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Introduction

Background

- 3.1 Abseline was commissioned in October 2023 to prepare a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) of the Proposed Development on behalf of Ben Sca Wind Farm Limited, as reported in this Chapter.
- 3.2 This assessment defines the landscape and visual baseline environments and any known future changes; assesses their sensitivity to change; describes the key features and design rationale of the Proposed Development in relation to the mitigation of landscape and visual effects; describes the nature of the anticipated changes to the landscape and views and assesses the effects arising during all stages of development.

The Site and Proposed Development

- 3.3 **Figures 3.4 and 3.7** place the Proposed Development within its local context. The site is currently mostly upland moor with some forestry within the northern part of the site which extends towards the A850.
- 3.4 The site forms part of the hills which surround lower-lying, coastal and settled landscapes to the north, west and south. Forestry and moorland covered hills which form the interior of the landscape of Skye continue to the east of the site.
- 3.5 There are existing consents for the seven turbine Ben Sca Wind Farm and the two turbine Ben Sca Wind Farm Extension within the site (jointly referred to as the consented development). The Proposed Development is to replace those consents with a single nine turbine wind farm, as described in **Chapter 1: Introduction and Project Description**. Key changes from the consented development of relevance to this chapter include:
- nine turbines of up to 149.9m to blade tip – representing a 14.9m tip height increase compared to the seven consented Ben Sca turbines and no change in height compared to the two consented Ben Sca Extension turbines;
 - an increase in rotor diameter from 115m to up to 138m;
 - moving the substation from the consented location to a new location close to the summit of Ben Sca – the same location as for the proposed Balmeanach Wind Farm;
 - changes to turbine locations and corresponding changes to the layout of tracks and crane hardstandings as shown on **Figures 1.6 and 1.7**. Details of the changes to positions of turbines are set out in **Chapter 1**; and
 - an increased operational lifespan from 30 years to 40 years.
- 3.6 The site is located in an area with a number of existing and consented wind farms in close proximity and is the subject of ongoing development interest with a number of larger wind farm proposals at various stages of the consenting process, as illustrated by **Figure 3.8**. The existing wind farms at Ben Aketil and Edinbane are respectively located immediately to the southwest and around 1km to the east of the site and the approved Glen Ullinish Wind Farm will be located around 5km to the southeast.

Statement of Competence

- 3.7 This Chapter has been prepared by Chartered Landscape Architects at Abseline. Key individuals working on this project are chartered landscape architects with 11 and 22 years of experience. The Practice is a Landscape Institute registered practice and all work is prepared and reviewed internally by senior highly experienced landscape planners with Public Inquiry experience.
- 3.8 To inform the assessment, a site visit was made to locations including representative viewpoints, the site and wider study area by the assessment team.

Stakeholder Consultation

- 3.9 A scoping report was submitted to THC in September 2023 which set out the proposed scope of the LVIA which sought to provide a focussed assessment of likely significant effects. This was informed by the scope and findings of the previous assessments for the consented development, where both the Applicant’s and THC’s previous assessments identified that significant effects would be confined to an area within c. 10km. Given the relatively modest changes of the Proposed Development compared to the consented development it was not anticipated that the nature or extent of potentially significant landscape and visual effects would materially change from that of the consented development.
- 3.10 THC’s scoping opinion, issued in November 2023, set out a list of expectations in relation to landscape and visual matters but did not directly address specific points in relation to the LVIA scope set out in the scoping report. It is also noted that much of the commentary provided by THC under the landscape and visual heading relates to assessment methodology rather than the scope of assessment.
- 3.11 Responses to issues raised by THC in their scoping opinion are addressed in **Table 3-1**.

Table 3-1: Summary of Stakeholder Consultation

Key Issue	Where Addressed in Chapter
<i>“Separate volumes of visualisations should be prepared to both Highland Council Standards and NatureScot guidance.”</i>	These are provided in Volume 3b: Proposed Development Visualisations (NatureScot) Viewpoints 1 – 10; Volume 3c: Proposed Development Visualisations (NatureScot) Viewpoints 11–18; and, Volume 3d: Proposed Development Visualisations (THC) Viewpoints 1–18.
<i>“All elements of a development are important to consider within any EIAR, including the visual impact of the tracks, substations, battery storage and on-site borrow pits etc. Therefore, the assessment should include the expected impact of these elements”</i>	The assessment of effects provided in this chapter considers all elements of the Proposed Development.

Key Issue	Where Addressed in Chapter
<p><i>“Study Area of 45km is appropriate given the scale of the turbines and the landscape sensitivities of the site and the surrounding area, we would expect a detailed assessment of effects should be undertaken for the whole Study Area.”</i></p>	<p>A 45km study area was considered, but as shown by Figure 3.1, this would primarily extend into areas of sea or no visibility. Given the presence of other wind farms on Skye, it is considered that the limited areas of visibility from The Small Isles NSA (41km, south), Wester Ross NSA (43km, east) and the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist NSA (41km, northwest) would not give rise to greater than negligible effects.</p> <p>As set out in paragraph 3.13, an initial study area of 40km has been used in line with NatureScot guidance which recommends initial ZTV’s are produced out to 40km for wind turbines of 131-150m. A 40km study area was also previously agreed with THC in respect of assessments for the consented development.</p> <p>Given that none of the previous assessments, nor THC’s Reports of Handling, identified significant effects for the consented development beyond 12km and the limited changes comprising the Proposed Development it is not considered necessary to extend the study area further.</p>
<p><i>“We consider that you should undertake the cumulative assessment over a Study Area the same as the visual assessment, a minimum 45km Study Area consistent with NatureScot advice for turbine heights of 150 metres to tip.”</i></p>	<p>The same study area has been used for the cumulative assessment as for the main LVIA.</p>
<p><i>“Viewpoints (VP) for the assessment of effects of the two previously approved developments were agreed in advance of preparation of those visuals with THC and NatureScot at the time. It is considered appropriate that the new EIAR should include visualisations of the redesigned scheme from the same viewpoints, accepting that there may be a need to microsite the viewpoints to avoid intervening screening by vegetation etc. We consider that comparative wirelines of the redesign with both approved schemes should also be submitted so that the changes occasioned by the redesign can be assessed (noting that this will be assessed in full at application stage).”</i></p>	<p>The same viewpoints have been used as for assessments of the consented development. Comparative wirelines are included in Volume 3b and Volume 3c.</p>
<p><i>“The purpose of the selected and agreed viewpoints shall be clearly identified and stated in the supporting information. For example, it should be clear that the VP has been chosen for landscape assessment, or visual impact assessment, or cumulative assessment, or sequential assessment, or to show a representative view or for assessment of impact on designated sites, communities, or individual properties.”</i></p>	<p>All viewpoints are used to inform all aspects of the assessment.</p>

Key Issue	Where Addressed in Chapter
<i>“the LVIA Chapter of the EIAR should clearly set out the methodology”</i>	The full methodology is set out within Technical Appendix 3.1 with an overview provided in paragraphs 3.36 - 3.43 of this Chapter.
The methodology should set out the <i>“threshold to which the applicant considers a significant effect is reached. For the avoidance of doubt the Council consider that Moderate impacts can be significant, and it is recommended that the EIAR takes this approach as well;”</i>	As set out in paragraph 3.42, effects classified as major or major/moderate are considered to be equivalent to likely significant effects referred to in the EIA Regulations. Moderate effects or lower are considered to be not significant. The methodology used in this assessment is calibrated on this basis and THC should not take the identification of moderate effects as being significant. Doing so would be an improper application of the methodology and would misrepresent the assessment findings.
<i>“The Assessors should include complete visual impact assessments for each viewpoint up to an assessment of the significance of the effect so that the Assessor’s logic can be readily understood.”</i>	Full viewpoint analysis is provided in Technical Appendix 3.3 with a summary provided at Table 3-3 . As set out in GLVIA3, <i>“visual receptors are all people”</i> – viewpoints are used to illustrate and inform the assessment for different receptor groups but are not receptors themselves and thus no assessment of significance is provided for viewpoints.
<i>“We expect an assessment of the impact on all potentially effected WLAs to be included within the EIAR given the proximity to a number of WLAs and the theoretical visibility of the scheme from within WLAs. NatureScot will provide further assessment advice on WLAs.”</i>	NPF4 Policy 4 identifies that development proposals that lie <u>within</u> Wild Land Areas should be supported by a wild land impact assessment. It goes on to state that <i>“Buffer zones around wild land will not be applied, and effects of development outwith wild land areas will not be a significant consideration.”</i> As the Proposed Development is located outwith any wild land area this is not considered to be a ‘significant consideration’ and no wild land assessment is provided. NatureScot have not provided any comment in relation to wild land.
<i>“We expect an assessment of the proposal against the criterion set out in the Council’s OWESG to be included within the LVIA chapter of the EIAR.”</i>	This is a policy consideration and not a matter for LVIA. These criteria are considered in the Planning, Sustainable Design and Access Statement accompanying the application
<i>“An assessment of the impacts of the proposal on landscape should assess the impacts on any landscapes designated at a national and local scale. As part of this the impact on the Special Landscape Areas (SLA) must be undertaken using the SLA citations available from the Council’s website.”</i>	Effects on designated landscapes are considered in this Chapter in paragraphs 3.133 - 3.137.

Key Issue	Where Addressed in Chapter
<i>“Residential visual amenity should be assessed within the EIAR.”</i>	A residential visual amenity assessment is included in Technical Appendix 3.4 .

3.12 In summary, THC did not respond directly to the Applicant’s proposed scope of assessment. In some respects THC has sought to markedly extend the scope beyond that which was previously agreed for assessments of the consented development and/or beyond what is suggested by national policy and guidance. In response, the Applicant has extended the scope of assessment beyond what was proposed in the scoping report and largely adopted the LVIA scope previously agreed for assessments of the consented development. Given the findings of previous assessments and the relatively modest changes involved in the Proposed Development, this is considered more than adequate to identify any potentially significant effects.

Study Area and Scope

- 3.13 It is accepted practice that the extent of the study area for a development proposal is broadly defined by where it will be visible. As illustrated by **Figure 3.1** and in line with NatureScot guidance, an initial study area of 40km has been used to prepare a bare ground Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) study.
- 3.14 Previous LVIA’s for the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and Ben Sca Wind Farm Extension considered detailed study areas of 20km from the proposed turbines with neither assessment, nor THC’s Reports of Handling for the two proposals identifying potentially significant landscape or visual effects beyond approximately 10km. Given the relatively modest increase in turbine sizes for the Proposed Development and the previous consensus on the extent of potentially significant effects for the consented development, a detailed study area of 20km has also been utilised (as shown by Figure(s) 2-7) in this case and is sufficient to identify all potentially significant effects arising from the Proposed Development, also taking on board THC’s request for a larger study area than the 10km proposed in the Scoping Report.
- 3.15 A more detailed study area has been used for Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA), which includes all properties considered within the previous RVAAs for the consented development (i.e. homes within approximately 3km of the proposed turbines).
- 3.16 The final list of viewpoints agreed through consultation is provided in **Technical Appendix 3.3** and **Table 3-3**.

Cumulative Assessment

- 3.17 Cumulative assessment relates to the assessment of the effects of more than one development (as set out within **Technical Appendix 3.1**). Operational developments are included in the baseline, consented development forms part of the future baseline, unless there is some uncertainty regarding the future construction of consented developments in which case they may be considered as the first scenario of the cumulative assessment.
- 3.18 The main focus of the cumulative assessment is on developments in planning. The full list of developments considered within the cumulative assessment is provided within the Cumulative Effects section of this Chapter.

Residential Amenity

- 3.19 As set out within LI TGN 02/19 'Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA)':
- “Changes in views and visual amenity are considered in the planning process. In respect of private views and visual amenity, it is widely known that, no one has ‘a right to a view.’*
- ...
- It is not uncommon for significant adverse effects on views and visual amenity to be experienced by people at their place of residence as a result of introducing a new development into the landscape. In itself this does not necessarily cause particular planning concern. However, there are situations where the effect on the outlook / visual amenity of a residential property is so great that it is not generally considered to be in the public interest to permit such conditions to occur where they did not exist before.”*
- 3.20 The methodology for and assessment of effects on residential amenity for the most affected properties within approximately 3km is included as **Technical Appendix 3.4**.

Assessment Scenarios and Potential Effects

- 3.21 Effects arising from the proposed Development are considered at the following key stages. The nature of the potential effects relevant to this assessment are described for each stage below.

