of the locations within the study area from where the Proposed Development could be visible. Following the viewpoint assessment, the LVIA considers the effect on visual amenity throughout

the study area with reference to different visual receptor groups at varying distances from the Proposed Development.

Cumulative Assessment Methodology

5.4.24 Best practice guidelines identify two principal types of cumulative visual impact:

- combined visibility – where the observer is able to see two or more developments from one viewpoint; and
- sequential visibility – where two or more sites are not visible at one location but would be seen as the observer moves along a linear route, for example, a road or public right of way.

5.4.25 The guidelines state that 'combined visibility' may either be 'in combination' (where two or more sites are visible from a fixed viewpoint in the same arc of view) or 'in succession' (where two or more sites are visible from a fixed viewpoint, but the observer is required to turn to see the different sites). Both types are discussed in this LVIA. The published GLVIA3 also indicates a difference in emphasis between sequential effects that are frequent and those which are occasional. The LVIA also includes a further consideration of the overall totality of the effect when the Proposed Development is considered alongside the other operational or proposed schemes across the Study Area.

5.4.26 In relation to both the effects of the Proposed Development alone and the cumulative effects with other wind farm schemes in the study area, both beneficial (positive) and adverse (negative) effects are considered. Wind farms give rise to a wide spectrum of opinions, ranging from strongly positive to strongly negative, with a wide range of opinions lying somewhere between these two positions. Some people view wind turbines as aesthetically pleasing, elegant structures and a positive response to climate change whilst others view them as incongruous or industrial structures. This spectrum of opinion has come to be referred to in relation to wind farms as the concept of valency. For the avoidance of doubt, in considering the effects of the Proposed Development, a precautionary approach to the assessment has been adopted and it is assumed that, unless specifically stated otherwise, the effects of the proposal will be adverse in nature even though it is acknowledged that, for some people, the impacts could be considered to be beneficial.

Assessment Criteria

5.4.27 The purpose of an LVIA when produced in the context of an EIA is to identify any significant landscape and visual effects within the study area to assist the determining authority in deciding the acceptability of the scheme under consideration.

5.4.28 The detailed assessment criteria used to determine landscape and visual sensitivity, magnitude of change and significance of effect are set out in **Technical Appendix 5.1**.

5.4.29 Professional judgement is then employed to determine whether the effect is significant or not. Those effects described as **Major**, **Moderate-Major** and, in some cases, **Moderate** may be regarded as significant.

Residual Effects

5.4.30 Best practice for EIA in general terms requires that the significance of potential effects be assessed, mitigation proposals identified (if a significant effect is identified) and the

residual effect (with mitigation in place) then re-assessed to demonstrate the effectiveness of the mitigation proposed.

5.4.31 In the case of LVIA for wind farms, this presents two interrelated problems:

- Potential effects cannot be meaningfully assessed in the absence of an assumed layout; and
- Landscape and visual mitigation principally involves the refinement of the Site layout ('mitigation by design').

5.4.32 The approach taken in this study has therefore been to build landscape and visual mitigation into the final layout (refer to **Chapter 2** and the **Design and Access Statement**). Mitigation has been considered as part of the iterative design process but as this mitigation is integral to the final layout, there is no difference between the assessed effects reported in the main body of this chapter and the residual effects.

Limitations to the Assessment

5.4.33 The assessment of effects within this LVIA has been derived using publicly available information only. Within such a large study area it is unfeasible to visit every single location from which the Proposed Development might be visible as illustrated on the ZTVs. The authors of the LVIA have, however, spent a considerable length of time 'in the field' and visited all important viewpoints and locations within the study area.

5.4.34 Limitations to the use of ZTVs are set out in **Table 5.2** above and the limitations in relation to photography, wireframes and photomontages are also set out in **Volume 2,Technical Appendix 5.2**.

5.5 Existing Landscape and Visual Context

5.5.1 For the avoidance of doubt, all distances are approximate and have been measured from the asset to the nearest proposed turbine, unless otherwise stated.

Site Location

5.5.2 The Site is in the A&BC area, centred at approximately Ordnance Survey (OS) Grid Reference NM 977 258. The closest settlements (identified in the A&BC LDP 2) include the village of Taynuilt 5.2 km northeast, and the town Oban 10 km west of the Site.

5.5.3 The nearest main transport routes are the A85 between Oban (west) and Perth (east), situated approximately 5.2 km to the northeast, the A816 between Oban (north) and Lochgilphead (south) that passes approximately 8.9 km to the northwest and the West Highland Railway Line between Oban and Glasgow that passes approximately 5.2 km to the northeast.

5.5.4 The location of the Site is illustrated at **Figure 5.1**, and the final Proposed Development layout including ancillary infrastructure is shown on **Figures 2.5a and 2.5b.**

5.5.5 The Site is situated at the location of the operational Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm which comprises 14 wind turbines with a blade tip height of approximately 54.1 m.

Landscape Designations

5.5.6 A review of all landscape designations within the 35 km study area has been undertaken. Landscape designations are illustrated on **Figures 5.9** and **5.10**. **Figure 5.11** illustrates landscape designations to 20 km overlaid with the blade tip ZTV.

International Landscape Designations

5.5.7 There are no international landscape designations covering the Site or located within the 35 km study area.

National Parks

5.5.8 The Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park (LLTNP) is located approximately 26.3 km east of the Site. Theoretical visibility is indicated from the elevated western extent of the LLTNP including from high point Meall nan Tighearn 739 m AOD. Given the intervening distance between the Site and LLTNP, significant effects on special qualities are considered unlikely and the LLTNP is not considered further in this assessment.

National Scenic Areas

5.5.9 National Scenic Areas (NSAs) within 35 km of the Proposed Development as indicated on **Figure 5.9** are listed below. Accounting for the intervening distance, significant effects on special qualities of NSAs are considered unlikely for those over 20 km and as such, they have not been considered further in the assessment. As set out in **Technical Appendix 5.3**, and with reference to **Figure 5.11,** all NSAs present within the 20 km detailed LVIA study area have been subject to an initial review. The findings of this exercise are presented at **Table 5.3.2** of **Technical Appendix 5.3**.

- Lynn of Lorn NSA – situated 13.9 km northwest of the Proposed Development. Theoretical visibility is indicated across western areas if the NSA including from the

eastern side of Lismore and the open waters of the Lynn of Lorn. **Potential effects on the special qualities of the Lynn of Lorn NSA are considered in Technical Appendix 5.7.**

- Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA – situated 15.3 km northeast of the Proposed Development. Theoretical visibility is indicated from south western areas of the NSA including from high point Ben Starav 1078m AOD, 21.1 km to the northeast. **Potential effects on the special qualities of Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA are considered in Technical Appendix 5.7**.

5.5.10 Special qualities of the Lynn of Lorn and Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSAs are outlined in turn below, the effects upon which are assessed within **Technical Appendix 5.7**.

Lynn of Lorn NSA

5.5.11 This NSA covers the Isle of Lismore, the small islands, and open waters of the Lynn of Lorn and areas of Appin and Benderloch. With reference to the designation statement, its 'special qualities' are identified as:

- *"*A long-inhabited, green oasis;
- A small scale, low-lying landscape within a vast highland backdrop;
- A landscape strongly orientated northeast-southwest;
- The coastline of great variety and diversity;
- A strategic location, rich in history;
- A place of retreat and seclusion; and
- Castle Stalker, one of Scotland's iconic romantic images.*"*

Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA

5.5.12 This NSA covers an extensive area of valleys and mountains from Killiechonate Forest and Ben Nevis in the north, Loch Leven, Glen Coe and Glen Etive and Rannoch Moor in the southwest and southeast respectively. With reference to the designation statement, its 'special qualities' are identified as:

- *"*A land of mountain grandeur;
- A land of classic highland vistas
- Human settlement dwarfed by mountain and moorland;
- The expansive Moor of Rannoch;
- The spectacular drama of Glen Coe;
- The wooded strath of lower Glen Coe;
- The narrow and enclosed Loch Leven;
- The impressive massif of Ben Nevis;
- The wild Mamores and secretive Glen Nevis;
- The fjord-like upper Loch Leven Long and green Glen Etive; and
- The dark heritage.*"*

Local Landscape Areas (LLA)

5.5.13 Following Scottish Government Policy in 2017, Local Landscape Area (LLA) is the name given for local landscape designation. In Argyll and Bute (A&BC Policy LDP 3) these were previously referred to as Areas of Panoramic Quality which were designated by A&BC as

an area of local importance in terms of its landscape quality. LLAs within 35 km of the Proposed Development as indicated on **Figure 5.9** are listed below. Accounting for the intervening distance, significant effects on LLAs are considered unlikely over 20 km and therefore only those within the 20 km detailed study area have been considered further. With reference to **Figure 5.11,** all LLAs present within the 20 km detailed LVIA study area have been subject to an initial review. The findings of this exercise are presented at **Table 5.3.2** of **Technical Appendix 5.3**.

- North Argyll LLA – situated 3.8 km east of the Proposed Development. Theoretical visibility is indicated across western areas if the LLA including from Ben Cruachan 9.6 km northeast. **Potential effects on the North Argyll LLA are considered further in the assessment**.
- North West Argyll (Coast) LLA – situated 7.9 km west of the Proposed Development. Theoretical visibility is largely limited to elevated areas of Loch Feochan 9.8 km west. Accounting for the limited theoretical visibility, significant effects on this LLA are considered unlikely and this locally designated landscape is not considered further in this assessment.
- Knapdale / Melfort LLA – situated 12.0 km southwest of the Proposed Development. Theoretical visibility is generally limited to some northern coastal areas and some elevated parts of Glen Gallan. Accounting for the intervening distance and limited theoretical visibility significant effects on this LLA are considered unlikely and this locally designated landscape is not considered further in this assessment.
- West Loch Fyne LLA – situated 18.2 km southeast of the Proposed Development. No theoretical visibility is indicated therefore this LLA is not considered further in the assessment.

5.5.14 It should be noted that there is no written citation specifically for A&BC LLAs or the reasons for their designation. There are no clearly defined Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) for the LLAs, so and the assessment of potential effects at **Paragraphs 5.7.262 – 278** on these locally designated landscapes considers local landscape and visual qualities within the LLA boundaries informed by the ABLWECS and field assessment.

Wild Land Areas (WLA)

5.5.15 Wild Land Areas (WLA) are not designated but are mapped and described by NatureScot and are considered sensitive to development within them. Scottish Planning Policy 2014 covered these within policy areas however the relevant policy has subsequently been replaced by NPF4. NPF4 states that: "(inter alia) effects of development outwith wild land areas will not be a significant consideration". However, WLAs of potential relevance have been addressed to determine if an assessment of effects of the Proposed Development on their qualities would be required.

5.5.16 The Site is not located within any WLAs. Those within 35 km of the Proposed Development as indicated on **Figure 5.9** include:

- WLA 05. Jura, Scarba Lunga and Garvellachs – situated 29.2 km southwest of the Proposed Development. Some limited theoretical visibility is indicated from the north eastern extents of the WLA. However, as stated in NPF4, as the development would be outwith the WLA, and accounting for the limited predicted visibility and intervening distance, significant effects on the key attributes and qualities of WLA 05 are considered unlikely and are not considered further in the assessment.

- WLA 06. Ben Lui – situated 15.0 km east of the Proposed Development. Theoretical visibility is largely limited to western areas of the WLA including from high point Beinn Bhoidheach 590m AOD. However, as stated in NPF4, as the development would be outwith the WLA, and given the limited predicted visibility and intervening distance as set out in **Technical Appendix 5.3**, significant effects on the key attributes and qualities of WLA 06 are considered unlikely and are not considered further in the assessment.
- WLA 07. Ben More - Ben Ledi – situated 34.9 km east of the Proposed Development. No theoretical visibility, therefore, not considered further in the assessment.
- WLA 08. Ben More, Mull – situated 33.8 km west of the Proposed Development. Limited theoretical visibility from the south-eastern extent of the WLA. As set out above and given the intervening distance, significant effects on the key attributes and qualities of WLA 08 are considered unlikely and are not considered further in the assessment.
- WLA 09. Loch Etive mountains – situated 7.5 km northeast of the Proposed Development. Theoretical visibility is indicated across southern areas of the WLA and higher ground including from Ben Cruachan 9.6 km northeast, Beinn Bhreac 13.6 km north and Ben Starav 22.0 km northeast. Visual effects on Viewpoints 9, 14 and 17 within WLA 09 are considered in the viewpoint assessment in **Technical Appendix 5.5**. However, as stated in NPF4, as the development would be outwith the WLA, , effects on the key attributes and qualities of WLA 09 are considered unlikely, so these are not considered further.
- WLA 10. Breadalbane – Schiehallion – situated 35.8 km east of the Proposed Development. No theoretical visibility, therefore, not considered further in the assessment.
- WLA 13. Moidart – Ardgour – situated 34.4 km north of the Proposed Development. Limited theoretical visibility from the southern extent of the WLA. As set out above and given the intervening distance, significant effects on the key attributes and qualities of WLA 08 are considered unlikely and are not considered further in the assessment.

Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDL)

5.5.17 There are 11 Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDLs) situated within the 35 km study area, the closest GDLs include:

- Achnaloich GDL – 7.3 km north of the Proposed Development. Very limited theoretical visibility indicated, actual visibility is likely to be filtered and screened by mature vegetation within the GDL. Significant effects are considered unlikely therefore this GDL is not considered further in the assessment.
- Ardchattan Priory GDL – 8.2 km north of the Proposed Development. **Theoretical visibility is indicated across this GDL and potential effects are considered in the assessment**.
- Ardanaiseig House GDL – 9.4 km east of the Proposed Development. No theoretical visibility, therefore, not considered further in the assessment.
- Inverary Castle GDL – 16.8 km southeast of the Proposed Development. No theoretical visibility, therefore, not considered further in the assessment.

5.5.18 Significant effects on GDLs beyond 20 km with reference to **Figure 5.11** are considered unlikely given either no or limited theoretical visibility. As such, effects on GDLs beyond 20 km are not considered further within the assessment.

Published Landscape Character Descriptions

5.5.19 A review was undertaken of the following published sources of information regarding regional and local landscape character, landscape value and landscape capacity:

- NatureScot National Landscape Character Assessment, 2019;
- Argyll and Bute Council. Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (Carol Anderson Landscape Associates 2017); and
- NatureScot. Landscape Character Assessment: Argyll and Firth of Clyde – Landscape Evolution and Influences (2019).

5.5.20 At this point, for clarity, it is necessary to distinguish between two terms that are frequently used in published guidance and this chapter. They originate from the 'Guidelines for Landscape Character Assessment' (Countryside Agency and NatureScot, 2002):

- Landscape Character Types (LCTs) are defined as tracts of landscape, which have a generic unity of character due to the particular combinations of landform, land cover, pattern and elements. The same landscape character type can occur at several different locations throughout a study area; and
- Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) are defined as discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape character type and can only occur at a single location.

5.5.21 At a national level, the whole of Scotland has now been characterised by the NatureScot National Landscape Character Assessment (2019) which has been published as an online resource. In introducing the updated information, NatureScot set out that where there are: *"*topic specific landscape capacity or sensitivity studies, they would take precedence for informing that development type*"*.

5.5.22 At the local level, the Proposed Development lies within the area covered by the ABLWECS. The ABLWECS identifies key sensitivities and opportunities for wind farm development, based on the LCTs included in the Landscape Assessment of Argyll and the Firth of Clyde (Environmental Resources Management, 1996). Some revisions were made to the previous landscape assessment LCTs and their classification in the capacity study which identifies LCTs and LCT sub-types.

5.5.23 Given the finer grain detail of the ABLWECS, it is considered appropriate to focus the assessment of effects on the LCTs in this study, further informed by the NatureScot LCTs.

Landscape Character Types Covering the Proposed Development

5.5.24 The proposed turbines and southern extent of the access route lies within ABLWECS LCT 7 Craggy Upland, the larger part of the access route lies within LCT 7a Craggy Upland with Settled Glens, whilst the northern extent of the access at the connection with the A85 road lies within LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic.

<u>LCT 7 Craggy Upland</u>

5.5.25 The landscape context for the LCT set out in the ABLWECS states as follows:

*"*This extensive upland character type forms a backdrop to Loch Awe and the Rocky Mosaic (20). It often merges with the Upland Forest Moor Mosaic character type (6) to the south-east where it has similar elevation, landform and vegetation cover. This character type also forms backdrop hills (some of these notably pronounced) seen at the head of settled glens within the adjacent Craggy Upland with Settled Glens (7a). The outer hills of this landscape also contain the sensitive Moine Mhor area (lying close to the

Knapdale NSA) and provide the wider setting to the scenic basin of north Loch Awe (LCT 7C)."

5.5.26 The very large scale typology assessment (>130m) for the LCT set out in the ABLWECS states as follows:

*"*Very large turbines (as new or repowered developments) would be likely to impact on the smaller scale settled fringes of Loch Awe (LCT 20) and on the settled glens which abut this upland area from the west (LCT 7a). Effects on the shores of Loch Awe, inner Loch Fyne (including the setting of Inveraray and Lachlan Castle), the archaeological rich area of Moine Mhor and the scenic north Loch Awe basin are all key sensitivities*."*

LCT 7a Craggy Upland with Settled Glens

5.5.27 The landscape context for the LCT set out in the ABLWECS states as follows:

*"*This landscape forms the transition between the intricate and diverse Craggy Coast and Islands (7b) and the more extensive plateau of the Craggy Uplands (7). The upper parts of the settled glens gradually merge with the Craggy Uplands (7) with occasional more pronounced hills forming focal features, at the head of Glen Scammadale for example. The Glens also link to the coast although the boundary is usually marked by a distinct 'pinch point' of hills and constriction of the valley floor away from the broader alluvial plain and bay. Steep containing ridges form a well defined edge between the coast and this landscape character subtype*."*

5.5.28 Both ABLWEC LCTs 7 and 7a are located within NatureScot LCT 40 Craggy Upland – Argyll, whose key characteristics are described as:

- *"*Upland moor with irregular, rather amorphous landform;
- Rounded knolls, rock outcrops and numerous lochs in low-lying hollows and glens;
- Open moorland predominates, but extensive conifer plantations camouflage the landscape pattern in some areas;
- Oak-birch woodland on lower slopes;
- Stone walls enclose an irregular patchwork of pastures within glens on margins of moorland;
- Isolated farmsteads and small villages in sheltered sites within glens;
- Numerous archaeological remains, often concentrated on rounded knolls on lower slopes and
- Historic intricate, irregular landscape pattern in glens*."*

LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic

5.5.29 The landscape context for the LCT set out in the ABLWECS states as follows:

*"*This landscape forms a narrow coastal or shoreline band often contained by steeply rising ground. In the Kintyre and Loch Fyne area it is adjacent to the Upland Forest Moor Mosaic (6) and in the Loch Awe area it sits below the Craggy Upland (7). The High Tops (2) form the immediate backdrop to the Rocky Mosaic defined on the northern shores of outer Loch Etive. There is often a strong contrast between the small scale, more diverse landform and land cover of the Rocky Mosaic (20) and the simpler, larger scale landform and more uniform forestry and moorland of these adjacent upland character types.

This contrast is less pronounced where the Rocky Mosaic (20) on the southern shores of outer Loch Etive is backed by the Craggy Upland with Settled Glens (7a) and where the transition between types is more gradual in less settled areas.

The consistent presence of the sea or loch forms a unifying element common to this character type and there is strong inter-visibility across the water to a variety of other landscape types including the islands of Arran and Jura in the Kintyre area or the High Tops in upper Loch Fyne and Loch Etive area.*"*

5.5.30 LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic is located within NatureScot LCT 53 Rocky Coastland – Argyll, whose key characteristics are described as:

- *"*Uneven, hummocky landform with rocky outcrops and narrow glens.
- Raised beaches, cliffs and distinctive rounded knolls.
- Rocky, indented coastline with offshore islands and small sandy bays.
- Relatively small-scale landscape with a diverse mix of colours and textures.
- Steep wooded cliffs and hummocky, gorse-covered slopes.
- Stone walls provide partial enclosure.
- Relatively well-settled, with scattered isolated farm buildings and small villages in sheltered sites.
- A wide variety of archaeological sites.
- Complex transitional landscape.*"*

Other Landscape Character Types considered in this LVIA

5.5.31 To consider the indirect effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character, LCTs within 35 km of the Proposed Development have been illustrated at **Figure 5.12**, and those located within the 20 km detailed study area are illustrated at **Figure 5.13**. The LCTs within 20 km have also been overlaid with the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 5.14**.

5.5.32 All LCTs located between 20 km and 35 km have been scoped out of any further assessment, as it is considered that there would be no potential for significant effects to arise at these distances.

5.5.33 An initial review has been undertaken to determine which LCTs would have the potential for significant effects to arise and would therefore require detailed consideration in this chapter. The intention has been to ensure that the level of attention given to each character type is proportionate to the likelihood of significant effects arising. The discussion below summarises the process followed in deciding which character types have the potential to experience significant effects and hence to scope out various character types from further consideration.

5.5.34 As set out in **Technical Appendix 5.3** all LCTs present within the 20 km detailed LVIA study area have been subject to this initial review. The findings of this exercise are presented at **Table 5.3.1** of **Technical Appendix 5.3**.

5.5.35 The LCTs considered in detail in this chapter are:

- LCT 2 High Tops;
- LCT 4 Mountain Glens;
- LCT 7 Craggy Upland;
- LCT 7a Craggy Upland with Settled Glens;

- LCT 7c North Loch Awe Craggy Uplands;
- LCT18 Lowland Ridge and Moss; and
- LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic.

Local Landscape Description and Character Appraisal

5.5.36 A plan illustrating the landscape features/elements within the Site and its immediate context (5 km radius of the turbines) is provided in **Figure 5.16**. The following provides an overview of the physical and perceptual characteristics of the Site and immediate surrounding landscape without reference to published LCTs.

