

Technical Appendix 3.3 Viewpoint Analysis

Introduction

1. A viewpoint assessment has been carried out from a selection of representative viewpoint locations to inform the assessment of the likely magnitude of change and level of landscape and visual effects arising as a result of the Proposed Development.
2. The 18 viewpoints agreed for previous assessments of Ben Sca and Extension Wind Farm (the consented development) were also used for this assessment. The following viewpoints are not described in detail in this assessment:
 - Viewpoints that were provided as wireline only (3, 4, 9, 13, 16, 17) and/or previously agreed to be scoped out (10 and 11) in the previous assessments; and
 - Viewpoints where effects are judged to be negligible scale (4, 10 and 14-18).
3. The locations of the selected viewpoints are shown on **Figures 3.1** and **3.2**. Panoramic photographs, wireline diagrams and photomontages (in most cases) are provided to illustrate the existing view at each viewpoint location and the likely extent of the Proposed Development and cumulative developments within the view (see Viewpoints 1-18). All cumulative developments with turbines over 50m to blade tip have been included on the visualisations (also see **Figure 3.8**), there are a number of existing small turbines (less than 50m) present within the study area and these are discussed where relevant to the assessment.
4. This viewpoint assessment considers the nature of the predicted view and informs the judgements of scale of change provide in Table 3-3 of the main LVIA. The wider extent of the change and its duration are not captured in the viewpoint analysis (as a single location cannot capture these factors for an entire route or area). As duration and extent are necessary considerations in determining magnitude of change, magnitude and level of effect judgements are provided for visual receptors considered in the main body of the assessment and not for viewpoints.
5. The method of assessment used for the viewpoint analysis, which is described in **Technical Appendix 3.1**, accords with current best-practice guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment¹. Observations are made of the baseline characteristics at each of the representative viewpoints with site observations, computer modelling and professional judgement then applied to determine the scale of change attributable to the Proposed Development (Large, Medium, Small and Negligible). Where relevant, consideration is also given to cumulative effects and the effects of any proposed lighting.
6. The viewpoint analysis takes into account the screening effect of intervening landform, vegetation and built form and the potential for changes to those baseline features. It assumes excellent clear weather conditions; although the influence of different seasons, weather, sunlight and visibility conditions have been considered, where relevant.
7. The development scenarios considered are as follows:
 - Scenario 1 – The Proposed Development with operational and consented development – described under ‘Predicted changes to view’.
 - Scenario 2 – The Proposed Development with repowering schemes (incl. Glen Ullinish II).
 - Scenario 3 – The Proposed Development with Balmeanach.
 - Scenario 4 – The Proposed Development with Waternish.

¹ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third Edition (GLVIA3)

| Viewpoint | Key features of existing view | Predicted changes to view | Cumulative |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| 1) A850 between Dunvegan and Edinbane | <p>From this viewpoint, views are generally open and elevated, contrasting with other sections of the A850. Looking south, the main focus of the view is Ben Aketil Wind Farm which is a prominent feature. Edinbane Wind Farm is also visible along the skyline to the east. These two wind farms and the moorland skyline of Ben Sca are foregrounded by lower lying forestry.</p> | <p>The proposed turbines would be seen to descend the hill slope in a line broadly towards the viewpoint and felling/peatland restoration associated with the Outline Habitat Management Plan (OHMP) would be seen around the bases of two of the three closest turbines. The proposed turbines would appear both closer and larger than the existing wind farms.</p> <p>The proposed substation building would also be visible beyond the turbines, just over the skyline of Ben Sca.</p> <p>The effects of the Proposed Development at this viewpoint would be the same as those of the consented development, in particular as the nearest proposed turbines would not be any taller.</p> | <p>Scenario 2 – The repowering of Ben Aketil and Edinbane would increase the scale and proximity of turbines in this view, in particular arising from the additional, taller turbines at Ben Aketil. In this context the Proposed Development would make a reduced change to the view.</p> <p>Scenario 3 – Balmeanach Wind Farm would be seen as hubs and blade tips above the summit of Ben Sca. The effects of the Proposed Development would remain the same.</p> <p>Scenario 4 – Waternish Wind Farm would not be visible from this viewpoint. The effects of the Proposed Development would remain the same.</p> |
| 2) Edinbane (Top Road) | <p>The views are largely open to the south, west and northwest, and limited to the east by the rising landform. The main direction of view is to the hill slopes and skyline on the opposite side of the broad, shallow glen which appear largely forested, with just a small band of open moorland above. The tips of Ben Aketil turbines are seen rotating above the skyline.</p> <p>To the northwest, the landform Waternish and the southern end of Loch Greshornish appear as distinctive and prominent features. To the south Edinbane Wind Farm is prominent.</p> | <p>The proposed turbines would be seen to follow the skyline above the forestry on the hill slopes, creating an evenly spaced and sized array occupying a wide arc of the view and appearing both closer and larger than the existing wind farms.</p> <p>The effects of the Proposed Development at this viewpoint would be the same as those of the consented development, but would create a more evenly sized array.</p> | <p>Scenario 2 – The repowered Edinbane Wind Farm would combine with Glen Ullinish II to create a more dominant feature in the view and the repowered Ben Aketil turbines would be more clearly seen above the skyline. In this context the Proposed Development would make a reduced change to the view.</p> <p>Scenario 3 – Balmeanach Wind Farm would be seen appearing from beyond the hill to the left of the summit of Ben Sca, the nearest turbines in open view and more distant ones increasingly screened by landform. The effects of the Proposed Development would remain the same.</p> <p>Scenario 4 – Waternish Wind Farm would be seen descending the hill slopes above Loch Greshornish. Collectively Edinbane, the Proposed Development and Waternish would span across the open view available and in this context the effects of the Proposed Development would remain the same.</p> |