Construction

- 3.22 The construction of the Proposed Development would take place over a period of approximately 18 months. It would involve the activities set out within Chapter 1 of the EIA Report.
- 3.23 Effects during construction on landscape fabric would arise from:
- felling;
 - habitat management and peatland restoration;
 - construction of some new tracks and crane hardstandings within formerly forested areas and open moorland;
 - borrow pits;
 - construction of the turbine foundations, substation; and
 - site reinstatement.
- 3.24 Effects during construction on landscape character would arise from:
- the changes to landscape fabric within the site;
 - the change of the site character from forestry and moorland to construction site; and
 - views towards the construction activity, particularly the crane and part completed turbines.
- 3.25 Effects during construction on visual receptors would arise from:
- views towards the construction activity, particularly the crane and part completed turbines.
- 3.26 Effects during construction on designated landscapes would arise from:

- short-term changes to the special qualities as a result of views towards the construction activity, particularly the crane and part completed turbines.
- 3.27 Effects on landscape fabric are not considered to be significant. The elements which make up the landscape fabric of the site are commonplace both within the study area and within Scotland, and the felling of forestry is an expected outcome within its normal lifecycle, although it's worth noting that much of the forestry at the site is of poor merchantable quality due to poor growth.
- 3.28 Effects on landscape character, views and designations during construction would be short-term and would primarily arise from views of the crane and part-completed turbines. During this stage of construction, effects would be very similar to those from the operational stage and are not assessed separately.

Operation

- 3.29 A 40-year consent is sought for the Proposed Development, and effects are assessed as though permanent for the purposes of this assessment as the duration exceeds the 25-year 'long-term' duration as defined in **Technical Appendix 3.1**. Effects during operation on landscape fabric would arise from:
- the presence of the turbines and other site infrastructure; and
 - establishment of bog habitats in restored peatland areas.
- 3.30 Effects during operation on landscape character would arise from:
- the permanent inclusion of wind turbines and other infrastructure within the forestry and moorland; and
 - changes to vegetation cover as a result of the removal of forestry and increase of moorland within the site.
- 3.31 Effects during operation on visual receptors would arise from:
- changes to views towards the site to include the wind turbines; and
 - smaller scale, close range changes to views into the site where other infrastructure may be visible.
- 3.32 Effects during operation on designated landscapes would arise from:
- changes to the special qualities as a result of visibility of the turbines (and associated infrastructure where visible).

Decommissioning

- 3.33 Effects during decommissioning would be short-term (up to one year period) and similar to those arising during construction except in reverse in terms of the site being reinstated to moorland.

Supporting Information and Terminology

- 3.34 Supporting appendices and figures have been prepared as set out in the table of contents. These are important to the assessment and should be read alongside this Chapter.
- 3.35 Key terms used within the assessment are described in the Methodology section of this Chapter and **Technical Appendix 3.1**. A glossary is provided within **Technical Appendix 3.1**.

Methodology

3.36 The full methodology is described in **Technical Appendix 3.1**, which also references the key guidance documents which inform the approach. A summary of key points is provided below.

Distances

3.37 Where distances are given in the assessment, these are approximate distances between the nearest proposed turbine and the nearest part of the receptor in question, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

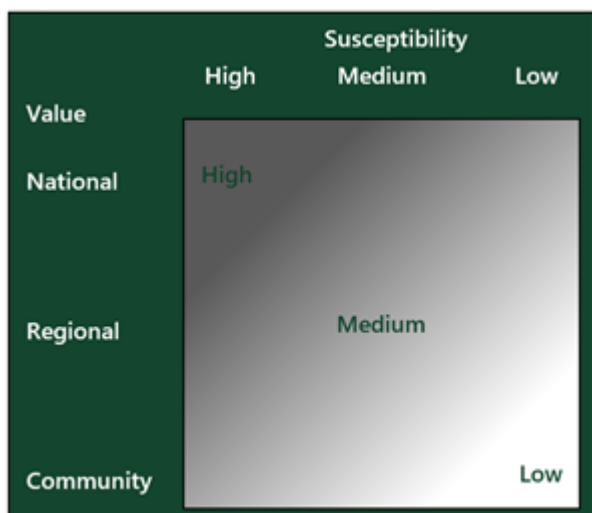
Visualisations

3.38 Visualisations have been prepared to both NatureScot¹ and THC². The methodology of production for the visualisations (undertaken by SLR) is described in **Technical Appendix 3.1**.

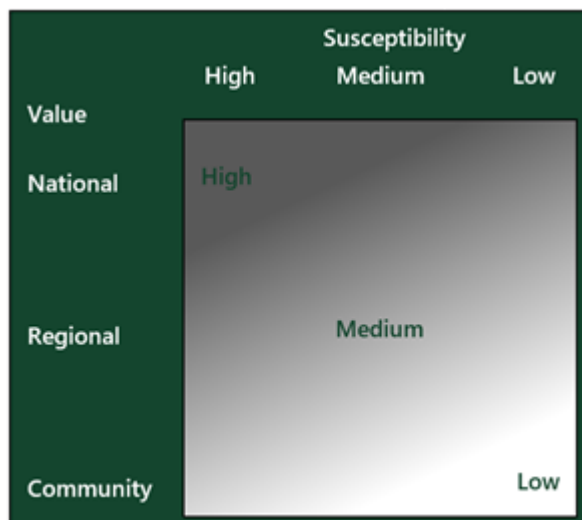
Sensitivity

3.39 Sensitivity judgements take account of consideration of the value and susceptibility of the receptor as illustrated by the diagrams below. Where sensitivity is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment will be adopted. As comparison of the two diagrams indicates, a slightly greater weight is given to susceptibility in judging sensitivity of visual receptors.

Landscape Sensitivity



Visual Sensitivity



¹ Scottish Natural Heritage (2017). Visual Representation of Wind Farms. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/doc/visual-representation-wind-farms-guidance>

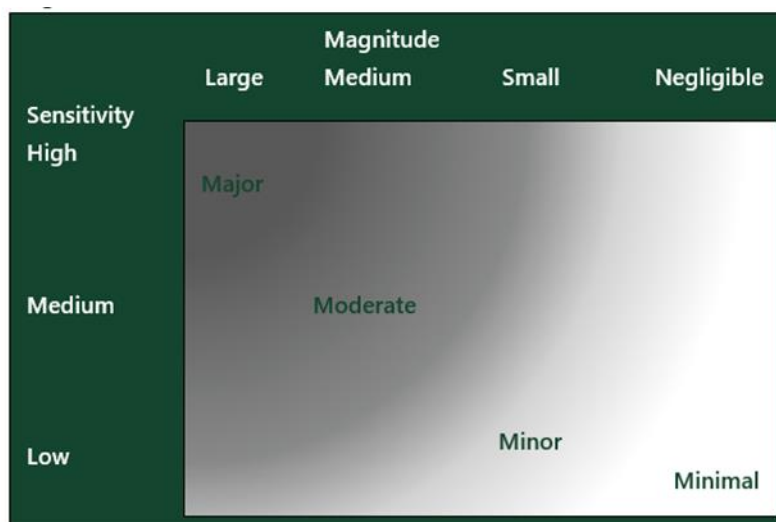
² Highland Council (2016). Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments. Available at: https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/12880/visualisation_standards_for_wind_energy_developments

Magnitude

- 3.40 Magnitude of change (large, medium, small, negligible) judgements take account of the degree of change arising from the Proposed Development at any particular location in terms of its size or scale; extent of the area or receptor that is influenced, and the duration and reversibility of the change.
- 3.41 The maximum scale of change on the receptor is the primary factor in determining magnitude. However, for particularly widespread and/or long-lasting effects the magnitude judgement may be slightly greater than the scale of change; or for effects that are constrained in geographic extent and/or short-lived the magnitude of change may be slightly lower than the scale of change.

Level of Effect

- 3.42 The level (major, moderate, minor, minimal) of any identified landscape or visual effect reflects a professional judgement as to the relative importance of the effects identified, taking account of the sensitivity of the receptor and the predicted magnitude of change as illustrated by the diagram below. Where the effect has been classified as major or major/moderate this is considered to be equivalent to likely significant effects referred to in the EIA Regulations. The indication that some effects are ‘significant’ should not be taken to imply that they should warrant refusal in any decision-making process.



Positive/Adverse

- 3.43 Landscape and visual effects can be positive, adverse or neutral (different but neither better nor worse taking all factors into account). Taking a precautionary approach in making an assessment of the ‘worst case scenario’, the assessment considers that all effects which would result in a notable difference to the existing features, character, views or special qualities would be adverse unless indicated otherwise. It should be noted however that people’s individual responses to change arising from development can vary markedly.

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy

- 3.44 Relevant national planning policy is set out within National Planning Framework 4³. Within NPF4, Policy 11 Energy is of specific relevance to the proposed Development and indicates in relation to landscape and visual matters that project design and mitigation should demonstrate how the following impacts are addressed:
- “on communities and individual dwellings, including, residential amenity, visual impact ...;
 - 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;”
- 3.45 Policy 11 also indicates that Policy 4 relating to Natural Places, will be taken into account in relation to effects on international or national designations but does not refer to Policy 4 in relation to local designations. Policy 4 sets out criteria identifying that the “*objectives of designation and the overall integrity*” of a National Park or National Scenic Area should not be compromised by development. Other criteria within that policy indicate in relation to locally designated landscapes that significant effects on the qualities for they are designated or on their integrity may be “*clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of at least local importance*” – which would include the benefits arising from the Proposed Development.
- 3.46 Although not planning policy, the Onshore Wind Policy Statement (OWPS)⁴ sets out the Scottish Government’s policy towards onshore wind and explicitly notes that:
- 3.47 “*Meeting our climate targets will require a rapid transformation across all sectors of our economy and society. This means ensuring the right development happens in the right place. Meeting the ambition of a minimum installed capacity of 20 GW of onshore wind in Scotland by 2030 will require taller and more efficient turbines. This will change the landscape*” (their underlining).
- 3.48 The OWPS also notes within the section relating to landscape and visual impacts that outside of National Parks and National Scenic areas the criteria within NPF4 include “*stronger weight being afforded to the contribution of the development to the climate emergency*” and that “*Landscape Sensitivity Studies (LSS) are strategic appraisals of the relative sensitivity of landscapes ... a tool to help guide development to less sensitive locations. ... LSS should not be used in isolation to determine the acceptability of a development type in landscape terms..., however they will continue to be a useful tool in assessing the specific sensitivities within an area.*”

³ Scottish Government (2023). National Planning Framework 4. Available at: <https://www.transformingplanning.scot/national-planning-framework/adopted-npf4/>

⁴ Scottish Government (2022). Onshore Wind Policy Statement. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/onshore-wind-policy-statement-2022/>

Local Planning Policy

- 3.49 Current local planning policy is described in the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (2012)⁵. Key policies relevant to this assessment include:
- Policy 57 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage – which covers effects on “*features of local/regional importance*” (which may be considered a reference to Special Landscape Areas).
 - Policy 61 Landscape – which relates specifically to the consideration of landscape character and references relevant local baseline studies including landscape character assessments and capacity studies, and design guidance.
 - Policy 67 Renewable Energy Developments – which identifies effects on landscape character and visual receptors – including residential properties and recognised visitor sites as key matters to be considered - including “*cumulatively with other developments*”.
- 3.50 The West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan 2019 (WestPlan) also forms part of the development plan covering the site although it is of limited relevance to this assessment. It notes the presence of Special Landscape Areas although simply states that “*the boundaries of these areas are set out in the Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas (June 2011) and supported by planning policy in the Highland-wide Local Development Plan.*”

Policy Considerations

- 3.51 Taking account of these policies, this assessment considers effects on landscape and visual receptors; with the assessment for designated landscapes identifying any effects on the qualities for which they are designated and the effect on the overall integrity of the designation. Baseline studies also inform this assessment as set out below.

Other Relevant Guidance and Baseline Studies

- 3.52 Other published documents relevant to this assessment include the following documents which have informed this assessment and/or the design of the proposed Development in relation to the mitigation of landscape and visual effects:
- NatureScot National Landscape Character Assessment (2019)⁶;
 - THC Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (‘OWESG’, 2017)⁷, and

⁵ Highland Council (2012), Highland-wide Local Development Plan. Available at: https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/199/highland-wide_local_development_plan

⁶ Nature Scot (2019). National Landscape Character Assessment. Available at: [Scottish Landscape Character Types Map and Descriptions | NatureScot](#)

⁷ Highland Council (2017). Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance. Available at: [Development guidance - Onshore wind energy | The Highland Council](#)

- THC Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas (2011)⁸.