Topography

5.5.37 Topography within 35 km of the Proposed Development is illustrated in **Figure 5.15**. The Proposed Development is situated on an undulated plateau, part of the wider Lorn plateau with boundaries comprising the Sound of Lorn to the west, Loch Etive to the north, Loch Awe to the east and Loch Melfort to the south.

5.5.38 The proposed turbines would be located on the plateau east of high point Beinn Ghlas and north-west of Loch Nant. Elevations across the Site range from 335 m AOD to 461 m AOD at Carn Gaibhre. The immediate plateau is defined by Glen Lonan to the north, Glen Nant to the east, Loch Nant, Sior Loch to the south and the higher ground of Beinn Ghlas to the west. The highest areas within the study area are found beyond 10 km to the north and the north east and include high points Ben Cruachan 1126 m AOD and Beinn Meadhonach 715 m AOD.

5.5.39 Overall, the topography of the Site and its immediate environs is characterised as undulating uplands off rounded knolls, rock outcrops, lochs and lochans.

Watercourses and Drainage

5.5.40 The Proposed Development generally lies on watersheds between three drainage systems. The burn alongside the access track from Barguillean Farm continues north into the Allt Nathais, which emerges into Loch Etive at Muckairn, west of Airds point. Burns on the northern slopes of high point Carn Gaibhre 461 m AOD and Beinn Ghlas 512 m AOD join the River Lonan west into Loch Nell. To the south the burns join Garbh Allt, and Allt Carnaich / Laggan Burn which all flow into Loch Nant. Several small water bodies and lochans are found within and in proximity to the Site including Lochan Criege Ruaidhe, southeast of Carn Gaibhre.

Vegetation

5.5.41 The Site occupies an area of approximately 430 hectares (ha) of largely heather moorland and rough grassland. Within the immediate context of the Site. open upland moorland is found to the north, northeast, southwest and west, with an area of conifer forest plantation that extends around Loch Nant to the southeast.

5.5.42 Across the wider elevated parts of the study area, vegetation generally comprises moorland, large blocks of coniferous plantations and large areas of broadleaved woodland around Glen Nant, Glen Lonan, around the Blach Lochs and along the shores of Loch Etive. At lower elevations and closer to settled coastal and lochside areas,

vegetation varies in association with rectilinear field and farms and blocks of confer plantation and areas of native broadleaf woodland.

Built Infrastructure

5.5.43 The existing Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm occupies the Proposed Development Site comprising 14 wind turbines with a blade tip height approximately 54.1 m. Associated infrastructure includes the access tracks between the turbines and the access north connecting with the minor road at Barguillean Farm, approximately 2.2 km north. The closest operational wind farm to the Proposed Development is Carraig Gheal Wind Farm, 4 km south comprising 9 turbines with a blade tip height of 109.8 m and 11 turbines with a height of 124.8 m. Within the wider landscape there are several consented and operational wind farms as shown on **Figures 5.27 and 5.28**, outlined within **Table 5.11** and considered further at **Chapter 5.8**.

5.5.44 Settlement close to the Site is sparse with the closest residential property situated at Duntanachan, within Glen Lonan approx. 1.9 km to the north of the nearest proposed turbine. The closest settlement, the village of Taynuilt, is situated 4.9 km to the north. The town of Oban is located 10.4 km to the west.

5.5.45 The transport routes within the locality are set out at Paragraph 5.6.3 above.

Sensory and Perceptual Characteristics

5.5.46 The Site is already influenced by the presence of Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm, within and surrounded by open moorland. Outward views from within the Site are generally open, unrestricted, and panoramic looking across the open moorland across coastal transitions, lochs and highpoints within NSAs, LLAs and WLAs to the north, east and west.

5.5.47 The average elevation of the upland moor is approximately 300 m, generally lower than the mountains to the north and east. The uplands become higher and broader in scale towards the north. Burns flow in narrow gullies leading from the moorland, but in broader glens on the lower slopes. The rounded knolls remain as distinctive, prominent landscape features within the valleys. Together with the mosaic of moorland, conifer forest plantation and native woodland, the landscape of the Site and surroundings is large in scale.

Forces for Future Change in the Landscape

5.5.48 The main foreseeable forces for change in the landscape surrounding the Site relate to changes to the forest plantations with areas of felling and replanting in line with forest management plans. Further changes may also occur due to changes in agricultural land use and changes to traditional forms of moorland management, which may over time change such as by introducing longer rotations between burning, or changes to vegetation resulting from re-wetting or rewilding which encourage greater habitat diversity.

5.5.49 Within the wider landscape, there are several other operational commercial wind energy developments. In addition, there are wind developments that are consented, in planning or being considered at scoping which, if consented, would further influence the existing character of the Site and its wider landscape.

5.5.50 In addition to the consented or proposed developments within the vicinity of the Site, it is widely recognised that climate change will have an impact on the future character of the

Scottish landscape through changes to weather conditions, including warmer and wetter winters and hotter summers, that will in turn result in changes to vegetation through root damage caused by more active pathogens, waterlogging, soil shrinkage and heat stress that will affect the intrinsic character of the landscape.

Visual Receptors

5.5.51 As illustrated by the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 5.3**, theoretical visibility is focused across the Site itself and the immediate surrounding landscape. Within 5 km, ZTV coverage to the north is limited to some western and eastern sides of Glen Lonan, across elevated areas of Fearnoch Forest, sections of the A85, Taynuilt and Loch Etive. ZTV coverage to the east is partly restricted by Cruach Airdeny 396 m AOD and Glen Nant, with theoretical visibility indicated from higher largely afforested areas east of Glen Nant and open moorland and Loch Nant to the southeast.

5.5.52 Beyond 5 km, up to 10 km to the north, theoretical visibility is largely focused across Loch Etive, the lower northern side of the loch and higher elevations including from a section of the A828, Black Crofts and high points Na Maoilean 350 m AOD, and Beinn Mheadhonach 715 m AOD. To the east, theoretical visibility is indicated from the southern and western slopes of Ben Cruachan 1126 m AOD, and elevated areas east of Glen Nant. Some theoretical visibility is indicated to the southeast across an area of Loch Awe and from the western side of the loch. To the south, theoretical visibility is largely limited to the high point and the northern slopes of Carn Dearg 437 m AOD. Beinn Ghlas generally restricts theoretical visibility to some elevated areas and areas through Glen Lonan including from a section of the associated minor road.

5.5.53 Beyond 10 km, up to 20 km, theoretical visibility to the north is generally limited to higher elevations near Port Appin. To the east, theoretical visibility extends across Loch Etive to the northeast, across the northern areas of Loch Awe and elevated areas east of the loch. Theoretical visibility to the south is largely limited to elevated areas south and east of Loch Etive. To the west, theoretical visibility is shown from areas of Lynn of Lorn and the eastern side of the Isle of Lismore.

5.5.54 With increased distance from the Site, the likelihood of significant visual effects occurring incrementally decreases. Therefore, whilst the primary study area for this LVIA extends out to 35 km and the various figures which accompany this report illustrate a 35 km study area, a greater level of detail is provided for the most sensitive visual receptors which are closest to the Site.

5.5.55 Interpretation of the various ZTVs accompanying this report assisted in identifying potentially sensitive visual receptors. Principal visual receptors within the surrounding landscape are illustrated at **Figures 5.17** and **5.18** and are identified below.

Residential Receptors and Settlements

5.5.56 Residential visual receptors have been identified in bands of distance from the nearest turbine with a greater level of detail provided in relation to those properties nearest to the Proposed Development, although it is recognised that there may be views from individual properties and clusters of properties throughout the wider study area.

5.5.57 With reference to the blade tip ZTVs at **Figures 5.3 - 5.8** and **Figures 5.19 – 5.26** and the Local Landscape Context to 5 km at **Figure 5.16**, only those properties or settlements

with theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development have been identified below. Properties and settlements with no theoretical visibility have not been considered further within this chapter.

5.5.58 An initial review has been undertaken to determine which properties have the potential for significant effects to arise and would therefore require detailed consideration in this chapter. The intention has been to ensure that the level of attention given to each property is proportionate to the likelihood of significant effects arising. The findings of the initial review are presented at **Table 5.4.2** of **Technical Appendix 5.4**.

Residential Properties within 3 km of a Turbine

5.5.59 There are eight residential properties located within 3 km of the nearest proposed turbine as illustrated at **Figure 5.79**. Of these, two have no theoretical visibility and are therefore are not considered further within this chapter. The remaining six have some degree of theoretical visibility. These are listed as follows:

- Bar-Glas, situated approximately 2.1 km north;
- Am-Barr, situated approximately 2.2 km north;
- Bunanta, situated approximately 2.2km northeast;
- Josephine's Wing, situated approximately 2.3 km north;
- The Granary, situated approximately 2.3 km north;
- Barguillean Farm, situated approximately 2.3 km north; and
- Sithean self-catering, situated approximately 2.3 km north northeast.

Settlements within 3 to 5 km of a Turbine

5.5.60 Beyond 3 km of the Proposed Development, the nearest residential properties identified with potential for significant effects are located at:

- Cluster of properties around Corachie Farm, situated approximately 3.4 km northeast;
- Cluster of properties around Balindore, situated approximately 3.8 km north northeast; and
- Taynuilt, situated approximately 4.9 km northeast.

Settlements within 5 to 10 km of a Turbine

5.5.61 Beyond 5 km of the Proposed Development, the nearest settlement identified with potential for significant effects is:

- Connel and North Connel, situated approximately 9.2 km northwest.

Scotland's Great Trails

5.5.62 With reference to **Figure 5.17**, four of Scotland's Great Trails pass within the 35 km LVIA study area. With increased distance, visual effects reduce due to the stronger influence of closer features in the view. It is considered that no significant visual effects would be experienced from distances over 20 km from the Proposed Development. None of the routes pass within 20 km of the Proposed Development. Therefore, no Scottish Great Trails are considered in the assessment.

Core Paths and Routes

5.5.63 Within the initial 35 km LVIA study area there is an extensive network of core paths. These are illustrated at **Figure 5.17** and those within the 20 km detailed study area are shown in **Figure 5.18** overlaid with the blade tip ZTV.

5.5.64 An initial review has been undertaken to determine which core paths have the potential for significant effects to arise and would therefore require detailed consideration in this chapter. The intention has been to ensure that the level of attention given to each core path is proportionate to the likelihood of significant effects arising. The findings of the initial review are presented at **Table 5.4.3** of **Technical Appendix 5.4**.

5.5.65 Core paths within 5 km of the Proposed Development covered in detail include:

- C171 - Kilmore - Loch Nant - Kilchrenan, located approximately 1.3 km to the south of the Proposed Development;
- C160 - Taynuilt to Oban, located approximately 1.8 km to the north of the Proposed Development;
- C523 - Loch Nant, Loch Aweside, located approximately 3.1 km southwest; and
- C300 - Kilchrenan to Taynuilt, located approximately 3.7 km northwest.

5.5.66 Core paths within 5 to 10 km of the Proposed Development which are covered in detail include:

- C157 - Taynuilt - Airds circular approximately 5.2 km northwest;
- C158 - Achlonan to Taynuilt Jetty Airds circular approximately 5.6 km northwest;
- C159 - Shore Cottage, Brochroy to Inverawe, approximately 6.3 km northwest;
- C526 - Inverawe to Dun Mor, approximately 6.8 km northwest;
- C517 - Inverawe to Glenkinglass, approximately 6.8 km northwest; and
- C156 - Bonawe to Glen Etive, approximately 7.6 km northwest.

5.5.67 Beyond approximately 10 km of the Proposed Development, theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is intermittent. Where theoretical visibility is predicted, it is only over short sections of the route. Therefore, any effects experienced would be seen at considerable distance and would not be considered significant. As such, effects on core paths and routes beyond 10 km of the Proposed Development are not considered further within this chapter.

Cycling Routes

5.5.68 The following recreational route is located within 10 km of the Proposed Development:

- National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 78 – passes along Glen Lonan Road on Core Path C160 - Taynuilt to Oban 1.8 km north.

Roads

5.5.69 Within the initial 35 km LVIA study area there is an extensive network of A roads, B roads and minor roads. These are illustrated at **Figure 5.18** overlaid with the blade tip ZTV.

5.5.70 An initial review has been undertaken to determine which roads have the potential for significant effects to arise and would therefore require detailed consideration in this chapter. The intention has been to ensure that the level of attention given to each core

path is proportionate to the likelihood of significant effects arising. The findings of the initial review are presented at **Table 5.4.4** of **Technical Appendix 5.4**.

5.5.71 The following roads are located within 10 km of the Proposed Development:

- A85 passing approximately 5.2 km northeast;
- A819 passing approximately 11.8 km east southeast;
- B845 passing approximately 3.7 km northeast;
- B840 passing approximately 7.6 km southeast; and
- Argyll Coastal Route (A828) passing approximately 8.9 km northwest.

5.5.72 Beyond approximately 10 km of the Proposed Development, theoretical visibility is intermittent and limited. Where theoretical visibility is predicted, it is largely from short sections of the route. Therefore, any effects experienced would be seen at considerable distance, and intermittently as receptors travel along the route and effects would not be considered significant. As such, effects on roads beyond 10 km of the Proposed Development are not considered further within this chapter.

Recreation and Tourism

5.5.73 Within the initial 35 km LVIA study area there are numerous designated landscapes, including the LLTNP, which attracts more than four million visitors per year "because of its world-renowned natural beauty, its extensive outdoor recreation opportunities, its close proximity to the large population centres of central Scotland and its easy accessibility by road and rail".

5.5.74 The LLTNP lies outside of the 20 km detailed study area and has very limited ZTV coverage (see **Figure 5.11**). Given the very limited extent of predicted visibility, it is considered that effects on it would be very limited in nature and would not be considered significant. As such it is not considered further within the assessment.

5.5.75 Other main destinations for tourism within the 20 km detailed study area (see **Figure 5.10**) include the following GDLs: Inverary Castle; Ardanaiseig House, Achnacloich and Ardchattan Priory. With reference to the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 5.11,** there is no theoretical visibility from Inverary Castle or Ardanaiseig House and as such effects on the visual amenity of people visiting these assets are not considered further within the assessment.

5.5.76 In relation to Achnacloich, although there is theoretical visibility of up to all seven turbines, the ZTV illustrated at **Figure 5.11** does not take account of screening by vegetation. The garden is set within plantation forestry and the view towards the Site is screened by trees, so it is not considered further within this assessment. Effects on views experienced from Ardchattan Priory are represented by Viewpoint 7 and are considered within **Technical Appendix 5.5**.

Assessment Viewpoints

5.5.77 **Table 5.3** sets out the 19 viewpoints considered as part of this assessment. The locations of these viewpoints are illustrated on **Figures 5.2** and **5.3.** The viewpoints have been derived through desk-based, on-site analysis and interpretation of ZTVs. The assessment viewpoints have been adopted following feedback at Scoping stage. Following this feedback, three additional LVIA viewpoints were included.

5.5.78 The viewpoints are representative of the range of views towards the Proposed Development. They are not intended to cover every single view but are representative of a range of distances from the Site and receptor types (e.g. residents, walkers, road users) and have been used to inform the assessment of effects on landscape character, the visual assessment, the cumulative assessment, the assessment of effects and from routes.

Table 5.3: Assessment Viewpoints

No.	Location	OS Grid Reference	Approx. Distance to the Nearest Turbine	Receptor Type
1	Minor road, Lonan	194358, 727526	2.9 km northeast	Road users, walkers, cyclists
2	Clach Bhadan, Core Path	196905, 723339	1.5 km south	Walkers
3	Taynuilt Church	200478, 730998	5.3 km northwest	Visitors, residential and road users
4	Creag Ghlasrach	191683, 722881	5.6 km southwest	Walkers
5	Minor road near Barran an Fhraoich, east of Oban	188810, 729712	8.8 km northwest	Road users
6	Achnacairn	192670, 735113	9.8 km northwest	Road users
7	Ardchattan Priory	197223, 734827	8.3 km north	Road users, residents
8	B845	198505, 736718	10.2 km north	Road users
9	Ben Cruachan	206968, 730467	9.6 km northeast	Walkers
10	Portsonachan	204900, 720837	8.0 km southeast	Road users, residents
11	A819 layby nr Cladich	210624, 723093	12.3 km west	Road users
12	A816 layby / parking near Knipoch	184309, 723327	12.5 km east	Road users
13	A6088 Approach to Bonchester Bridge	190939, 736152	11.5 km northwest	Road users
14	Beinn Bhreac	199279, 740046	13.6 km north	Walkers
15	Core Path C517(b) - Inverawe to Glenkinglass, Loch Etive	205510, 735250	11.7 km northeast	Walkers
16	Achnacroish Lismore	185226, 740970	18.8 km northwest	Residents / Visitors
17	Ben Starav	212574, 742708	22.0 km northeast	Walkers
18	Bonawe Jetty, Taynuilt	201029, 732739	7.0 km northeast	Visitors / Recreational receptors

No.	Location	OS Grid Reference	Approx. Distance to the Nearest Turbine	Receptor Type
19	Glen Lonan Road	199207, 729224	3.1 km northeast	Cyclists / Road users

5.5.79 An initial review has been undertaken to determine which viewpoints would have the potential for significant effects to arise and would therefore require detailed consideration in this chapter.

5.5.80 The intention has been to ensure that the level of attention given to each viewpoint is proportionate to the likelihood of significant effects arising. The findings of the initial review are presented at **Table 5.4.1** of **Technical Appendix 5.4**.

5.5.81 This review identified that the following viewpoints have the potential to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development:

- Viewpoint 2 - Clach Bhadan, Core Path;
- Viewpoint 3 - Taynuilt Church;
- Viewpoint 4 - Creag Ghlasrach;
- Viewpoint 5 – Minor road near Barran an Fhraoich, east of Oban;
- Viewpoint 6 – Achnacairn;
- Viewpoint 7 - Ardchattan Priory;
- Viewpoint 8 – B845;
- Viewpoint 9 – Ben Cruachan;
- Viewpoint 10 – Portsonachan;
- Viewpoint 11 – A816 layby / parking near Knipoch;
- Viewpoint 13 – A6088 Approach to Bonchester Bridge;
- Viewpoint 14 - Beinn Bhreac;
- Viewpoint 15 - Core Path C517(b) - Inverawe to Glenkinglass, Loch Etive;
- Viewpoint 16 – Achnacroish Lismore;
- Viewpoint 17 - Ben Starav;
- Viewpoint 18 – Bonawe Jetty, Taynuilt; and
- Viewpoint 19 - Glen Lonan Road.

5.5.82 **Technical Appendix 5.5** provides a baseline description of the view from each assessment viewpoint identified in the initial review process as having the potential to experience significant effects, followed by a detailed analysis and assessment of the effects.

5.6 Predicted Impacts

5.6.1 Following a brief summary of the Proposed Development, this section of the LVIA considers the effects of the Proposed Development on the physical features of the Site (landscape fabric), landscape character, and visual amenity. It considers the effects at three different stages in the lifetime of the Proposed Development:

- during construction of the Proposed Development;
- during the operational lifetime of the Proposed Development; and
- during decommissioning of the Proposed Development after 35 years of operation.

5.6.2 Effects during the first and third of these phases are considered to be temporary and would have a short duration. Effects associated with the operational phase of the Proposed Development are considered to be long-term, reversible effects.

Project Description

5.6.3 A detailed description of the Proposed Development is set out in **Chapter 2** of the EIA Report. The Proposed Development description below summarises those details of the Proposed Development that have particular relevance to this LVIA.

5.6.4 The Proposed Development will principally comprise the following visible features which may have an impact on landscape character or visual amenity:

- Up to seven wind turbines of approximately 4.8 MW each, with a maximum tip height of 149.9 m;
- Hardstanding areas at the base of each turbine, with a permanent area of approximately 1,400 m^2 per turbine;
- Upgrading of forestry tracks from the A85 through Fearnoch Forest, Glen Lonan Road (C32) and existing wind farm access track to accommodate the delivery of abnormal loads to the site;
- A network of 12.83 km of site access and internal access tracks of which 2.71 km is new access track (1.6 km floating) with associated watercourse crossings and 8.52 km which would be upgraded. In total there would be four new watercourse crossings and 22 existing crossings;
- Upgrading of the existing onsite sub-station/control building;
- Transformers and underground cables to connect the turbines to the onsite substation;
- Permanent anemometry mast for wind monitoring, including associated foundation and hardstanding;
- Telecommunications equipment;
- Concrete batching plant;
- Preliminary temporary construction compound; and
- Temporary construction compound.

Turbine Design

5.6.5 The turbines would be three bladed, horizontal axis turbines with solid tubular towers. The final colour and finish of the wind turbine blades, nacelles and towers would be subject to approval by A&BC and controlled through a condition should consent be granted. However, turbine blades would likely be made from reinforced composite

materials such as fibreglass or carbon spar with glass fibre air foil shells and the towers would consist of steel.

5.6.6 The proposed turbines would likely be of a semi-matt finish with a grey colour. Although, off-white has been an accepted colour for turbines, more recently constructed wind turbines have been a mid-grey tone, which reduces the distance over which turbines are visible, especially in dull weather or low light conditions. The choice of material and colour for the proposed turbines is an important consideration in terms of visual impact.

Effects during Construction on Existing Landscape Features

5.6.7 As identified in the baseline section, the existing landscape features present on the Site that may be affected by the Proposed Development are:

- Heather moorland and rough grassland;
- Coniferous forestry plantation;
- Deciduous trees; and
- Minor watercourses and crossings.

Heather moorland and rough grassland

5.6.8 The construction phase would include the decommissioning and removal of the existing Beinn Ghlas wind turbines and associated infrastructure, except where it will be re-used e.g. existing access tracks which will be upgraded, and replacement with new ground level vegetation as appropriate.

