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## INTRODUCTION

- 7.1 This Chapter assesses the landscape and visual effects of the proposed Balmeanach Wind Farm (the Proposed Development), which is described in **Chapter 3: Description of the Development**.
- 7.2 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is based on an indicative turbine with an 80.9m hub height, 138m rotor diameter and maximum height to blade tip of 149.9m, as shown on **Figure 3.3**.
- 7.3 The LVIA has been undertaken by experienced Landscape Architects from SLR Consulting Ltd following the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) produced by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013).
- 7.4 The LVIA considers the effects on:
- landscape fabric which would be caused by changes to the physical form of the landscape and its elements as a result of the Proposed Development;
  - landscape character and designated landscapes, which would be caused by changes in the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape as a result of the Proposed Development; and
  - visual amenity for people (visual receptors) in the surrounding area which would be caused by changes in the appearance of the landscape as a result of the Proposed Development on people.
- 7.5 Impacts on landscape fabric occur when there is physical change to components of the landscape: landform, land use or land cover. Impacts on landscape character occur when there is change to the key characteristics of the landscape and the associated distinct and recognisable pattern of elements which give it a particular character. Visual amenity impacts comprise changes in views of the landscape and the overall effects on visual amenity.
- 7.6 Following GLVIA, landscape effects and visual effects are assessed separately. Landscape effects concern the physical aspects of an area, landscape character and how the landscape is experienced. Visual effects chiefly concern the nature of views obtained by viewers (known as ‘visual receptors’).
- 7.7 The LVIA Chapter is supported by:
- **Technical Appendix 7.1: LVIA Methodology;**
  - **Technical Appendix 7.2: LVIA Visualisation Methodology;**
  - **Technical Appendix 7.3: Viewpoint Assessment;**
  - **Technical Appendix 7.4: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA);** and
  - Figures and Visualisations contained in **Volumes 3a to 3e** of this EIA Report.

## LANDSCAPE POLICY AND PLANNING GUIDANCE

- 7.8 A review of national and regional landscape policies and planning guidance, as detailed in **Technical Appendix 4.1: Legislation, Policy and Guidance**, that are specifically relevant to the LVIA is

presented in **Table 7-1** and **Table 7-2**.

## National Planning Policy

7.9 **Table 7-1** includes the national policies which are particularly relevant to the LVIA.

**Table 7-1: Key National Planning Policies Relevant to the LVIA**

Policy Document	Relevant Policy	Description	Response
National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (Scottish Government, February 2023)	4 – Natural Places	<p>This Policy sets out principles for protecting locally, regionally, nationally and internationally important natural assets, both on land and along coasts. It states “Development proposals which by virtue of type, location or scale will have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment, will not be supported”.</p> <p>It includes specific provisions for the protection of National Parks and National Scenic Areas, establishing the need to protect the objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the areas.</p> <p>Policy 4 also sets out that development proposals that affect a designated landscape area in the LDP will only be supported where such development would not have significant adverse effects on the integrity of that area or the qualities for which it has been identified. However, Policy 4 also sets out development proposals that affect such landscape designations can be supported where these are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance.</p> <p>In relation to NatureScot Wild Land Areas (WLA), NPF4 states that development proposals “<i>will only be supported where the proposal...will support meeting renewable energy targets [inter alia]</i>”. It goes on to identify that such proposals should be supported by a wild land impact assessment. However, it also states 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>”.</p>	<p>The site is not located with a National Park or National Scenic Area. Landscape designations within the study area and potential effects on these are assessed within this chapter.</p> <p>Potential landscape and visual effects resulting from the Proposed Development are considered throughout this chapter.</p> <p>The site is not located within a NatureScot WLA. The two WLAs within the wider study area, Duirinish and Cuillin, are assessed in this chapter.</p>
	6 – Forestry, Woodland and Trees	<p>Policy 6 seeks to protect and expand forest, woodland and trees. It sets out that development proposals that enhance, expand and improve woodland and tree cover would be supported. It places an emphasis on the protection of ancient woodlands, ancient and veteran trees,</p>	<p>Some tree felling is proposed as part of the Proposed Development. This is not required to facilitate the Proposed Development, but is proposed to create an area of improved habitat. This is described in Chapter 3: Description of the Development, <b>Technical Appendix</b></p>