3.53 These baseline studies are further considered in the Baseline section of this Chapter.

Baseline

3.54 LVIA is an iterative process; baseline studies have informed early assessment before the final assessment was prepared as documented in this Chapter. This section provides a review of documented baseline studies (as listed at paragraph 3.52) and a baseline description of the site and its landscape and visual context. The baseline description of the individual landscape and visual receptors is provided alongside the assessment in the Landscape and Visual Effects section of this Chapter for ease of reference.

Baseline Studies

NatureScot National Landscape Character Assessment

3.55 This is the most recently updated characterisation of the study area and is used as the primary reference in relation to landscape character.

Highland Council Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance

3.56 This document provides guidance in relation to design and assessment and includes some landscape sensitivity studies, but not covering the study area. The ten design criteria it sets out as “*key landscape and visual aspects that the Council will use as a framework and focus for assessing proposals*” are predicated on avoiding significant landscape and visual effects as indicated within the document as follows:

- “All proposals should seek to avoid significant adverse landscape and visual effects...” (paragraph 4.10);
- “The criteria do not set absolute requirements but seek to ensure that developers are aware of key constraints to development. It is the Council’s expectation that applicants will site and design schemes to avoid significant adverse impacts in order that they reflect the criteria below.” (paragraph 4.17).

3.57 Given that the criteria are introduced within the OWESG on the premise that it is necessary to avoid significant effects in order to meet them; and the fact that they do not meet current guidance in relation to sensitivity studies⁹, the ten criteria are superseded by NPF4 and the OWPS and are not considered within this Chapter. The OWESG and criteria it sets out are considered further in the **Planning, Sustainable Design and Access Statement** accompanying the application.

⁸ Highland Council (2011). Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas. Available at: https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/2937/assessment_of_highland_special_landscape_areas

⁹ NatureScot (2022). Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Guidance. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/doc/landscape-sensitivity-assessment-guidance-methodology>

Highland Council Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas

- 3.58 This document describes each of the Special Landscape Areas (SLAs). Key sections within the description of relevance to this assessment are the descriptions of special qualities which identify the qualities for which each area is designated; the ‘overview’ and the factors identified under the heading of ‘sensitivity to change’.

Site and Context

- 3.59 The site is located in an upland area to the east of Dunvegan and to the southwest of Edinbane and mostly comprises upland moor with some forestry within the northern part of the site which extends towards the A850.
- 3.60 The site forms part of the hills which surround lower-lying, coastal and settled landscapes to the north, west and south. Forestry and moorland covered hills which form the interior of the landscape of Skye continue to the east of the site.
- 3.61 The site is located in an area with a number of existing and consented wind farms in close proximity and is the subject of ongoing development interest with a number of larger wind farm proposals at various stages of the consenting process, as illustrated by **Figure 3.8**. The existing wind farms at Ben Aketil and Edinbane are respectively located immediately to the southwest and around 1km to the east of the site and the approved Glen Ullinish Wind Farm will be located around 5km southeast.
- 3.62 The site lies within LCT359 Upland Sloping Moorland as shown by **Figure 3.5**. This is surrounded by areas of LCT360 Stepped Moorland which forms the lower slopes of the hills, some areas of LCT 358 Low Smooth Moorland within 10km to the north, east and southwest and numerous small pockets of LCT 357 Farmed and Settled Lowlands along the coast and extending inland along some valleys. More extensive upland areas with complex terrain are located beyond 9km to the northeast and 7.5km southwest as illustrated by **Figures 3.4** and **3.5**.
- 3.63 Nearby visual receptors include the routes shown on **Figure 3.7**, in particular the A850 which passes close to the north of the site and A863 which passes approximately 5km to the southwest. The nearest settled areas include Edinbane approximately 2.5km to the northeast, tDunvegan approximately 6.5km to the west and dispersed coastal settlement along the local roads 5-9km to the southwest.
- 3.64 The nearest nationally designated landscapes are Trotternish National Scenic Area (NSA), located approximately 18km to the northeast and Dunvegan Castle Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL) which is located 7km to the west as illustrated by **Figure 3.2**. There are also two locally designated Special Landscape Areas (SLA) within 5km of the site; Greshornish SLA is located 3.5km to the north and North West Skye SLA is located 4.7km to the west.

Design and Mitigation

Mitigation Measures Included within the Consented Development

- 3.65 The proposed design largely retains the characteristics of the consented development. The layout remains roughly linear and the proposed design changes would not increase the blade tip heights to 150m, which means that visible aviation lighting is not required and none of the turbines would be taller than those currently consented for Ben Sca Wind Farm Extension.

3.66 In relation to the consented development, design and mitigation measures have been previously discussed within previously submitted Ben Sca Wind Farm EIA Report in January 2020 (SLR, 2020a), Ben Sca Wind Farm Supplementary Information (SI) Report in August 2020 (SLR, 2020b) and Ben Sca Wind Farm Extension EIA Report November 2021 (SLR 2021). Those most recent and relevant to the Proposed Development are set out within:

- Ben Sca Wind Farm SI Report, Chapter 2 Site Description and Design Evolution, paragraph 2.3, which included changes to the previously proposed layout in relation to the comments from THC (SLR, 2020b); and
- Mitigation measures as set out in Ben Sca Wind Farm Extension EIA Report , Chapter 2: Landscape and Visual, paragraphs 2.27-2.29 (SLR, 2021).

Mitigation Measures Included within the Proposed Development

Table 3-2 considers each of the points mentioned in the previous EIA reports as discussed at paragraph 3.66, in relation to the Proposed Development:

Table 3-2: Mitigation Measures

Measure as reported in previous EIA Report	Response in relation to Proposed Development
Supplementary Information for the Ben Sca Wind Farm – comments from THC	
<i>Reduce the proportion of the proposed development which may overtop MacLeod's table and the Cuillin when viewed from viewpoint 8 [A87 near Cuidrach]</i>	The larger rotor diameters and increased tip heights would mean that the Proposed Development would have a greater presence in the view as shown by the comparative wirelines from viewpoint 8. It would however also remain well separated from the view towards the mountains, which would remain the most noticeable feature in the view.
<i>Removal of the majority of the proposed turbines which would be most visible where the hills drop to the sea at Idrigill Point (where sky, sea and land meet) as viewed from viewpoint 15 [Beinn Edra]</i>	The turbines would not be seen to move closer to this part of the view as a result of the minor position changes.
<i>Minimise the magnitude of change introduced at viewpoint 4 [Totaig] by the proposed turbines located on higher ground</i>	As shown by the comparative wirelines from viewpoint 4, there would be no discernible change to the visibility of the turbines at viewpoint 4.
<i>Reducing the number of proposed turbines that breach the skyline when viewed from viewpoint 18 [Beinn Tianavaig]</i>	As shown by the comparative wirelines from viewpoint 18, one additional turbine would breach the skyline (when visibility allows).
<i>Mitigate potential negative effects of the proposed turbines located on higher ground from viewpoints 1 [A850 between Dunvegan and Edinbane] and 5 [A863 Junction with road to Feorlig]</i>	As shown by the comparative wirelines from viewpoint 1, the main effects on the views in this location arise from the 2 consented turbines of Ben Sca Wind Farm Extension, which would not be changing in blade tip height. At viewpoint 5 this advice related specifically to the effects of previously proposed turbines no. 1 and 2 (in the original submission of January 2020) extending the layout higher up on the skyline. Turbines no. 1 and 2 from this layout were subsequently removed as reported in the SI (August 2020) and the consented development did not include them. The tip height

Measure as reported in previous EIA Report	Response in relation to Proposed Development
	increase would not have the same effect as those previously proposed turbines and the layout would remain set back from the higher parts of the skyline as was the case with the consented development.
Mitigation measures as set out at sections 2.2.7-2.2.9 of the EIA Report for Ben Sca Extension	
<i>“Ensuring consistency with the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm layout by extending the linear arrangement of the Ben Sca turbines in a north westerly direction, following the alignment of the topography as well as the layout of the existing Ben Aketil layout to the south west;</i>	Whilst turbine locations would change slightly to accommodate the larger rotor diameters, the linear arrangement following the topography would remain.
<i>utilising existing and consented access tracks where possible to reduce the extent of new development;</i>	Unchanged from consented development.
<i>utilising the consented substation that would form part of the Ben Sca Wind Farm, again reducing the extent of development required;</i>	The grid network operator has provided a different connection point (at Edinbane substation) and as a result the substation is proposed to be moved. The new location is the same as the proposed Balmeanach Wind Farm and would be shared by both wind farms if both are consented.
<i>utilising the consented borrow pits that form part of the Ben Sca Wind Farm to reduce the extent of development and disturbance to the baseline landscape; and</i>	Unchanged from consented development.
<i>selection of internal wind turbine transformers.</i>	Unchanged from consented development.
<i>the rotor diameter of the proposed wind turbines would be 115m, which is the same as those of the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. ...</i>	Rotor diameters would remain matched to keep an even appearance across the Proposed Development but would now be up to a maximum of 138m.
<i>The lower ground level height on which the taller turbines of [Ben Sca Extension] would be located would contribute to offsetting the difference in the tip heights of turbines.”</i>	All turbines would have the same tip height so this measure would no longer be relevant.
<i>vegetation restoration adjacent to the proposed wind turbines and tracks, and upon the site of the borrow pits;</i>	Unchanged from consented development.
<i>selection of wind turbine colour and finish”.</i>	Unchanged from consented development.

Landscape and Visual Effects

Introduction

3.67 This section sets out the effects that the Proposed Development would have on landscape and visual receptors. Some receptors are only briefly discussed and for these receptors effects “*have been judged unlikely to occur or so insignificant that it is not essential to consider them further*” (GLVIA3, para. 3.19).

- 3.68 Effects on landscape character and visual receptors are set out before those on designated areas as it is common for designations to encompass both character and visual considerations within their special qualities or purposes of designation.
- 3.69 As noted at paragraph 3.21, effects during construction, decommissioning and for the completed development are considered for each landscape and visual receptor. The effects on landscape character, designations and visual receptors during construction and decommissioning would arise for a short-term period from a noticeable presence of vehicles and plant on site during groundworks and the use of cranes to erect/dismantle the turbines. While standing turbines are on site, the most notable effects would arise from these and effects during the construction and decommissioning stages are assessed to be the same as during operation except where otherwise specifically noted in the assessment below.
- 3.70 Although the development is proposed for 40 years of operation and is thus temporary and mostly reversible (foundations are typically not removed during decommissioning), the timescale of operation exceeds the 25-year 'long term' duration defined within the methodology. On this basis, effects during operation are assessed as having a 'permanent' duration.
- 3.71 Where effects on receptors are judged to be lower than moderate they are described in **Technical Appendix 3.5** and summarised below.

Effects on Landscape Fabric

Changes to landscape fabric would arise from groundworks to form turbine foundations, hard standings, around 4.5km of new access tracks and the substation compound along with the working of up to three borrow pits. The Proposed Development would also include the felling of approximately 65ha. of plantation forestry as shown on **Figure 3.4** to facilitate a corresponding area of peatland habitat restoration (as discussed in detail in **Technical Appendix 5.3: Outline Habitat Management Plan**). These changes to landscape fabric are largely the same as for the consented development, aside from the area of felling/peatland restoration which would roughly double. They would affect a small proportion of the site and commonplace elements of the landscape and effects on landscape fabric would not be significant, and would include both positive and adverse changes.

Geographic Distribution of Effects

ZTV Study

- 3.72 A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) study has been prepared to indicate the potential visibility of the Proposed Development; inform viewpoint selection and site assessment work; and ensure that this assessment focusses on the potentially significant effects. Where receptors are outside of the area of visibility indicated by the ZTV study, no effects would arise and they are not considered further.
- 3.73 **Figure 3.1** shows a bareground ZTV Study covering a 40km study area as required by NatureScot guidance. The Study shows that visibility and visual receptors are limited beyond 20km from the Proposed Development. **Figure 3.2** shows a more detailed ZTV Study covering the area within 20km of the Proposed Development and including screening by woodland and buildings (see methodology set out in **Technical Appendix 3.1**). This provides a more realistic visibility pattern for the Proposed Development although it should be noted that the extent and height of forestry will vary over time as part

of the felling cycle – often being taller than the 15m modelled and sometimes less when there has been recent felling and/or replanting.