5.6.9 The construction of the Proposed Development would result in the removal of existing ground-level vegetation to facilitate the construction of new turbine foundations, foundations for crane pads, the substation compound, and two temporary construction compounds. Ground level vegetation would also be removed for the construction of approximately 5.5 km of new access tracks and the upgrade of approximately 9.2 km of existing forest and wind farm access tracks.

5.6.10 Open upland moorland predominates as the landcover pattern within LCT 7 Craggy Upland. Rough grassland within the Site occurs abundantly and is assessed as having **Low** value. The ABLWECS states that turbines could fit with the simple landcover pattern, resulting in **Low** susceptibility. The overall sensitivity of this landscape element is judged as **Low**.

5.6.11 Where required, areas of grassland, and where necessary substrate, would be cleared. Soils would be stored to enable replacement following construction and areas would be allowed to naturally regenerate. In addition, areas of hardstanding associated with the existing Beinn Ghlas wind turbines will be removed where no longer needed and these areas initially disturbed and reinstated in accordance with the decommissioning plan. The overall magnitude of change this element would experience is assessed as **Low** due to the localised instances where such works would be needed, resulting in a **Minor effect** that would be **Not Significant**.

Coniferous trees

5.6.12 Approximately 8.52 km of existing forest and wind farm access tracks would require upgrading, necessitating the removal of some trees within Fearnoch Forest to facilitate access.

5.6.13 Although it is noted as a characteristic element in the description of LCT 7a Craggy Upland with Settled Glens, within which much of the proposed access route is located, the coniferous forest plantation is an element that has been introduced to the landscape to provide a timber crop and hence its value is considered to be **Low**. Its susceptibility is also considered to be **Low** as it is subject to ongoing change as areas are felled, cleared, and replanted. The overall sensitivity of the plantation is judged to be **Low**.

5.6.14 The forestry plantation would experience a **Low** magnitude of change resulting from the upgrade of access tracks, affecting a small part of the overall plantation, with large areas remaining. Combining the separate judgements about the sensitivity of the plantation and the magnitude of change introduced by the Proposed Development, the overall level of effect is considered to be **Minor**, which is considered to be **Not Significant**.

Deciduous trees

5.6.15 The existing access from the A85 would require upgrading to allow a suitable track width, visibility and turning space for wind farm construction and delivery vehicles and as set out in **Chapter 2**, necessitating the removal of a stretch of deciduous woodland adjacent to the A85. A new section of track would also need to be constructed within an area of deciduous woodland at a hairpin bend near to the Fearnoch Forest car park, to allow a wider turning circle than is currently present.

5.6.16 This part of the proposed access route is located within LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic, which has a 'diverse and richly patterned vegetation cover', including broadleaved woodlands, hence its value is considered to be **Medium**. Its susceptibility is considered to be **Medium** as it is possible to be replanted following removal of temporary access tracks. The overall sensitivity of the plantation is judged to be **Medium**.

5.6.17 The deciduous trees would experience a **Low** magnitude of change resulting from the upgrade of access tracks, affecting a small part of the overall deciduous woodland areas, with large areas remaining. Combining the separate judgements about the sensitivity of the trees and the magnitude of change introduced by the Proposed Development, the overall level of effect is considered to be **Minor Moderate**, which is considered to be **Not Significant**.

Watercourses

5.6.18 Referring to **Figures 2.5a** and **2.5b**, a total of 26 watercourse crossings would be required. Watercourses are judged to have a low value in landscape terms but are highly susceptible to changes which affect their course or their water quality (see **Chapter 8 Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Geology and Peat**). Combining their value and susceptibility results in the watercourses having a medium level of sensitivity.

5.6.19 The proposed turbines have been located away from watercourse channels. Therefore, it is only where new internal access tracks cross these landscape features where there is potential for construction effects to occur. At present a total of four new crossings are proposed. Effects on the watercourses crossing the Site would be limited and controlled through best-practice construction and environmental practices, such that there would be no greater than a **Low** magnitude change and a **Minor Moderate** level of effect which would be **Not Significant**.

Summary of Effects on Existing Landscape Features

5.6.20 The construction of the Proposed Development including the decommissioning of the existing Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm, would result in no greater than a **Minor Moderate level of effect** to existing landscape features on the Site, with the effects considered to be **Not Significant**.

Assessment of Effects on Landscape Character

5.6.21 As explained in the baseline, an initial review has been carried out of the LCTs within 20 km which have the potential to experience significant effects, with reference to **Figure 5.14**. This found that in addition to the LCTs in which the application boundary lies (LCT 7 Craggy Upland, LCT 7a Craggy Upland with Settled Glens, and LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic), a further four LCTs and two NSAs have the potential to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development as detailed in **Table 5.4**.

Table 5.4 - Landscape Character Types assessed in detail

Landscape Character Type	Location relative to the Proposed Development
LCT 7 Craggy Upland	Proposed turbines and the southern section of the proposed access route are located within this LCT.
LCT 7a Craggy Upland with Settled Glens	Northern section of proposed access track are located within this LCT.
LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic	Connection of access track with A85 is located within this LCT. Situated 5.2 km north of the Proposed Development.
LCT 2 High Tops	Situated 6.0 km northeast of the Proposed Development.
LCT 4 Mountain Glen	Situated 5.1 km northeast of the Proposed Development.
LCT 7c – North Loch Awe Craggy Uplands	Situated 4.5 km east of the Proposed Development.
LCT 18 Lowland Ridges and Moss	Situated 9.4 km north of the Proposed Development.

Sensitivity of Landscape Character to Wind Energy Development

5.6.22 The first stage in assessing the effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character is to evaluate the sensitivity of the landscape to the type of change proposed at the Site. As indicated within GLVIA3, sensitivity of landscape character should be determined through a consideration of both its susceptibility to change and any values associated with the landscape.

5.6.23 The overall sensitivity of landscape character is essentially an expression of a landscape's ability to accommodate a particular type of change, either directly within that landscape, or indirectly in a separate part of the wider landscape with which there is some degree of intervisibility. It varies depending on the physical and perceptual attributes of the landscape including but not necessarily limited to: scale; degree of openness; landform; existing land cover; landscape pattern and complexity; the extent of human influence in the landscape; the degree of remoteness/wildness; perception of change in the landscape; the importance of landmarks or skylines in the landscape; intervisibility

with and influence on surrounding areas; condition; rarity and scenic quality of the landscape, and any values placed on the landscape, including any designations that may apply.

5.6.24 For the wider landscape, where only indirect effects on landscape character would have the potential to occur, the key element which defines the susceptibility of that landscape to the Proposed Development is the degree of intervisibility with the landscape in which the development is proposed. In some cases, the importance of intervisibility with surrounding landscapes will be specifically listed as a characteristic of published landscape character areas. However, even where this is not explicitly stated, there will always be some degree of visual relationship between a landscape and its wider surroundings, and this matter is therefore considered in the field during the site work which is undertaken to help inform the judgements of susceptibility for each part of the landscape. However, it is recognised that where views of the surrounding landscape are not listed as a key characteristic of a landscape, it would not be expected that a proposed development in that separate adjoining landscape would be able to impact on the key characteristics of that first area.

5.6.25 The discussion below analyses the susceptibility and value of each of the LCTs taken forward into detailed assessment and then combines these separate judgements to provide an overall judgement of the sensitivity of the LCT, summarised at **Table 5.5**. This analysis takes account of the ABLWECS 2017, as discussed further below, and was also informed by further desk and field study.

Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study 2017

5.6.26 The ABLWECS considers the sensitivity of the Argyll and Bute landscape to onshore wind energy development and is based on an assessment of landscape sensitivity and value of the different landscape character types and areas in Argyll and Bute.

5.6.27 The Landscape Capacity Study, which is effectively a relative sensitivity study, considers characteristics such as context, scale, landform, landcover, built environment, perceptual qualities, visual amenity, and landscape values, in order to inform a judgement of landscape character sensitivity to a particular scale of wind energy development.

5.6.28 It is also important to note that the judgements concerning how sensitive each character type is to wind energy development being deployed within that specific unit. As noted previously, this is not necessarily the same as being of a particular sensitivity to wind farm development in an adjacent or distant character unit, which may only result in indirect effects on landscape character. The sensitivity of the character unit to wind energy development in an adjoining or distant character unit would typically be lower. This is because at any given location in a landscape, whilst features of the wider landscape do help to characterise that area, the physical features and perceptual characteristics of the landscape in the immediate vicinity have a far greater influence on character and one's sense of landscape character than distant features, no matter how tall they may be.

5.6.29 Therefore, the ABLWECS is a useful baseline input to help inform the consideration of the susceptibility and value of the LCTs set out below. A sensitivity rating for each area has been produced in line with the approach advocated in GLVIA3, whilst taking the ABLWECS into consideration.

LCT 7 Craggy Upland

5.6.30 As outlined above, the majority of the Proposed Development, including wind turbines, anemometer mast, hardstandings and substation are located within LCT 7 – Craggy Upland. This LCT straddles Loch Awe, with the Proposed Development located within the western area, at its northern edge, near to the border with LCT 7a – Craggy Upland with Settled Glens. The western area of LCT 7 extends southwards to approximately 20 km from the Proposed Development, at the southern edge of Inverliever Forest, whilst the eastern area extends to approximately 30km to the south, at A'Cruach Wind Farm.

5.6.31 Within the ABLWECS Detailed Sensitivity Assessment, the landscape values of LCT 7 are described in relation to The North Argyll LLA (previously known as an Area of Panoramic Quality or APQ) as follows:

"No landscape designations apply to this character type. This landscape is visible from parts of the APQ around the head of Loch Awe and from the designated along the shores of Loch Fyne."

5.6.32 The majority of the LCT is not designated for its scenic qualities, however the locally designated Knapdale/Melfort LLA overlaps with the far south western edge of the LCT, whilst a sliver of the North Arygyll LLA overlaps with the north eastern edge of the LCT, elevating the value of these small areas. The LCT includes large areas of commercially managed forest plantation and existing wind farms at Beinn Ghlas and Carraig Gheal to the west of Loch Awe, and An Suidhe to the east. With reference to **Figure 5.17**, the western area of the LCT is crossed by several Core Paths along minor roads and forest tracks (represented by Viewpoints 2 and 4). A Sustrans Cycling Route (formerly part of NCN Route 78, the Caledonian Way), passes along the western shore of Loch Awe. The presence of these activities, along with forest management operations moderates the area's perception of remoteness and tranquillity. Overall, the value of the LCT is assessed as **Medium**.

5.6.33 The ABLWECS summarises the sensitivity of the LCT to wind energy development based on an assessment of opportunities and constraints as follows:

"The Craggy Upland character type comprises a high irregular upland plateau lying either side of Loch Awe. This landscape generally has a large scale and simple land cover of extensive moorland and coniferous forestry which reduces sensitivity to wind farm development although areas with more complex craggy knolls and lochans have an increased sensitivity. Although this is a very sparsely settled landscape with roads aligned in valleys and views additionally restricted by extensive coniferous forest and loch-side woodland, immediate skylines formed by hills on the edge of the Craggy Upland, and visible from more settled loch shores and valleys, are sensitive. These uplands already accommodate a number of operational wind farms and potential cumulative effects on Loch Awe, inner Loch Fyne and on surrounding smaller scale settled glens and valleys are constraints to additional development*."*

5.6.34 The ABLWECS states that "this landscape has a **High** landscape sensitivity to very large turbines (>130m*)*."

5.6.35 The ABLWECS extends beyond its scope as a sensitivity study and sets out the following guidance on development for this LCT:

"There is considered to be **no scope** to accommodate very large turbines in this landscape due to potential effects on Loch Awe and its smaller scale and often scenic settled fringes, the Craggy Upland with Settled Glens (7a) and Craggy Coasts and Islands (7b)".

5.6.36 It is assumed that this statement refers to the theoretical situation of a new greenfield development, rather than repowering of an existing wind farm, which is what is being assessed in the case of the Proposed Development. The guidance continues:

"Replacement of the operational wind farm developments of Carraig Gheal, An Suidhe and Beinn Ghlas with turbines >130m high would be likely to incur significant effects on key sensitivities including on the setting of Inverary (An Suidhe) and on the character and views from Loch Awe (Carraig Gheal and Beinn Ghlas)."

5.6.37 The guidance goes on to state that "Replacing (repowering) the Beinn Ghlas wind farm would need to minimise potential effects on the scenic north-eastern head of Loch Awe and cumulative effects with the Carraig Gheal wind farm in views from the south-eastern shore of Loch Awe."

5.6.38 The majority of the Proposed Development would be located directly within this LCT, however the susceptibility of the area in proximity to the site is moderated by the existence of the operational Beinn Ghlas and Carraig Gheal wind farms which influence its baseline character. In other areas of the LCT, such as within Inverinan Forest to the south, intervisibility with the existing wind farms is reduced, but the presence of plantation forestry reduces the area's susceptibility to the Proposed Development. Intervisibility with other LCTSs would be influenced by the Proposed Development, including where views of turbines would become available along the south-eastern shore of Loch Awe (See **Figure 5.4**), however, views of Carraig Gheal already influence the visual baseline (see **Figure 5.30**. On balance, the susceptibility of the LCT as a result of the direct effects resulting from the Proposed Development, is assessed as **Medium**.

5.6.39 The value of the LCT combined with its susceptibility to the Proposed Development results in the LCT having an overall **Medium sensitivity**.

LCT 7a Craggy Upland with Settled Glens

5.6.40 As outlined above, the northern part of the Proposed Development, including most of the access tracks are located within LCT 7a – Craggy Upland with Settled Glens. This LCT includes two areas of land, one to the north of LCT 7 – Craggy Upland (including the proposed elements described above), and one area to the west of LCT 7. Both areas lie within the 20 km detailed study area.

5.6.41 Within the ABLWECS Detailed Sensitivity Assessment, the landscape values of LCT 7a are described as follows:

"An APQ covers the western part of this character sub-type in the plateau area around Cruach Rarey. This area is extensively forested but is visible in the foreground of views from the Loch Avich road to the coast."

5.6.42 The majority of the northern area of this LCT is not designated for its scenic qualities, however the far western tip overlaps with the locally designated North West Argyll (Coast) LLA and Achnacloich Garden and Designed Landscape is located at its northern edge. The locally designated Knapdale/Melfort LLA overlaps with the western area of the LCT.

With reference to **Figure 5.17**, the northern area of the LCT is crossed by several Core Paths (represented by Viewpoints 1, 5 and 19). A Sustrans Cycling Route (formerly part of (NCN) Route 78, the Caledonian Way), passes through the northern area of LCT 7a, along Glen Lonan Road. The presence of these activities moderates the area's perception of remoteness and tranquillity. Overall, the value of the LCT is assessed as **Medium**.

5.6.43 The ABLWECS summarises the sensitivity of the LCT to wind energy development based on an assessment of opportunities and constraints as follows:

"This landscape forms a series of deep glens, some of these containing narrow lochs, and areas of more expansive low craggy plateaux. Scale varies with the contained glens having a generally small scale accentuated by the often intricate pattern of broadleaved woodland, pastures and settlement and with scale increasing in the more extensive and open plateau areas which are generally densely forested. Although views are restricted from roads by the incised landform of the glens, the skylines formed by hills within this landscape (seen from the glens and the adjacent Craggy Coast and Islands (7b) are highly sensitive."

5.6.44 The susceptibility of the LCT, as a direct result of the proposed upgrade of access tracks to the Proposed Development combined with an indirect result of its intervisibility with the Proposed Development, is assessed as **Medium High**.

5.6.45 The value of the LCT combined with its susceptibility to the Proposed Development results in the LCT having an overall **Medium High sensitivity**.

LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic

5.6.46 Within the 20 km detailed LVIA study area there are five areas of this LCT, located on either side of Loch Awe (represented by Viewpoints 10 and 11), Loch Etive (represented by Viewpoint 7), and on the north-eastern shore of Loch Fyne. The area on the southern shore of Loch Etive, includes the proposed access track connection with the A85 road. The closest proposed turbine is situated approximately 5.2 km to the south of this area of LCT 20.

5.6.47 There are several designated landscapes which overlap with this LCT, including the North Argyll LLA, Ardchattan Priory, Achnacloich and Ardanaiseig House GDL. With reference to **Figure 5.17**, a Core Path and former section of Route 78, the Caledonian Way, passes through the area on the North-west shore of Loch Awe. The presence of these activities moderates the area's perception of remoteness and tranquillity. Overall, the value of the LCT is assessed as **Medium High**.

5.6.48 The ABLWECS assesses the sensitivity of the LCT to wind energy development within its boundary and considers inter-visibility with landscapes outwith. In relation to potential cumulative effects, the ABLWECS states that "The operational Beinn Ghlas and Carraig Gheal wind farms are visible from the south-eastern shores of Loch Awe and the north shore of lower Loch Etive."

5.6.49 It goes on to state that "Key cumulative issues that may arise are likely to include:

- Inter-visibility between any wind turbine development located in this character type and larger wind farms in adjacent upland character types. This could lead to potentially significant impacts where existing and consented wind farms already

form a key influence on views from some loch shores, for example in the Loch Awe and Loch Fyne area."

5.6.50 Within the sensitivity assessment for larger typologies for LCT 20, the landscape context summary description states that "…There is strong inter-visibility across water to a variety of other landscape types including […] High Tops in upper Loch Fyne and Loch Etive area". The visual amenity summary description states that "…Views to this landscape are fairly restricted from adjacent upland character types such as (6) and (7) which tend to be densely forested, sparsely settled and difficult to access."

5.6.51 The ABLWECS states that '*A number of major roads are aligned through this landscape type and include the A83 and A85 which are promoted tourist routes'*. It also notes that views from these roads and the shores of Loch Awe '*focus on views across water to opposite shores and upland backdrops*', however views tend to be glimpsed and filtered through woodland.

5.6.52 With reference to **Figure 5.14**, which illustrates the theoretical inter-visibility with the Proposed Development, the susceptibility of the LCT, is assessed as **Medium High**.

5.6.53 The value of the LCT combined with its susceptibility to the Proposed Development results in the LCT having an overall **Medium High sensitivity**.

LCT 2 High Tops

5.6.54 This LCT is situated within the northern part of the 20 km detailed LVIA study area, straddling Loch Etive. The LCT covers a mountainous area including the landmark hill of Beinn Bhreac (Viewpoint 14) and the Munro mountains of Ben Cruachan (Viewpoint 9) and Ben Starav (Viewpoint 17). The B845 road at Gleann Salach, represented by Viewpoint 8 also passes within this LCT.

5.6.55 The ABLWECS detailed sensitivity assessment for LCT 2 High Tops in relation to visual amenity states that:

*"*These uplands are popular with walkers because of their highly natural and rugged character and the presence of 'Munro' and 'Corbett' hills. The higher summits offer extensive views into the less visited interior of the hills and the wider area…*"*

5.6.56 The ABLWECS detailed sensitivity assessment for LCT 2 High Tops in relation to landscape values states that:

"The Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA is largely located within neighbouring Highland area although part of the NSA extends over the northern boundary of Argyll and Bute in the Glen Tulla and Glen Kinglass area. The special qualities of this NSA most likely to be affected by wind turbine development include the 'mountain grandeur' and 'classic highland vistas' of this landscape*."*

5.6.57 The value of the LCT is judged to be **High**. The majority of the LCT is covered by designations for scenic quality, including part of Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA, approximately 15 km to the northeast of the Proposed Development. The locally designated North Argyll LLA covers most of the LCT, as does the nationally important Loch Etive Mountains WLA. Core Paths are present along the shores of Loch Etive and one of Scotland's Great Trails, the West Highland Way, passes across Black Mount / Am Monadh Dubh at the eastern extent of this LCT.

5.6.58 The ABLWECS guidance on development for this LCT states that:

"Extensions to operational wind farms, repowering (particularly featuring larger turbines) schemes or new wind farm development sited in adjacent landscapes should avoid significantly impacting on key views to and from these uplands from roads and settlement. Wind farm development in adjoining character types should be sited sufficiently away to avoid visual prominence in views from key mountain summits and also to avoid concentrations of multiple wind farms in close views which could affect the experience of wildness associated with this landscape."

5.6.59 The susceptibility of the LCT, as a result of its inter-visibility with the Proposed Development, is assessed as **Medium High**. With reference to **Figure 5.14**, the shores of Loch Etive are generally enclosed, with restricted visibility out of the LCT, however the open mountain peaks such as Beinn Bhreac and Ben Starav are considered to be more highly susceptible to indirect effects due to the available views to adjacent LCTs.

5.6.60 The value of the LCT combined with its susceptibility to the Proposed Development results in the LCT having an overall **High sensitivity**.

LCT 4 Mountain Glens

5.6.61 Within the 20 km detailed LVIA study area there are three areas of this LCT, the closest of which is situated approximately 5.1 km to the north of the Proposed Development and includes Viewpoints 3 (Taynuilt Church) and 18 (Bonawe Jetty, Taynuilt).

5.6.62 Within the ABLWECS Detailed Sensitivity Assessment, the landscape values of LCTs 3 and 4 are described as follows:

"All of the 'Mountain Glens' are designated as APQs while the eastern coastal areas of the 'Hidden Glens' is the only part of this character type similarly designated. A rich land use pattern, influenced by policy plantings, historic buildings and coastal character are particularly associated with the 'Hidden Glens' (3). The 'Mountain Glens' (4) feature a strongly contained landform and are dramatically juxtaposed with the 'High Tops' (2)*."*

5.6.63 Of the three areas of this LCT that lie within the 20 km study area, there are overlaps with the locally designated North Argyll LLA, the West Loch Fyne (Coast) LLA and Inverary Castle Garden and Designed Landscape. However, the area of LCT 4 closest to the Proposed Development contains very little coverage by a landscape designation. With reference to **Figure 5.17**, all three areas of the LCT within 20 km of the Proposed Development include sections of Core Paths. The northern area of the LCT is also crossed by a section of Sustrans Cycling Route (formerly part of Route 78, the Caledonian Way). The presence of these activities moderates the areas' perception of remoteness and tranquillity. Overall, the value of the LCT is assessed as **Medium High**.

