

Beaufort Wind Limited

Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm Repowering

Environmental Impact Assessment Report (Volume 4)

Appendix 5.7 – Effects on the Special Qualities of National Scenic Areas

663547







RSK GENERAL NOTES

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 This Appendix provides an assessment of the potential for effects on the Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) of the Lynn of Lorn and Ben Nevis and Glen Coe National Scenic Areas (NSAs).
- 1.1.2 In January 2025 NatureScot, together with the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) and the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) published their Guidance 'Special Landscape Qualities guidance on assessing effects'1.
- 1.1.3 The SLQs were defined in 2009 when SNH (now NatureScot) extended their earlier work from 2007/2008 defining the SLQs of Scotland's National Scenic Areas (NSAs) to include the whole of the National Parks. Reports setting out the SLQs of each of the NSAs and National Parks were published in 2010.
- 1.1.4 The assessment methodology follows a four-step approach:
 - Step 1 Review and Describe the Proposal a summary of the project description;
 - Step 2 Identify the SLQs that may be affected by the proposal;
 - Step 3 Assessment of Effects on SLQs and design objectives; and
 - Step 4 Summary of Significant Effects on SLQs .
- 1.1.5 The assessment methodology also suggests the use of a tabular approach to the recording the assessment to aid transparency.

¹ https://www.nature.scot/doc/special-landscape-qualities-guidance-assessing-effects accessed June 2015



2 LYNN OF LORN NSA

- 2.1.1 The Lynn of Lorn NSA is located approximately 13.9 km to the northwest of the Proposed Development. This NSA covers the Isle of Lismore, the small islands, and open waters of the Lynn of Lorn and areas of Appin and Benderloch.
- 2.1.2 SNH (now NatureScot) Commissioned Report No. 374 "The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas" ² defined the SLQs which are as follows:

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.

² SNH (2010) Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No. 374. The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas. Available at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/naturescot-commissioned-report-374-special-qualities-national-scenic-areas



Assessment of Impacts on Special Landscape Qualities from: Lynn of Lorn NSA

Step 1: Review and Describe The Proposal

The Proposed Development will principally comprise the following visible features which may influence the perception of SLQs:

- Up to seven wind turbines of approximately 4.8 MW each, with a maximum blade tip height of up to 149.9 m;
- Hardstanding areas at the base of each turbine, with a permanent area of approximately 1,400 m2;
- Upgrading of four existing road junctions to support construction and abnormal road traffic;
- 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 and use of existing track for access to the first
 construction compound. An internal network of new onsite access tracks and upgrade of existing Wind Farm access track.
 The total length of the Site Access and Internal Access Tracks would be approximately 12.83 km of which 2.71 km is new
 access track (1.6 km floating) with associated new watercourse crossings and 8.52 km is existing access track and
 watercourse crossings which would need to be upgraded. In total there would be 4 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.

Temporary construction compound.

(N.B. This is also included in **Section 5.6** of the LVIA Chapter).

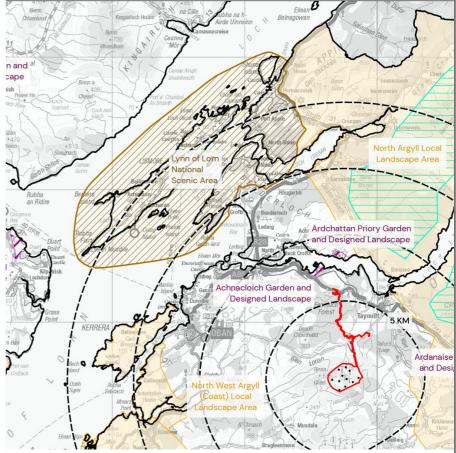
The main elements of the Proposed Development that have the potential to influence the SLQs are the seven wind turbines, which have a blade tip height of 149.9 m.



Step 2: The Study Area and Scope of the Assessment including the SLQs that might be affected

The Proposed Development is approximately 13.9 km **outside** the south-eastern boundary of the Lynn of Lorn NSA (measured to the nearest turbine).

The 20 km detailed LVIA study area includes the south-western coast of Lismore, the western edge of Appin, and the north-western edge of Benderloch, together with the western part of Loch Creran, and areas of sea and small islands in between.



Extract of Figure 5.10 – Landscape Designations within 20 km



Relevant Studies

Scottish Natural Heritage (2010) Commissioned Report No.
 374 The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas.