- 3.74 **Figure 3.2** shows that visibility would be relatively widespread within 5km of the Proposed Development; across the open moorland and sites of existing wind farms and towards the lower lying settled areas of Edinbane and Greshornish to the northeast and Caroy and Upper Feorlig to the southwest. Within this 5km area there would be notable breaks in visibility within forestry and on slopes beyond groups of summits to the west, east and south.
- 3.75 Beyond 5km, visibility would markedly decrease in most directions, except to the west and southwest. To the north, visibility arises from higher ground on the peninsulas and slopes facing towards the site – most notably the A87 corridor along the east shore of Loch Snizort Beag – extending up to the sharp ridges of Trotternish; the north side of Loch Greshornish and the east-facing slopes of Beinn Bhreac. To the south and southeast, the main area of visibility would arise from north facing slopes and higher ground within and beyond the consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm, and from higher ground to the west of Portree. To the southwest visibility would extend out across the lower lying crofting landscapes and shores and islands of Loch Bracadale, to the summits of Macleod’s Tables and to the summits and east facing slopes west of Loch Dunvegan.
- 3.76 **Figure 3.3** shows a comparative ZTV study which highlights areas of additional visibility arising from the Proposed Development compared to the consented development. This shows that for most of the study area there would be either no change in the number of turbines visible or one more blade tip would be seen. There would be some areas where more blade tips would be visible, and these mostly reflect areas where visibility of the consented development was limited by terrain such that a number of blade tips were just below the skyline, and the tip height increase would bring them just above - such as near viewpoint 9 at Gearymore and along the A87 (viewpoints 11 and 13).

Viewpoint Analysis

- 3.77 Viewpoint analysis has been undertaken from 18 viewpoints. The final list of viewpoints was prepared based on previous applications on the site and following consultation with THC via the EIA scoping, as set out in **Table 3-1**. The table below provides a summary of the scale and nature of the changes to views at each viewpoint.
- 3.78 The viewpoint locations are shown on **Figures 3.1 – 3.3, 3.6 and 3.7** and are the same as those considered for the consented development. Visualisations are provided with reference to the viewpoint numbers listed below.

Table 3-3: Viewpoint Analysis Summary

No.	Viewpoint	Distance, Direction	Scale and Nature of Change
1	A850 between Dunvegan and Edinbane	1.7km, NW	Large/medium, Adverse
2	Edinbane (Top Road)	3.0km, NE	Large/medium, Adverse
3	Junction of B884 and minor Road to Orbost	7.0km, W	Medium, Adverse
4	Totaig	12.6km, W	Negligible, Neutral
5	Road to Feorlig	5.2km, SW	Medium/small, Adverse
6	Roag	7.0km, SW	Small, Adverse

No.	Viewpoint	Distance, Direction	Scale and Nature of Change
7	Macleod's Table North	11.2km, SW	Small/negligible, Adverse
8	A87	11.3km, NE	Small, Adverse
9	A863	8.0km, S	Negligible, Neutral
10	B885	9.7km, SE	Negligible, Neutral
11	A850 / A87 (West of Borve)	10.8km, E	Small/negligible, Adverse
12	Minor Road to Greshornish	4.6km, N	High/Medium, Adverse
13	A87 (Eyre)	9.4km, E	Small/negligible, Adverse
14	The Storr	17.2km, E	Negligible, Neutral
15	Beinn Edra	18.8km, NE	Negligible, Neutral
16	Bruach na Frithe	25.8km, SE	Negligible, Neutral
17	Uig - Lochmaddy Ferry Route	15.6km, N	Negligible, Neutral
18	Ben Tianavaig	19.0km, SE	Negligible, Neutral

3.79 Each of the viewpoints is a 'sample' of the potential effects, representing a range of visual receptors including people at the viewpoint and nearby, at a similar distance and/or direction. From the ZTV and viewpoint analysis it can be seen that changes to views would arise as follows:

- The extent of large scale and large/medium scale visual changes, where the Proposed Development would form a major alteration to key elements, features, qualities and characteristics of the view such that the baseline will be fundamentally changed, would generally be limited to locations within up to 4km.
- Beyond this area, medium scale changes to views would arise within up to 7km, decreasing to more rapidly to small scale to the southwest where the turbines are seen beyond both the skyline and Ben Aketil Wind Farm.
- Between 7-12km, small and small/negligible scale effects would arise, and beyond this area effects would reduce to negligible as turbines are increasingly seen at a distance.

3.80 A review of the comparative wirelines also indicates the following points in relation to the similarities and differences compared to the consented development:

- The differences in size between the consented and proposed turbines are most apparent in views where the turbines are seen beyond Ben Aketil (i.e. from the west and southwest), where the difference in size compared to the Ben Aketil turbines is most readily apparent.
- In views where the extension turbines are closer (such as viewpoint 1), or where all the turbines are roughly equidistant, the tip height increase results in a more visually balanced appearance whereas previously the smaller scale of the Ben Sca turbines compared to Ben Sca Extension was apparent.
- There are no viewpoints where the scale of change for the consented development (if they had been proposed as a single development) would have been considered to be lower than that of the Proposed Development.

- 3.81 The ZTV and viewpoint analysis also inform the consideration of effects on character. Typically, the scale of change to character at a particular location will be slightly less than the changes to views, as character derives from a more holistic experience of the landscape, not just views. The degree to which a proposal changes character depends on a combination of:
- the degree to which it is ‘in keeping’ with the existing character;
 - proximity and visibility; and
 - the importance of views towards the site to the existing character.
- 3.82 These factors vary by character type and are considered below.

Effects on Landscape Character

Introduction

- 3.83 The assessment of effects identified no significant effects on landscape character. Baseline character (based on review of the baseline documents discussed in the Baseline section of this Chapter and site observations) and effects on LCTs where effects are judged to be Moderate are described below and those for the other LCTs considered in detail are described in **Technical Appendix 3.5** and summarised below.
- 3.84 Based on the visibility illustrated by **Figure 3.6** and the geographic distribution of changes set out in paragraphs 3.72 - 3.82, some of the character types within the study area would experience negligible effects and do not require detailed assessment, including:
- All LCT’s beyond 7km except to the northeast; and to the northeast beyond 11km – beyond this area, changes to views would reduce to small/negligible scale and these changes to views would give rise to negligible scale changes to character.
 - LCTs to the west and southwest of Ben Aketil Wind Farm where the presence of the more nearby wind farm already influences character in the areas of visibility shown on **Figure 3.6**:
 - LCT 360 Stepped Moorland, Ben Horneval (2.3km, W);
 - LCT 357 Farmed and Settled Lowlands, Loch Bracadale (4.1km, SW);
 - LCT 358 Low Smooth Moorland between Heribost and Dunvegan (5km, SW); and
 - LCT 357 Farmed and Settled Lowlands, Dunvegan (5.5km, W) – This area is not included within an LCT within the NatureScot Character Types Map, however this is considered to be an error in the data, and based on the character of this area it is considered it should have been included as an area of LCT 357.
 - LCT 358 Low Smooth Moorland to the northwest of Portree (6.3km, E) – this area lies beyond the intervening Edinbane Wind Farm and the presence of the more nearby wind farm already influences character in the areas of visibility shown on **Figure 3.6**:
 - Relatively distant areas with limited or no visibility:
 - LCT357 Farmed and Settled Lowlands at Loch Bay and Claigan (6.1km, NW);
 - LCT357 Farmed and Settled Lowlands at Loch Snizort Beag west shore (6.6km, NW); and

- LCT 359 Upland Sloping Moorland.

- 3.85 As set out within **Technical Appendix 3.5**, this LCT includes the site and those of Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms to the southwest and southeast of the site. As illustrated by **Figure 3.5**, this LCT extends across around half of the area within 5km of the proposed turbines, and to around 13km to the southeast. The site is fairly typical of the landscape type, only differing in that it includes one of the few areas of forestry. As set out within **Technical Appendix 3.2**, this LCT is judged to be of community value, medium susceptibility and medium/low sensitivity.
- 3.86 As set out within **Technical Appendix 3.5** there would be changes to character within 1km of the turbines where the perception of the landscape would change from being near wind farms to being within a wind farm and changes in the small part of the LCT to the north of the A850 due to the sense of being closer to a wind farm as illustrated by viewpoint 1. Medium and medium/small scale changes would arise across a localised extent of the LCT and give rise to a medium magnitude of change. Effects would be moderate/minor, adverse and not significant. These effects would not be different from those arising from the consented development.

LCT 360 Stepped Moorland

- 3.87 There are multiple instances of this character type within 7km of the Proposed Development as illustrated by **Figures 3.5** and **3.6**. The LCT is considered to be of regional/community value, high/medium susceptibility and high/medium sensitivity. Four LCT units are considered in detail in **Technical Appendix 3.5**, as follows:
- 3.88 **Waternish (1.7km, N)** – This area includes most of the Waternish peninsula. As illustrated by nearby viewpoints 1 and 12, changes to character would arise from a sense of increased proximity wind farms compared to those currently operational, which would give rise to small scale changes within the main area of visibility within 6km to the north of the Proposed Development, affecting a limited extent of the LCT unit and giving rise to a small/negligible magnitude of change. Effects would be minor, adverse and not significant. These effects would not be different from those arising from the consented development.
- 3.89 **Beinn a' Chearcaill to Loch Sligachan (1.5km, SE)** – This area includes an extensive area of moorland to the south and southeast of the site and a small outlier. There would be changes to character within the outlier at Beinn a' Chlèirich, where the addition of the Proposed Development would create a sense of being surrounded by wind farms (including those currently operational and the consented wind farm at Glen Ullinish). These small scale changes would arise across a very limited extent of the LCT unit and give rise to a negligible magnitude of change. Effects would be minimal, neutral and not significant. The effects would not be different from those arising from the consented development.
- 3.90 **Loch Snizort Beag to Loch Greshornish (3km, NE)** – Including the larger area of the LCT between Edinbane and Loch Snizort Beag, and smaller areas at Knott, Dùn Cruin and Ben Tote. Viewpoint 2 is on the edge of the LCT closest to the site, and viewpoint 12 illustrates views from a similar distance and direction and illustrates that the Proposed Development would increase the influence of wind farms on the inland skyline. small scale changes would arise across a Localised extent of the LCT unit and give rise to a small magnitude of change. Effects would be moderate/minor, neutral and not significant. The effects would not be different from those arising from the consented development.
- 3.91 **Loch Dunvegan to Loch Bay (5km, W)** – This area includes the moorlands which extend between Dunvegan and Loch Bay. Views of the Proposed Development within this LCT would be aligned such that they look along the line of Ben Aketil Wind Farm which would

remain closer than the Proposed Development. Changes to character would arise due to the addition of a second row of turbines extending away on the inland skyline, creating a distinct and noticeable pattern of development. Small scale changes would arise across a Limited extent of the LCT unit and give rise to a small/negligible magnitude of change. Effects would be minor, neutral and not significant. The effects would not be different from those arising from the consented development.

LCT 358 Low Smooth Moorland

- 3.92 There are three instances of this character type within 7km of the proposed turbines as illustrated by **Figures 3.5** and **3.6**. As set out at paragraph 3.84, effects on two areas would be negligible.
- 3.93 **West of Edinbane (1.5km, N)** – This is a small area between the A850 and the local road to Greshornish, west of Edinbane. As set out within **Technical Appendix 3.5**, this LCT unit is judged to be of low sensitivity. As shown by **Figure 3.6**, there would be widespread visibility of the Proposed Development, which would become the closest wind farm, from within the LCT as shown by nearby viewpoints 1, 2 and 12. The Proposed Development would be separated from the landscape unit by the A850 and forestry, giving rise to a medium/small scale change to character across a wide extent of the LCT unit and a medium/small magnitude of change. Effects would be minor, adverse and not significant. Effects would not differ from the consented development.