Policy Document	Relevant Policy	Description	Response
		<p>together with native woodlands, trees and hedgerows.</p> <p>Part c states that <i>“development proposals involving woodland removal will only be supported where they will achieve significant and clearly defined additional public benefits”</i>.</p>	<p><b>3.2: Assessment of Potential Areas for Woodland Removal for Peatland Restoration and Technical Appendix 8.5: Outline Habitat Management Plan.</b> This habitat enhancement would complement local landscape character, restoring the landscape in a way that would be consistent with the adjacent moorland.</p>
	11 – Energy	<p>Policy 11 seeks to encourage and support development proposals for all forms of renewable, low carbon and zero emissions technologies. Wind farms are specifically covered by this policy, including repowering, extending, expanding and extending the life of existing wind farms. It also sets out that development proposals for wind farms in National Parks and National Scenic Areas will not be supported.</p> <p>Part e of this Policy include criteria linked with project design, mitigation and potential impacts. These include reference to impacts on communities and individual dwellings, residential amenity and visual impact. It also identifies the potential for significant landscape and visual impacts, recognising that such impacts are to be expected from some forms of renewable energy, stating that <i>“where impacts are localised and/or appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they will generally be considered to be acceptable”</i>.</p> <p>Part iii specifically relates to potential impacts on public access, including long distance walking, cycling and scenic routes. Part xiii makes reference to potential cumulative impacts.</p> <p>Part f of Policy 11 identifies that consents for development proposals may be time limited. However, it also identifies that areas identified for wind farms are expected to be suitable for use in perpetuity.</p>	<p>The site is not located with a National Park or National Scenic Area. Landscape designations within the wider study area and potential effects on these are assessed within this chapter. Potential landscape and visual effects resulting from the Proposed Development are considered throughout this chapter, with <b>Technical Appendix 7.3</b> comprising the Viewpoint Assessment and <b>Technical Appendix 7.4</b> comprising the Residential Visual Amenity Assessment.</p> <p><b>Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution</b> describes the approach taken to consider the siting and design of the Proposed Development.</p>

## Development Plan Policy

- 7.10 The site is located within the area covered by Highland-wide Local Development Plan (LDP) (THC, 2012). The policies listed within **Table 7-2** are considered to be relevant to the LVIA, including the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (2016) produced by THC.

**Table 7-2: Key Development Plan Policies Relevant to the LVIA**

Policy/Guidance Document	Policy/Section	Description	Response
Highland-wide Local Development Plan (2012) THC	Policy 36: Development in the Wider Countryside	Development proposals in the countryside will be assessed for the extent to which they (amongst other factors): are acceptable in terms of siting and design; are sympathetic to existing patterns of development in the area; are compatible with landscape character and capacity; avoid incremental expansion of one particular development type within a landscape whose distinct character relies on an intrinsic mix/distribution of a range of characteristics.	<b>Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution, Chapter 3: Description of Development and the Design and Access Statement</b> , which describe the approach taken to consider the siting and design of the Proposed Development.
	Policy 51: Trees and Development	The Council will <i>“support development which promotes significant protection to existing hedges, trees and woodlands on and around development sites”</i> and <i>“will secure additional tree/hedge planting within a tree planting or landscape plan to compensate removal and to enhance the setting of any new development.”</i>	Some tree felling is proposed as part of the Proposed Development. This is not required to facilitate the Proposed Development, but it is proposed to create an area of improved habitat. This is described in Chapter 3: Description of the Development, <b>Technical Appendix 3.2: Assessment of Potential Areas for Woodland Removal for Peatland Restoration and Technical Appendix 8.5: Outline Habitat Management Plan</b> . This habitat enhancement would complement local landscape character, restoring the landscape in a way that would be consistent with the adjacent moorland.
	Policy 52: Principle of Development in Woodland	This policy is clear that applicants should justify the need to develop a wooded site and that the site has <i>“capacity to accommodate the development.”</i>	
	Policy 57: Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage	This policy states that the impact on all natural, built and cultural heritage features must be addressed when considering and assessing development proposals.	In relation to this chapter, the potential impact of the Proposed Development on landscape resource, designated landscapes (including Wild Land Areas) and visual receptors has been assessed within this LVIA.
	Policy 61: Landscape	<i>“New developments should be designed to reflect the landscape characteristics and special qualities identified in the Landscape Character Assessment of the area in which they are proposed.”</i> The Council will consider available Landscape Character Assessments, Landscape Capacity Studies and its supplementary guidance on Siting and Design and Sustainable Design when assessing new developments.	As is described in <b>Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution</b> , the approach taken included inputs from the lead project landscape architect and considered factors such as the baseline landscape character of the site and surrounding area. It also responded to feedback from THC in relation to landscape and visual considerations. Existing and consented infrastructure would be utilised as far as practical to reduce potential landscape and visual effects.
	Policy 67: Renewable Energy Developments	This policy states that proposals for renewable energy development will be supported <i>“where it is satisfied that they are located, sited and designed such that they will not be significantly detrimental</i>	