5.6.64 There is no sensitivity assessment for larger typologies within LCT 4, however for smaller typologies the landscape context summary description states that "These narrow glens are visually isolated from other landscape types with the exception of the immediate edges of the surrounding upland character types…".

5.6.65 The ABLWECS guidance on development for this LCT states that:

"Any wind farm development in the adjacent Upland Forest Mosaic, Craggy Upland (7) and (7a) and the Steep Ridgeland and Mountains (1) character types should also be sited away from prominent ridge lines visible from the floor of these glens."

5.6.66 The susceptibility of the LCT, as a result of its intervisibility with the Proposed Development, is assessed as **Medium**.

5.6.67 The value of the LCT combined with its susceptibility to the Proposed Development results in the LCT having an overall **Medium High sensitivity**.

LCT 7c North Loch Awe Craggy Uplands

5.6.68 Within the 20 km detailed LVIA study area there are two areas of this LCT, straddling Loch Awe. The closest of which is situated approximately 4.5 km to the east of the Proposed Development.

5.6.69 Within the ABLWECS Detailed Sensitivity Assessment, the landscape values of LCT 7c are described as follows:

"The majority of this character type has been designated as the North Argyll Area of Panoramic Quality. This designation reflects the juxtaposition of different landscape types in this area, including the dramatic and rugged mountains, the small scale pattern of settled glens, the presence of the Loch and its islands and the contrasts in scale, relief and landform shape which combine to add to the diversity and associated scenic quality of this landscape."

5.6.70 Both areas of the LCT are covered by the North Argyll LLA local landscape designation. The eastern area of the LCT is also overlapped by the Ben Lui WLA designation. The western area of the LCT is bounded to its western edge by a Core Path and section of Sustrans Cycling Route (formerly part of NCN Route 78, the Caledonian Way). Overall, the value of the LCT is assessed as **Medium High**.

5.6.71 A key cumulative issue is identified as follows:

"Inter-visibility with wind farms on adjacent character types, principally the Craggy Upland (7) type, particularly where these might extend to create cumulative effects of distracting visual clutter or significant loss of open skylines around north Loch Awe and the designated APQ."

5.6.72 A key constraint is identified as follows:

"Cumulative effects with the operational wind farms of Carraig Gheal and Beinn Ghlas (particularly if larger turbines replaced the relatively small turbines in the latter development as part of a repowering scheme) seen in widespread views from roads, visitor facilities, hill paths and settlement as the head of Loch Awe."

5.6.73 With refence to **Figure 5.14**, which illustrates the intervisibility with the Proposed Development, the susceptibility of the LCT, as a result of its intervisibility with the Proposed Development, is assessed as **Medium High**.

5.6.74 The value of the LCT combined with its susceptibility to the Proposed Development results in the LCT having an overall **Medium High sensitivity**.

LCT 18 Lowland Ridges and Moss

5.6.75 Within the 20 km detailed LVIA study area there are three areas of this LCT, the closest of which is situated approximately 9.4 km to the north of the Proposed Development and includes Viewpoints 6 (Achnacairn),13 (A828, grass verge), and 16 (Achnacroish Lismore).

5.6.76 Within the ABLWECS Detailed Sensitivity Assessment, the landscape values of LCT 18 are described as follows:

"An APQ covers the two northern areas of this character type only. The special qualities of this APQ are likely to relate to the wider setting and views to the Lynn of Lorn NSA. This area also lies adjacent to the Lynn of Lorn NSA with relevant special qualities likely to be the 'Small scale low-lying landscape with a vast highland backdrop."

5.6.77 The northernmost of the three areas of LCT 18 is covered by the North Argyll LLA local landscape designation. This area also bordered by the Lynn of Lorn NSA to its western edge, whilst the middle of the three areas borders the NSA to its northern edge. With reference to **Figure 5.17**, a section of NCN Route 78, the Caledonian Way, passes through all three areas of the LCT. The presence of these activities moderates the area's perception of remoteness and tranquillity. Overall, the value of the LCT is assessed as **Medium High**.

5.6.78 The ABLWECS summarises the sensitivity of the LCT to wind energy development based on an assessment of opportunities and constraints as follows:

"The very small extent of this landscape, its well-settled character (where small buildings provide ready scale references) and the presence of diverse remnant mosses, wetlands and scrub woodland are key constraints to turbine development. This landscape is often open and widely visible from the A828, from settlement and recreational features including cycle-ways, beaches and footpaths. Views are often highly scenic across the sea and focus on dramatic mountain backdrops."

5.6.79 With refence to **Figure 5.14**, which illustrates the intervisibility with the Proposed Development, the susceptibility of the LCT, as a result of its intervisibility with the Proposed Development, is assessed as **Medium High**.

5.6.80 The value of the LCT combined with its susceptibility to the Proposed Development results in the LCT having an overall **Medium High sensitivity**.

Summary of Landscape Character Sensitivity

Table 5.5: Landscape Character Sensitivity

Landscape Character Type	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
LCT 7 – Craggy Upland	Medium	Medium	Medium
LCT 7a – Craggy Upland with Settled Glens	Medium	Medium high	Medium high
LCT 20 – Rocky Mosaic	Medium high	Medium high	Medium high
LCT 2 – High Tops	High	Medium high	High
LCT 4 – Mountain Glens	Medium high	Medium	Medium high
LCT 7c – North Loch Awe Craggy Uplands	Medium high	Medium high	Medium high

Landscape Character Type	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
LCT 18 – Lowland Ridges and Moss	Medium high	Medium high	Medium high

The shaded rows indicate the Proposed Development is located within the character type

Assessment of Landscape Character Effects

Effects on Landscape Character during Construction

5.6.81 This section relates to the temporary effects on landscape character resulting from the decommissioning of the existing Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm and the construction of the Proposed Development.

5.6.82 The 14 existing Beinn Ghlas turbines anemometer mast and substation building are all located in the Craggy Upland LCT (LCT 7). The 7 proposed turbines, turbine hardstandings, anemometer mast, anemometer mast hardstanding and temporary construction compounds are also located in the Craggy Upland LCT (LCT 7). Some sections of existing wind farm access tracks are located within the Craggy Upland with Settled Glens LCT (LCT 7a). Some new and upgraded sections of track are also located within the Craggy Upland with Settled Glens LCT (LCT 7a), whilst a short section of new and upgraded access track is located within the Rocky Mosaic (LCT 20). This would result in direct effects on landscape character during construction on only these LCTs.

5.6.83 As noted above and with reference to **Figure 2.1,** access to the Proposed Development will be via the existing forest access track that leads from the A85 at Fearnoch Forest, crosses Glen Lonan Road and then heads south towards the existing Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm, where both new and existing tracks are followed to each turbine location. In total, approximately 2.71 km of new access tracks will be constructed and approximately 8.52 km of existing tracks will be upgraded.

5.6.84 During both the construction phase of the Proposed Development, and the decommissioning of the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines. there would be the temporary presence of cranes on the Site and the movement of other construction traffic, consistent with the removal of existing turbines and the creation of access tracks, hardstandings and turbine bases. However, effects resulting from construction activities would be highly localised to the Craggy Upland, Craggy Upland with Settled Glens and Rocky Mosaic LCTs, due to the visual containment provided by remaining areas of forest plantation.

5.6.85 Effects during construction on landscape character will initially increase incrementally through the construction and upgrade of access tracks and the temporary construction compound. Effects would then begin to reduce incrementally as existing turbines are gradually removed, before more turbines, foundations, hardstandings and ancillary elements are constructed. Construction activities would move from turbine location to turbine location and, as activities increased in one location, they would be decreasing at locations where construction had finished.

5.6.86 Cranes would be involved in the decommissioning and erection of the turbines, but these would be onsite for a relatively short period during the overall construction phase. The cranes would form noticeable vertical features in the landscape for a short period of time but would be a relatively diminutive visual component compared with the turbines being erected.

LCT 7 Craggy Upland

5.6.87 As previously discussed, there would be no significant effects on any existing landscape features during the construction phase. Overall, it is considered that there would be

localised areas of **High** magnitude of change on the landscape character of the Site, resulting in a **Moderate significant** effect to approximately 1 km.

5.6.88 Construction activity would occur in an elevated, upland part of LCT 7 that is surrounded to the north and south by forested hill slopes, which would serve to limit its influence on lower lying parts of LCT 7 and neighbouring LCTs. Between approximately 1 km and 2 km, there would be a medium magnitude of change upon the Craggy Upland LCT (LCT 7) during the construction phase. This would result in a temporary additional **Moderate** effect, which would be **Not Significant**.

5.6.89 Between approximately 2-4 km, there would be **Medium Low** magnitude of change upon the Craggy Upland LCT (LCT 7), during the construction phase. This would result in no greater than a **Minor Moderate** temporary additional effect on the LCT, above that set out for the operational phase, which would be **Not Significant**. No significant effects are predicted during the construction phase on LCT 7 beyond 4 km from the Proposed Development.

LCT 7a Craggy Upland with Settled Glens

5.6.90 In terms of direct effects upon Craggy Upland with Settled Glens LCT (LCT 7a), construction activities would occur in a relatively small part of the LCT relating to the upgrade of existing access tracks, the construction of new sections of track, and the movement of construction or haulage vehicles. The character of this LCT is already influenced by ongoing forestry operations and the existing Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm. These elements would be contained by the forestry plantation within Fearnoch Forest to the north of Glen Lonan, and by topography to the south. Construction works would introduce a **Low** magnitude of change within approximately 50 m of the access tracks and result in a temporary additional **Minor Moderate** effect, which would be **Not Significant**. There would also be indirect effects on views southwards from the LCT resulting from the decommissioning and erection of the turbines in neighbouring LCT 7. This would introduce a **Medium Low** magnitude of change within 4 km of the nearest proposed turbine and a temporary additional **Minor Moderate** additional effect which would be **Not Significant**. Beyond approximately 4 km, the ZTV coverage quickly diminishes, resulting in a **Low to Very Low** magnitude of change and no greater than a **Minor effect** that would be considered **Not Significant**.

LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic

5.6.91 In terms of direct effects upon Rocky Mosaic (LCT 20), construction activities would be limited to a very small part of the LCT at the site entrance onto the A85 and a section of access track to the south, near to the Fearnoch Forest car park. Temporary site access works would require the removal of a short section of woodland on the south side of the A85 and the construction of a temporary load bearing surface to allow vehicles to turn safely into and out of the site. A further area of woodland would be removed at the location of a hairpin bend in the track, near to Fearnoch Forest car park. The ABLWECS describes landcover in this LCT as 'diverse and richly patterned', which increases the sensitivity of woodland within this LCT. However, the part of the LCT in which the proposed access is located, is more closely associated with Fearnoch Forest to the south, within LCT 7a where woodland is a much more common characteristic.

5.6.92 This would introduce a **Medium** magnitude of change and a temporary additional **Moderate effect** on a small part of the LCT, approximately 2 km in length along the A85 (approximately 500 m to the east and west of the site boundary). These effects would be contained by the areas of woodland and plantation to the north and south of the A85, and would be **Not Significant**. The effects would be experienced within approximately 7 km of the nearest proposed turbine.

5.6.93 Indirect effects would also be experienced within LCT 20 at distances over 7 km to the southeast, on the shores of Loch Awe. From this part of the LCT (represented by Viewpoints 10 and 11) cranes may be visible during the decommissioning of the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines and the construction of their replacements. At this distance, no greater than **Low** magnitude of change and a temporary additional **Minor Moderate** effect is anticipated, which is **Not Significant.**

LCT 2 High Tops, 4 Mountain Glens, 7c North Loch Awe Craggy Uplands and 18 Lowland Ridges & Moss

5.6.94 In terms of indirect effects on the other landscape character types brought forward into detailed assessment, generally the only visible construction elements would be cranes which would be seen in the context of the existing turbines being decommissioned and the new turbines being erected. Ground level elements would largely be screened by intervening landform and intervening forestry from LCTs 4 and 18, resulting in a **Very Low** magnitude of change. The. This would result in no greater than a **Minor** temporary effect which would be **Not Significant**. From LCT 2 High Tops and 7c North Loch Awe Craggy Upland, where elevated views are available towards the Site, some ground level construction activity would potentially be visible, but at over 5 km away it would result in no greater than a **Low** magnitude of change. This would result in a temporary **Minor Moderate** effect in LCT 2, and a **Minor** effect in LCT 7c, which would both be not significant.

5.6.95 **Table 5.6** below summarises the effects on landscape character during the decommissioning of the existing Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm, and construction of the Proposed Development.

Table 5.6: Summary of Landscape Effects during Decommissioning of existing Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm / Construction of Proposed Development

Landscape Character Type	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significant
LCT 7 Craggy Upland (up to 1 km)	Medium	High	**Moderate**	**Yes**
LCT 7 Craggy Upland (1-2 km)	Medium	Medium	Moderate	No
LCT 7 Craggy Upland (2-4 km)	Medium	Medium Low	Minor Moderate	No
LCT 7a Craggy Upland with Settled Glens (up to 4 km)	Medium high	Medium Low	Minor Moderate	No
LCT 7a Craggy Upland with Settled Glens (over 4 km)	Medium high	Low to Very Low	Minor	No
LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic (up to 7 km)*1	Medium high	Medium	Moderate	No
LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic (over 7 km)	Medium high	Low	Minor Moderate	No
LCT 2 High Tops	High	Low	Minor Moderate	No
LCT 4 Mountain Glens	High	Very Low	Minor	No

Landscape Character Type	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significant
LCT 7c North Loch Awe Craggy Uplands	Medium high	Low	Minor	No
LCT 18 Lowland Ridges and Moss	Medium high	Very Low	Minor	No

The shaded rows indicate the Proposed Development is located within the character type

Bold text indicates a significant effect

*1 Within approximately 500 m of site boundary

Effects on Landscape Character during the Operational Phase

5.6.96 The effects on landscape character are discussed below in relation to each landscape character type brought forward from the initial review (see **Technical Appendix 5.3**) and as identified in **Table 5.4**. The magnitude of change on landscape character as a result of the replacement of the existing Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm with the Proposed Development has been determined using professional judgement based on the following factors:

- The percentage of the character type from where the Site would theoretically and actually be visible;
- The distance between the character type and the Site;
- The likely prominence of the turbines from the character type taking account of existing locally dominant characteristics in the character type; and
- The degree to which the physical and perceptual characteristics of the landscape would change from the existing baseline as a result of the Proposed Development.

5.6.97 To aid the consideration of effects on landscape character, the ZTV has been overlaid on the character types within 20 km of the Site, which is shown at **Figure 5.14**.

5.6.98 The ground-level components of the Proposed Development would generally not be discernible due to the screening provided by the local topography and remaining forestry plantation. Therefore, impacts on landscape character, as experienced in the wider landscape, arise largely in relation to the replacement of the 14 existing wind turbines with the 7 larger proposed turbines into the landscape and the resultant impact on the perceptual experience of landscape character.

5.6.99 A summary of the effects on landscape character is presented in **Table 5.7**: Summary of Landscape Effects during Operation

5.6.100 Note, that for all character types stated within this table, the duration of the Proposed Development is considered to be long-term (35 years) and reversible. A summary of effects on landscape character on a theoretical future zero baseline in which the existing Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm has been decommissioned to create a blank canvas has been considered at **Technical Appendix 5.8**.

LCT 7 Craggy Upland

5.6.101 The seven proposed turbines and all associated infrastructure of the Proposed Development, are located within the northern part of this LCT.

5.6.102 With reference to the landscape character types within 20 km overlaid with the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 5.14**, theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is largely contained within a 10 km radius, with some additional visibility across higher ground to the southeast and channelled along Loch Etive to the northeast and northwest.

5.6.103 Within LCT 7, theoretical visibility is largely contained within a 4 km radius, except for an area to the southwest, illustrated by Viewpoint 4 (Creag Ghlasrach). Viewpoints 2 and 4 provide useful context for appreciating the scale of the LCT, the simplicity of its landform and the uniformity of its landscape cover.

5.6.104 The existing Beinn Ghlas turbines, together with the nearby Carraig Gheal Wind Farm (approximately 3.8 km to the south) are both located within this LCT. The existing schemes already exert influence over the landscape character as illustrated by **Figure 5.4** (Beinn Ghlas) and **Figure 5.30** (Carraig Gheal). The proposed turbines would reinforce direct effects on the LCT in the immediate vicinity of where they are located by adding to the existing effects of operational schemes and extend indirect effects on the remaining parts of the LCT as illustrated by **Figure 5.4**. The Proposed Development is located within a large-scale landscape that has simple form where character has been influenced by the existing Beinn Ghlas and Carraig Gheal Wind Farms. Nonetheless, the proposed turbines would introduce taller vertical structures that extend above the horizon.

5.6.105 The proposed turbines would form a notable change to the scale of the turbines within part of the landscape in relation to those which are existing. This would have a **High** magnitude of change within approximately 1 km of the Proposed Development resulting in a **Moderate Significant** effect. Between approximately 1-2 km of the nearest proposed turbine, the on the character of the LCT would reduce to a **Medium** magnitude of change, and a Moderate level of effect that is considered **Not Significant**.

5.6.106 Between approximately 2-4 km of the Proposed Development, the influence of the new turbines on the landscape character would diminish further to a **Medium Low** magnitude of change on the character of the LCT, and a **Minor Moderate** effect that is **Not Significant**.

5.6.107 Between 4 and 10 km, theoretical visibility is intermittent and patchy with a larger band of theoretical visibility to the southwest, around Creag Ghlasrach (Viewpoint 4). At these distances, the Proposed Development would form a less prominent element within available views and would have less influence on its character, which is more strongly influenced by nearby features. It is considered that the magnitude of change would be **Low**, which combined with its sensitivity would result in indirect **Minor Moderate effects** that would be considered **Not Significant**.

5.6.108 Beyond 10 km, the Proposed Development is much more recessive in the view and is a small-scale component of the broad scale panoramic view, resulting in a **Low to Very Low** magnitude of change and no greater than a **Minor effect** that would be considered **Not Significant**.

LCT 7a Craggy Upland with Settled Glens

5.6.109 The larger part of the access route, is located within this LCT and would exert direct effects on the landscape character to approximately 6 km of the nearest proposed turbine. The access route follows existing tracks through Fearnoch Forest, which would be upgraded to accommodate delivery of the new turbines. Sections of new track would also be constructed in some locations.

5.6.110 The proposed access tracks would give rise to direct effects on the LCT within a very localised area. The changes would result in no greater than a **Low** magnitude of change and a **Minor Moderate effect** that is considered **Not Significant** on the footprint of the upgraded access tracks. Up to approximately 50 m from the upgraded access tracks, the magnitude of change would reduce to **Very Low** and the level of effect to **Minor** that is **Not Significant**.

5.6.111 With reference to **Figure 5.4**, which compares the theoretical visibility of the existing and proposed Beinn Ghlas schemes, the proposed turbines would extend the area of influence of indirect effects at the southern edge of the LCT, although coverage is intermittent and variable due to the undulating terrain to the east of the access route. Where ZTV coverage is greatest, to the west of the access route, the influence of existing forestry plantation would reduce the impact from lower elevations. Open views are available however from the peak of Deadh Choimhead approximately 3.6 km to the northwest. This would result in no greater than a **Medium** magnitude of change within approximately 4 km, and an indirect **Moderate effect** that is considered **Not Significant**.

5.6.112 Beyond approximately 4 km the ZTV coverage quickly diminishes, resulting in a **Low to Very Low** magnitude of change and no greater than a **Minor effect** that would be considered **Not Significant**.

LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic

5.6.113 The access point onto the A85 at the northern end of the proposed access route is located within this LCT. This isolated location would be subject to direct effects where the existing track would be widened to accommodate the delivery of abnormal loads, which is discussed in relation to construction effects above. All other effects relating to the Proposed Development would be indirect.

5.6.114 As shown in **Figure 5.14**, four of the five areas of LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic within the 20 km study area have ZTV coverage of the proposed turbines. These are located on the shores of Loch Etive to the north, represented by Viewpoint 7, and Loch Awe to the southeast, represented by Viewpoints 10 and 11.

5.6.115 As shown in **Figures 5.3 and 5.4**, generally the proposed turbines would be visible where the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines are already visible, except for areas to the southeast side of Loch Awe from approximately 7.5 km from the nearest turbine. Where visible from the southeast side of Loch Awe, the proposed turbines would be seen in the context of the existing Carraig Gheal Wind Farm, which exerts an influence on the landscape character, relating to landscape context, scale and openness, perceptual qualities, visual amenity and landscape values. The Proposed Development would add to these existing indirect effects on the LCT.

5.6.116 The intervening Loch and lochside landscape provides separation from the Proposed Development and continues to influence the local character. This would result in no greater than a **Medium Low** magnitude of change and a **Moderate effect** within 10 km of the Proposed Development that is considered **Not Significant**.

5.6.117 Beyond approximately 10 km of the Proposed Development, theoretical visibility becomes patchy. Due to the increase of distance and the greater influence of intervening landscape features, especially woodland along loch shores, the magnitude of change is assessed as **Low to Very Low** with no greater than a **Minor effect** that would be considered **Not Significant**.

LCT 2 High Tops

5.6.118 This LCT lies within the northern part of the detailed study area over 5 km from the Proposed Development. No infrastructure will be located in this area. Therefore, any

effects discussed below relate to indirect effects on the LCT, illustrated by Viewpoints 8, 9, 14 and 15.

5.6.119 **Figure 5.14** shows ZTV coverage along the southern edge of the LCT, extending north towards the Munro summit of Beinn Bhreac represented by Viewpoint 14, and channelled northwards along Loch Etive, represented by Viewpoint 15.