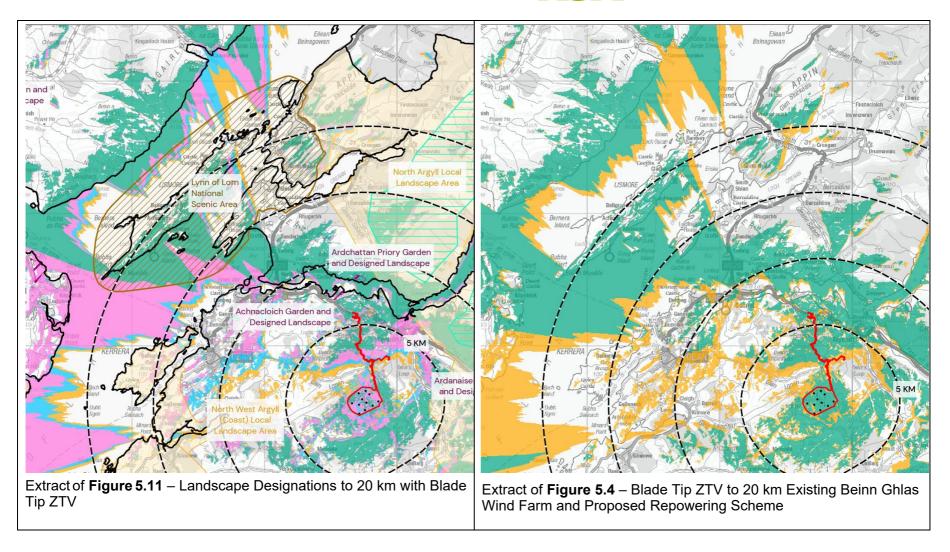
https://www.nature.scot/doc/naturescot-commissioned-report-374-special-qualities-national-scenic-areas

 NatureScot (2019). National Landscape Character Types. https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-character-assessment/scottish-landscape-character-types-map-and-descriptions

Assessment Scope

- Any effects would be indirect and focussed on those SLQs which are perceived in views from within the NSA beyond its southeastern boundary, looking towards the Proposed Development. As such it is considered the SLQs taken forward into assessment are:
 - A small scale low-lying landscape with a vast highland backdrop; and
 - The coastline of great variety and diversity.







How the Area is used and experienced by people

Agriculture and tourism both play an important role in the NSA, with visitors attracted by its tranquillity and heritage, including numerous castles, with views across water towards the scenic mountainous backdrop.

Visitors to the Isle of Lismore travel by ferry from Oban to Achnacroish, on the south-eastern shore of the island, or from Port Appin to Point at the northern end of the island. The main road on Lismore (the B8045) is a single-track lane, which passes along its length from north-east to south-west. It provides access to facilities in the centre of the island, including the Community Stores and Post Office, Gaelic Heritage Centre and cafe. The road is designated as a Core Path (C529 and C153). There are holiday homes on the island and a bunkhouse and campsite. There are also taxi land rover tours available.

The Isle of Lismore website states that 'There are great places to walk, cycle, kayak, sail and picnic with views on the higher ground of the encircling mainland mountains...the flat top of Ben Nevis and the Glencoe range is to the north east, the twin peaks of Cruachan to the east...' 'The population of the island is at present about 170'.

On the mainland within the NSA there is a wider range of tourist accommodation including self-catering cottages, hotels and caravan parks. The north-eastern edge of the NSA is bordered by the A828, which forms part of the Argyll Coastal Route and National Cycle Network Route 78, the Caledonia Way. Core Path C152 runs parallel to the A828, within the NSA, and Core Path C169 connects it with Port Appin to the south-west. At Benderloch, Tralee Beach faces south-west towards Ardmucknish Bay, with Core Paths along the beach connecting with the settlement of

The relevant

• A small scale low-lying landscape with a vast highland backdrop / The coastline of great variety and diversity'.

Step 3: The Assessment			
Relevant SLQs identified at scoping and refined during subsequent study	Underpinning landscape characteristics to inform detailed SLQ descriptions		Proposed mitigation and timescales. Level of residual effect.
A small scale low-lying landscape with a vast highland	LCT 51 Lowland Ridges and Moss	Referring to the comparative blade tip ZTV at Figure 5.4,	The location of the Proposed Repowering Scheme on the site of the existing Beinn

Benderloch at the A828 to the south-east.