Policy/Guidance Document	Policy/Section	Description	Response
		<i>overall, either individually or cumulatively with other developments.” Landscape and visual impacts are referred to as key considerations in the Council’s judgement on this matter.</i>	
Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (2016) THC	Landscape and Visual Effects, Para 4.10 onwards	This section states that <i>“all proposals should seek to avoid significant adverse landscape and visual effects individually and cumulatively, taking into account other built and permitted proposals as well as valid planning applications not yet determined (the weight apportioned to each will reflect their position in the planning process).”</i>	In addition to the consideration given to the design of the Proposed Development and the minimisation of potential landscape and visual effects, potential cumulative effects in conjunction with other operational and proposed wind developments has been considered in this chapter. The key focus of the design development has been the relationship of the Proposed Development to the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and the adjacent operational Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms. There are a number of wind farm proposals at EIA Scoping Stage in the study area. As there is no certainty in relation to these projects, in relation whether they would progress to a planning application or in relation to the proposed layout, number of turbines or turbine height, they have not been assessed in detail in the LVIA.
	Para 4.11	The following key aspects should be considered in the assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>“National Parks, National Scenic Areas and mapped wild land areas;</i></li> <li>- <i>Special Landscape Areas (including their citations);</i></li> <li>- <i>The capacity of the local landscape character (as defined within a Landscape Character Assessment) to accommodate the proposal;</i></li> <li>- <i>2km from residential buildings and boundaries of settlements (mapped, where relevant)</i></li> </ul> <i>Important public views (this includes considering impacts to popular viewpoints, the adopted road network, key and designated tourist routes, public footpaths, core paths and other recognised visitor locations).”</i>	All of the aspects listed here have been considered in this chapter, aside from: National Parks, which do not fall within the study area.
	Para 4.14	<i>“Where effects are unavoidable, appropriate mitigation will be required to overcome or otherwise minimise impacts.”</i>	Mitigation has been addressed in <b>Chapters 2 and 3</b> as it is embedded within the design of the Proposed Development.
	Para 4.15	- The Council has visualisation standards for wind energy developments.	Refer to <b>Technical Appendix 7.2</b> which sets out the approach to visualisations and specifically how the approach complies with THC standards.



Policy/Guidance Document	Policy/Section	Description	Response
	Para 4.16 and 4.17	- This section defines criteria which set out key landscape and visual aspects that the Council will use as a framework and focus for assessing proposals	As is described in <b>Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution</b> , the approach taken included inputs from the lead project landscape architect and considered factors such as the baseline landscape character of the site and surrounding area. It also responded to feedback from THC in relation to landscape and visual considerations. Existing and consented infrastructure would be utilised as far as practical to reduce potential landscape and visual effects.
	Para 4.18 to 4.21	This section includes reference to Residential Visual Amenity (RVA) and specifically states that where larger scale developments are proposed within 2km of residential buildings and settlements, applicants will be expected to clearly demonstrate how potential impacts on amenity have been avoided or mitigated, including: <i>"All proposals should seek to avoid or mitigate impacts on landscape and visual amenity."</i>	A RVA assessment has been carried out and comprises <b>Technical Appendix 7.4</b> .

7.11 The West Highlands and Islands Development Plan (THC, Adopted September 2019) also sets out planning policy that is relevant to the Isle of Skye. However, the focus of this is on community and settlement related development and the Highland-wide Local Development Plan referred to in the table above is more relevant to the LVIA and the Proposed Development. The Council's vision for the West Highland and Islands area recognises the importance of high quality places and the need to celebrate and safeguard the environment and natural, built and cultural heritage. Section 1.4, Environment and Heritage, recognises the importance of Special Landscape Areas and National Scenic Areas. However, the key issues and the protection of the landscape is covered by the Highland-wide Local Development Plan.