LCT 357 Farmed and Settled Lowlands

- 3.94 There are numerous instances of this character type within 10km of the proposed turbines as illustrated by **Figures 3.5** and **3.6**. For the purposes of this assessment these are grouped into areas in similar locations in the analysis below. Key characteristics are described by NatureScot as:
- “Sharp contrast between human activity and small-scale land use patterns, and the surrounding large scale, mainly uninhabited, landscapes.
 - Always found on low lying terrain - coastal shelves, narrow coastal strips, wide, level strath and glen floors and better drained estuarine flats.
 - In rocky moorland and mountainous areas, found on narrow shelves and slopes at the base of rocky or rugged coastal strips with an abrupt, steep and sometimes complex coastal edge.
 - On basalt bedrock on Skye, relief is level, inclined or terraced, incorporating vertical rock faces, tending to become broader and flatter at lower levels.
 - Dominance of improved grass land and relatively intense grazing.
 - Margins of broadleaf woodlands in good soils and sheltered areas mainly relating to estates or sheltered parts of coastal rocky moorland.
 - Mature parkland trees and small plantations provide shelter and enclosure and are associated with rural estates and better soils.
 - Settlements coalesce with each other and surrounding inbye to form ribbons or swathes of green pastures.
 - Green pasture contrasts with surrounding muted colours of rough grass land.
 - Land use is farming, crofting, tourism accommodation and activities, ferry terminals, and small plantations.

- Larger settlements are active, bustling places, providing facilities for local services and tourism.
 - Variable pattern of settlement, governed largely by historical changes in tenure – the change from run-rig to crofting - landform and soils, and influenced by coastlines, water courses, roads, ferries and bridges.”
- 3.95 As set out within **Technical Appendix 3.2**, some units of this LCT are included in SLA designations and others are undesignated. Value and sensitivity are set out for each LCT unit below. Susceptibility to the Proposed Development is judged to be high/medium; the small scale, settled landscape pattern, varied coastal landform and vegetation patterns indicate higher susceptibility whilst the limited inland views and stronger visual relationship with the sea indicate lower susceptibility.
- 3.96 **Edinbane and Kildonan (2km, NE)** – Contains the two units of this LCT at Edinbane and Kildonan. As described within Technical Appendix 3.5, this unit of the LCT is not within an SLA and is considered to be of community value and medium sensitivity. Small scale changes to character would arise across a wide extent of the LCT unit as a result of the increased presence of turbines spread along the inland skyline as illustrated by viewpoint 2. The magnitude of change would be small and effects would be moderate/minor, adverse and not significant. Effects would not differ from the consented development.
- 3.97 **Greshornish (4.1km, N)** – Contains the unit of this LCT at Greshornish which forms the core of the Greshornish SLA. This LCT unit is judged to be of regional value and high/medium sensitivity. The combination of tree cover, the relationship of the settlement with the loch and rising ground to the north focusses views across and along the loch, including towards the site where more open views are available at the southern edge of the LCT unit.
- 3.98 Viewpoint 12 is within this LCT Unit and illustrates that the turbines would be seen as a line following the skyline from Ben Sca summit beyond the forestry, appearing noticeably larger and closer than the visually more randomly arranged turbines at Edinbane Wind Farm seen to the south. Visibility of the turbines, as shown by **Figure 3.6**, would be theoretically widespread within the LCT unit, though often filtered through the mature tree cover which is locally characteristic.
- 3.99 Medium/small scale changes to character would arise across an Intermediate extent of the LCT unit as a result of the increased presence of turbines spread along the inland skyline. The magnitude of change would be medium/small and effects would be moderate, adverse and not significant.
- 3.100 As shown by **Figure 3.3**, there would be very limited differences in visibility of the Proposed Development compared to the consented development within this LCT unit and neither this additional visibility nor the increased height of the turbines would give rise to different effects on character than for the consented development.
- 3.101 **Loch Snizort Beag east shore (6.5km, NE)** – As set out within Technical Appendix 3.5, this unit of the LCT extends along the eastern shore of the loch and valley sides between Kingsburgh and Borge and is judged to be of community value and medium sensitivity. The shoreline and valley slopes in this area face towards the site and there would be widespread visibility. The small/negligible changes to views illustrated by viewpoints 11 and 13 would give rise to negligible scale changes to character across a wide extent of the LCT. The magnitude of change would be negligible and effects would be minimal, neutral and not significant. Effects would not differ from the consented development.

Visual Effects

3.102 Three types of visual receptors are considered within this assessment:

- groups – Based around settlements or rural areas and representing effects on the community within public spaces including streets and local recreational routes in that place. Views from groups of homes may also be noted in the descriptions, but as noted at paragraph 3.19, effects on these are a separate matter;
- routes – Users of longer distance transport and recreational routes through the study area; and
- specific viewpoints – Visitors to locations which are recognised and valued for the views available.

3.103 Based on the geographic distribution of changes to views set out in paragraphs 3.72 - 3.82, some visual receptors within the study area as shown on **Figure 3.7** would experience negligible effects and do not require detailed assessment:

- all receptors beyond 12km;
- residents of and visitors to settlements and recreational areas, and users of local roads and core paths in the following areas, due to limited visibility as shown by **Figure 3.7**:
 - Waternish Peninsula;
 - West shore of Loch Snizort Beag;
 - Bracadale and B885 corridor;
 - Eabost and Ullinish;
 - Core Path approximately 4km to the south; and
 - Dunvegan Castle GDL; and
 - residents of and visitors to Tote and Carbost, where **Figure 3.7** shows up to three blade tips may be visible, beyond Edinbane Wind Farm.

Edinbane (2.3km, NE)

3.104 This small settlement is located on the A850 at the southern end of Loch Greshornish. The core of the settlement is low-lying and loosely clustered along Old Edinbane Road and has trees and woodland amongst and around the houses. There is also a more open and elevated part of the village along the west facing slope at Upper Edinbane, and a more open area of settlement at the foot of this slope along the A850. The village is not within an SLA and views are of community value. People living in and visiting the village have a high susceptibility and high/medium sensitivity to changes to views.

3.105 As illustrated by **Figure 3.7**, visibility from within the core of the village would be more restricted due to the lower lying terrain and enclosure by forestry to the west and woodland close to the village. Views towards the Proposed Development would be further reduced by localised tree cover such that changes to views would be constrained to glimpsed views. From the A850 and Upper Edinbane, views of the Proposed Development would be similar to those shown by viewpoint 2, giving rise to large/medium scale effects for a wide extent of the village. The magnitude of change would be large/medium and effects would be major/moderate, adverse and significant.

- 3.106 Most of the homes in Edinbane which have open views are oriented with the main outlook facing downslope and away from the site. Effects on residential amenity of those within approximately 3km of the turbines are considered in **Technical Appendix 3.4**.
- 3.107 As shown by **Figure 3.3**, and the comparative wirelines for viewpoint 2 there would be very limited differences in the visibility of the Proposed Development compared to the consented development, with the main change being the increased size of the turbines which would contrast more with the Ben Aketil turbines within the perspective offered from Upper Edinbane. The slight increase in visibility indicated in the core of the village where blade tips may in theory be more visible above the forestry would not be noticeable in the context of the local vegetation which filters and screens views from this area. It is considered that effects for this receptor group would be slightly greater than those for the consented development.

Kildonan and Flashader (4.2km, NE)

- 3.108 These two small linear settlements lie along the A850 and a local road. The settlement pattern is sparse and homes often have trees within their gardens creating a pattern of open views from the road between the houses, but more enclosed views from homes. The settlements are not within an SLA and views are of community value. People living in and visiting the settlements have a high susceptibility and high/medium sensitivity to changes to views.
- 3.109 As illustrated by **Figure 3.7**, visibility from Flashader would be relatively widespread, but would be more restricted from Kildonan, which is partly set on lower slopes with rising ground screening inland views. Where the Proposed Development is openly visible, effects would be medium scale for a wide extent of the settlements. The magnitude of change would be medium and effects would be major/moderate, adverse and significant.
- 3.110 Homes are typically oriented with the main outlooks to the northwest across the loch and away from the site. As noted above, many are partly enclosed by trees and would be less affected than the public views from the roads.
- 3.111 As shown by **Figure 3.3**, and the comparative wirelines for the nearest viewpoint (12) there would be very limited differences in the visibility of the Proposed Development compared to the consented development, with the main change being the increased size of the more distant turbines which would create a more evenly sized array. It is considered that effects for this receptor group no different than those for the consented development.

Greshornish (4.5km, N)

- 3.112 This area is reached via a dead end road along the west shore of Loch Greshornish. A small number of homes and farms and a hotel are clustered among trees which line the local roads and surround the settlement. The hotel and its grounds have open views across the loch which are channelled by the surrounding trees. The settlement forms the core of the Greshornish SLA and views are of regional value. People living in and visiting the settlement and tourists visiting the hotel have a high susceptibility and high/medium sensitivity to changes to views.
- 3.113 As noted above, views out from Greshornish are restricted by trees except from the hotel grounds, though even here trees focus views to the southeast. The tree lines alongside roads are relatively sparse and the turbines may be visible through tree branches in winter. Leaving the settlement and heading inland, there would be open views of the turbines beyond forestry at the end of the loch, seen in the direction of travel for approximately 2.5km, similar to viewpoint 12. Changes to views would be large/medium

scale for a localised extent. The magnitude of change would be medium and effects would be moderate, adverse and not significant.

- 3.114 Homes in the settlement of Greshornish are typically partly enclosed by trees and would be less affected than open locations such as viewpoint 12.
- 3.115 As shown by **Figure 3.3**, and the comparative wirelines for viewpoint 12 there would be very limited differences in the visibility of the Proposed Development compared to the consented development, with the main change being the increased size of the more distant turbines which would create a more evenly sized array. It is considered that effects for this receptor group would be no different than those for the consented development.

Settlement around Loch Bracadale between Gearymore and Roag (5km, SW)

- 3.116 As shown by **Figure 3.7**, there is a cluster of small, mostly linear settlements around the northern shores of Loch Bracadale, set along local roads and the A863. The settlements and roads are mostly open, with occasional trees in gardens and along watercourses. The settlements are either within or on the boundary of the North West Skye SLA as shown by **Figure 3.2** and views are of Regional value. People living in and visiting the settlements have a high susceptibility and high/medium sensitivity to changes to views.
- 3.117 Terrain focusses the main views from the settlements out over the loch, away from the site. Inland views towards the site tend to include a relatively uninteresting skyline and some visibility of Ben Aketil Wind Farm (and/or the consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm), as shown by viewpoints 5, 6 and 9. In the closer views towards the northern end of this receptor group, the turbines would be seen as a second row beyond the Ben Aketil turbines, appearing slightly larger or of the same scale. At the southern edge of this group, they would be less visible, as illustrated by viewpoint 9, and would give rise to a limited change to the view in the context of Glen Ullinish Wind Farm as shown by viewpoint 9. Changes to views would be medium/small near viewpoint 5 and more typically small scale within a wide extent of the receptor group. The magnitude of change would be small and effects would be moderate, adverse and not significant.
- 3.118 Homes in the settlements are typically oriented to face out over the loch and would not have direct views of the Proposed Development within the main outlook.
- 3.119 As shown by **Figure 3.3**, and the comparative wirelines for viewpoints 5, 6, and 9 there would be some differences in the visibility of the Proposed Development compared to the consented development, with the main change in visibility being from near Gearymore as shown by viewpoint 9 – where the turbines would become more visible above the skyline but give rise to negligible effects. Otherwise, the main change would be a more perceptible increase in scale compared to Ben Aketil Wind Farm. It is considered that effects for this receptor group would be no greater than those for the consented development.

Dunvegan, Kilmuir and Lonmore (6.1km, SW)

- 3.120 As shown by **Figure 3.7**, this area of settlement extends broadly between the A850 and B884, along the route of the A863, near the head of Loch Dunvegan. The area of settlement is adjacent to, but not within the North West Skye SLA as shown by **Figure 3.2** and views are of community value. People living in and visiting the settlement here, including tourists staying at the campsites, have a high susceptibility and high/medium sensitivity to changes to views.
- 3.121 Terrain focusses the main views from the settlement out over the loch and towards the flat-topped summits of Macleod's Tables. Inland views towards the site tend to include a

relatively uninteresting nearby skyline, though the Kinloch campsite and adjacent local road have east facing views which look out towards the rest of the village with a more distant skyline beyond. As shown by **Figure 3.7**, no more than six of the turbines would be visible within the village. From the A863 at the southern end of this group, the turbines would be seen along the inland skyline appearing behind, but larger than the turbines at Ben Aketil Wind Farm as illustrated by nearby viewpoint 3. Homes in this area would have similar views from open rear facades and gardens. From the A850 at the northern end of the group visibility would be more restricted by nearby houses and trees in gardens, with occasional views through gaps. Except for a short stretch of one path close to the A850, there would be no visibility of the Proposed Development from Core Paths around Dunvegan. Changes to views would be medium/small scale within an intermediate extent of the receptor group. The magnitude of change would be medium/small and effects would be moderate, adverse and not significant.