Relevant SLQs identified at scoping and refined during subsequent study	Underpinning landscape characteristics to inform detailed SLQ descriptions	Impacts of the proposal on underpinning key characteristics and the effects on SLQs	Proposed mitigation and timescales. Level of residual effect.
backdrop / The coastline of great variety and diversity "The pattern of the land is intimate, with small, walled fields, woods and lush meadows. Even the natural features of hill and crag tend to be of the small scale. It is a distinctive landscape, an area of lowland set within a backdrop of high mountains." "The array of islands and islets, horseshoe bays, shingle beaches, geometric cliffs, rocky shores and tidal flats, together with the narrow mouth of Loch Creran, provide continual interest to the eye. The natural rock arch of Clach Tholl is particularly striking. In places sheltered woods extend right down to the tideline, in others there are cliffs that bear the brunt of the gales that whip up the Firth of Lorn. The enclosed Lynn, long a sheltered sea route and a place of anchorage, contrasts markedly	 "Coastal lowland with low ridges separating narrow, linear glens or flat areas of moss. Ridges form low, narrow peninsulas enclosing small, horseshoe-shaped bays. Rocky ridges are densely wooded and linear glens are a patchwork of marginal pastures. Shoreline and offshore islands have a more undulating landform and a more open character. Landform becomes lower and ridges less pronounced towards the south, where there are extensive areas of flat, peaty moss." 	there is little difference between the theoretical visibility of the existing Beinn Ghlas scheme and the Proposed Development. There would a difference in the perceived scale of the turbines, as illustrated by Viewpoint 16. However, the Proposed Development would still appear smaller in scale than the vast highland backdrop to the north-east. As the Proposed Development is situated approximately 13.9 km from the boundary of the NSA in a different direction from the ridgelines that rise up towards the Loch Etive Mountains WLA, and Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA, there would be no change to the underpinning key characteristics of these two grouped SLQs from locations within the Lynn of Lorn NSA.	Ghlas Wind Farm limits the spread of the development across a broader area in the upland landscape. The Proposed Development would have a minor moderate effect which is considered significant on this SLQ that would only be experienced from occasional elevated summits and south-east facing slopes that allow views out of the NSA.



Step 3: The Assessment				
Relevant SLQs identified at scoping and refined during subsequent study	Underpinning landscape characteristics to inform detailed SLQ descriptions	Impacts of the proposal on underpinning key characteristics and the effects on SLQs	Proposed mitigation and timescales. Level of residual effect.	
with the open and exposed Loch Linnhe.				
This great variety within a small area results in unparalleled, intimate coastal scenery. However, views over the sea to the distant mountains of Mull or the mainland, can bring a vastness of scale to the scene."				



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Step 4: Summary of effects on SLQs

Overall, it is not considered there would be any significant effects on any of the special qualities of the NSA as a result of the Proposed Development. Most of the key visual receptors at Appin and Benderloch (settlements, roads etc) within the NSA would have no visibility of the proposals as illustrated by the blade tip ZTV. Where theoretical visibility is available, particularly from the Isle of Lismore, generally speaking, the existing Beinn Ghlas turbines, are already visible. Visibility is generally restricted to south-east facing coastal areas and higher ground within the landscape, the majority of which lie beyond 15 km of the site. There would be some limited non-significant effects experienced on the 'Small scale low-lying landscape with a vast highland backdrop' and the 'Coastline of great variety and diversity' SLQs with regard to the perception of scale, but these effects would not be of such a degree so as to undermine their overall integrity.

When considered with other proposed wind farms located to the south-east of the NSA, no significant effects are identified which would undermine the overall integrity of this SLQ to such an extent that it would no longer be able to be perceived.



3 BEN NEVIS AND GLEN COE NSA

3.1.1 The Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA is located approximately 15.3 km to the northeast of the Proposed Development 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.



Assessment of Impacts on Special Landscape Qualities from: Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA

Step 1: Review and Describe the Proposal

The Proposed Development will principally comprise the following visible features which may influence the perception of SLQs:

- Up to seven wind turbines of approximately 4.8 MW each, with a maximum blade tip height of up to 149.9 m;
- Hardstanding areas at the base of each turbine, with a permanent area of approximately 1,400 m2;
- Upgrading of four existing road junctions to support construction and abnormal road traffic;
- 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 and use of existing track for access to the first
 construction compound. An internal network of new onsite access tracks and upgrade of existing Wind Farm access track.
 The total length of the Site Access and Internal Access Tracks would be approximately 12.83 km of which 2.71 km is new
 access track (1.6 km floating) with associated new watercourse crossings and 8.52 km is existing access track and
 watercourse crossings which would need to be upgraded. In total there would be 4 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.