## Guidance

7.12 The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA)'s 'The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Third Edition (GLVIA3) (December 2013) is the key guidance that informs the methodology for the assessment of effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character and visual amenity.

7.13 NatureScot and THC have published a number of guidance documents that are of relevance to LVIA. NatureScot was formerly known as Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and most references relevant to the LVIA were published prior to the renaming of the organisation. For simplicity and consistency in naming the organisation, it is referred to as NatureScot throughout the LVIA. However, the full document references include NatureScot or SNH as appropriate.

7.14 In June 2015, NatureScot published Spatial Planning for Onshore Wind Turbines – Natural Heritage Considerations. This guidance document focuses on providing advice in developing spatial



frameworks for wind energy developments. The guidance is aimed at planning authorities and whilst the document does not set out specific site location advice, or any new policy positions or technical requirements for applicants, it does highlight the importance of natural heritage considerations and provides links to existing policy and guidance documents. Specifically relevant to LVIA, the guidance includes advice on the use of Landscape Character Assessment, Landscape Capacity Studies, and Cumulative Impacts with reference to the specific NatureScot onshore wind farm guidance.

- 7.15 NatureScot has published 'Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape' (SNH, 2017) guidance. This, as the title describes, provides guidance on the siting and design of wind farms within the landscape, and also includes advice on assessing the landscape and visual effects of wind farms taking into consideration that this should be done as an iterative process with the design. This guidance was key to the design development stages of the Proposed Development.
- 7.16 THC has published 'Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance' (THC, November 2016) which provides advice on the siting and design of proposed wind energy development, and how this relates to key planning and environmental issues, including potential landscape and visual effects. As part of this advice, the guidance sets out 10 specific criteria in relation to landscape and visual effects, which are set out and discussed towards the end of this chapter (see **Table 7-13**). However, no specific assessment of potential landscape and visual sensitivity to wind energy development has been published for the Isle of Skye.
- 7.17 In addition to those mentioned above, the methodology for the LVIA also considers the following best practice guidance (in order of most recent publication date first):
- Landscape Institute (May 2021) Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations, Technical Guidance Note 2/21;
  - NatureScot (September 2020) Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas: Technical Guidance;
  - Landscape Institute (September 2019), Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 06/19;
  - Landscape Institute (15 March 2019) Residential Visual Amenity, Technical Guidance Note 2/19;
  - SNH (February 2017), Visual Representation of Wind Farms, Version 2.2;
  - SNH (January 2017), Assessing the Impact on Wild Land – Technical Note Consultation Draft;
  - THC (July 2016) Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments;
  - SNH (September 2015), Guidance on Constructed tracks in the Scottish Uplands;
  - SNH (September 2019), Good Practice During Wind Farm Construction;
  - SNH (March 2012), Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy developments;
  - Department of Landscape University of Sheffield and Land Use Consultants (2002), Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland, The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage.

- SNH and the Countryside Agency, (2002) Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity; and
- SNH (2002), Policy Statement No.02/03: Wildness in Scotland’s Countryside.

## APPROACH AND METHOD

- 7.18 The following section outlines the approach and method, with full detail and assessment criteria provided in **Technical Appendix 7.1: LVIA Methodology**.
- 7.19 The LVIA has been carried out following GLVIA (Landscape Institute and IEMA, 2013). Within the broad scope of this method, the LVIA has focused upon potentially significant effects from the Proposed Development in addition to the baseline conditions that include the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm (including its Extension)<sup>1</sup> as well as the existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms.
- 7.20 Key references used in the LVIA are listed in the References section at the end of this Chapter.

## Consultation

- 7.21 A request for a Scoping Opinion was submitted to THC and a Scoping Report was submitted in August 2022. In addition, pre-application advice consultation was undertaken with THC prior to the submission of the Scoping Report. A summary of the Scoping Opinion received in October 2022 is provided in **Chapter 6** and **Technical Appendix 6.1**. Key responses provided by consultees relevant to this LVIA assessment is provided in **Table 7-3**. Further consultation with NatureScot and THC has taken place to agree the viewpoints included in the LVIA and in relation to the wind farms included in the cumulative assessment.
- 7.22 **Table 7-3** presents a summary of the consultation with NatureScot and THC. Further detail of the consultation undertaken throughout the project are presented in the **Chapter 6**.