5.6.120 As shown in **Figures 5.3 and 5.4**, generally the proposed turbines would be visible where the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines are already visible. The Proposed Development would introduce a notable change to the scale of the turbines within parts of the landscape which are already influenced by the existing Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm at distances of between 5-10 km, illustrated by Viewpoints 8 and 9. From this distance the change would result in a **Medium** magnitude and a **Moderate effect** that is considered **Not Significant**.

5.6.121 For isolated locations to approximately 15 km from the Proposed Development, illustrated by Viewpoints 14 and 15, the turbines would be notable but the landscape would continue to be influenced by more prominent intervening features. The change would result in a **Medium Low** magnitude and a **Minor Moderate effect** that is considered **Not Significant**.

5.6.122 Beyond approximately 15 km of the Proposed Development, there is very little theoretical visibility within LCT 2 (see **Figure 5.14**), resulting in a **Very Low to no change** in landscape character and no greater than a **Minor effect** that is considered **Not Significant**.

LCT 4 Mountain Glens

5.6.123 As shown on **Figure 5.14**, within the 20 km study area, only one of the four areas of LCT 4 Mountain Glens have ZTV coverage, in the vicinity of Taynuilt, illustrated by Viewpoints 3 and 18. No infrastructure will be located in this area. Therefore, any effects discussed below relate to indirect effects on the LCT.

5.6.124 The ABLWECS states that '*the heads of the glens are often the focal point for key views'*. However, from the 'Pass of Brander' mountain glen to the east of Taynuilt, there is no ZTV coverage.

5.6.125 The description of visual amenity for LCT 4, namely '*the irregular shaped skyline around the rim of the valleys'* is apparent at Viewpoint 18 (**Figure 5.51**). The intervening landscape provides separation from the Proposed Development and continues to influence the local character. As shown in **Figures 5.3 and 5.4**, generally the proposed turbines would be visible where the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines are already visible. Where theoretically visible, in an isolated location within the mountain glen around Taynuilt between 5 - 7.5 km from the Proposed Development this would result in no greater than a **Medium** magnitude of change on landscape character in comparison with the current baseline, which includes the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines, and a **Moderate effect** that is considered **Not Significant**.

5.6.126 The areas of LCT 4 beyond 7.5 km of the Proposed Development, including above Loch Awe, Loch Fyne and Loch Creran have no theoretical visibility (see **Figure 5.14**) and would result in no effect on landscape character.

LCT 7c North Loch Awe Craggy Uplands

5.6.127 There are two areas of LCT 7c North Loch Awe Craggy Uplands within the eastern part of the detailed study area. As shown in **Figure 5.14**, both areas on either side of Loch Awe demonstrate ZTV coverage. No infrastructure will be located in these areas. Therefore, any effects discussed below relate to indirect effects on the LCT.

5.6.128 The ABLWECS notes that '*the most dramatic views are those associated with Loch Awe towards the surrounding mountains, including the setting of Kilchurn castle (a key focal point), the Loch Awe islands, views across and along the length of the main Loch and those framed by the steep-sided Pass of Brander*'. There is no ZTV coverage at the Kilchurn Castle viewpoint and layby or within the Pass of Brander.

5.6.129 As shown in **Figures 5.3 and 5.4**, generally the proposed turbines would be visible where the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines are already visible. The Proposed Development would introduce a notable change to the scale of the turbines within parts of the landscape which would influence the character of the LCT at distances of between 5-10 km. The turbines would not become the defining characteristic of the landscape which would continue to be influenced by more prominent intervening features. The change would result in a **Medium** magnitude and a **Moderate effect** that is considered **Not Significant**.

5.6.130 At distances over 10 km the magnitude of change would reduce to **Medium Low** and the level of effect to **Minor Moderate** that is considered **Not Significant.**

LCT 18 Lowland Ridges and Moss

5.6.131 As illustrated on **Figure 5.14**, there are three areas of LCT 18 Lowland Ridges and Moss with variable ZTV coverage, within the 20 km study area. The closest area to the Proposed Development has the greatest coverage and is represented by Viewpoints 6 and 13. No infrastructure will be located in this area. Therefore, any effects discussed below relate to indirect effects on the LCT.

5.6.132 The ABLWECS notes that '*the A828 Tourist Route is aligned within this character type and provides open and close views of these landscapes. This is also a well-settled area with houses fringing coastal edges and featuring scenic views across water to dramatic mountainous backdrops*'. Views tend to focus away from the Proposed Development towards the Lynn of Lorn NSA to the northwest and Ben Cruachan within LCT 2 High Tops to the east.

5.6.133 As shown in **Figures 5.3 and 5.4**, generally the proposed turbines would be visible where the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines are already visible. Where theoretically visible, at distances between 5 – 7.5 km from the Proposed Development, the turbines introduce larger scale elements into the view, than those which are existing, but they do not conflict with the large scale of the distant upland landscape, which continues to strongly influence views within the LCT.

5.6.134 The magnitude of change is considered to be no greater than **Medium Low** within this LCT and the level of effect **Minor Moderate** that is considered **Not Significant.**

Table 5.7: Summary of Landscape Effects during Operation

Landscape Character Type	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significant
LCT 7 Craggy Upland (up to 1 km)	Medium	High	**Moderate**	**Yes**
LCT 7 Craggy Upland (1-2 km)	Medium	Medium	Moderate	No
LCT 7 Craggy Upland (2-4 km)	Medium	Medium Low	Minor Moderate	No
LCT 7 Craggy Upland (4-10 km)	Medium	Low	Minor Moderate	No
LCT 7 Craggy Upland (over 10 km)	Medium	Low to Very Low	Minor	No
LCT 7a Craggy Upland with Settled Glens (up to 4 km)	Medium High	Medium	Moderate	No
LCT 7a Craggy Upland with Settled Glens (over 4 km)	Medium High	Low to Very Low	Minor	No
LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic (up to 10km)	Medium High	Medium Low	Moderate	No
LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic (over 10 km)	Medium High	Low to Very Low	Minor	No
LCT 2 High Tops (up to 10 km)	High	Medium	Moderate	No
LCT 2 High Tops (10km – 15 km)	High	Medium Low	Minor Moderate	No
LCT 2 High Tops (over 15 km)	High	Very Low	Minor	No
LCT 4 Mountain Glens (up to 7.5 km)	High	Medium	Moderate	No
LCT 4 Mountain Glens (over 7.5 km)	High	No change	No effect	No
LCT 7c North Loch Awe Craggy Uplands (up to 10 km)	Medium high	Medium	Moderate	No

Landscape Character Type	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significant
LCT 7c North Loch Awe Craggy Uplands (over 10 km)	Medium high	Medium Low	Minor Moderate	No
LCT 18 Lowland Ridges and Moss	Medium high	Medium Low	Minor Moderate	No

The shaded rows indicate the Proposed Development is located within the character type

Bold text indicates a significant effect

Effects on Landscape Character during Decommissioning

5.6.135 It is acknowledged that there would be some additional temporary effects during decommissioning of the Proposed Development after 35 years, over and above those assessed under the heading of operational effects above. The effects resulting from decommissioning activities will be localised and relatively incidental when viewed in the context of the wind farm being removed.

5.6.136 The effects on landscape character will therefore decrease incrementally as decommissioning progresses and as more turbines and associated foundations and hardstanding are removed.

5.6.137 The effects would be similar to those during the construction phase but in reverse.

5.6.138 Overall, it is considered that there would be a **Medium Low** magnitude of change upon the part of the Craggy Upland LCT (LCT 7), Craggy Upland with Settled Glens LCT (LCT 7a) and Rocky Mosaic (LCT 20) within which the Proposed Development is sited, which would result in no greater than a **Minor Moderate** temporary additional effect on the LCTs, above that set out for the operational phase, which would be **Not Significant**.

5.6.139 In terms of indirect effects on other landscape character types assessed in detail, there will be a **Very Low** magnitude of change and no greater than a **Minor effect**.

5.6.140 The decommissioning effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character are deemed to be **Not Significant**. Once decommissioning is complete, there would be no further effects upon landscape character.

5.6.141 Construction effects on landscape character would be temporary, short term, non-permanent and **Not Significant**.

Assessment of Visual Effects

5.6.142 Effects on visual amenity arise from changes to views resulting from the introduction of the Proposed Development. It comprises:

- An assessment of visual effects from the representative viewpoints brought forward into detailed assessment; and
- An assessment of visual effects on receptor groups such as settlements, roads and core paths brought forward into detailed assessment.

5.6.143 The assessment has been carried out through a combination of site visits and desk study using the ZTVs, wirelines and photomontages.

Assessment of Visual Effects during Construction

5.6.144 The assessment of construction effects in this section considers the temporary visual impact relating to the decommissioning of the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines and the construction of the Proposed Development.

5.6.145 Due to the topographical screening within Glen Lonan to the north and Glen Nant to the east, together with the extensive forestry plantation at Fearnoch Forest to the north, the ground-level activity associated with the turbine decommissioning and construction will generally be screened from the view from locations to the north and east. There is a greater degree of visibility from the south, for example at Viewpoints 2 and 4, and from Carraig Gheal Wind Farm. Due to the proximity of these locations to the Proposed

Development and their elevation relative to the Site, some ground-level activity such as movement of construction vehicles may be visible resulting in a **Low** magnitude of additional change and no greater than a **Minor**, temporary effect which would be **Not Significant**.

5.6.146 From all the remaining assessment viewpoints, the only additional visual effects, over and above those addressed under the heading of Operational Effects, will arise in relation to views of the cranes decommissioning the existing turbines and erecting the replacement turbines.

5.6.147 The cranes will be visible for a relatively short period and would be incidental when considered in the context of the turbines being decommissioned / erected. However, it is assessed that any views of these works will result in a **Low** magnitude of additional change and no greater than a **Minor**, temporary effect which would be **Not Significant**.

Assessment of Visual Effects during the Operational Phase

5.6.148 A detailed viewpoint assessment of the operational effects is presented at **Technical Appendix 5.5,** and this considers the long-term visual effects during the operational phase of the Proposed Development for each of the 19 viewpoints.

5.6.149 For each of the assessment viewpoints, a short description is given of the baseline view, and a judgement is provided regarding the sensitivity of the key receptors likely to experience the view.

5.6.150 This is followed by a description of the features of the Proposed Development that would be visible from that viewpoint. This includes a description of how many turbine hubs and blades would be visible and, where relevant, whether any ground-level components of the Proposed Development would be visible. For each viewpoint, there is a comment on how vegetation or topography would affect the actual visibility of the turbines.

5.6.151 A judgement is then provided of the magnitude of change that would be experienced at each viewpoint, the level of the effect on the view and a statement provided to clarify whether the additional effect resulting from the Proposed Development is significant or not.

5.6.152 A summary of the sensitivity of the view, the magnitude of change in the view, the level of effect and its significance is given in

5.6.153 **Table** 5.8**8**. Where a viewpoint is representative of more than one type of visual receptor, the assessment carried forward to the table represents the most sensitive receptor group represented by the viewpoint.

5.6.154 With reference to the Viewpoint Assessment at **Technical Appendix 5.5**, when considered against the existing baseline it has been assessed that there would be a significant visual effect at two of the 19 representative viewpoints. These are as follows:

- Viewpoint 2 - Clach Bhadan, Core Path; and

Viewpoint 7 - Ardchattan Priory.

Table 5.8: Summary of Visual Effects during Operation

Viewpoint	Approx. Distance to the Nearest Turbine	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significant
1 - Minor road, Lonan	3.4 km northeast	High	No change	No effect	No
2 - Clach Bhadan, Core Path	2.2 km south	Medium high	Medium high	**Moderate Major**	**Yes**
3 - Taynuilt Church	5.3 km northwest	High	Medium	Moderate	No
4 - Creag Ghlasrach	6.1 km southwest	High	Medium	Moderate	No
5 - Minor road near Barran an Fhraoich, east of Oban	9.3 km northwest	High	Medium low	Minor Moderate	No
6 - Achnacairn	9.9 km northwest	High	Negligible	No effect	No
7 - Ardchattan Priory	8.3 km north	High	Medium	**Moderate**	**Yes**
8 - B845	10.2 km north	Medium	Medium	Moderate	No
9 - Ben Cruachan	9.6 km northeast	High	Medium low	Moderate	No
10 - Portsonachan	8.0 km southeast	High	Medium low	Minor Moderate	No
11 - B840 layby nr Cladich	12.3 km west	Medium	Medium low	Minor Moderate	No
12 - A816 layby / parking near Knipoch	13.0 km east	Medium high	Negligible	No effect	No

Viewpoint	Approx. Distance to the Nearest Turbine	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significant
13 - A828, grass verge	11.7 km northwest	Medium	Low	Minor Moderate	No
14 - Beinn Bhreac	13.6 km north	High	Low	Minor Moderate	No
15 – Core Path C517(b) – Inverawe to Glenkinglass, Loch Etive	11.7 km northeast	High	Medium	Moderate	No
16 – Cachnacroish Lismore	19.0 km northwest	High	Low	Minor Moderate	No
17 – Ben Starav	22.0 km northeast	High	Low	Minor Moderate	No
18 – Bonawe Jetty, Taynuilt	7.0 km northeast	High	Medium	Moderate	No
19 – Glen Lonan Road	3.1 km northeast	High	Low	Minor Moderate	No

Bold text indicates a significant effect

Assessment of Effects on Visual Receptor Groups

5.6.155 This section considers the effects of the Proposed Development on the visual receptor groups brought forward into detailed assessment.

Construction Effects on Visual Receptor Groups

5.6.156 It is recognised that there would be some additional temporary visual effects during the decommissioning of the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines and the construction of the Proposed Development over and above those assessed under the operational phase.

5.6.157 The vast majority of effects, of note, when considering the construction phase will be experienced within the local environs of the site, with views contained by the topography to the north of the Site at Glen Lonan and east of the Site at Glen Nant.

5.6.158 An aspect of the construction works, specifically works relating to the upgrade of the access route at Glen Lonan Road, will be visible from a number of properties within the local landscape, including Barguillean Farm, Josephine's Wing, The Granary and Am-Barr.

5.6.159 Where views are available of the decommissioning and construction of turbines, these will be restricted to views of cranes appearing above intervening landform and vegetation with all ground-level components screened from view. These views would only be experienced for a relatively short duration during the construction phase, and they would be experienced within the context of the turbines being constructed.

5.6.160 Overall, it is assessed that there would be a low magnitude of additional effect during decommissioning / construction over and above the operational phase effects assessed below. This would result in a temporary **Moderate** additional effect which would **Not** be **Significant**, and these effects need to be considered in conjunction with the operational effects identified below.

Operational Effects on Visual Receptor Groups

5.6.161 Views of the ground level components of the Proposed Development will be limited to a relatively short radius of approximately 4 km around the Site, largely in a southerly direction. Except where indicated, the discussion below therefore relates primarily to views of the proposed turbines of the Proposed Development. A summary of the visual effects on residential properties and settlements during the operational phase is provided at **Table 5.9**. A comparison of visual effects against a theoretical future zero baseline in which the existing Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm has already been decommissioned has been considered separately in **Technical Appendix 5.8.**

Residential Receptors within 3 km of Nearest Proposed Turbine

5.6.162 The initial assessment of visual receptors at **Technical Appendix 5.4** identified that of 24 residential properties within 3 km of the proposed turbines, six would have some theoretical visibility.

5.6.163 Bar-Ghlas and Am-Barr are both situated to the north side of Glen Lonan Road, at approximately 2.1 km and 2.2 km respectively to the north of the nearest proposed turbine. Bar-Ghlas is set back slightly from the road and is at a slightly higher elevation

than Am-Bar. With reference to the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 5.79**, theoretical visibility of four to five turbines is predicted from these properties, with two to three of the proposed turbines screened by intervening landform. The intervening woodland would partially filter views, reducing the visual impact further. The existing turbines at Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm are theoretically visible from these properties, but they are subject to visual filtering by intervening vegetation.

5.6.164 Other properties within this cluster, including Barguillean Farm, The Granary, Josephine's Wing, Sithean self-catering and Bunanta (at 2.3 km from the nearest proposed turbine) benefit from a greater degree of topographical screening by the local undulating landform, with only one to three turbines theoretically visible.

5.6.165 Any available views from these properties would be limited to the upper parts of a small number of turbines and only available at discrete locations. Considering the extent of existing vegetation around the properties it is assessed that there would be no greater than a **Low** magnitude of change. When combined with the high sensitivity of residential receptors, there would be no greater than a **Minor Moderate effect** that is considered **Not Significant**.

Settlements and Groups of Properties between 3 to 5 km of Nearest Proposed Turbine

Cluster of properties around Corachie Farm

5.6.166 The cluster of properties around Corachie Farm, including Fishers Glen, Fisher's Cottage and The Byre are situated approximately 3.4 km to the northeast of the nearest proposed turbine. With reference to the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 5.6**, theoretical visibility of up to only three turbines is predicted from these properties, with the majority of the proposed turbines screened by intervening landform. The hub height ZTV at **Figure 5.8** shows very little theoretical visibility of turbine hubs from these properties.

5.6.167 To the north of Corachie Farm, an area of mixed woodland provides screening of theoretical views from properties around Lonan House, including Struthan House, Airdeny House, Aird Na Mara, Windy Ridge, Lonan Beag, Achnahannait and Keeper's Cottage.

5.6.168 North of Glen Lonan Road, at Airdeny Lodge and The Neuk, there is a greater degree of theoretical visibility, with four to five turbines theoretically visibility. However existing vegetation on the horizon will offer some partial screening or filtering of views.

5.6.169 With reference to **Figure 5.4**, the existing turbines at the Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm are not visible from this group of properties. It is anticipated that the Proposed Development would introduce partial views of turbines into views where currently there are none. However, frequently, the lower parts of turbines would be screened by intervening landform, with views filtered by intervening vegetation. It is assessed that there would be no greater than a **Medium Low** magnitude of change, when combined with the high sensitivity of residential receptors, no greater than a **Minor Moderate effect** that is considered to be **Not Significant**.

Cluster of properties around Balindore

5.6.170 The cluster of properties around Balindore, including Robmar, Ellwood and Eilean Garbh are located between 3.8 – 4 km north northeast of the nearest proposed turbine. With reference to the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 5.6**, theoretical visibility of between six to seven

turbines is predicted from these properties. However, the hub height ZTV at **Figure 5.8** shows that only four to five hubs would be theoretically visible, with lower parts of turbines screened by intervening landform. Trees around these properties would provide filtering of some views.

5.6.171 To the south of this group, a single property, Gorstain, is located closer to the Proposed Development at approximately 3.4 km, however it is covered by a part of the ZTV where theoretical visibility is patchy.

5.6.172 Where visible from these properties, the Proposed Development would introduce larger scale turbines into the view than those existing, however they would occupy a similar lateral extent of the view as the existing turbines. Frequently the lower parts of the proposed turbines would be screened by intervening landform, with views often filtered by intervening vegetation. However, where open views are available towards the Proposed Development, e.g. from Ellwood, it is assessed that there would be no greater than a **Medium** magnitude of change. When combined with the high sensitivity of residential receptors, this would result in a **Moderate effect** that is considered **Significant**.

Taynuilt

5.6.173 The south-western edge of Taynuilt is situated approximately 4.8 km to the northeast of the nearest proposed turbine. The blade tip ZTV in this location indicates theoretical visibility of four to five turbines (**Figure 5.6**). Existing trees around these properties would provide some filtering of potential views.

5.6.174 Viewpoint 3 is located within Taynuilt and represents views from the Church, which is located in an elevated position at the centre of the settlement, whilst Viewpoint 18 represents views from Bonawe Jetty to the north. Theoretical visibility is similar from these locations, with varying degrees of partial screening or filtering by vegetation in the foreground view.

5.6.175 Where visible, the Proposed Development would introduce larger scale turbines into the view than those existing. Frequently the lower parts of turbines would be screened by intervening landform, with views filtered by intervening vegetation. It is assessed that there would be no greater than a **Medium** magnitude of change, when combined with the high sensitivity of residential receptors, no greater than a **Moderate effect** that is considered **Not Significant**.

Settlements within 5 to 20 km of Nearest Proposed Turbine

Connel and North Connel

5.6.176 Connel is situated approximately 9.2 km to the northwest of the nearest proposed turbine and is located on the south shore of Loch Etive with outward views focussed across the loch to the north. The blade tip ZTV (**Figure 5.6)** and hub height ZTV (**Figure 5.8**) both show patchy coverage across this settlement, especially across the eastern part. Existing woodland adjacent to the railway line along the southern edge of the settlement filters views in the direction of the Proposed Development. The sporadic theoretical visibility indicated by the ZTVs and the presence of built form and woodland combined with the position and propensity for northerly views (away from the Site) result in a magnitude of change no greater than **Low** and an effect no greater than **Minor Moderate, Not Significant**.

5.6.177 North Connel, situated approximately 10.3 km to the northwest of the Proposed Development, has open views across the Loch Etive estuary towards the south. The comparative ZTV at **Figure 5.4** indicates that the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines are visible from this location. The blade tip ZTV at **Figure 5.6** shows theoretical visibility of up to all seven proposed turbines from this location, whilst the hub height ZTV at **Figure 5.8** indicates that only four to five turbine hubs would be visible, due to screening by intervening landform.

5.6.178 To the east of North Connel, towards Black Crofts, ZTV coverage becomes patchy due to screening by intervening landform, however further east towards Achnacreebeag there is a greater degree of theoretical visibility.