- 3.122 As shown by **Figure 3.3**, and the comparative wirelines for viewpoint 3 there would be very limited differences in the visibility of the Proposed Development compared to the consented development, with the main change being the increased size of the turbines which would contrast more with Ben Aketil turbines within the perspective offered from this direction. It is considered that effects for this receptor group would be no greater than those for the consented development.

A850 (1.1km, N)

- 3.123 As shown by **Figure 3.7**, the A850 connecting the A87 at Borve and the A863 at Dunvegan, passes through an open landscape and settlements around Loch Snizort Beag and Loch Grehornish between Borve and Edinbane, and then between areas of forestry as it approaches Dunvegan. The forestry is more set back from the road than shown in the mapping on **Figures 3.2** and **3.7** and has occasional gaps (such as near viewpoint 1), though for the most part the forestry still provides a degree of screening of views towards the site. The route does not pass through designated landscapes and views are of community value. Tourists and local road users would have a medium susceptibility and medium sensitivity to changes to views from this route.
- 3.124 Westbound travellers would see occasional blade tips between Borve and Suledale and changes to views along this part of the route would typically be negligible scale. Small scale changes to views would arise in the short stretch of visibility east of Breabost, increasing to medium scale as the route passes through Flashader and to large/medium scale approaching Edinbane (similar to nearby viewpoint 2), affecting a localised extent of the route. Through this section, the turbines would be seen ahead of the direction of travel. Passing Edinbane, there would be intermittent views of blade tips above forestry as the route passes the site.
- 3.125 Eastbound travellers would first see the Proposed Development, beyond Ben Aketil Wind Farm, in glimpsed views between houses and trees as they leave Dunvegan, giving rise to a limited extent of small scale changes to views. Between Dunvegan and Fairy Bridge there would be no visibility, with visibility of the Proposed Development alongside Ben Aketil Wind Farm returning after the road turns eastwards at Fairy Bridge. Initially as blade tips and then more openly as the road climbs and then descends again towards viewpoint 1, giving rise to large/medium scale changes to views for a limited extent of the route. Beyond this there would be occasional views of blade tips above forestry as the route passes the Proposed Development.
- 3.126 The magnitude of change for users of the A850 would be medium and effects would be moderate, adverse and not significant.

- 3.127 As shown by **Figure 3.3**, and the comparative wirelines for viewpoints 1 and 2 there would be very little difference in the visibility of the Proposed Development compared to the consented development. The main change would be the increased size of the turbines which would create an evenly sized array, whereas the difference in scale between the turbines of the consented development would be apparent in views from this route. It is considered that effects for this receptor group would be the same as for the consented development.

Other Visual Receptors

- 3.128 Effects on the following visual receptors are assessed to be lower than moderate and are described within **Technical Appendix 3.5**.
- 3.129 **B884 and Colbost (6.2km, SW)** – The scattered settlement and most of the B884 approaching it are within the North West Skye SLA. People living in and visiting the area have a high/medium sensitivity to changes to views. Up to six of the turbines would be visible within the settlement which is relatively low-lying and looks out over Loch Dunvegan; with more open views from the B884 as it heads towards the A863 as shown by viewpoint 3. Changes to views would be small scale along the closer stretches of the road, reducing to small/negligible towards Colbost, affecting a wide extent of the receptor group. The magnitude of change would be small and effects would be moderate/minor, adverse and not significant. Effects would not differ from the consented development.
- 3.130 **Macleod's Tables (11km, SW)** – These summits and the walking route to them from Orbst are within the North West Skye SLA. People enjoying this walk have a high/medium sensitivity to changes to views. As illustrated by **Figure 3.7** and viewpoint 7, there would be views of the Proposed Development for a wide extent of the route. The turbines would be seen beyond Ben Aketil Wind Farm giving rise to small/negligible changes to the view from the summits and there would be small scale changes arising in closer views with the Proposed Development seen ahead of the direction of travel as the route returns to Orbst. The magnitude of change would be small/negligible and effects would be moderate/minor, adverse and not significant. Effects would not differ from the consented development.
- 3.131 **A863 (5km, SW)** – As shown by **Figure 3.7**, the A863 is a main road route running southeast from Dunvegan. Tourists and local road users would have a medium sensitivity to changes to views. Southbound travellers would first see the Proposed Development as they leave Dunvegan and would experience short stretches of medium/small and small scale changes to views before passing beyond the site at Feorlig, affecting a limited extent of the route. Northbound travellers would experience a localised extent of effects and would first see the Proposed Development in the distance as shown by viewpoint 9, where changes to views would be negligible. Beyond this point there would be short stretches of visibility for a localised extent of the route where effects would be small and medium/small scale, with views of the turbines beyond Ben Aketil Wind Farm, as illustrated by viewpoint 5. The magnitude of change would be small and effects would be moderate/minor, adverse and not significant. Effects would not differ from the consented development.
- 3.132 **A87 and settlement between Earlish and Borge (9km, NE & E)** – Except for Earlish which lies partly within the Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA, this area is undesignated and views are of community value. Residents of and visitors to settlements have high/medium sensitivity and A87 road users have medium sensitivity. As shown by viewpoints 8, 13 and 11 and **Figure 3.7**, visibility of the turbines would be more open towards the northern end of the receptor group, reducing as the far valley side increasingly screens views heading southwards. Effects on the settlements in this area are judged to be of small/negligible

scale for a wide extent. Localised changes to views for southbound travellers on the A87 would be small scale for a localised extent in the stretches of visibility near viewpoint 8 and Kingsburgh, and predominantly small/negligible scale for northbound users, with a limited extent of small scale effects near Kingsburgh. The magnitude of change for both roads users and people at settlements would be small/negligible and effects would be minor, adverse and not significant. Effects would not differ from the consented development.

Effects on Designated Areas

Greshornish SLA (3.5km, N)

3.133 This SLA includes the wooded settlement of Greshornish, the small peninsula on the west side of Loch Greshornish, the inlet of Loch Diubaig on its northern side, and the cliffs immediately to the north at Creagan Dearga (Red Rocks). As shown on **Figure 3.2** visibility of the Proposed Development would arise from more elevated inland areas within the SLA, and the west shore of Loch Greshornish, reducing within the settlement due to the tree cover. As a local designation, the SLA is considered to be of regional value. **Table 3-4** considers effects on each of the special qualities of the designation as set out within THC Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas (2011).

Table 3-4: Effects on Greshornish SLA Special Qualities

Quality	Susceptibility	Effect
Contrasting Geology, Enclosure and Exposure	High – the Proposed Development would not directly affect the landscape contrasts, but may be seen in views of Creagan Dearga or the adjacent peninsulas and may affect the sense of seclusion if visible from Diubaig Bay.	The description notes that the cliffs at Creagan Dearga are best appreciated from the sea, where the turbines may be visible on the inland skyline giving rise to small scale changes to views but would not be directly beyond the cliffs which are seen looking southwest. The proposed Development would not be visible from Diubaig Bay. Views towards the Trotternish and Waternish peninsulas look away from the site. In views to the south the Proposed Development would be seen alongside existing wind farms as illustrated by viewpoint 12. Changes to views from the more elevated area where both the Proposed Development and the adjacent peninsula would be visible would be medium/small scale, taking account of the wider panoramas available and the lack of the focussing effect of the terrain which directs the lochside views towards the site. Considered together, these effects would give rise to a small scale change to this special quality, across an Intermediate extent of the SLA.
Historic Landscape	Medium – The proposed Development would not directly affect these features but may distract or detract from their appreciation.	The prehistoric roundhouses, hillforts, relic field systems and ruined buildings described mostly lie on the south side of the small peninsula around Greshornish where there would be medium and medium/small scale changes to views arising from the Proposed Development being seen alongside the existing wind farms. This change to the views would give rise to a small scale change to this special quality for a wide extent of the area in which it is most clearly apparent.

- 3.134 Based on the detailed considerations set out in **Table 3-4**, there would be a small magnitude of change to a special quality of medium sensitivity ('historic landscape'), and a small magnitude of change to the appreciation of the 'contrasting geology, enclosure and exposure' which is judged to be of high/medium sensitivity. Effects on the SLA would be moderate, adverse and not significant.
- 3.135 As shown by **Figure 3.3**, and the comparative wirelines for viewpoint 12 there would be very little difference in the visibility of the Proposed Development compared to the consented development. The main changes would be some additional visibility from the sea beyond the peninsula, and the increased size of the turbines which would create an evenly sized array, whereas the difference in scale between the turbines of the consented development would be apparent in views from area. It is considered that effects for this receptor group would be the same as for the consented development.

Other Designated Landscapes

- 3.136 Effects on the following designations are assessed to be lower than Moderate and are described within **Technical Appendix 7.5**:
- **North West Skye SLA (4.7km, W)** – This large SLA includes much of Skye's north western peninsulas extending from to Waternish Point in the north to Loch Brittle in the south and including Loch Dunvegan and Loch Bracadale. There would be small scale changes to the medium sensitivity special quality of 'Distinctive Terrain' as a result of views of the Proposed Development from Macleod's Tables and some limited visibility of the turbines in areas where there are key views of Macleod's Tables. In such views, the turbines would typically be either behind the viewer or seen well separated from Macleod's Tables. Effects would be minimal, adverse and not significant, and would not differ from those of the consented development.
- 3.137 Based on the geographic extent of changes to views as set out at paragraph 3.79, effects on the following designations are judged to be negligible for the reasons described below and are not considered in detail:
- **Trotternish NSA (17.9km, NE)** – As illustrated by **Figure 3.2** there would be very limited visibility of the Proposed Development, and changes to views where visibility does arise would be negligible scale as illustrated by viewpoint 15. Key views identified in the Special Qualities of the SLA are primarily eastwards towards the mainland rather than southwest towards the site.
 - **Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA (10km, NE)** – As illustrated by viewpoint 8 and **Figure 3.2**, at most small scale changes to views would arise within a very limited extent of this large SLA to the southwest of Earlish. These cliffs form part of the enclosure to Uig Bay and are mentioned under the special quality of 'Ridgeline Spine and Coastal Fringe'. The small scale changes to views from the clifftops would not affect their role in providing "*an impressive landscape setting*" to Uig.

Cumulative Effects

Introduction

- 3.138 The assessment is based on the same landscape and visual baseline and receptor groups as the main LVIA, and the methodology is the same in terms of forming and expressing judgements. Two types of judgement are provided:

- additional effects – The effects that would arise from the addition of the Proposed Development to a baseline which includes the cumulative development(s) being considered; and
 - combined effects – The effects that would arise from the addition of both the Proposed Development and the cumulative development(s) being considered to the main assessment baseline.
- 3.139 Typically, only the additional effects need to be considered and the cumulative assessment is provided to inform decision-making in the event that one or more of the cumulative developments has been consented prior to the Proposed Development (i.e. the future baseline has changed). The combined effects may be relevant where two or more development applications are determined together.
- 3.140 Landscape and visual receptors that are considered to receive effects of small/negligible or negligible magnitude from the Proposed Development are not included in this assessment, as an effect of such low magnitude adds nothing or very little regardless of the effects of other developments. If significant cumulative effects arise on those receptors, they would be as a result of other developments and are not relevant for consideration as part of this application.
- 3.141 This assessment considers two types of cumulative visual effect:
- combined views which “*occur where the observer is able to see two or more developments from one viewpoint*”. Combined visibility may either be in combination (where several developments are within the observer's arc of vision at the same time) or in succession (where the observer has to turn to see the various developments); and
 - sequential views which “*occur when the observer has to move to another viewpoint to see different developments.*” (GLVIA3)

Assessment Scenarios

- 3.142 All cumulative schemes with turbines over 50m to blade tip within the 20km study area are illustrated on **Figure 3.8**. Operational and consented developments have been included within the landscape and visual baseline within the main assessment. Those located within the study area include:
- operational wind farms: Ben Aketil (12 turbines at 100.5m to blade tip, 1km, SW) and Edinbane (18 turbines at 100m to blade tip, 1.5km SE);
 - consented wind farms: Glen Ullinish (10 turbines at 149.9m to blade tip, 5km, S) and Beinn Mheadhonach (4 turbines at 99.5m to blade tip, 11.8km, S).
 - single turbines at Sumardale Croft (up to 91m to blade tip) and Meadale Farm (54m to blade tip), both more than 12km to the south.
- 3.143 All of the wind farms listed above are subject to proposals for their replacement (noting that the EIA Report for Glen Ullinish II states that Glen Ullinish would not be built if Glen Ullinish II is consented).
- 3.144 **Table 3-5** lists proposals at application or scoping stages within the study area (also illustrated on **Figure 3.8**).