**Table 7-3: Key Comments Raised During Consultation**

Consultee	Comment/Issue	Response
THC	Require single frame images with different focal lengths taken with a 35mm format full frame sensor camera – not an ‘equivalent.’ The focal lengths required are 50mm and 75mm.	A full frame digital SLR camera has been used for all viewpoint photography and the images have been presented in accordance with the guidance published by THC and NatureScot.
	Separate volumes of visualisations should be prepared to both The Highland Council Standards and NatureScot guidance. These should be	Visualisations have been prepared in accordance with both guidance documents and are included in <b>Volume 3b</b> and <b>Volume</b>

<sup>1</sup> Note that in this Chapter the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm refers to the consented seven turbines of Ben Sca Wind Farm and consented two turbines of Ben Sca Wind Farm Extension.

Consultee	Comment/Issue	Response
	provided in hard copy and A3 ring bound folder. The use of monochrome for specific viewpoints is useful where there are a number of different wind farms in the view.	<b>3c.</b>
	Visual impact of the tracks, on-site borrow bits and the proposed battery storage should also be considered in addition to turbines.	Addressed where applicable throughout the LVIA. Battery storage does not form part of the Proposed Development and has not been assessed.
	Methodology to be used for the LVIA, approach to landscape character assessment (same as Ben Sca groupings), methodology for assessing wild land areas (high level assessment requested), study areas for the LVIA & the proposed final viewpoint locations), scope of cumulative assessment & associated study area.	The landscape character areas identified in the LVIAs for Ben Sca Wind Farm have been applied.
	Council is still working on landscape sensitivity appraisal for Skye - update to be provided.	According to the THC website <a href="https://www.highland.gov.uk/onshorewind">https://www.highland.gov.uk/onshorewind</a> the work on the Skye appraisal has yet to be commenced.
	RVAA should be within 2km as a minimum, extended where appropriate.	No properties are located within 2km of the proposed turbines. The RVAA study area has been extended, as set out in <b>Technical Appendix 7.4</b> .
	THC do not agree on wireline only VPS and request photomontages. Specifically a photomontage was requested for Bruach na Frithe in Cuillin mountains due to cumulative situation.	Additional viewpoint photography has been obtained where relevant. It was subsequently agreed, as per NatureScot comments, that it would be appropriate and proportionate for VP20 Bruach na Frithe to be assessed by wireline only, no photomontage. THC subsequently agreed that a wireline for VP20 would be acceptable.
	Clear rationale behind choice of viewpoints to be provided.	The viewpoints included in the LVIA are explained in the visual assessment, with more detail regarding each viewpoint provided in <b>Technical Appendix 7.3</b> .
	All wind farms over 50m to be considered over whole of Skye in CLVIA including scoping.	All wind farms on the Isle of Skye have been considered where appropriate. The cumulative scenario for assessment was agreed with THC on 31 January 2023. However, it was continually reviewed up to 31 May 2023 and fixed at this point to enable the preparation of the LVIA and associated Figures and visualisations.
	No aviation lighting is envisaged if turbines remain <150m.	Not applicable, no aviation lighting required.