(N.B. This is also included in **Section 5.6** of the LVIA Chapter).

The main elements of the Proposed Development that have the potential to influence the SLQs are the seven wind turbines, which have a blade tip height of 149.9 m.

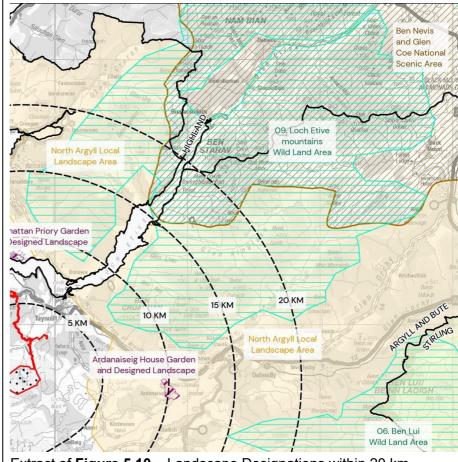


Step 2: The Study Area and Scope of the Assessment including the SLQs that might be affected

The Proposed Development is approximately 15.3 km **outside** the south-western boundary of the Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA (measured to the nearest turbine).

The 20 km detailed LVIA study area includes the north-eastern end of Loch Etive and surrounding highlands, including Ben Starav (although this lies just beyond 20 km).

This part of the NSA overlaps with 09. Loch Etive mountains WLA. However, as the site boundaries lie outside of the WLA by a distance of approximately 7.5 km to the nearest proposed turbine, a WLA impact assessment is not required.



Extract of Figure 5.10 - Landscape Designations within 20 km



Relevant Studies

Scottish Natural Heritage (2010) Commissioned Report No. 374
 The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas.

https://www.nature.scot/doc/naturescot-commissioned-report-374-special-qualities-national-scenic-areas

 NatureScot (2019). National Landscape Character Types. https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-character-assessment/scottish-landscape-character-types-map-and-descriptions

Assessment Scope

- Of the twelve special qualities of the NSA, eight (relating to Rannoch, Glen Coe, Loch Leven, Ben Nevis and Glen Nevis) are not considered of relevance due to their specific geographical locations, outside of the LVIA study area.
- Any effects would be indirect and focussed on those SLQs which are perceived in views from within the NSA beyond its south-western boundary, looking towards the Proposed Development. As such it is considered the SLQs taken forward into assessment are:

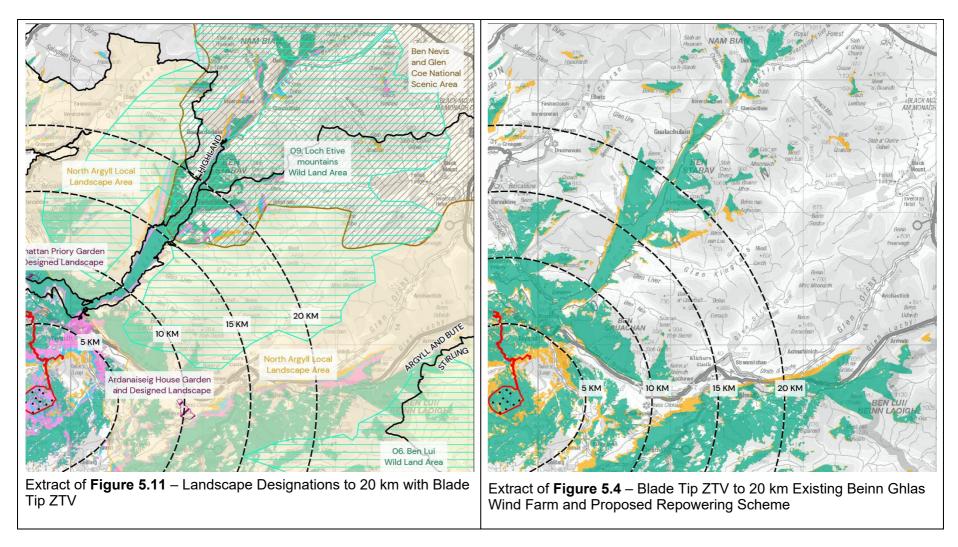
'A Land of mountain grandeur';

'A land of classic highland vistas';

'Human settlement dwarfed by mountain and moorland'; and

'Long and green Glen Etive'.