Table 3-5: Cumulative Development Proposals

Name	Description	Planning Status	Distance, Direction
Ben Aketil Repowering	10 turbines at 200m	Application	1.2km, SW
Edinbane Repowering	19 turbines at 200m	Scoping	1.5km, SE
Balmeanach	10 turbines at 149.9m	Application	0.7km, SE
Glen Ullinish II	47 turbines at 200m	Application	2.7km, SE
Beinn Mheadhonach (Redesign)	5 turbines at 149.9m	Scoping	11.5km, S
Waternish	11 turbines at 149.9m	Scoping	2.7km, N
Land at 4 Edinbane	2 turbines at 150m	Screening	3.7km, NE

- 3.145 A review of the cumulative wirelines and the outcomes of the main assessment indicate that there would be no cumulative effects arising from the combination of the Proposed Development and Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm and that this is likely to remain the case for Beinn Mheadhonach (Redesign).
- 3.146 Proposals in scoping (or that have been screened for EIA purposes) may not proceed to application with the same design as scoped, and may not become applications before the Proposed Development is determined and are therefore less certain and are not typically included in cumulative assessment. Land at 4 Edinbane was screened out for EIA in April 2022 and as no application has yet been submitted it is not considered further in this assessment. Edinbane Repowering is considered as currently scoped and Waternish is considered based on the anticipated application layout provided by the developer of that project.
- 3.147 Scenarios considered within this cumulative assessment are:
- Scenario 1 – The Proposed Development with operational and consented development – i.e. the effects of the Proposed Development compared to the current baseline – as described in the main LVIA.
 - Scenario 2 – The Proposed Development with repowering/replacement schemes (including Glen Ullinish II).
 - Scenario 3 – The Proposed Development with Balmeanach.
 - Scenario 4 – The Proposed Development with Waternish.

Cumulative ZTV Studies

- 3.148 **Figure 3.9** provides a cumulative ZTV study for the Proposed Development and operational and consented wind farms at Ben Aketil, Edinbane and Glen Ullinish. As indicated by the large areas of orange in the study area and very limited areas of pale blue and pale pink, the areas of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development and operational and consented wind farms is substantially the same.
- 3.149 ZTV studies for other scenarios are described under the relevant sections below.

Cumulative Viewpoint Analysis

- 3.150 The scale of effect at viewpoints arising from adding the Proposed Development to a baseline including the relevant cumulative developments for each scenario is set out

within **Table 3-6**. Only viewpoints where the effects of the Proposed Development are greater than small/negligible are considered for the reasons set out at paragraph 3.1403.140.

Table 3-6: Cumulative Scale of Change at Viewpoints

(entries are only made where effects differ from Scenario 1)

No.	Viewpoint	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
1	A850 between Dunvegan and Edinbane	Large/medium	Medium		
2	Edinbane (Top Road)	Large/medium	Medium		
3	Junction of B884 and minor Road to Orbost	Medium	Negligible		
5	Road to Feorlig	Medium/small	Small/negligible	Small	
6	Roag	Small	Small/negligible		
8	A87	Small	Negligible		Small/negligible
12	Minor Road to Greshornish	Large/medium	Small	Medium	

Scenario 2

- 3.151 The three developments included in this scenario (Glen Ullinish II, Edinbane Repowering and Ben Aketil Repowering) would all include 200m high turbines and would surround the Proposed Development to the east, west and south.
- 3.152 **Figure 3.9** provides a cumulative ZTV study for the Proposed Development and additional areas of visibility which would arise from the replacement of operational and consented wind farms at Ben Aketil, Edinbane and Glen Ullinish with repowered/redesigned/extended wind farms. As discussed at paragraph 3.148, theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development and operational and consented wind farms is substantially the same. New areas of combined visibility of the Proposed Development and repowered/redesigned/extended wind farms would arise in the areas shown in darker blue on **Figure 3.9**, and would arise in fairly limited areas, mostly located 6-10km to the north and northeast of the site and around the shores of Loch Dunvegan 8-10km to the northwest of the site.
- 3.153 In the context of these larger repowered wind farms, the effects of the Proposed Development would be focussed (as for Scenario 1) on landscape and visual receptors within 1km of the site and within 5km to the north of the site as indicated by the viewpoint analysis above.

Cumulative Effects on Landscape Character

- 3.154 **LCT 359 Upland Sloping Moorland (includes site)** – There would be changes to character within 1km of the turbines where the perception of the landscape would change from being near wind farms to being within a wind farm and small scale changes (slightly reduced from Scenario 1) in the small part of the LCT to the north of the A850. medium and small scale changes would arise across a Localised extent of the LCT and give rise to a medium/small magnitude of change. Effects would be moderate/minor, adverse and not significant.

- 3.155 **LCT 360 Stepped Moorland, Loch Snizort Beag to Loch Greshornish (3km, NE)** – Edinbane Repowering would be the primary influence on character in this direction as illustrated by viewpoints 2 and 12 and the Proposed Development would be seen backdropped by turbines at Ben Aketil Repowering on the same section of skyline. Negligible scale changes would arise across a localised extent of the LCT unit and give rise to a negligible magnitude of change. Effects would be minor/minimal, adverse and not significant.
- 3.156 **LCT 358 Low Smooth Moorland, West of Edinbane (1.5km, N)** – The Proposed Development would remain the closest wind farm to this LCT in this scenario, but given its smaller turbines would make a limited contribution to the cumulative effects on character as shown by nearby viewpoints 1, 2 and 12. The Proposed Development would be separated from the landscape unit by the A850 and forestry, giving rise to small scale effects within a wide extent of the LCT unit and a small magnitude of change. Effects would be minor, adverse and not significant.
- 3.157 **LCT 357 Farmed and Settled Lowlands, Edinbane and Kildonan (2km, NE)** – Edinbane Repowering would be the primary influence on character in this direction as illustrated by viewpoint 2 and the Proposed Development would be seen backdropped by turbines of Ben Aketil Repowering on the same section of skyline. Negligible scale changes would arise across a localised extent of the LCT unit and give rise to a negligible magnitude of change. Effects would be minimal, neutral and not significant.
- 3.158 **LCT 357 Farmed and Settled Lowlands, Greshornish (4.1km, N)** – The Proposed Development would add to the number of turbines seen looking south from this LCT, but would not be the largest or occupy a new areas of skyline as illustrated by viewpoint 12. Negligible scale changes to character would arise across an intermediate extent of the LCT unit. The magnitude of change would be negligible and effects would be minor/minimal, adverse and not significant.

Cumulative Effects on Visual Receptors

- 3.159 **Edinbane (2.3km, NE)** – As illustrated by viewpoint 2, Edinbane Repowering would be the nearest wind farm in this scenario and its larger turbines would make it a very prominent feature in the view to the south which would be particularly noticeable when travelling along the road at Upper Edinbane towards homes. The Proposed Development with Ben Aketil Repowering beyond would be seen looking across the glen and would be more visible in outlooks from homes which tend to be oriented towards the southeast. Changes to views from adding the Proposed Development in this scenario, with either or both of the repowered schemes present, would be medium scale for a wide extent of the village and the magnitude of change would be medium. Effects would be major/moderate, adverse and significant.
- 3.160 **Kildonan and Flashader (4.2km, NE)** – Effects would be similar to those illustrated by nearby viewpoint 12 and the repowering of both Ben Aketil and Edinbane would markedly increase the prominence of these wind farms in the view. If only Edinbane were repowered the addition of the Proposed Development would give rise to medium/small scale changes to view over a wide extent of the villages, although if the repowered Ben Aketil were present (with or without Edinbane repowering) the scale of change would be small. The magnitude of change would be no greater than medium/small and effects would be moderate, adverse and not significant.
- 3.161 **Greshornish (4.5km, N)** – As noted at paragraph 3.113, views out from the settlement are screened and filtered by nearby trees, but views from the road leaving the village would be similar to viewpoint 12. Changes to views would be medium/small scale for a

localised extent of the settlement if only one of the repowering schemes were present, reducing to small scale if both were present. The magnitude of change would be no more than medium/small and effects would be moderate, adverse and not significant.

- 3.162 **A850 (1.1km, N)** – For westbound travellers, the effects of adding the Proposed Development would be slightly reduced from Scenario 1 due to the increased influence of the repowering schemes on views as users travel towards the site. If only Edinbane were repowered the addition of the Proposed Development would give rise to small scale changes to views over the short stretch of visibility east of Breabost, increasing to medium/small scale as the route passes through Flashader and medium scale approaching Edinbane (similar to nearby viewpoint 2), affecting a localised extent of the route. If the repowered Ben Aketil were present (with or without Edinbane Repowering) the scale of change would be slightly reduced to small through Flashader but would remain medium scale approaching Edinbane settlement.
- 3.163 For eastbound travellers, the effects of adding the Proposed Development would be slightly reduced from Scenario 1 due to the increased influence of Ben Aketil Repowering on views as they travel towards the site. As illustrated by viewpoint 1, the Proposed Development would be seen alongside the larger turbines of Ben Aketil Repowering where it is openly visible, giving rise to medium scale changes to views for a limited extent of the route. If only Edinbane were to be repowered there would be no change to Scenario 1.
- 3.164 The magnitude of change for users of the A850 would be no greater than medium/small and effects would be moderate/minor, adverse and not significant.

Cumulative Effects on Designated Landscapes

- 3.165 **Greshornish SLA (3.5km, N)** – As noted above, changes to views at viewpoint 12 within the SLA would be reduced to no greater than medium/small scale in this scenario, and it is considered that effects on the special qualities of the SLA arising from the addition of the wind farm in views south from the SLA would reduce to small/negligible scale, small/negligible magnitude and would be minor, adverse and not significant.

Comparison with Consented Development

- 3.166 In this scenario the dominant influences on effects are the proposed repowering/replacement schemes. In this context the effects arising from the Proposed Development would be the same as for the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and Extension. The slightly increased height of seven turbines and, more importantly, the increased rotor diameter would mean that scale contrasts between the Proposed Development and the repowering schemes would be less apparent than would be the case for the consented development.

Scenario 3

- 3.167 **Figure 3.10** shows a cumulative ZTV study for the Proposed Development and Balmeanach Wind Farm and illustrates that the two wind farms have a very similar pattern of potential visibility across the study area and would generally be seen in conjunction with one another. The main differences in visibility, where only one or the other of the wind farms would be visible, are generally confined to remote upland areas or out to sea. As illustrated by the visualisations and the viewpoint analysis in **Table 3-3**, there would be a slight reduction to the scale of change to views at viewpoints 5 and 12 where the Proposed Development would appear almost as a continuation of Balmeanach, extending

past the summit of Ben Sca. In most views from the north, west and east of the site, Balmeanach is less visible than the Proposed Development, and partly screened by terrain. The main changes arising would be in views from the south, where Balmeanach may be closer, however effects arising from the Proposed Development tend towards negligible from this direction. It is considered that all effects on receptors would remain as for Scenario 1.

Scenario 4

- 3.168 **Figure 3.11** shows the cumulative ZTV study for the Proposed Development and Waternish Wind Farm. The main areas of combined visibility would arise around Loch Greshornish; the eastern slopes and ridgeline of Waternish peninsula; east-facing slopes of Beinn Bhreac; eastern shores of Loch Snizort Beag extending up to the ridgeline of Trotternish; the open moorland and wind farm sites within 5km of the site, and the crofting landscapes between Dunvegan and Loch Bracadale. Other areas of combined visibility would be 10km or more from one or both of the two proposed wind farms.
- 3.169 Given the location of Waternish Wind Farm 2.5km to the north of the site, the main changes to effects arising from the Proposed Development in this scenario would be on landscape receptors within 5km to the north and visual receptors between the two sites. Beyond Waternish Wind Farm, to the northwest along the peninsula, the Proposed Development would be seen beyond Waternish Wind Farm where it would be visible, reducing the limited effects from the Proposed Development on character and views in this area to negligible. In addition, the low-lying position of Greshornish would largely screen the Waternish turbines as illustrated by viewpoint 12, and **Figure 3.10**. As shown by viewpoint 2, effects on nearby visual receptors to the northeast would tend to remain the same as for Scenario 1.