Consultee	Comment/Issue	Response
	Impacts on recreational routes should include all core paths and recreational routes including The Skye Trail and consideration should be given to boat users within the lochs and ferry routes - these latter viewpoints should also include a sequential assessment.	Addressed in the visual assessment part of the LVIA.
	Cumulative sites agreed, including Skye Reinforcement Project.	Addressed throughout the LVIA and Technical Appendix 7.3 where relevant.
	Agreed Scoping sites will not be fully assessed - they will be mapped and referred to in the LVIA where relevant, they will not be included in Cumulative Zones of Theoretical Visibility (CZTV) and wirelines.	No response needed.
	Agreed that Scoping includes Ben Aketil Repowering, Glen Ullinish II, Breakish, Edinbane Repowering, Waternish.	No response needed.
	Agreed that photography would be captured and photomontages prepared for VP8 (A885 Road), VP10 (A850/A87 west of Borve) and VP13 (A87 Road).	Additional photography captured and included in <b>Volume 3b</b> and <b>Volume 3c</b> .
	Agreed, as per NatureScot comments, that it would be appropriate and proportionate for VP20 Bruach na Frithe to be assessed by wireline only, no photomontage.	No response needed.
NatureScot	Notable differences in design and scale of the Proposed Development and neighbouring schemes.	Considered throughout the LVIA where appropriate.
	Particular interest in any adverse effects on the special qualities of Trotternish National Scenic Area (NSA), The Cuillin Hills NSA, Duirinish Wild Land Area (WLA) and Cuillins WLA and welcome that these are scoped in to the assessment	Potential Effects of the Proposed Development on the NSAs and WLAs have assessed as part of the LVIA.
	Viewpoints are appropriate.	No response needed
	Agree that VP20 Bruach na Frith (Cuillins) should be a wireline only VP, taking into account the distance, context of existing development and lack of turbine lighting in this case - full written assessment of the VP is however requested including consideration of the Special Qualities of the NSA.	This viewpoint is illustrated by wireline images. The viewpoint has been assessed in <b>Technical Appendix 7.3</b> .
	We anticipate that cumulative landscape and visual impacts will be a key consideration but are content for THC to agree which developments should be included in that assessment	The wind farms included in the LVIA have been agreed with THC, as outlined in response to other consultation comments. The cumulative scenario for assessment was agreed with THC on 31 January 2023.

Consultee	Comment/Issue	Response
		However, it was continually reviewed up to 31 May 2023 and fixed at this point to enable the preparation of the LVIA and associated Figures and visualisations.

## Assessment Study Area

- 7.23 The LVIA study area extends to 40km from the outermost turbines of the Proposed Development, as shown in Figure 7.1. This reflects NatureScot recommendations for the production of Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) maps for wind turbines between 131 and 150m to blade tip height (SNH, 2017), as the proposed turbines would be up to 149.9m to blade tip height.
- 7.24 Within the LVIA study area, initial assessment, including the production and review of ZTV maps, identified that significant landscape and visual effects were unlikely to occur at a distance from the Proposed Development of more than 20km. This is primarily because the existing baseline conditions include two existing wind farms adjacent to the Proposed Development at Edinbane and Ben Aketil. For this reason, consistent with the LVIA for other recent EIA Reports for other proposed wind farm developments (e.g. Ben Sca Wind Farm), the assessment of effects on landscape character and visual amenity has focused on areas within 20km.
- 7.25 Following NatureScot guidance (SNH, 2012), initial consideration of potential wind farms to include within the cumulative LVIA extended to 60km from the Proposed Development. Following a review of the cumulative data and draft ZTVs across this area, the study area was reduced down to within 40km, to focus on potentially significant cumulative effects with other wind turbines over 50m to blade tip.

## Assessment Process, Criteria and Definitions

- 7.26 The aim of this assessment is to identify, predict and evaluate potential effects on the landscape and visual resource of the study area. LVIA separates landscape and visual effects: landscape effects concerning physical aspects of an area, landscape character and how the landscape is experienced; and visual effects concerning the nature of views obtained by viewers (known as ‘visual receptors’), such as residents, visitors, motorists, hill-walkers etc.
- 7.27 LVIA considers in a methodical manner the sensitivity of the baseline resource and the magnitude of predicted change from the Proposed Development on this, and then makes a judgement as to whether or not the resulting effects would be significant.
- 7.28 This LVIA within the study area considers broad scale landscape and visual effects specifically relevant to the Proposed Development. The visual impact assessment takes account of a range of visual receptors that includes residents, including from representative viewpoints. Nonetheless, it should be noted that, following GLVIA, it does not include site specific assessment of the landscape and visual amenity and effects at individual residences: this assessment is included in **Technical Appendix 7.4: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment**.
- 7.29 GLVIA (Landscape Institute and IEMA, 2013) requires definition of the criteria determining various levels of resource sensitivity, magnitude of change and significance, that are pre-defined to ensure consistency and transparency. For this LVIA, these criteria are described in **Technical Appendix 7.1**.