5.6.179 Where clear views are available across Loch Etive, intervening houses in Connel and surrounding woodland filters views of the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines. The Proposed Development would be more visible above the trees and rooftops, but frequently the lower parts of turbines would be screened from view. It is assessed that there would be no greater than a **Low** magnitude of change. When combined with the high sensitivity of residential receptors, this would result in no greater than a **Minor Moderate effect** that is considered to be **Not Significant.**

Table 5.9: Summary Operational Effects on Residential Properties and Settlements

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significant
Residential Properties within 3 km of Proposed Turbines				
Bunanta	High	Low	Minor Moderate	No
Sithean Self-catering	High	Low	Minor Moderate	No
Bar-Ghlas	High	Low	Minor Moderate	No
Am-Barr	High	Low	Minor Moderate	No
Josephine's Wing	High	Low	Minor Moderate	No
Barguillean Farm	High	Low	Minor Moderate	No
Settlements and Groups of Properties between 3-5 km of Nearest Proposed Turbine				
Cluster of properties around Corachie Farm	High	Medium low	Minor Moderate	No
Cluster of properties around Balindore	High	Medium	Moderate	**Yes**
Taynuilt	High	Medium	Moderate	No
Settlements between 5-20km of Nearest Proposed Turbine				
Connel	High	Low	Minor Moderate	No
North Connel	High	Low	Minor Moderate	No

Bold text indicates a significant effect

Recreational Routes

5.6.180 A summary of operational effects on recreational routes is provided at **Table 5.10**.

Core Paths within 5 km

5.6.181 As identified in the Assessment of Visual receptors at **Technical Appendix 5.4**, the following core paths within 5 km of the Proposed Development have the potential for significant effects. These routes include:

- C171 - Kilmore - Loch Nant - Kilchrenan, located approximately 1.3 km to the south of the Proposed Development;
- C160 - Taynuilt to Oban, located approximately 1.8 km to the north of the Proposed Development;
- C523 - Loch Nant, Loch Aweside, located approximately 3.1 km southwest; and
- C300 - Kilchrenan to Taynuilt, located approximately 3.7 km northwest.

5.6.182 With reference to the LVIA Assessment Criteria at **Technical Appendix 5.1**, the receptors using these routes are generally considered to have high sensitivity to a change in their view except for where the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines or other operational wind farms have a **Moderate** or greater effect on views.

Core path No. C171 – Kilmore – Loch Nant - Kilchrenan

5.6.183 Core Path No. C171 is a route approximately 20.2 km in length located to the east of Kilmore. Section C171(a) follows a single-track lane within Glen Feochan. The road gradually climbs out of the valley onto the upland moor. After approximately 7.2 km, at section C171(b) the route leaves the road onto a stone track and continues in a broadly easterly direction towards Loch Nant, passing between the existing Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm to the north, and Carraig Gheal Wind Farm to the south (represented by Viewpoint 2).

5.6.184 Referring to the principal visual receptors within 20 km overlaid with the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 5.18**, no theoretical visibility is predicted for C171(a) due to its relatively enclosed position, enclosed within a valley. Theoretical visibility is predicted for the majority of C171(b) for approximately 13 km. However, Loch Nant is surrounded by coniferous forestry plantation, which would screen many views from the eastern half of the route. Visibility along the western half of C171(b) varies due to the undulating terrain, so the number of turbines visible varies. The route generally lies at a lower elevation than the surrounding landscape, so the number of lower parts of the turbines are generally screened from view.

5.6.185 With reference to **Figure 5.4**, visibility of the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines is lower along this core path due to the relative height of the existing turbines being lower. However, the existing visibility of both the Beinn Ghlas and Carraig Gheal wind turbines lowers the susceptibility of receptors, thus reducing sensitivity to medium high. Where visible, the proposed turbines introduce larger scale elements into the view than those which are existing, which would be experienced at close proximity. Views of the associated infrastructure would also potentially be available at certain points along the route, but these would be much more diminutive visual components when viewed within the context of the turbines.

5.6.186 Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development would result in a **Medium High** magnitude of change and a **Moderate Major** effect that is considered **Significant** for an extremely limited section of the route. For the remainder of the route, effects would be lower where the landform partially screens views, and in many locations, including within areas of forest plantation, receptors would experience no visual effects.

Core path No. C160 – Taynuilt to Oban

5.6.187 Core Path No. C160 is approximately 19 km in length located within Glen Lonan between Oban to the west and Taynuilt to the northeast. Much of the route follows the single-track road which was a former part of the National Cycle Network (represented by Viewpoints 1, 5 and 19). The route generally lies at a lower elevation than the surrounding landscape, and therefore views tend to be enclosed.

5.6.188 With reference to **Figure 5.18**, the ZTV indicates that where there is theoretical visibility along this route, it would be for less than the full suite of proposed turbines, with up to a maximum of five theoretically visible at the north-eastern end of the route, near Taynuilt. As indicated in **Figure 5.8**, the majority of turbine hubs would be screened from view along this route by the local topography, with only up to five theoretically visible near to Taynuilt. However, the ZTV does not account for screening of views by intervening trees or buildings, which are present around the settlements of Taynuilt and Oban at either end of the route (illustrated by Viewpoint 5).

5.6.189 Where visible, the proposed turbines introduce larger scale elements into the view than those which are existing, which would be experienced at relative proximity. Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development would result in a **Medium Low** magnitude of change and a **Moderate effect** that is considered **Not Significant**. Such effects would not be experienced over the entirety of the route and for large sections of the route, where the landform screens views, receptors would experience no visual effects.

Core path No. C523 – Loch Nant, Loch Aweside

5.6.190 Core Path No. C523 runs southwards from Core Path No. C171 at Loch Nant for approximately 4.7 km towards Loch Awe. Although the ZTV at **Figure 5.18** indicates theoretical visibility at the northern end of this route, it is entirely enclosed by coniferous forestry plantation, so visibility would in fact be much less.

5.6.191 Views of the proposed turbines would generally be restricted by intervening coniferous trees except at times when felling has enabled clear views in the direction of the Proposed Development in the northwest. During commercial forestry operations within the vicinity of the route, the sensitivity of receptors would reduce, but at all other times sensitivity is considered to be high.

5.6.192 From locations where views are available, the Proposed Development would give rise to a **Low** magnitude of change and a **Minor Moderate** effect that would be considered **Not Significant**.

Core path No. C300 – Kilchrenan to Taynuilt

5.6.193 Core Path No. C300 runs northwards from Kilchrenan on the north shore of Loch Awe for approximately 10.7 km along the B845 single track road towards Taynuilt. It also coincides with a section of Sustrans Cycle Route 78. Although the ZTV at **Figure 5.18** indicates some theoretical visibility at the northern end of this route within 5 km of the

Proposed Development, it is enclosed by Glen Nant National Forest, so visibility would in fact be much less.

5.6.194 From locations where views are available, the Proposed Development would give rise to a low magnitude of change and a **Minor Moderate** effect that would be considered **Not Significant**.

Core Paths between 5-10 km

5.6.195 As identified in the Assessment of Visual receptors at **Technical Appendix 5.4**, the following core paths over 5 km of the Proposed Development have the potential for significant effects. These routes include:

- C157 - Taynuilt - Airds circular approximately 5.2 km northeast
- C158 - Achlonan to Taynuilt Jetty approximately 5.6 km northeast;
- C159 - Shore Cottage, Brochroy to Inverawe, approximately 6.3 km northeast;
- C526 - Inverawe to Dun Mor, approximately 6.8 km northeast;
- C517 - Inverawe to Glenkinglass, approximately 6.8 km northeast; and
- C156 - Bonawe to Glen Etive, approximately 7.6 km northeast.

5.6.196 With reference to the LVIA Assessment Criteria at **Technical Appendix 5.1**, the receptors using these routes are all considered to have high sensitivity to a change in their view.

Core Path No. C157 – Taynuilt – Airds

5.6.197 Core Path No. C157 is a circular route, approximately 3 km in length on the western side of Taynuilt, including a section of the A85 road, located in the vicinity of Viewpoint 3. The ZTV at **Figure 5.18** indicates theoretical visibility of up to all seven proposed turbines, however views from this route tend to be partially screened or filtered by deciduous trees within Taynuilt Golf Course, or by those marking field boundaries in foreground views, so actual visibility would be lower.

5.6.198 From locations where views are available, the Proposed Development would give rise to a low magnitude of change and a **Minor Moderate** effect that would be considered **Not Significant**.

Core Path No. C158 – Achlonan to Taynuilt Jetty

5.6.199 Core Path No. C158 is situated on a section of the B845 single track road, approximately 1.5 km in length on the northern side of Taynuilt, including Bonawe Jetty, represented by Viewpoint 18. The ZTV at **Figure 5.18** indicates theoretical visibility of up to all seven proposed turbines from this route, however built form within Taynuilt and roadside vegetation would reduce visibility in certain locations.

5.6.200 From locations where views are available, particularly from Bonawe Jetty at the northern end of the route, the Proposed Development would introduce larger scale elements into the view than the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines, but they would appear smaller in relation to trees and buildings in the foreground, and would occupy a similar lateral extent of the view as the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines. When travelling in a southerly direction it is anticipated that there would be a **Medium** magnitude of change from a limited section of the route (approx. 350 m) and a **Moderate** effect that is considered **Not Significant**.

Core Path No. C159 – Shore Cottage, Brochroy to Inverawe

5.6.201 Core Path No. C159 is a route approximately 1.6 km in length, situated on the eastern side of Taynuilt. The ZTV at **Figure 5.18** indicates theoretical visibility of up to all seven proposed turbines from this route, however built form within Taynuilt and roadside vegetation would reduce visibility.

5.6.202 The Proposed Development would introduce larger scale elements into the view than the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines, but they would appear smaller in relation to trees and buildings in the foreground. It is anticipated that there would be a **Low** magnitude of change from this route and a **Minor Moderate** effect that is considered **Not Significant**.

Core Path No. C526 – Inverawe to Dun Mor

5.6.203 Core Path No. C526 is a route approximately 1.3 km in length, situated on a single-track road on the eastern bank of the River Awe, adjacent to Inverawe Country Park. The ZTV at **Figure 5.18** indicates theoretical visibility of up to all seven proposed turbines from this route, however intervening woodland along the route would greatly reduce actual visibility.

5.6.204 Where glimpsed, or filtered views are available, the Proposed Development would introduce larger scale elements into the view than the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines. It is anticipated that there would be a **Low** magnitude of change from this route and a **Minor Moderate** effect that is considered **Not Significant**.

Core Path No. C517 – Inverawe to Glenkinglass

5.6.205 Core Path No. C517 is a route approximately 11 km in length, situated on the south-eastern shore of Loch Etive. The southern end of the route (C517(a)) passes along a forestry road within Inverawe Country Park for approximately 5.1 km. The ZTV at **Figure 5.18** indicates theoretical visibility of up to all seven proposed turbines from this section of the route, however intervening trees would greatly reduce actual visibility.

5.6.206 The northern sections of the route (C517(b) and C517(c)) generally have clearer views along the loch, but views towards the Proposed Development are frequently screened by the intervening landform of the steep loch sides.

5.6.207 From limited locations where views are available (see **Viewpoint 15**), the Proposed Development would introduce larger scale elements into the view than the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines. It is anticipated that there would be a **Medium** magnitude of change from isolated points on this route and a **Moderate** effect that is considered **Not Significant**.

Core Path No. C156 – Bonawe to Glen Etive

5.6.208 Core Path No. C156 is a route approximately 14.6 km in length, situated on the north-western shore of Loch Etive, roughly parallel to Core Path C517, which runs along the opposite shore of the loch. The western end of the route (C156(a)) passes through a working quarry. Much of the remainder of the route passes through either mixed woodland or coniferous forestry plantations. The ZTV at **Figure 5.18** indicates theoretical visibility of up to all seven proposed turbines from the southwestern section of the route (C156(a) and from section C156(c) towards the northeast, however intervening trees would greatly reduce actual visibility from much of this route.

5.6.209 At the southwestern end of this route, at Bonawe Quarries, some open views are available towards Beinn Ghlas. From a short section of the route, under 1 km in length, to the east of Bonawe, within open views across Loch Etive, the Proposed Development would appear as larger scale elements in the view than the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines.

It is anticipated that there would be a **Medium** magnitude of change from this part of the route and a **Moderate** effect that is considered **Not Significant**.

Cycling Routes

National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 78

5.6.210 The Caledonian Way, NCN Route 78, passes through the 20 km study area for the Proposed Development from north to south. Much of the route within the study area for the Proposed Development, including everywhere to the south of Connel, has been reclassified as a former part of the National Cycle Network due to high motor traffic speeds and volumes.

5.6.211 NCN Route 78 is represented by Viewpoint 13 at the northern end (on the A828 road to Connel) where it passes through the ZTV for the Proposed Development. The route, then bears west towards the coast, where it leaves the ZTV. At Oban the route heads inland towards Glen Lonan in the east, following the route of Core Path C160 (represented by Viewpoints 1, 5 and 19). Theoretical visibility along this section of the route closest to the Proposed Development is patchy. At Taynuilt, the route turns southwards along the B845 road, via a short section of the A85 road. Theoretical visibility gradually increases as the route climbs in elevation, but as it descends towards the shore of Loch Awe, once again the route leaves the ZTV.

5.6.212 The section of the route with the greatest degree of theoretical visibility is to the north of Connel, represented by Viewpoint 13. Roadside vegetation partially screens or filters views in the direction of the Proposed Development from this location, over 10 km from the Proposed Development. It is considered that the proposed turbines would give rise to a **Medium Low** magnitude of change on views when travelling in a southerly direction from a short section of the route. This would result in a **Minor Moderate** level of effect that is considered **Not Significant**.

Table 5.10: Summary Operational Effects on Recreational Routes

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significant
C171 - Kilmore - Loch Nant	Medium high	Medium high	**Moderate Major**	**Yes**
C160 - Taynuilt to Oban	High	Medium low	Minor Moderate	No
C523 - Loch Nant, Loch Aweside	High	Low	Minor Moderate	No
C300 - Kilchrenan to Taynuilt	High	Low	Minor Moderate	No
C157 - Taynuilt - Airds	High	Low	Minor Moderate	No
C158 - Achlonan to Taynuilt Jetty	High	Medium	Moderate	No
C159 - Shore Cottage, Brochroy to Inverawe	High	Low	Minor Moderate	No
C526 - Inverawe to Dun Mor	High	Low	Minor Moderate	No
C517 - Inverawe to Glenkinglass	High	Medium	Moderate	No
C156 - Bonawe to Glen Etive	High	Medium	Moderate	No
NCN Route 78	High	Medium low	Minor Moderate	No

Bold text indicates a significant effect

Roads

5.6.213 As identified in the Assessment of Visual receptors at **Technical Appendix 5.4**, the following roads within 10 km of the Proposed Development have the potential for significant effects. These routes include:

- A85 passing approximately 5.2 km northeast;
- A819 passing approximately 11.8 km east southeast;
- B845 passing approximately 3.7 km northeast;
- B840 passing approximately 7.6 km southeast;
- Argyll Coastal Route (A828) passing approximately 8.9 km northwest; and
- Minor road between A828 and B845 passing approximately 8.2 km north.

5.6.214 As set out in **Technical Appendix 5.1** the visual sensitivity of trunk road and major roads is typically low. However, given the nature of the landscape and the likelihood that a greater number of tourists are likely to be passing through the landscape, who are more likely to appreciate its scenic qualities, users of the A85 and A819 are considered to have a medium sensitivity to the change proposed. Users of B roads and minor roads are generally considered to have medium sensitivity, unless they form part of a recreational route, such as the B845 part of which is identified as a Core Path (C300 – Kilchrenan to Taynuilt) and is a former part of NCN Route 78, the Caledonian Way. Users of the Argyll Coastal Route, recognised and promoted scenic route (A85 to the west of Connel, and A828), are considered to have a high sensitivity.

5.6.215 A summary of the operational effects on roads is provided at **Table 5.11**.

A Roads

A85

5.6.216 The A85 passes from the eastern edge of the study area to the north of the Proposed Development, approximately 5.2 km to the northeast at its closest point. The road forms a connection between Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park and to the east, and forms part of the Argyll Coastal Route between the A828 at Connel and the A816 at Oban at its western end.

5.6.217 With reference to the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 5.18**, theoretical visibility from the road is patchy, with the greatest degree of visibility available from a short section between Taynuilt and Fearnoch to the north of the Proposed Development, close to the access point, approximately 5.9 km north of the nearest proposed turbine. Views from this road are well enclosed by woodland on either side.

5.6.218 Theoretical visibility of the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines is patchy, as shown in **Figure 5.4**. As with the existing wind farm, the Proposed Development would appear as intermittent filtered or glimpsed views of the turbines, albeit at a larger scale. Views would be experienced perpendicular to the direction of travel, when travelling in either direction, with intervening forestry plantation at Feanoch Forest, providing further screening. This would result in no greater than a **Low** magnitude of change and **Minor Moderate effect** that is considered **Not Significant**.

A819

5.6.219 The A819 passes through the eastern part of the study area, connecting the A85 at its northern end with the A83 at Inverary on the shore of Loch Fyne to the south. The southern part of this road lies within a broad valley which screens potential views of the Proposed Development. The northern end of the road climbs in elevation towards Loch Awe and as indicated on **Figure 5.4**, the section to the northeast of Cladich lies within the ZTV for both the existing and proposed Beinn Ghlas wind farms (represented by Viewpoint 11).

5.6.220 When travelling along this road in a south-westerly direction, woodland on the shore of Loch Awe screens or filters views in the direction of the existing and Proposed Development from many locations except for a short section approximately 1.5 km in length, at an oblique angle to the direction of travel. Where clear views are available from this road it is assessed that the magnitude of change to views would be **Medium low**. This would result in a **Minor Moderate** level of effect that is considered **Not Significant**.

B Roads

B845

5.6.221 The B845 road straddles Loch Etive. To the south of Bonawe Jetty, Taynuilt (represented by Viewpoint 18) the road follows the same route as Core Paths C158 (see **Paragraphs 5.7.196 – 5.7.197**) and C300 (see **Paragraphs 5.7.190 – 5.7.191** above). To the north of Bonawe, the road is represented by Viewpoint 8. It passes along Gleann Salach through Barcaldine Forest and connects with the Argyll Coastal Route at its northern end.

5.6.222 With refence to the blade tip ZTV overlaid onto the visual receptors plan at **Figure 5.18**, theoretical visibility is patchy to the south of Taynuilt. The section of the road to the north of Viewpoint 8 (approximately 10 km to the north of the Proposed Development) exits the ZTV altogether. The greatest theoretical visibility is the section approximately 5 km in length between Viewpoint 8 and Bonawe on the northern shore of Loch Etive, when travelling in a southerly direction. Views in the direction of the Proposed Development are frequently filtered through intervening roadside vegetation, particularly on the shore of Loch Etive, but where open views are available, for approximately 200 m near to Blarcreen House, the proposed turbines would appear taller than the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines, but they would occupy a similar lateral extent of the view, giving rise to a **Medium** magnitude of change. This would result in a **Moderate** level of effect that is considered **Not Significant**.

B840

5.6.223 The B840 road passes along the south-eastern shore of Loch Awe, between the A819 at Cladich and the A816 Argyll Coastal Route at Carnasserie Castle. Theoretical visibility along this road of both the existing and proposed Beinn Ghlas turbines is variable and intermittent, with the section of greatest theoretical visibility represented by Viewpoint 10 (see **Figure 5.18**).

5.6.224 Lochside vegetation tends to filter views in the direction of the Proposed Development, however, where clear views are available from this road it is assessed that the magnitude of change to views would be **Medium Low**. This would result in a **Minor Moderate** level of effect that is considered **Not Significant**.

Scenic Routes

Argyll Coastal Route

5.6.225 The Argyll Coastal Route passes from north to south through the study area. The northern section of the route follows the A828 trunk road from Appin to Connel, where it turns west and follows the A85 to Oban. At Oban the route follows the A816 southwards, exiting the study area at Loch Melfort.

5.6.226 With reference to **Figure 5.4**, the section of the route to the southwest of Connel lies largely outside of the ZTV for the Proposed Development, and almost entirely outside for the existing Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm. The section of the route with greatest theoretical visibility of both existing and proposed wind farms lies to the north of Connel on the A828. When travelling in a southerly direction from Benderloch to North Connel, the focus of views is towards the coast to the west. Oblique views in the direction of the Proposed Development to the southeast are frequently filtered by roadside vegetation (see Viewpoint 13). Where filtered and glimpsed views are available from this section of road, the proposed turbines would be set back beyond the ridgeline. The magnitude of change is considered to be **Low** from this route, resulting in a **Minor Moderate** effect that is considered **Not Significant**.

Minor Roads

Minor Road between A828 and B845

5.6.227 The minor road between the A828 at North Connel and the B845 passes along the northern shore of Loch Etive, including adjacent to Ardchattan Priory (represented by **Viewpoint 7**). Theoretical visibility at the western end of this road, such as at **Viewpoint 6**, is patchy, however, the majority of the route has high ZTV coverage of both existing and proposed Beinn Ghlas wind farms (see **Figure 5.4**).

5.6.228 When travelling in an easterly direction along this road towards Ardchattan Priory, panoramic views are available across Loch Etive towards the craggy upland beyond. In many sections of this route, roadside and lochside vegetation filter views in the direction of the Proposed Development, however, where clear views are available from this roadnear Ardchattan Priory, within approximately 8.3 km of the nearest turbine, it is assessed that the magnitude of change to views would be **Medium**. This would result in a **Moderate** level of effect that is considered **Significant**.

Table 5.11: Summary Operational Effects on Roads

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significant
A Roads				
A85	Medium	Low	Minor Moderate	No
A819	Medium	Medium low	Minor Moderate	No
B Roads				
B845	High	Medium	Moderate	No
B840	Medium	Medium low	Minor Moderate	No
Scenic Routes				
Argyll Coastal Route	High	Low	Minor Moderate	No
Minor Roads				
Minor road between A828 and B845	Medium	Medium	**Moderate**	**Yes**

Designated Landscapes

5.6.229 As identified in the Preliminary Assessment of LCTs and Designations at **Technical Appendix 5.3**, the following designated landscapes within 20 km of the Proposed Development have the potential for significant effects. These include:

- Lynn of Lorn NSA, approximately 13.9 km northwest;
- Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA, approximately 15.3 km northeast;
- North Argyll LLA, approximately 3.8 km east;
- Loch Etive mountains WLA, approximately 7.5 km northeast; and
- Ardchattan Priory GDL, approximately 8.2 km east north.