Cumulative Effects on Landscape Character

- 3.170 **LCT 358 Low Smooth Moorland, West of Edinbane (1.5km, N)** – As illustrated by **Figure 3.10**, both wind farms would be visible and roughly equidistant from this LCT unit. Both would have some separation from the LCT provided by a combination of forestry and the A850 for the Proposed Development and the hill of Beinn Eirisalain for Waternish. In this context, adding the Proposed Development giving rise to small/negligible scale effects within a wide extent of the LCT unit and a small/negligible magnitude of change. Effects would be minimal, neutral and not significant.

Cumulative Effects on Visual Receptors

- 3.171 **A850 (1.1km, N)** – For westbound travellers, the effects of adding the Proposed Development would be small to negligible scale for a localised extent of the route between Breabost and the site. Both wind farms would be seen together for much of the route between Breabost and Edinbane set across the skyline looking to the right and ahead, with a gap between and Waternish would generally appear the larger and more prominent scheme. In this context the Proposed Development would be a smaller change to the views approaching Edinbane where there are open views towards the Waternish site. For eastbound travellers, the effects of adding the Proposed Development would remain the same as Scenario 1 due to the limited visibility of Waternish Wind Farm as illustrated by viewpoint 1 and **Figure 3.10**. Effects would be medium to small scale for a limited extent of the route. The magnitude of change for users of the A850 in this scenario would remain the same as for Scenario 1.

Cumulative Effects on Designated Landscapes

- 3.172 **Greshornish SLA (3.5km, N)** – As illustrated by **Figure 3.10**, there would be areas of combined visibility within the SLA and areas where one of the two developments would be markedly more visible due to the terrain of the small peninsula. On the western shores of Loch Greshornish, as illustrated by **Figure 3.10** and viewpoint 12, the Proposed Development would often be the only one of these schemes visible and where both are seen the Proposed Development would be more prominent. Conversely, in the more elevated core areas of the SLA and lower lying areas to the north and west, Waternish would be more openly visible and would appear much closer and more prominent than the Proposed Development. Effects on the special qualities of the SLA arising from the addition of the Proposed Development in the context of the more nearby and widely visible turbines at Waternish would be small scale changes to the ‘Contrasting Geology, Enclosure and Exposure’ in the Limited extent of the SLA which does not have visibility of Waternish Wind Farm along the west shore of Loch Greshornish. The magnitude of change would be small/negligible and effects would be minor, adverse and not significant.

Comparison with Consented Wind Farms

- 3.173 In this scenario the main cumulative effects would arise to the north of the site where the closest consented turbines are the two turbines of Ben Sca Extension, which would not change in terms of either the blade tip height or position; the increased rotor diameter of these would be noticeable but would have no influence on cumulative effects. In this context the effects arising from the Proposed Development would be the same as for the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and Extension.

Summary

Scope and Purpose

- 3.174 This assessment describes the existing landscape and views, considers their sensitivity to change and identifies changes likely to arise from the Proposed Development, providing judgements of the importance of the effects arising.

Design

- 3.175 The primary design changes from the consented development are the increased blade tip height of seven of the turbines and the move of the substation. The substation location, despite its elevation, is not visible from most viewpoints, with only brief glimpsed views of the top of the substation beyond the summit from a short stretch of the A850 to the northwest of the site as illustrated by viewpoint 1. The increased tip height has the effect of creating an array of more even appearance in views from the southwest and northeast.
- 3.176 The only notable changes to effects on receptors as a result of the tip height increase is a marginal increase in the scale of change to views at Macleod’s Table, where the elevated perspective would mean the difference in scale of the Ben Aketil turbines and those proposed would be more apparent. This effect would not arise in the event of Ben Aketil Repowering being consented.

Effects on Character

- 3.177 There would be no significant effects arising from the Proposed Development. This arises as a result of the relatively low sensitivity of the host character type (LCT 359 Upland Sloping Moorland) and the existing influence on nearby Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms on the host character type and landscape character in the surrounding area.
- 3.178 The most notable effects would be moderate and adverse effects on LCT357 Farmed and Settled Lowlands (Greshornish) located approximately 4km to the north of the site, and moderate/minor and adverse effects on the host LCT, LCT 360 Stepped Moorland (Loch Snizort Beag to Loch Greshornish) and LCT357 Farmed and Settled Lowlands (Edinbane and Kildonan) – both within 3km to the northeast of the proposed turbines.

Visual Effects

- 3.179 As with effects on landscape character, changes to views would be moderated by the existing presence of operational wind farms. Effects would be greatest to the northeast as Ben Aketil is mostly screened by terrain in views from this direction and the Proposed Development spans across the elevated skyline in views from lower lying settlements and roads.
- 3.180 Significant (major/moderate and adverse) effects on views would arise for visual receptors at Edinbane, Kildonan and Flashader. People living in and visiting these small settlements within 6km to the northeast of the site would have relatively open views of the Proposed Development – particularly from Upper Edinbane.
- 3.181 Effects on other visual receptors would be moderate at most – at Greshornish, Dunvegan, settlement around Loch Bracadale between Gearymore and Roag and for users of the A850.

Effects on Designated Areas

- 3.182 There would be no effects on Nationally designated landscapes. The only locally designated landscape which would be affected by the proposed Development would be the Greshornish SLA, where views of the turbines alongside Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms would give rise to moderate, adverse and not significant effects as a result of small changes to the special qualities of ‘Historic landscape’ and ‘Contrasting geology, enclosure and exposure’. These changes would not affect the integrity of the SLA.

Cumulative Effects

- 3.183 The following cumulative development scenarios are considered in this assessment:
- Scenario 1 – The Proposed Development with operational and consented development – i.e. the effects of the Proposed Development compared to the current baseline – as described in the summary above.
 - Scenario 2 – The Proposed Development with repowering/replacement schemes (Ben Aketil Repowering, Edinbane Repowering, Glen Ullinish II).
 - Scenario 3 – The Proposed Development with Balmeanach.
 - Scenario 4 – The Proposed Development with Waternish.
- 3.184 In general, the effects of adding the Proposed Development to the schemes included in each of the scenarios would remain much the same as for Scenario 1. The exceptions to

this would be reductions to effects on some receptors to the north and northeast of the site in the Scenario 2 as a result of the increased influence of the turbines at Edinbane and Ben Aketil, which would be double the height of the operational turbines; and reduced effects on some receptors to the north of the site in Scenario 4 as a result of the nearby presence of Waternish Wind Farm in that development scenario.

- 3.185 In Scenario 2, effects on LCT357 Farmed and Settled Lowlands (Greshornish) LCT 360 Stepped Moorland (Loch Snizort Beag to Loch Greshornish) and LCT357 Farmed and Settled Lowlands (Edinbane and Kildonan) would reduce to minor/minimal or minimal in this scenario. For visual receptors, effects at Kildonan and Flashader would reduce to moderate and adverse and would not be significant, and effects on road users on the A850 would also reduce to moderate/minor, though only in the context of a consent for Ben Aketil Repowering.
- 3.186 In Scenario 4, effects on LCT 358 Low Smooth Moorland (West of Edinbane) would be reduced to minimal and neutral and effects on the Greshornish SLA would be reduced to minor and adverse.

Statement of Significance

- 3.187 Significant effects would arise for visual receptors at Edinbane, Flashader and Kildonan – within 6km to the northeast of the site.
- 3.188 In cumulative development scenarios, the only changes to significant effects would be that effects on visual receptors at Kildonan and Flashader would reduce to become not significant in the context of a consent for Ben Aketil Repowering or Edinbane Repowering (or both).

Assessment Summary Tables

Table 3-7: Main Assessment Summary

Effects identified as being Minimal are omitted from the table below. Significant effects are underlined.

Receptor	Distance, Direction	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Level of Effect
Landscape Character Types and Units				
LCT 359 Upland Sloping Moorland	includes site	Medium/low	Medium	Moderate/minor, Adverse
LCT 360 Stepped Moorland (Waternish)	1.7km, N	High/medium	Small/negligible	Minor, Adverse
LCT 360 Stepped Moorland (Loch Snizort Beag to Loch Greshornish)	3km, NE	High/medium	Small	Moderate/minor, Adverse
LCT 360 Stepped Moorland (Loch Dunvegan to Loch Bay)	5km, W	High/medium	Small/negligible	Minor, Adverse
LCT 358 Low Smooth Moorland (West of Edinbane)	1.5km, N	Low	Medium/small	Minor, Adverse
LCT357 Farmed and Settled Lowlands (Edinbane and Kildonan)	2km, NE	Medium	Small	Moderate/minor, Adverse
LCT357 Farmed and Settled Lowlands (Greshornish)	4.1km, N	High/medium	Medium/small	Moderate, Adverse

Receptor	Distance, Direction	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Level of Effect
Visual Receptors				
Edinbane	2.3km, NE	High/medium	Large/medium	<u>Major/moderate, Adverse</u>
Kildonan and Flashader	4.2km, NE	High/medium	Medium	<u>Major/moderate, Adverse</u>
Greshornish	4.5km, N	High/medium	Medium	Moderate, Adverse
Settlement around Loch Bracadale between Gearymore and Roag	5km, SW	High/medium	Small	Moderate, Adverse
Dunvegan	6.2km, W	High/medium	Medium/small	Moderate, Adverse
A850	1.1km, W	Medium	Medium	Moderate, Adverse
B884 and Colbost	6.2km, W	High/medium	Small	Moderate/minor, Adverse
Macleod's Tables	11km, SE	High/medium	Small/negligible	Moderate/minor, Adverse
A863	5km, SW	Medium	Small	Moderate/minor, Adverse
A87 and settlement between Earlish and Borve	9km, NE & E	High/medium	Small/negligible	Minor, Adverse
Designated Areas				
Greshornish SLA	3.5km, N	High/medium	Small	Moderate, Adverse

Table 3-8: Cumulative Assessment Summary (level of additional effects)

Only receptors with greater than small/negligible magnitude of change and effects which are different to the main LVIA (Scenario 1) are included.

Receptor	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
Landscape Character Types and Units				
LCT 359 Upland Sloping Moorland	Moderate/minor, Adverse			
LCT 360 Stepped Moorland (Loch Snizort Beag to Loch Greshornish)	Moderate/minor, Adverse	Minor/minimal, Adverse		
LCT 358 Low Smooth Moorland (West of Edinbane)	Minor, Adverse			Minimal, Neutral
LCT357 Farmed and Settled Lowlands (Edinbane and Kildonan)	Moderate/minor, Adverse	Minimal, Neutral		
LCT357 Farmed and Settled Lowlands (Greshornish)	Moderate, Adverse	Minor/minimal, Adverse		

Receptor	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
Visual Receptors				
Edinbane	<u>Major/moderate, Adverse</u>			
Kildonan and Flashader	<u>Major/moderate, Adverse</u>	Moderate, Adverse		
Greshornish	Moderate, Adverse			
Settlement around Loch Bracadale between Gearymore and Roag	Moderate, Adverse			
Dunvegan	Moderate, Adverse			
A850	Moderate, Adverse	Moderate/minor, Adverse (with Ben Aketil Repowering)		
B884 and Colbost	Moderate/minor, Adverse			
A863	Moderate/minor, Adverse			
Designated Areas				
Greshornish SLA	Moderate, Adverse	Minor, Adverse		Minor, Adverse

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Figures

Figure 3.1: ZTV Study – Bare Ground

Figure 3.2: ZTV Study – including Screening by Woodland and Buildings

Figure 3.3: ZTV Study – Comparison with Consented Development

Figure 3.4: Topography and Landcover

Figure 3.5: Landscape Character

Figure 3.6: Landscape Character & Visibility

Figure 3.7: Routes & Visibility

Figure 3.8: Cumulative Sites

Figure 3.9: Cumulative ZTV Study – with operational & consented and proposed repowering/redesign/extensions

Figure 3.10: Cumulative ZTV Study – with Balmeanach Wind Farm

Figure 3.11: Cumulative ZTV Study – with Waternish Wind Farm

Appendices

Technical Appendix 3.1: Methodology

Technical Appendix 3.2: Landscape Sensitivity

Technical Appendix 3.3: Viewpoint Analysis

Technical Appendix 3.4: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment

Technical Appendix 3.5: Effects less than Moderate