| Viewpoint | Key features of existing view | Predicted changes to view | Cumulative |
|--|--|---|---|
| 3) Junction of B884 and minor Road to Orbost | Wireline only | | |
| 4) Totaig | Wireline only, negligible scale effects | | |
| 5) Road to Feorlig | <p>From the area surrounding this representative viewpoint, key views are towards Loch Bracadale to the west or the distant Cuillin mountains to the south and the interior hills form a simple skyline and gentle slopes that extend from a local pattern of dispersed small-scale houses, agricultural buildings, fields and riparian woodland.</p> <p>Ben Aketil Wind Farm is seen to the northeast, forming an evenly spaced row of turbines along the moorland skyline.</p> | <p>The proposed turbines would be seen as a second line beyond Ben Aketil Wind Farm. The blade tips of the proposed turbines would not be higher than those at Ben Aketil, but the larger rotor size would be readily apparent.</p> <p>The effects of the Proposed Development at this viewpoint would be the same as those of the consented development. However, the proposed turbines would be more obviously larger by comparison with those at Ben Aketil.</p> | <p>Scenario 2 – The larger and closer turbines at Ben Aketil would be seen directly in front of the Proposed Development and Edinbane and Glen Ullinish II would be seen at a similar scale to the Proposed Development on the skyline to the right of the summit of Ben Sca. In this context the Proposed Development would make a very limited change to the view.</p> <p>Scenario 3 – Balmeanach Wind Farm would be seen as a cluster of turbines appearing slightly larger/closer than the Proposed Development and separated by the summit of Ben Sca. The effects of the Proposed Development would remain the same.</p> <p>Scenario 4 – Waternish Wind Farm would be seen as a more distant, denser cluster of turbines beyond the left-hand two turbines of Ben Aketil Wind Farm. The effects of the Proposed Development would remain the same.</p> |

| Viewpoint | Key features of existing view | Predicted changes to view | Cumulative |
|--------------------------|--|--|---|
| 6) Roag | <p>The main focus of the view is to the southeast, over Loch Bracadale and a mixed composition of sea, peninsulas, islands and inlets towards the distant and distinctive focal feature of the Cuillin mountains. The foreground crofting landscape includes fields, houses, farms, wooden powerline poles and small woodlands. Ben Aketil Wind Farm can be seen on the skyline to the northeast and the tips of some of the turbines at Edinbane are just visible to the right of Ben Aketil.</p> | <p>The proposed turbines would be seen as a second line beyond Ben Aketil Wind Farm. The blade tips of the proposed turbines would appear slightly higher than those at Ben Aketil and the larger rotor size would be readily apparent.</p> <p>The effects of the Proposed Development at this viewpoint would be the same as those of the consented development. However, the proposed turbines would be more obviously larger by comparison with those at Ben Aketil.</p> | <p>Scenario 2 – The larger and closer turbines at Ben Aketil would be seen directly in front of the Proposed Development and Edinbane and Glen Ullinish II would be seen as an extensive group at a similar scale to the Proposed Development on the skyline to the right. In this context the Proposed Development would make a very limited change to the view.</p> <p>Scenario 3 – Balmeanach Wind Farm would be seen as a cluster of turbines appearing slightly larger/closer than the Proposed Development and separated by the summit of Ben Sca. The effects of the Proposed Development would remain the same.</p> <p>Scenario 4 – Waternish Wind Farm would be seen as a single turbine hub and blades and the blade tips of another turbine above Ben Vic Askill to the north-northeast. The effects of the Proposed Development would remain the same.</p> |
| 7) Macleod's Table North | <p>The hill top is flat, so there is not a single, focused vantage point and open panoramic views over the surrounding landscape are experienced from the outer edges of the table-top. Within this context, this representative viewpoint is on the eastern side of the top where an informal path (publicised on the Walkhighlands website) descends the hill and views face the existing Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms. The consented turbines at Glen Ullinish will be visible to the right of these.</p> <p>The panoramic view includes open sea, islands, lochs, mountains and hills, interior moorland and forest, and coastal settlements, including the Cuillins, Loch Bracadale, and the distinctive island profiles of the Outer Hebrides and Rum.</p> | <p>The proposed turbines would be seen as a second row beyond Ben Aketil Wind Farm, partly separated by the forestry and set on lower-lying moorland in the middle ground of the view. Felling/peatland restoration associated with the OHMP would also be visible around the bases of the three lowest lying turbines to the left.</p> <p>From the elevated perspective offered by this viewpoint, the proposed turbines would be more obviously larger by comparison with those at Ben Aketil and the effects would be slightly greater than those of the consented development.</p> | <p>Scenario 2 – The increased size, proximity, extent and number of the repowered wind farms would render the Proposed Development a negligible addition to this view.</p> <p>Scenario 3 – Balmeanach Wind Farm would be visible at a similar scale to the right of the Proposed Development. The effects of the Proposed Development would remain the same.</p> <p>Scenario 4 – Waternish Wind Farm would be seen as an uneven line of similar scale turbines partly screened by intervening landform to the left of the Proposed Development and separated from the other wind farms. The effects of the Proposed Development would remain the same.</p> |