How the Area is used and experienced by people

Loch Etive is a popular fishing spot, and visitors are also attracted by its resident seal population and boat trips. Within the NSA, a Core Path (C156) passes along the north-western shore of Loch Etive, whilst to the east of the loch, Ben Starav is a Munro Mountain, popular with walkers for its views at the summit. The road along Glen Etive is a popular scenic drive and is also known as a famous film location for both James Bond's Skyfall and Braveheart films. River Etive is popular with white water kayakers.

Much of the craggy upland landscape of the NSA lies within the Loch Etive mountains WLA, where it is possible to spot deer, golden eagles and sea eagles.

The relevant

- A Land of mountain grandeur'
- 'A land of classic highland vistas / Human settlement dwarfed by the mountain and moorland'
- 'Long and green Glen Etive'

Step 3: The Assessment				
Relevant SLQs identified at scoping and refined during subsequent study	Underpinning landscape characteristics to inform detailed SLQ descriptions	Impacts of the proposal on underpinning key characteristics and the effects on SLQs	Proposed mitigation and timescales. Level of residual effect.	
A Land of mountain grandeur "This is a landscape of massive proportions, breathtaking grandeur and great variety. It	NatureScot LCT 233 Mountain Massif - Lochaber • Grey craggy peaks of vast and imposing scale with sweeping	Referring to the comparative blade tip ZTV at Figure 5.11, theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is very limited and patchy from the majority of this NSA, except for a	No residual effect.	



Step 3: The Assessment			
Relevant SLQs identified at scoping and refined during subsequent study	Underpinning landscape characteristics to inform detailed SLQ descriptions	Impacts of the proposal on underpinning key characteristics and the effects on SLQs	Proposed mitigation and timescales. Level of residual effect.
offers the highest altitude and greatest vertical relief in Britain."	concave slopes of steep, smooth rock faces which plummet into glaciated valleys. Strong visual force created by the slope profile and accentuated by fans of scree and bracken, which draws the eye up and down the slopes. Typical glacial forms such as aretes and carries within the hills, and moraine and erratics along the glen floors.	few elevated peaks, such as Viewpoint 17. As the Proposed Development is situated approximately 15.3 km from the boundary of the NSA, in a landscape of lower elevation than the mountains of LCT 233, there would be no change to the underpinning characteristics that inform this SLQ.	
A land of classic highland vistas / Human settlement dwarfed by the mountain and moorland "With each crossing of a glen or watershed, the scenery dramatically changes, from open moor to mountain pass, from smooth hillside to towering crags,	NatureScot LCT 233 Mountain Massif - Lochaber Dense patches of coniferous woodland along the base and sides of the glens, often broken by brown plots of clear-felled forest. Deep rocky clefts within the hillside carved and highlighted by silvery	Referring to the comparative blade tip ZTV at Figure 5.4, there is little difference between the theoretical visibility of the existing Beinn Ghlas scheme and the Proposed. There would be a difference in the perceived scale of the turbines, as illustrated by Viewpoint 17. However, the Proposed Development would still appear smaller in scale than the	The Proposed Development would have a limited minor effect which is considered not significant on this group of SLQs that would only be experienced from occasional elevated summits and elevated southwest-facing slopes that allow views out of the NSA.



