

Technical Appendix 3.2 Landscape Sensitivity

The sensitivity of the landscape character types/areas which may receive significant landscape effects are assessed below. Landscape sensitivity is not absolute and can only be defined in relation to each development and its location. To assess the sensitivity of a particular landscape it is good practice to consider the value attached to the landscape and its susceptibility to the particular form of change likely to result from the proposed development. Assessment text relates to sensitivity of the landscape receptor as a whole, to the proposed development, with additional comments regarding the Site where relevant. In the main this has been taken from the NatureScot (2019) Landscape Character Assessment (quotes shown in italics) as well as from site assessment.

Given the presence of both national and local landscape designations within the study area, more detailed evaluations are not undertaken. Areas within the NSAs are deemed to be of National value; areas within the SLAs are deemed to be of Regional Value, and undesignated areas are deemed to be of Community value. The criteria in the table below are used in judging susceptibility of the individual character types and are based on relevant guidance (see **Technical Appendix 3.1**).

Susceptibility Criteria

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy
Scale	Large scale landscapes where the turbines may be in proportion	Small scale intimate landscapes
Landform	Smooth regular flowing, flat or uniform landscapes	Dramatic, rugged and complex landscapes
Openness/enclosure	Open and exposed landscapes	Enclosed and sheltered landscapes
Land cover	Simple or regular landcover (including intensive farming and forestry). Simple and sweeping lines, linear feature and patterns.	Complex, intimate or mosaic cover. Complex or irregular patterns.
Built Environment	Contemporary masts, pylons, industrial elements, buildings infrastructure, settlements	Established, traditional or historic built character
Views and intervisibility	Visually contained and have limited inward or outward views	Extensive views within or of the area with distant horizons.
Landscapes that form settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	Generally low lying landscapes without distinctive landform or horizon	Areas with strong features, focal points that define the setting or skyline

Host Landscape: LCT 359 Upland Sloping Moorland

Factors affecting sensitivity	Explanation	Judgement
Designation	No designations apart from a very small area near Bay.	Community
Overall Judgement of Value		Community
Scale	Large scale – <i>"expansive moorland ..."</i> with <i>"broad areas of landcover components"</i> .	Low
Landform	<i>"gently sloping and undulating with the lower slopes cut by small burns radiating from below the summits"</i>	Medium/low
Openness/enclosure	<i>"Exposed and open ..."</i>	Low
Land cover	<i>"Simple overall composition..."</i> , <i>"The majority of land cover is rough, boggy grassland and heather, alongside a few large-scale plantations..."</i>	Low
Built Environment	<i>"Little settlement – occasional isolated modern farms"</i> , <i>"higher locations are used for wind energy generation, with two moderately-sized windfarms."</i>	Medium/low
Views and intervisibility	<i>"extensive views to surrounding mountains, islands, coastlines and the sea"</i>	High
Forms settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	Forms the visual backdrop to the settlements and road network in the surrounding lower lying areas.	High/medium
Overall Judgement of Susceptibility		Medium
Overall Judgement of Sensitivity		Medium/low

LCT 360 Stepped Moorland

Factors affecting sensitivity	Explanation	Judgement
Designation	Typically undesignated, though areas which form the immediate setting to the locally designated coastal areas are included within the Greshornish and North West Skye SLAs.	Regional/ community
Overall Judgement of Value		Regional/ community
Scale	Mixed - smaller scale close to lower lying settled areas where fields are enclosed, otherwise landcover is larger scale. Stepped structure of the landform provides a visible measure of scale.	Medium
Landform	<i>"moderate to low, broad-based, usually asymmetrical hills and moorlands occurs from sea level up to elevations of around 400 metres" with a "distinct stepped profile". "Summits are often craggy, and can be narrow and well defined or broad and rounded as a result of erosion."</i>	High
Openness/enclosure	<i>"Exposed and open"</i>	Low
Land cover	<i>"Isolated large to moderate scale forest blocks, usually found in more elevated areas..."</i> <i>Trees and plantations largely absent on coastal lowlands.</i> <i>Extensive grazed rough grassland, bog and heather, with more intensively grazed grassland at the coast".</i>	Low
Built Environment	<i>"generally limited settlement. Main roads usually occur at the coastal margins of this type which, along with single track roads, link the interspersed areas of Farmed and Settled Lowlands Roads occasionally traverse passes in the central uplands, connecting a few solitary farms. Forest, farm and windfarm tracks extend further into the interior. There is evidence of abandoned agricultural uses.... the remains of scattered mediaeval and later farmsteads and townships"</i>	Medium/low
Views and intervisibility	<i>"...extensive visibility", though "the upland areas are rarely visited by walkers."</i> <i>At the coast, high inter-visibility between promontories and rare views of inaccessible coastlines and mountains."</i>	High/medium
Forms settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	Parts of this landscape type are included within SLAs where it forms the immediate landscape setting to coastal settlements. The distinctive landform forms a focus in views towards and around the coast of the north of Skye.	High
Overall Judgement of Susceptibility		High/medium
Overall Judgement of Sensitivity		High/medium