| Viewpoint | Key features of existing view | Predicted changes to view | Cumulative |
|-------------------------------|---|--|---|
| 8) A87 | <p>This viewpoint offers open, elevated views over the surrounding moorland and sea, with some local screening provided by knolls and ridges. To the south, the Cuillin mountains form the main focus. The fore and midground of the view includes rocky ridges, shelves and knolls, grassland, patches of woodland, dispersed and clustered crofts/ settlements, and powerlines.</p> <p>To the southwest, Macleod’s Tables are key foci on the skyline and Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms can be seen along with extensive forestry.</p> <p>There are also two small turbines which were not present at the time of the visualisation photography – see illustrative view A below.</p> | <p>The proposed turbines would be seen as a closer, larger and more prominently positioned second row in front of Ben Aketil Wind Farm. The proposed turbines would be evenly spaced and sized, and prominent due to their positioning in the view.</p> <p>The effects of the Proposed Development at this viewpoint would be the same as those of the consented development with the difference in scale to Ben Aketil and Edinbane turbines appearing to be mostly due to perspective.</p> | <p>Scenario 2 – The proposed repowering of Ben Aketil and Edinbane would increase the scale and proximity of turbines in this view, with Edinbane becoming the most noticeable development forming a dense cluster set at varied heights. The turbines of Ben Aketil repowering and the Proposed Development would appear to be of a similar scale to each other and the effects of the Proposed Development would be negligible in this scenario.</p> <p>Scenario 3 – Balmeanach Wind Farm would be seen as a small cluster to the left of Edinbane Wind Farm. The effects of the Proposed Development would remain the same.</p> <p>Scenario 4 – Waternish Wind Farm would be seen on the hill slopes to the right of the existing wind farms, clearly closer and appearing more so due to descending the slopes, but with turbines appearing of a similar scale to the Proposed Development and other wind farms. The effects of the Proposed Development would be slightly reduced in this scenario.</p> |
| 9) A863 | Wireline only. There is also a recently built large barn now at this viewpoint location – see illustrative view B below. | | |
| 10) B885 | Previously scoped out, wireline only, negligible scale effects | | |
| 11 A850 / A87 (West of Borve) | Previously scoped out – wireline only | | |

| Viewpoint | Key features of existing view | Predicted changes to view | Cumulative |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 12) Minor Road to Greshornish | <p>The main focus in this view is Loch Greshornish and the surrounding crofting landscape and hills beyond. The hill slopes to the south are largely covered in forestry plantation which contrasts with the surrounding open moorland. The crofts and settlement surrounding Loch Greshornish include houses, agricultural buildings, patches of trees, agricultural fields and electricity poles.</p> <p>Edinbane Wind Farm is prominently seen above the settlement of Edinbane to the south. The blades and hubs of the Ben Aketil Wind Farm can be seen beyond the skyline and forestry.</p> | <p>The proposed turbines would be seen forming a closer and markedly more prominent line in front of, and extending to the left of, Ben Aketil Wind Farm.</p> <p>The effects of the Proposed Development at this viewpoint would be the same as those of the consented development, but would create a more evenly sized array.</p> | <p>Scenario 2 – The proposed repowering of Ben Aketil and Edinbane would increase the scale and proximity of turbines in this view, in particular arising from the taller turbines at Edinbane. In this context the Proposed Development would appear to be of similar scale to, and less extensive than, Ben Aketil Wind Farm and would make a reduced change to the view.</p> <p>Scenario 3 – Balmeanach Wind Farm would be seen as a cluster to the left of the summit of Ben Sca. The turbines would appear of a similar scale to the Proposed Development. The effects of the Proposed Development would remain the same in this scenario.</p> <p>Scenario 4 – Waternish Wind Farm would not be visible from this location. The effects of the Proposed Development would remain the same in this scenario.</p> |
| 13) A87 (Eyre) | Wireline only | | |
| 14) The Storr | Negligible scale effects | | |
| 15) Beinn Edra | Negligible scale effects | | |
| 16) Bruach na Frithe | Wireline only, negligible scale effects | | |
| 17) Uig - Lochmaddy Ferry Route | Wireline only, negligible scale effects | | |
| 18) Ben Tianavaig | Negligible scale effects | | |

Illustrative View A – Viewpoint 8, two small turbines are visible which are not included in the visualisations



Illustrative View B – Viewpoint 9, recently built nearby barn