Step 3: The Assessment				
Relevant SLQs identified at scoping and refined during subsequent study	Underpinning landscape characteristics to inform detailed SLQ descriptions	Impacts of the proposal on underpinning key characteristics and the effects on SLQs	Proposed mitigation and timescales. Level of residual effect.	
from enclosed glen to long sea loch. The mountains, moors and glens are visited by many of those in search of the outstanding scenic experience, or outdoor exhilaration and challenge. It is not remote by distance or time from major settlement, particularly Fort William, and a sense of true remoteness must be searched for, with human contact in the upper glens and moors to be expected." "Although in places humans have left a marked impression on the landscape, particularly around Loch Leven, overall this is a landscape where human endeavour and activity is dwarfed by the mountain grandeur. Where houses and settlements are present, they appear small amongst the large scale surrounds of mountain, moor,	burns and shadows, sometimes packed with birch trees, forming meandering mossy veins on the rock face. Glens affording a small scale refuge from the vast mountainous masses and often containing roads, footpaths, settlement and picnic areas. Rivers along the glen floor that are wide and shingly near the mouth, steep and rocky higher up the glen; these are often highlighted by clumps of alder, rowan and birch. Single track roads, often with dead ends, small bridges and stone dykes, concentrated along the small scale glens; their scale provides a contrast to the experience of the	mountains flanking Loch Etive in the foreground. The Proposed Development is situated approximately 15.3 km from the boundary of the NSA, in a landscape of lower elevation than the mountains of LCT 233, which is already influenced by human development in the form of existing wind energy. The addition of the Proposed Development would slightly increase the scale of influence of human development from limited locations within the NSA. The Proposed Development would not impact on intervisibility or framed views or panoramas within the NSA. It would introduce additional elements that would be seen in occasional long-distance views south-west out of the NSA. Referring to the blade tip ZTV, these views would only be experienced from discrete elevated locations within the south-western part of the NSA with the majority of the NSA not experiencing such views.		



Step 3: The Assessment			
Relevant SLQs identified at scoping and refined during subsequent study	Underpinning landscape characteristics to inform detailed SLQ descriptions	Impacts of the proposal on underpinning key characteristics and the effects on SLQs	Proposed mitigation and timescales. Level of residual effect.
glen and sea loch. Scenic quality and drama prevail."	vast scale of the landscape.		
"Glen Etive, a long and dramatic glen with a fast-flowing rocky river, is generally green and grassy, affording tranquillity and peacefulness. Surrounded by high mountains, its narrow, sinuous single track road extends to the shores of Loch Etive, where it abruptly ends at the disused pier. From here the narrow, elegant Loch Etive stretches seawards, free of obvious human infrastructure, settlement or intrusion. The upper reaches of the River Etive offer interesting and sharply contrasting detail to the overall simplicity of the landscape. Its shallow, gorged profile within the sweeping, smooth grassland draws attention, emphasised by	NatureScot LCT 233 Mountain Massif - Lochaber • Typical glacial forms such as aretes and carries within the hills, and moraine and erratics along the glen floors. • Rivers along the glen floor that are wide and shingly near the mouth, steep and rocky higher up the glen; these are often highlighted by clumps of alder, rowan and birch.	Referring to the comparative blade tip ZTV at Figure 5.4, there is little difference between the theoretical visibility of the existing Beinn Ghlas scheme and the Proposed Development Development from Loch Etive. There would however be a difference in the perceived scale of the turbines, as illustrated by Viewpoint 15. The Proposed Development would still appear smaller in scale than the mountains in the foreground. The Proposed Development is situated approximately 15.3 km from the boundary of the NSA, in a landscape of lower elevation than the mountains of LCT 233, which is already influenced by human development in the form of existing wind energy. The addition of the Proposed Development would increase the influence of human development from this part of the NSA.	The Proposed Development would have a limited minor effect which is considered not significant on this SLQ of the NSA.



Step 3: The Assessment				
Relevant SLQs identified at scoping and refined during subsequent study	Underpinning landscape characteristics to inform detailed SLQ descriptions	Impacts of the proposal on underpinning key characteristics and the effects on SLQs	Proposed mitigation and timescales. Level of residual effect.	
the crystal pools and waterfalls over a complex geological bedrock.				
Settlement in this glen is limited to the occasional cottage and a single hunting lodge, but it is influential with the policies of the lodge dominating the lower reaches."				



Step 4: Summary of effects on SLQs, and integrity of NSA

Overall, it is not considered there would be any significant effects on any of the special landscape qualities of the NSA as a result of the Proposed Development. The majority of the landscape within the NSA would have no visibility of the proposals as illustrated by the ZTV. Where theoretical visibility is available, the existing Beinn Ghlas wind farm already exerts a small amount of influence, which would increase with the Proposed Development. Visibility is restricted to the landscape around Loch Etive and a small number of highpoints within the landscape, which all lie beyond 15 km of the site. There would be some limited non-significant effects experienced on the 'land of classic highland vistas', 'human settlement dwarfed by the mountain and moorland' and 'long and green Glen Etive' SLQs, but these effects would not be of such a degree so as to undermine their overall integrity.