LCT 358 Low Smooth Moorland

Factors affecting sensitivity	Explanation	Judgement
Designation	The unit of this LCT west of Edinbane is not designated. The other two areas are not considered in detail within the LVIA.	Community
Overall Judgement of Value		Community
Scale	<i>"Moderately sized bands of peaty lowland", "rivers or small burns, ...abandoned fields, occasional drainage channels and eroded peat banks provide some surface detail."</i>	Medium
Landform	<i>"flat to gently sloping or undulating"</i>	Low
Openness/enclosure	<i>"Expansive and open", "Formed in depressions linked to the coast, in straths and glens between hills, and at the foot of landslide edges."</i>	Low
Land cover	<i>"a subtle diversity of vegetation, ranging from moorland to semi-improved patches. There is no distinct pattern of land use, which is mainly rough grazing and... Patches of scrub woodland often run along water courses. The slightly raised, upper margins allow for moderately-scaled conifer plantations on better drained land."</i>	Medium/low
Built Environment	<i>"ground conditions have deterred settlement and road building, although there is evidence of abandoned agricultural uses in the ruined buildings and ridge and furrow marks"</i>	Medium
Views and intervisibility	<i>"views of mountains, islands and sea, channelled by adjacent hill slopes".</i> Tends to be channelled away from rather than towards the site.	Medium/low
Forms settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	<i>"provides an open setting for adjacent settled landscapes",</i> but the turbines would not be within this area or adjacent, so of limited relevance to this assessment.	N/A
Overall Judgement of Susceptibility		Medium/low
Overall Judgement of Sensitivity		Low

LCT 357 Farmed and Settled Lowlands

Factors affecting sensitivity	Explanation	Judgement
Designation	Varies by area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Edinbane and Kildonan (2km, NE) – not designated ● Greshornish (4.1km, N) – forms the core of an SLA ● Loch Snizort Beag east shore (6.5km, NE) – not designated 	Community Regional Community
Overall Judgement of Value		Varies by area
Scale	<i>"small-scale land use patterns", "small scale dwellings and fields divided by low, stock-proof fences and occasional stone dykes".</i>	High
Landform	<i>"low lying terrain ", "relief is level, inclined or terraced, incorporating vertical rock faces, tending to become broader and flatter at lower levels"</i>	High/medium
Openness/enclosure	Varied – see 'landcover' below.	Medium
Land cover	<i>"Vegetation coverage within the type is variable. In the north and centre of Skye, crofts and harbours are usually in exposed, virtually treeless settings. Occasionally, there are sheltered rocky slopes which support scrub and woodland pockets. ...Rural estates are on good soils, and associated with remnant broadleaf woodland, extensive mature parkland trees and avenues, and small conifer plantations and shelter belts, which create shelter and enclosure."</i>	Medium
Built Environment	<i>"Croft settlements are a mix of original and abandoned croft houses with an increasing proportion of modern houses." "settlements of different types and their surrounding fields, often coalesce to form extensive coastal ribbons or swathes."</i>	High
Views and intervisibility	Coastal settlements have a strong visual relationship with the sea, and settled areas within straths have <i>"sinuous views towards the mountainous interior"</i> .	Low
Forms settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	The turbines would not be within this area or adjacent, so of limited relevance to this assessment.	N/A
Overall Judgement of Susceptibility		High/medium
Overall Judgement of Sensitivity		Greshornish - High/medium Edinbane & Kildonan and Loch Snizort Beag east shore - Medium