5.6.230 Effects on the special qualities of NSAs are assessed in **Technical Appendix 5.7**. As summarised in this report, no significant effects are identified which would undermine the integrity of the SLQs of the NSAs to such a degree as to undermine the overall integrity of the designations. Visual effects within the Loch Etive mountains WLA are assessed in relation to Viewpoint 17 (Ben Starav) in **Technical Appendix 5.5**. Effects of LLAs and GDLs are assessed below. A summary of effects on designated landscapes is presented in **Table 5.12**.

Local Landscape Areas (LLA)

North Argyll LLA

5.6.231 The North Argyll LLA is situated approximately 3.8 km to the east of the Proposed Development at its closest point. It was designated in the Argyll and Bute adopted Local Development Plan 2015 as an Area of Panoramic Quality, an area of regional importance in terms of its landscape quality and was previously identified as a 'Regional Scenic Areas' in the former Strathclyde Structure Plan. In the 2022 NatureScot 'Landscape Indicator' publication 'LLQ3 Area of Local Landscape Designations', it states that:

"Local Landscape Areas (LLAs) are designated to safeguard and enhance the character and quality of a landscape which is valued locally or regionally. They can be used to promote understanding and awareness of the distinctive character and special qualities of local landscapes, or to safeguard and promote important local settings for outdoor recreation and tourism*."*

5.6.232 In relation to development impact on LLAs, the Argyll and Bute Local Landscape Development Plan 2 (LDP2) states that the LLAs *"are important not only for their physical landforms and scenic value, but also for the environmental assets that they represent*."

5.6.233 In order to consider the effects upon the North Argyll LLA, it is appropriate to consider the various assessments for the relevant identified landscape character types which occur within the LLA. Within the 20 km detailed study area the North Argyll LLA overlaps with the following LCTs identified in the ABLWECS 2017:

- LCT 2 High Tops;
- LCT 4 Mountain Glens;
- LCT 7c North Loch Awe Craggy Uplands;
- LCT 7d Lorn Craggy Upland;

- LCT 18 Lowland Ridges and Moss; and
- LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic.

5.6.234 LCT 7d Lorn Craggy Upland has been scoped out of the assessment, as explained in **Technical Appendix 5.3**.

5.6.235 The LLA is primarily covered by LCT 2 High Tops. Regarding the perceptual qualities of LCT 2, ABLWECS states that "An absence of built development and difficulty of access to the interior of these uplands give a strong sense of remoteness in places. The perception of wildness is accentuated by the ruggedness of the terrain. WLAs cover much of this landscape."

5.6.236 In terms of visual amenity of LCT 2 High Tops, ABLWECS states that "*These uplands These uplands are popular with walkers because of their highly natural and rugged character and the presence of 'Munro' and 'Corbett' hills. The higher summits offer extensive views into the less visited interior of the hills and the wider area. The West Highland Way is aligned on the eastern edge of this character type. In terms of views to this character type, these mountains are frequently visible in views from roads including main tourist routes and from settlements. Key views include those to these High Tops at the head of Loch Fyne, Upper Loch Creran seen from the A828 and Ben Cruachan seen extensively from the A85 and in the upper Loch Awe/Loch Etive area*."

5.6.237 Susceptibility to wind farm development located in landscapes beyond the LLA is determined by a combination of its intervisibility with the surrounding landscapes and its key visual qualities. The higher summits within the LLA with extensive views of the wider area are most susceptible to wind farm development outwith the LLA. From these locations, the susceptibility is considered high.

5.6.238 In relation to landscape value, the ABLWECS states that "*an APQ designation (subsequently referred to as an LLA) applies to the remainder of the High Tops character type*"' (outside of the Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA). It goes on to state that "*the special qualities of the APQ are likely to comprise dramatic mountain landform and the juxtaposition of these mountains with narrow lochs and the sea and with settled loch fringes which produce a richly scenic landscape composition*."

The value of the LLA is considered high on account of its designation for scenic value. Overall, the LLA is judged to have a high sensitivity.

5.6.239 With reference to **Figures 5.10** and **5.14,** theoretical visibility within the LLA is generally limited to the southern edge of the designation within 10 km of the Proposed Development, with isolated locations where views are channelled further north. There would be indirect effects on the LLA resulting from changes to views to the south.

5.6.240 Within LCT 2 High Tops, the Proposed Development would introduce a Medium magnitude of change, leading to indirect **Moderate effects** on the summit of Ben Cruachan (represented by Viewpoint 9) and other isolated locations within this part of the LLA, including that represented by Viewpoint 15 adjacent to Loch Etive. **Moderate** effects experienced within this part of the North Argyll LLA are **Not** considered **Significant** as the area would continue to be defined by its scenic, panoramic quality. There would therefore be no significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the LLA had been identified.

5.6.241 In other parts of the LLA, there are several areas of LCT 4 Mountain Glens, the nearest of which is represented by Viewpoint 18. Within the ABLWECS the heads of the glens are identified as the focal point for key views, which are located away from the Proposed Development site. Indirect effects experienced in these parts of the LLA would not impact upon these views. As set out in **Technical Appendix 5.5** however, there would be a medium magnitude of change to some views towards the Proposed Development, in proximity to Viewpoint 18, resulting in **Moderate** indirect effects, that are considered **Not Significant**.

5.6.242 There are two areas of LCT 7c within the LLA, one to the northwest of Loch Awe (approx. 4.5 – 9.5 km to the east of the Proposed Development), and one to the southeast of Loch Awe (approx. 8.5 – 22 km away). In relation to the visual amenity of LCT 7c North Loch Awe Craggy Uplands, the ABLWECS identifies the "The most dramatic views are those associated with Loch Awe towards the surrounding mountains, including the setting of Kilchurn Castle (a key focal point), the Loch Awe islands, views across and along the length of the main Loch and those framed by the steep-sided Pass of Brander." The view of Kilchurch Castle and the Loch Awe islands from LCT 7c are focused to the north or east (depending upon which side of Loch Awe the receptor is standing), away from the Proposed Development in the west. From the southeast side of Loch Awe, views along the main Loch are to the southwest or northeast, whilst views towards the Pass of Brander are to the northwest. These views may be affected by the introduction of the Proposed Development in their periphery, but it would not detract from the main focus. However, from the south side of the Pass of Brander, on the northwest side of Loch Awe, where open views are available towards the Proposed Development, a medium magnitude of change to views may be experienced within this part of the LLA, due to the relative proximity and elevation of the turbines. From this part of the LLA the resulting **Moderate** level of effect is considered **Not Significant** due to the existing view of the operational Beinn Ghlas turbines, which occupy a similar horizontal extent.

5.6.243 As mentioned earlier in the Chapter, in relation to the landscape values of LCT 18, as set out in the ABLWECS, "*the special qualities of this APQ are likely to relate to the wider setting and views to the Lynn of Lorn NSA"*. Views towards the NSA from the LLA are generally directed towards the west, away from the site of the Proposed Development in the south. There would therefore be no effects on these special qualities. Key views from this LCT are identified in the ABLWECS in locations outside of the LLA.

5.6.244 In relation to the visual amenity of LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic, the ABLWECS states that views are focused "*across water to opposite shores and upland backdrops"* (represented by Viewpoint 10). From this location the magnitude of change is considered medium low, due to the partial screening of the lower parts of the turbines by the intervening landform. The level of effect in this part of the LLA would be **Minor Moderate** and is considered **Not Significant.**

5.6.245 Whilst some localised indirect **Moderate** effects would occur within the LLA, within approximately 10 km of the Proposed Development, these effects would generally be experienced in directions away from the key views of the LLA. No significant effects are anticipated on the qualities for which the LLA had been identified.

5.6.246 Overall, it is not considered that there would be a significant effect on the integrity of the designation.

Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDL)

Ardchattan Priory GDL

5.6.247 The worst-case view which aims to be representative of those from Ardchattan Priory is represented by Viewpoint 7, located on the shore of Loch Etive at Ardchattan Jetty and beyond the GDL itself. As discussed in the Viewpoint Assessment at **Technical Appendix 5.5**, the greatest magnitude of change on views is assessed as **Medium**, resulting in a **Moderate Significant** effect and which is representative of visitors to Ardchattan Priory GDL at locations where they may be approaching or leaving the GDL, but outwith the extent of the designation.

5.6.248 The gardens of the GDL are located to the south and west of Ardchattan House and with no apparent designed relationship with Loch Etive or the views which could the been afforded towards it. The enclosure of the gardens of the GDL is formed by intervening walls, buildings and trees which place focus upon the relationship of the grounds with Ardchattan House. In instances where incidental views may be available from within the extent of the GDL, the magnitude of change is **Low**, as a worst-case, and the resulting level of effect considered to be **Minor Moderate, Not significant**.

Table 5.12: Summary of Operational Effects on Designated Landscapes

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significant
Local Landscape Areas (LLA)				
North Argyll LLA	High	Medium	Moderate	No
Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDL)				
Ardchattan Priory GDL	High	Low	Minor Moderate	No

Bold text indicates a significant effect

Visual Effects during Decommissioning

5.6.249 It is recognised that there would be some additional temporary effects during decommissioning of the proposed turbines over and above those assessed under the heading of 'Operational Effects' above. The additional effects resulting from decommissioning activities would be localised and relatively incidental when viewed in the context of the turbines being removed.

5.6.250 The effects on visual amenity would therefore decrease incrementally as decommissioning progresses and as more turbines and associated foundations and hardstanding are removed. Residents in nearby properties to the access route and people travelling along Glen Lonan Road and the A85 road to the north of the site will experience the greatest effects during decommissioning as vehicles transport infrastructure away.

5.6.251 The effects would be similar to those during the construction phase but in reverse.

5.6.252 Overall, it is considered that there would be a low magnitude of additional change (over that during the operation phase) for the reasons outlined above. This would result in no greater than a **Minor** temporary effect on the visual amenity. The decommissioning effects would be temporary in nature and are unlikely to all occur at the same time during this phase.

5.6.253 The decommissioning effects of the Proposed Development on visual amenity are deemed to be **Not Significant**.

5.7 Mitigation

5.7.1 As discussed in best practice guidance for EIA, mitigation measures may include:

- avoidance of effects;
- reduction in magnitude of effects; and
- compensation for effects (which may include enhancements to offset any adverse effects).

5.7.2 The primary mitigation adopted in relation to the Proposed Development is embedded within the design of the Proposed Development and relates to the consideration that was given to avoiding and minimising landscape and visual effects during the evolution of the Proposed Development layout. This is sometimes referred to as 'mitigation by design'. A detailed discussion of the design evolution and the iterative process underpinning it is provided in **Chapter 2** of this EIA Report and the Design Statement. Design evolution is summarised below, in so far as landscape and visual matters have influenced the Proposed Development.

5.7.3 Based on general good practice design principles (as set out in SNH / NatureScot guidelines) and an analysis of site-specific opportunities and constraints, the wind farm layout has evolved to take into consideration a number of landscape and visual and other constraints whilst maintaining a viable development.

5.7.4 A design rationale was adopted to avoid outliers or excessive overlapping turbines to minimise visual confusion and ensure a balanced / compact array from key views in the local landscape. The proposed turbines have been positioned within a bowl within the wider landscape, avoiding areas of higher ground.

5.7.5 Appropriate offsets from all properties and settlements, have been maintained to ensure that no property would experience an overbearing visual impact such that it became an unattractive place to live.

5.7.6 The above principles have been applied as a number of iterations to the design were made. Taking all other engineering and environmental constraints into account, the final layout of the turbines on site was specifically designed to achieve a balanced array of turbines when viewed from the surrounding landscape. The design considerations and design evolution are set out within the Design and Access Statement (which supports the application). In considering the layout of other structures and ancillary features of the Proposed Development, the design has sought to utilise existing forestry tracks where possible.

5.7.7 The turbines themselves will be painted a grey colour with a low reflectivity semi-matt finish (or similar as agreed with the A&BC). More recently constructed wind turbines have been a mid-grey tone, which reduces the distance over which turbines are visible, especially in dull weather or low light conditions.

5.7.8 These measures are proposed as embedded mitigation. They are likely to reduce the magnitude of landscape and visual effects particularly for distant receptors.

5.7.9 In the long term, when the Proposed Development is decommissioned, the turbines would be removed from site, and the development footprint would be restored in accordance with a restoration plan to be approved by the local planning authority.

5.8 Cumulative Effects

5.8.1 It is acknowledged that this list is continually evolving and therefore 19th May 2025 was used as an effective 'cut-off' date after which no further research was undertaken on the evolving status of wind energy development in the study area, and the CLVIA reflects the status of each wind farm at the time of this date.

5.8.2 In order that the assessment remains focused on those other schemes which have the greatest potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects, it was deemed appropriate to scope out any turbines under 50 m, or any turbines between 50 m and 80 m which lie over 10 km from the nearest proposed turbine. Projects that are at scoping or at the pre-planning stage have not been considered within this section due to the uncertainty that these projects will come forward and the lack of adequate information about project details. This is in accordance with the approach advocated in GLVIA3. Additional proposed projects at scoping stage are considered separately within **Technical Appendix 5.6**.

5.8.3 The cumulative sites within 35 km are shown in **Table 5.13** and illustrated in **Figure 5.27** and cumulative sites within the agreed 20 km detailed study area are shown on **Figure 5.28**.

5.8.4 At the time of preparing this LVIA, there were eight other wind farms within the detailed 20 km cumulative study area which were either operational, consented, under construction or in planning (**Table 5.13**). As a breakdown of these by status: three are operational, two were consented or under construction and three were subject of a valid planning application (including those at appeal).

Table 5.13: Other Wind Farms within 20 km of the Proposed Development

Site	Blade Tip Height	Number of Turbines	Distance and Direction
Operational			
Barran Caltum	54 m	2	9.1 km west northwest
Carraig Gheal	9 at 110 m 11 at 125 m	20	3.5 km south
An Suidhe	80 m	23	16.4 km south southeast
Consented or Under Construction			
Blarghour	180 m	14	11.5 km southeast
Ladyfield Renewable Energy Park	180 m	13	14.8 km east southeast
In Planning			
An Carr Dubh	180 m	13	12.8 km south southeast

Site	Blade Tip Height	Number of Turbines	Distance and Direction
Corr Chnoc	200 m	12	4.1 km west
Cruach Clenamacrie	200 m	6	4.1 km northwest
Eredine	200 m	22	18.3 km south

5.8.5 The primary purpose of the cumulative impact assessment is therefore to consider the additional effects that might arise as a result of the Proposed Development if the other consented and in planning (awaiting determination) schemes were also operational. In addition, this cumulative assessment also includes a further consideration of the overall totality of the effect, i.e. in-combination effects when the Proposed Development is considered alongside the other operational or proposed schemes across the study area.

5.8.6 The baseline in the cumulative impact assessment is therefore extended to consider other schemes that are not yet present in the landscape but are at various stages in the planning process. Two scenarios are considered which reflect the different degrees of certainty that these schemes will be constructed:

- Scenario 1 assumes that other consented (but as yet unbuilt) wind farms are operational;
- Scenario 2 extends this further to assume that all schemes in planning are also operational. In reality, it is possible that all other schemes that are in planning may not be approved and constructed but this scenario assumes all planning schemes are operational as this presents the 'worst case'.

5.8.7 In addition to these two scenarios, a third scenario has also been considered in **Technical Appendix 5.6.** Scenario 3 extends this further to assume that all projects currently in scoping are also operational. In reality, it is possible that all other projects that currently at scoping may not be approved and constructed but this scenario assumes all projects are operational as this presents the 'worst case'.

Cumulative ZTVs and Wireframes

5.8.8 Cumulative ZTVs (CZTVs) have been produced to illustrate the theoretical visibility of various other wind farms and combinations of wind farms with the Proposed Development.

5.8.9 It should be reiterated that ZTVs imply a much greater geographical extent of influence on the landscape and views of it than would actually be the case. It therefore follows that the CZTVs also exaggerate the actual impacts of the turbines on landscape character and visual amenity as they do not take account of vegetation or buildings in the landscape, which may restrict the nature and extent of views.

5.8.10 CZTVs have been produced for the following combinations of existing, consented, and other wind farm sites in planning:

<u>Operational</u>

- Group 1 – Barran Caltum (**Figure 5.29**)
- Group 2 – Carraig Gheal (**Figure 5.30**)

- Group 3 – An Suidhe (**Figure 5.31**)

Consented or Under Construction

- Group 4 - Blarghour (**Figure 5.32**)
- Group 5 – Ladyfield Renewable Energy Park (**Figure 5.33**)

In Planning

- Group 6 – An Carr Dubh (**Figure 5.34**)
- Group 7 – Corr Chnoc (**Figure 5.35**)
- Group 8 - Cruach Glenamacrie (**Figure 5.36**)
- Group 9 – Eredine (**Figure 5.37**)

5.8.11 In addition, as part of **Technical Appendix 5.6**, CZTVs have also been produced for the following wind farm in scoping:

- Group 9 – Musdale (**Figure 5.77**)
- Group 10 – Barachander (**Figure 5.78**)

5.8.12 Cumulative wireline drawings have been produced for each of the 19 viewpoints, including operational, consented, and other wind farms in planning:

- Viewpoint 1: Minor road, Lonan (**Figure 5.38**)
- Viewpoint 2: Clach Bhadan (**Figure 5.39**)
- Viewpoint 3: Taynuilt Church (**Figure 5.40**)
- Viewpoint 4: Creag Ghlasrach (**Figure 5.41**)
- Viewpoint 5: Minor road near Barran an Fhraoich, east of Oban (**Figure 5.42**)
- Viewpoint 6: Achnacairn (**Figure 5.43**)
- Viewpoint 7: Ardchattan Priory (**Figure 5.44**)
- Viewpoint 8: B845 (**Figure 5.45**)
- Viewpoint 9: Ben Cruachan (**Figure 5.46**)
- Viewpoint 10: Portsonachan (**Figure 5.47**)
- Viewpoint 11: B840 layby nr Cladich (**Figure 5.48**)
- Viewpoint 12: A816 layby / parking near Knipoch (**Figure 5.49**)
- Viewpoint 13: A828, grass verge (**Figure 5.50**)
- Viewpoint 14: Beinn Bhreac (**Figure 5.51**)
- Viewpoint 15: Footpath Ardmaddy, Loch Etive (**Figure 5.52**)
- Viewpoint 16: Achnacroish, Lisomre (**Figure 5.53**)
- Viewpoint 17: Ben Starav (**Figure 5.54**)
- Viewpoint 18: Bonawe Jetty, Taynuilt (**Figure 5.55**)
- Viewpoint 19: Glen Lonan Road at track leading to Fishers Bothy (**Figure 5.56**)

5.8.13 **Table 5.14** provides a summary of cumulative visibility at each of the 19 viewpoints.

Table 5.14: Summary of Combined Cumulative Visual Effects by Viewpoint Location

Viewpoint Location	Operational	Consented	In Planning	Scoping
1 – Minor Road, Lonan	-	-	O	-
2 – Clach Bhaden, Core Path	O	-	-	X
3 – Taynuilt Church	-	-	X	X
4 – Creag Ghlasrach	X	-	X	X
5 – Minor road near Barran an Fhraoich, east of Oban	X	-	X	X
6 - Achnacairn	O	-	X	X
7 – Ardchattan Priory	-	-	X	X
8 – B845	X	X	X	X
9 – Ben Cruachan	X	O	X	X
10 - Portsonachan	X	-	-	X
11 – A819 layby nr Cladich	X	-	X	X
12 – A816 layby / parking near Knipoch	-	-	X	-
13 – A828, grass verge	O	-	X	X
14 – Beinn Bhreac	X	X	X	X
15 – Core Path C517(b) – Inveraw to Glenkinglass, Loch Etive	-	-	X	-
16 – Achnacroish Lismore	X	-	X	X
17 – Ben Starav	X	-	X	X
18 – Bonawe Jetty, Taynuilt	-	-	X	X
19 – Glen Lonan Road	-	-	X	O

(Key: X = Simultaneously, O = In Succession and '-' = No Combined Visibility)

Cumulative Effects on Landscape Character

5.8.15 It is acknowledged that wherever more than one wind farm is visible at any given location in the landscape, there will be a greater overall or cumulative effect on landscape character than if just one wind farm was visible in the landscape.

5.8.16 However, it is also noted that in any given landscape where turbines are already present, the additional effect on landscape character of introducing further turbines may not be as significant as the initial introduction of turbines. Furthermore, in general, the greater the

number of turbines in the baseline landscape, the less significant the addition of further turbines may be in landscape character terms as the landscape will be more heavily characterised by turbines in the baseline situation.

5.8.17 It has been assessed in the assessment of the solus effects of the Proposed Development set out earlier in this chapter that there would be some limited significant effects on landscape character as a result of the Proposed Development. The purpose of this section of the cumulative assessment is therefore to identify whether there would be any change to the assessments of significance previously set out in relation to the Proposed Development, once the other wind turbines which are not already operational are considered to form part of the baseline landscape.

5.8.18 Generally speaking, such additional cumulative effects will arise when the addition of the Proposed Development to the baseline results in an increase in effects, when viewed in combination with the other wind turbines forming part of the baseline landscape.

5.8.19 The assessment is considered in two parts, firstly in relation to the scenario where the additional consented developments are also considered to be operational and then secondly the scenario where the consented and in-planning schemes are also considered to be operational.

Cumulative Scenario 1 – Other consented schemes are also considered to be operational

5.8.20 In the first cumulative scenario considered (where other consented wind farms are also considered to be operational), there would be two additional wind farms, Blarghour situated approximately 11.5 km to the southeast, and Ladyfield Renewable Energy Park, situated approximately 14.8 km to the east southeast.

5.8.21 Blarghour wind farm is situated within LCT 7 Craggy Upland, as is the Proposed Development. The assessment of the solus effects of the Proposed Development identified a **High** magnitude of change and a **Moderate** significant effect on LCT 7 extending to approximately 1 km of the Proposed Development. Effects beyond this were considered **Not Significant**.

5.8.22 Ladyfield Renewable Energy Park is situated within LCT 6a Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic. As set out in **Technical Appendix 5.3** Assessment of LCTs and with reference to **Figure 5.14** there is very limited theoretical visibility from this LCT and therefore it has been scoped out of the assessment.

5.8.23 If Blarghour were already present in the baseline landscape, along with the existing Beinn Ghlas and Carraig Gheal wind farms (see Viewpoint 8 at **Figure 5.41** and 14 at **Figure 5.47**), the influence of it on the character of the landscape would be such that the magnitude of change brought about by the Proposed Development would be similar to that described in the original assessment. The level of effect would continue to be **Not Significant** beyond 1 km.

Cumulative Scenario 2 – Other in-planning schemes are considered to also be operational

5.8.24 In the second cumulative scenario considered (where other schemes in planning are also considered to be consented and operational) there would be an additional four wind farms, An Carr Dubh situated approximately 12.8 km to the south southeast, Corr Chnoc

situated approximately 4.1 km to the west, Cruach Clenamacrie situated approximately 4.1 km to the northwest, and Eredine situated approximately 18.3 km to the south.

5.8.25 An Carr Dubh and Eredine wind farms are situated within the southern part of LCT 7 Craggy Upland to the south-east of Loch Awe. Of the Corr Chnoc wind turbines, 11 are situated within the northern part of LCT 7 Craggy Upland along with the Proposed Development. The remaining oneCorr Chnoc turbine is located just outside the boundary, within LCT 7a Craggy Upland with Settled Glens. Given the location of An Carr Dubh and Eredine wind farms in a broadly similar direction from the Proposed Development as Blaghour and their increased distance, it is considered that the effects on landscape character would be the same as those identified for Scenario 1.

5.8.26 If An Carr Dubh and Eredine wind farms were already present in the baseline landscape, along with the existing Beinn Ghlas and Carraig Gheal wind farms, as illustrated at Viewpoints 8 (**Figure 5.45**), 14 (**Figure 5.51**) and 17 (**Figure 5.54**), the influence of them on the character of the landscape would be such that the magnitude of change brought about by the Proposed Development would be similar to that described in the original assessment.

5.8.27 If Corr Chnoc were already present in the baseline landscape, within proximity to the existing Beinn Ghlas wind farm, the existing influence of it on the character of the landscape would slightly reduce the additional effect of the Proposed Development to a **Medium** magnitude of change. This would continue to result in a **Moderate** level of effect to approximately 1 km that would be considered **Not Significant**. Beyond approximately 1 km, the magnitude of change would reduce to low and the level of effect to **Minor Moderate** and **Not Significant.** Beyond approximately 2 km, it is considered that the effects on landscape character would be the same as those identified for Scenario 1.

5.8.28 Cruach Clenamacrie Wind Farm and one of the Corr Chnoc wind turbines are situated within LCT 7a Craggy Upland with Settled Glens, with a fifth on the boundary with LCT 7. Currently the two-turbine wind energy development at Barran Caltum is the only wind farm within this LCT. If both these schemes were also already present in the baseline landscape, the influence of them on the character of LCT 7a would slightly reduce the additional effect of the Proposed Development to a low magnitude of change and a **Minor Moderate** effect that is **Not Significant** within 6 km. Above approximately 6 km the magnitude of change would be **Very Low** and the effect **Minor** and **Not Significant**.

5.8.29 For all other assessments of landscape character effects there would be no change to the significant effects already identified in the main assessment.

Totality of the Combined Effect of All Schemes

5.8.30 Consideration has also been given to the overall totality of the effect, when the Proposed Development is considered alongside the other operational, consented and proposed schemes. Of most relevance to this, is a consideration of the overall impact on the four LCTs where a significant effect was identified in the main assessment, which cover the 5 km area around the Proposed Development and isolated locations to 10 km to the north and the southeast: LCT 7 Craggy Upland; LCT 7a Craggy Upland with Settled Glens; LCT 4 Mountain Glens; and LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic.

5.8.31 The access point to the Proposed Development is situated within LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic, with the majority of the access route situated within LCT 7a Craggy Upland with Settled

Glens. The existing Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm is located within LCT 7 along with the existing wind farms at Carraig Gheal and An Suidhe, which all introduce direct effects on the LCT.

5.8.32 The consented Blarghour wind farm and most of the in planning Corr Chnoc wind farm are situated within LCT 7, which would introduce direct effects close to their locations, albeit Blarghour would be situated between Carraig Gheal and An Suidhe. The 'in-planning' An Carr Dubh and Eredine wind farms are also sited within LCT 7. The introduction of these schemes would extend significant direct effects close to their locations and would introduce significant indirect effects across neighbouring LCTs beyond the immediate vicinity of the turbines. Considered collectively, the direct effects on the character of the LCT introduced by these other schemes would only reinforce the existing characteristic of this landscape as one 'with wind turbines'.

5.8.33 The consented Ladyfield Renewable Energy Park is situated within the neighbouring LCT 6a Loch Fyne Upland Forest Floor Mosaic, which would introduce significance indirect effects on LCT 7. However, it would not be the case that wind energy would become the single dominant characteristic of the LCT so as to prevent an understanding and appreciation of the character of the LCT.

5.8.34 The in planning Cruach Clenamacrie wind farm and a small part of Corr Chnoc wind farm would be situated within LCT 7a Craggy Upland with Settled Glens along with the existing wind turbines at Barran Caltum. The introduction of these schemes would extend significant direct effects close to their locations and would introduce significant indirect effects across neighbouring LCTs beyond the immediate vicinity of the turbines. Considered collectively, the direct effects on the character of the LCT introduced by these other schemes would only reinforce the existing characteristic of this landscape as one 'with wind turbines'.

5.8.35 There are no proposed or consented schemes within LCT 4 Mountain Glens or LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic, in which indirect significant effects were identified as a result of the Proposed Development. When the combined effect of these other schemes is considered, there would be no additional effects over and above those identified for the Proposed Development. Wind energy development beyond the boundary of the LCT would not become the single dominant characteristic of the LCT to prevent an understanding and appreciation of its wider underlying characteristics.

Cumulative Effects on Views and Visual Amenity

5.8.36 As with cumulative landscape character effects, it is acknowledged that the addition of the Proposed Development to the baseline has the potential to result in an increase in effects, when viewed in combination with other wind turbines forming part of the visual baseline.

5.8.37 However, it is also noted that in any given view where turbines are already present, the additional effect on visual amenity of introducing further turbines may not have as greater effect as the initial introduction of turbines. Furthermore, in general the greater the number of turbines in the baseline view, the less significant the addition of further turbines may be. It is also recognised however that a slight additional effect on top of an existing effect, which at present is not quite significant, could in theory tip the balance such that the overall effect is deemed to be significant. Again, generally speaking, such additional cumulative effects will arise where a visual receptor would now lie between a cumulative wind farm in one direction and the Proposed Development in a different direction, such

that the visibility of turbines as a result of the addition of the Proposed Development would become notable in multiple, usually directly opposite, directions.

Cumulative 'in combination' visual effects

5.8.38 An 'in combination' cumulative visual effect is the term used to refer to the situation where a viewer can see one or more further wind farms, in addition to the Proposed Development, whilst standing in the one location. These effects are either 'simultaneous', where the viewer can see the additional turbines in the same angle of view, or 'successive', where the viewer can see the additional turbines in a different angle of view by turning their head.

Cumulative Scenario 1 – Other consented schemes are also considered to be operational

5.8.39 In the first cumulative scenario considered (where other consented wind farms are also considered to be operational), there would be two additional wind farms, Blarghour situated approximately 11.5 km to the southeast, and Ladyfield Renewable Energy Park situated approximately 14.8 km to the east southeast. The addition of these schemes would serve to extend wind energy as a visual component within the part of the landscape between Loch Awe and Loch Fyne, beyond the existing An Suidhe Wind Farm.

5.8.40 There are limited locations where the Proposed Development would be seen simultaneously with Blarghour or Ladyfield Renewable Energy Park, such as in proximity to the three wind farms, and in long range views to the north, such as Viewpoints 8 (**Figure 5.44**) and 14 (**Figure 5.50**), and successively to the northeast, such as Viewpoint 9.

5.8.41 If these schemes formed part of the visual baseline against which the Proposed Development were to be constructed, there would be no change to the previous assessment of effects on visual amenity which the Proposed Development would bring about.

Cumulative Scenario 2 – Other in-planning schemes are also considered to be operational

5.8.42 In the second cumulative scenario considered (where other schemes in planning are also considered to be consented and operational) three additional schemes would comprise An Carr Dubh situated approximately 12.8 km to the south southeast, Corr Chnoc situated approximately 4.1 km to the west, Cruach Clenamacrie situated approximately 4.1km to the northwest and Eredine situated approximately 18.3 km to the south. Corr Chnoc and Cruach Clenamacrie would be seen in the same part of the landscape and at a similar distance, while An Carr Dubh and Eredine would be at a greater distance.

5.8.43 The location of Corr Chnoc and Cruach Clenamacrie would mean there would be simultaneous views from a broad range of locations over 5 km away, especially from the west through the north to the northeast, including viewpoints 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, and 18, and from more distant locations such as viewpoints 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17. There would also be successive views from other locations within relative proximity such from viewpoints 4 and 19. The location of An Carr Dubh and Eredine wind farms at a greater distance would give rise to a limited number of simultaneous views from elevated locations to the north, such as from viewpoints 8 and 14.

5.8.44 If these schemes formed part of the visual baseline against which the Proposed Development were to be constructed, there would be some changes to the previous assessment of effects (see **Table 5.8**) on visual amenity which the Proposed Development would bring about. At viewpoint 7 (see **Figure 5.44**) the **Moderate** effect identified in the solus assessment would be considered **Not Significant**. This is due to the presence of Cruach Clenamacrie wind farm, which would appear closer and more prominent in the views.

Cumulative 'sequential' effects

5.8.45 A 'sequential' cumulative visual effect is the term used to refer to the situation where a viewer is able to see one or more further wind farms in addition to the Proposed Development, whilst travelling along a linear route. This could be either on foot, whilst walking on a footpath, or by bicycle or car along the public highway. The assessment of visual receptors at **Technical Appendix 5.4** identified the following routes had the potential to experience significant effects as a result of the proposed scheme and these are also used as the basis for the cumulative assessment:

- C171 – Kilmore – Loch Nant;
- C160 - Taynuilt to Oban;
- C523 - Loch Nant, Loch Aweside;
- C300 - Kilchrenan to Taynuilt;
- C157 - Taynuilt – Airds;
- C158 – Achlonan to Taynuilt Jetty Airds;
- C159 - Shore Cottage, Brochroy to Inverawe;
- C526 - Inverawe to Dun Mor;
- C517 - Inverawe to Glenkinglass;
- C156 - Bonawe to Glen Etive;
- NCN Route 78;
- A85;
- A819;
- B845;
- B840;
- Argyll Coastal Route (A828); and
- Minor road between A828 and B845.

5.8.46 In the first cumulative scenario considered (where other consented wind farms are also considered to be operational), this would include Blarghour situated approximately 11.5 km to the southeast and Ladyfield Renewable Energy Park situated approximately 14.8 km to the east southeast.

5.8.47 With reference to the cumulative ZTV at **Figure 5.32**, views of these additional schemes may be experienced from the same part of the B845 as the Proposed Development, however there would be very limited parts of Core Path C158 where both schemes would be visible and no parts of Core Path C158. Given the greater distance of Blarghour and Ladyfield Renewable Energy Park from these routes than the Proposed Development, it is assessed that the addition of these schemes would not introduce any significant effects or materially change the findings of the main assessment (see **Table 5.10** and **Table 5.11**).

5.8.48 The second cumulative scenario would see the addition of An Carr Dubh, Corr Chnoc, Cruach Clenamacrie and Eredine. The location of Cruach Clenamacrie and Corr Chnoc wind farms would mean that there would be sequential cumulative views with the Proposed Development from core path C158 when travelling south from Taynuilt Jetty, from the minor road to the west of the B845, and when travelling south on the B845 towards Bonawe. The significant effect that was identified from the minor road in the solus assessment would be considered not significant due to the presence of existing turbines in views. The location of the Ann Carr Dubh and Eredine schemes at a greater distance from the routes, would not introduce any significant effects or materially change the findings of the main assessment (see **Table 5.10** and **Table 5.11**).

5.8.49 The location of the Corr Chnoc and Cruach Clenamacrie wind farms in proximity to National Cycle Route 78 would introduce significant cumulative sequential effects, but these would occur in the absence of the Proposed Development. Any further significant cumulative effects to other routes would not be a result of the Proposed Development.

Totality of the Combined Effects of all schemes

5.8.50 Consideration has also been given to the overall totality of the cumulative visual effect, when the Proposed Development is considered alongside the other operational, consented and proposed schemes.

5.8.51 It has already been identified in the main assessment that the Proposed Development introduces significant effects on a number of visual receptors located approximately within 5 km of the proposed turbines (see **.**

5.8.52 Table 5.9

5.8.53 When the combined effects of the other operational, consented and proposed schemes are considered, the addition of the Proposed Development would not result in the overall cumulative impact of turbines being dominant or oppressive in views. This is due to the separation distances between the schemes. Where seen simultaneously and at longer-range such as at viewpoint 8, the additional schemes would be seen at considerable distance.

Summary of Cumulative Effects

5.8.54 It is acknowledged that wherever more than one wind farm is visible at any given location in the landscape, there will be a greater overall or cumulative effect on landscape character than if just one wind farm was visible in the landscape. Likewise, it is acknowledged that the more wind turbines that are constructed in any given landscape, the greater the magnitude of overall (or combined) change to the landscape character.

5.8.55 When the other consented wind farms (Blarghour and Ladyfield Renewable Energy Park) are considered to already form part of the baseline, it is assessed that the significant landscape character effects on LCT 7 Craggy Upland which the Proposed Development would introduce, would not change.

5.8.56 When in-planning schemes are added into the baseline (An Carr Dubh, Corr Chnoc, Cruach Clenamacrie and Eredine), it has been assessed that the additional effect of the Proposed Development on landscape character would be lower than in Scenario 1, which included only the consented schemes. This would reduce the significant effects identified in the solus assessment and Scenario 1 to not significant.

5.8.57 In terms of the totality of effect on landscape character, it is recognised that the combined overall effect on the character of LCT 7 Craggy Upland would be significant and that collectively the character area would be reinforced as one in which the presence of occasional wind farms was a recognised characteristic feature. However, there would remain adequate spacing between the Proposed Development and the other schemes so that the existing understanding and appreciation of the existing character of the LCT would remain intact.

5.8.58 As with cumulative landscape character effects, it is acknowledged that wherever more than one wind farm is visible in any given view, there will be a greater overall or cumulative effect on the view or visual amenity than if just one wind farm was visible in the landscape and that the more wind turbines that are constructed, the greater the magnitude of overall (or combined) change to the view or visual amenity that prevailed prior to the introduction of the first turbines.

5.8.59 When each of the other consented wind farms are added into the assessment such that they are considered to already form part of the baseline it is considered that there would be no change to the previous assessment of the effects on visual amenity which the Proposed Development would bring about.

5.8.60 If the other in-planning schemes also formed part of the baseline, there would be a reduction to the level of visual effects which the Proposed Development would introduce from Viewpoints 7, 18, core path C158, parts of the B845 and the minor road between the A828 and B845 such that the effects would not be considered significant. Corr Chnoc and Cruach Clenamacrie wind farms would introduce additional significant sequential

effects to National Cycle Route 78, but this would occur in the absence of the Proposed Development.

5.8.61 In terms of the totality of effect on visual amenity, it is not considered that the addition of the Proposed Development would be such as to result in the overall cumulative impact of turbines being dominant or oppressive in views experienced at various points within the area.

5.9 Summary of Effects

5.9.1 This chapter presents the findings of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and identifies the likely significant effects arising from the Proposed Development on landscape character and visual amenity. It has been informed by field visits carried out at different times of the year, at different stages of the design scheme and by consultation undertaken with statutory consultees.

5.9.2 The existing landscape and visual baselines have been documented and presented at **Section 5.5** and the assessment has been supported by figures and visualisations (presented in **Volume 2** of the EIA Report) produced to NatureScot Visualisation Standards that show representative views from locations consulted on at Scoping that illustrate views existing and proposed views from a select number of viewpoint locations.

5.9.3 The design of the Proposed Development is the result of a considered iterative process which has sought to minimise landscape and visual effects whilst achieving the technical and commercial requirements to ensure project viability.

5.9.4 Appropriate offsets from all properties and settlements have been maintained to ensure that no property would experience an overbearing visual impact.

5.9.5 As with almost any onshore wind farm development it is recognised that the Proposed Development would give rise to some localised significant effects on landscape character and visual amenity.

5.9.6 The Proposed Development would result in direct and significant effects on the part of the landscape character type within which the Proposed Development is located, within LCT 7 Craggy Upland to approximately 1 km.

5.9.7 When compared with a theoretical zero future baseline (in which the existing Beinn Ghlas wind farm has been decommissioned to form a blank canvas) direct significant effects would extend to approximately 4 km.

5.9.8 No indirect significant effects were found within other LCTs when assessed against the current baseline. However, when assessed against a theoretical zero baseline, significant effects would also extend to approximately 4 km within LCT 7a Craggy Upland with Settled Glens, up to 7.5 km within LCT 4 Mountain Glens, and up to 10 km within LCT 2 High Tops and LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic.

5.9.9 In relation to visual effects, it is accepted that the Proposed Development would be visible from various nearby properties, settlements as well as the surrounding road network and footpath network.

5.9.10 It has been assessed that there would be significant visual effects experienced at two of the 19 representative viewpoints, as summarised above in

5.9.11 **Table** 5.8**8**, located within approximately 8.3 km from the nearest proposed turbine. When compared to a theoretical zero baseline, this number would increase to six.

5.9.12 Of the nine properties located within 3 km of a proposed turbine, the assessment found that residents at no single property (or groups of properties) would experience a significant visual effect on the view from a part of their house, garden, or principal access route.

5.9.13 When assessed against the current baseline scenario, including the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines, it was found that properties within the cluster around Balindore (3.8 km north northeast of the nearest proposed turbine) would potentially experience significant visual effects. When compared to a zero-baseline scenario, significant effects would extend to also include some properties within Taynuilt (approx. 4.8 km away). It is not the case that any of the effects would be of such a scale as to become dominant or overbearing.

5.9.14 The assessment of routes found that receptors would experience significant visual effects from a very limited part of Core Path C171 – Kilmore – Loch Nant. When assessed against the zero-baseline scenario, two further core paths were found to be subject to significant effects (Core Path C517 - Inverawe to Glenkinglass and C158 – Achnlonan to Taynuilt Jetty).

5.9.15 The assessment of roads found that receptors would experience significant effects from a section of the minor road between the A828 and the B845 near to Ardchattan Priory. In the theoretical zero-baseline scenario significant effects would be experienced from a section of the B845 to the north of Loch Etive.

5.9.16 **Technical Appendix 5.7,** which assessed the effects on the special qualities of NSAs, identified no significant effects which would undermine the overall integrity of the SLQs of an NSA to such a degree as to undermine their overall integrity.

5.9.17 The assessment of designated landscapes identified no significant effects from the North Argyll LLA. However, in the zero-baseline scenario isolated significant effects were identified within approx. 10 km of the Proposed Development. It is not considered that the addition of the Proposed Development would result in a significant effect on the integrity of the designation.

5.9.18 In both the existing and theoretical zero baseline scenarios, in relation to cumulative effects on landscape character, there would be no change to the extent of significant effects on LCT 7 Craggy Upland, if, individually, the other consented and in-planning schemes formed part of the baseline against which the effects of the Proposed Development were assessed.

5.9.19 In terms of the totality of effect on landscape character, there would be a significant overall effect on the character of LCT 7 and that collectively the character of a landscape in which the presence of occasional wind farms was a recognised characteristic feature would be reinforced. However, the spacing between wind farms would enable the continued understanding and appreciation of the existing character of the LCT.

5.9.20 There would be no additional cumulative effects over and above those identified in the zero baseline scenario on LCT 7a Craggy Upland with Settled Glens, LCT 20 Rocky Mosaic, LCT 2 High Tops or LCT 4 Mountain Glens due to its location relative to the other consented and in-planning schemes.

5.9.21 In relation to cumulative visual effects, when each of the other consented and in-planning wind farms are added into the assessment there would be no change to the identified visual effects resulting from the Proposed Development.

5.9.22 In terms of the totality of effect on visual amenity, it is considered that the addition of the Proposed Development would not result in the overall cumulative impact of turbines being dominant or oppressive in views experienced at various points within the area.

5.10 Conclusion

5.10.1 This LVIA has demonstrated that any significant effects that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development are limited and would be highly localised in their nature, restricted to within 8.3 km of the Site. This is in part due to the appropriate design mitigation which has been applied to the Proposed Development, including the deletion of turbines from the layout and the consideration given to an appropriate turbine height for the Site. It is also a function of the Proposed Development comprising of a repowering of an existing wind farm, such that existing infrastructure has been reused wherever possible. Further details of this design mitigation is set out within the Design and Access Statement which forms part of the wider application submission.

5.11 References

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