- 7.30 In addition to assessing separate landscape and visual effects, it is important to consider how these effects would be experienced together and by different people in different ways for different purposes. Consequently, this LVIA includes assessment along key routes within the study area and from key settlements as listed in **Table 7-8** (within the visual impact assessment section of this Chapter).
- 7.31 Based on good practice guidance LVIA distinguishes between:
- LVIA - Assessment of the Proposed Development in addition to the baseline conditions which may include existing developments, including existing and consented wind farms, with which the Proposed Development may have effects (recognising that these are either existing or highly likely to be constructed); and
  - Cumulative LVIA – Assessment of the Proposed Development in addition to the baseline conditions (as above) plus possible future cumulative effects, and proposed developments for which an application has been submitted (recognising that these schemes are possible, but not certain).
- 7.32 Within this LVIA, operational wind farms have been considered as part of the baseline of the main landscape and visual assessments and therefore also part of the baseline of the cumulative assessment. Operational wind farms are not therefore considered to be cumulative developments in accordance with GLVIA3 guidance. The consented Ben Sca Wind Farm has been considered throughout the LVIA, including the cumulative assessment section. This reflects the fact that the same development companies are involved in both the Proposed Development and Ben Sca Wind Farm. Therefore, there is a high level of certainty that this consented development would be implemented. However, scoping opinions have been requested for the expansion of two consented wind farms in the study area; Glen Ullinish Wind Farm and Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm. Given this context it is considered that there is a much greater level of uncertainty around whether they would be implemented based on the consent that has been granted. Therefore, both Glen Ullinish Wind Farm and Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm are considered in the cumulative effects section of this chapter.

## THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 7.33 The Proposed Development is described in full in **Chapter 3: Description of the Development and shown on Figure 3.1a-b**. The following aspects are particularly relevant to the LVIA:
- the Proposed Development would comprise 10 wind turbines which have been assessed at up to 149.9m to blade tip height (80.9m to hub/nacelle and rotor diameter of 138m), the transformer for each turbine would be located internally within the wind turbine tower;
  - the wind turbines would be three-bladed and would be painted a semi-matt pale grey colour to match the surrounding existing wind turbines (and the consented Ben Sca turbines);
  - a substation control building, approximately 15 x 25m in footprint, 5m in height, would be constructed to the north west of the proposed turbines, this would be located within a compound measuring 35m x 30m;
  - up to four temporary borrow pits would be constructed within the site and are positioned amongst the proposed turbines, on the south east facing slopes of Ben Sca. These have a combined surface area of approximately 48,900m<sup>2</sup>. Soil and vegetation would be restored

in these locations once the project construction is complete;

- a network of access tracks would be utilised, with these comprising sections of existing track into the site (1.8km), the consented tracks associated with the Ben Sca Wind Farm (2.3km), and new tracks that form part of Proposed Development (up to 9.4km);
- a crane hardstanding including laydown and storage areas would be built adjacent to each wind turbine and would have a footprint of approximately 3,350m<sup>2</sup>. These areas would remain in situ for the duration of the operational phase of the Proposed Development;
- a permanent met mast up to 83.5m height, with associated foundation and hardstanding; and
- a construction compound would be created to the north west of the proposed turbines and would be retained for the lifetime of the project. Future use of this area for other technologies is being considered e.g. battery storage; but does not form part of this application.

### Mitigation

7.34 Mitigation of the predicted landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development was an integral part of the design evolution process as described in **Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution** and **Chapter 3: Description of Development**. This included assessment of different wind turbine layouts and sizes. Based on this assessment, the following factors have influenced the mitigation measures factored into the Proposed Development:

- consideration of the scale and number of turbines proposed, both in isolation and cumulatively with existing wind farms in the area;
- the potential landscape and visual effects resulting from the Proposed Development have been considered extensively from key receptors, including the composition of the array of turbines and how this relates to existing and consented wind farms in the locality;
- utilising existing and consented access tracks where possible to reduce the extent of new development;
- siting the substation to limit potential visibility; and
- selection of internal wind turbine transformers.

7.35 Landscape and visual mitigation measures would be adopted where possible to reduce further any predicted adverse landscape and visual effects, including the following:

- vegetation restoration adjacent to the proposed turbines and tracks, and upon the site of the borrow pits as described in **Technical Appendix 3.1: Outline Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP)**; and
- selection of wind turbine colour and finish to match the consented Ben Sca turbines and existing Ben Aketil turbines.

7.36 Whilst, not a landscape specific mitigation measure, the Proposed Development includes the felling of up to 77.75ha of conifer forest. This land would not be replanted with trees but would comprise an area of land where peat habitat restoration is to be undertaken.



### LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS DURING CONSTRUCTION

- 7.37 Details of the proposed construction methods and duration are set out in **Chapter 3: Project Description**. The key aspects most relevant to the LVIA are listed in paragraph 7.33 above.
- 7.38 It is anticipated that construction of the Proposed Development would take approximately 18 months. The proposed turbines would be delivered, mobilised and erected during the latter part of the construction period and would involve large mobile cranes being present on the site.
- 7.39 While construction activities would have landscape and visual effects within the LVIA study area, it is judged that these would not typically be substantially greater than the effects of the Proposed Development during operation. This is primarily because of: the relatively limited extent of the construction activities, the short duration of the construction period and the reinstatement of working areas. For these reasons, the construction phase has not been considered in any further detail in this LVIA.

### THEORETICAL VISIBILITY OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 7.40 Analysis of ZTV data is necessary to establish the study area and scope of the LVIA, the landscape and visual baseline conditions, and to identify the potential landscape and visual effects of a proposed wind farm development. In particular, the ZTV focuses the baseline assessment to the area within which the Proposed Development would be theoretically visible, thereby enabling the area in which there would be no visibility to be scoped out (for example due to landform screening). The ZTV for the Proposed Development is shown on **Figures 7.5a** (blade tip and hub), **7.5b** (blade tip) and **7.5c** (hub height) on a 1:250,000 Ordnance Survey (OS) base map and a more detailed ZTV is shown on **Figure 7.5d** at 1:125,000 scale, showing theoretical blade tip and hub height visibility.
- 7.41 An analysis of the ZTVs is provided within the following section which summarises the extent to which the proposed turbines would theoretically be visible from within the study area and the nature and location of the receptors likely to be affected. This analysis has informed the subsequent scope and focus of both the landscape and visual assessments.

#### ZTV Analysis

##### *Blade Tip ZTV*

- 7.42 The blade tip ZTV, as shown on **Figure 7.5b**, identifies the parts of the study area where any part of the proposed turbines up to the blade tip height of 149.9m would be theoretically visible. It is highlighted that the ZTVs present a 'worst case scenario' in that they do not include the influence of any surface obstructions such as trees and buildings which would considerably reduce the visibility of the Proposed Development in some areas.
- 7.43 Although a large proportion of the ZTV within the study area occurs over the sea, specifically the Minch which is part of the 'Inner Seas off the West Coast of Scotland', this area was largely scoped-out during the initial stages of the LVIA for the Ben Sca Wind Farm application and the same has been applied for this LVIA in agreement with THC and NatureScot. This was principally because initial assessment predicted no likely significant effects on the seascape or visual receptors in this area in addition to the baseline conditions which included existing wind farms, apart from along the Uig to Lochmaddy ferry route (included as a sequential route and as representative Viewpoint 17).

- 7.44 The ZTV shows that the Proposed Development would be visible within its immediate surroundings, a radius of approximately 5km from the turbine locations, in addition to the following locations:
- east facing slopes and tops of Duirinish, between approximately 8km and 20km west of the proposed turbines. Further to the west, beyond Macleod's Tables, views would generally be screened by the landform;
  - the south east facing slopes of Beinn Chreagach, Waternish, approximately 5km north west of the proposed turbines;
  - south and south east facing slopes and tops of Greshornish, approximately 5km north of the proposed turbines and higher ground around Edinbane;
  - south west facing slopes of Trotternish, including The Storr, between approximately 10km and 20km east and north east of the proposed turbines; and
  - Loch Bracadale and the surrounding north facing slopes and tops of its islands, between approximately 3km and 12km south west and south of the proposed turbines.
- 7.45 Notably, the proposed turbines would be restricted or screened from many places in the east and south east by an arc of hills approximately 1 - 5km away including: Beinn a' Chearcaill (264m AOD); Ben Uigshader (246m AOD); Cruachan-Glen Vic Askill (295m AOD), Beinn a' Ghlinne Bhig (208m AOD); and Beinn na Cloiche (232m AOD). Similarly, the proposed turbines would be screened from many places in the west by Ben Horneval (264m AOD); and Ben Vic Askill (180m AOD).

### *Comparative ZTV of Blade Tip and Hub Height*

- 7.46 **Figures 7.5a** and **7.5d** illustrate where the blade tip ZTV and hub height ZTV overlap, in order to identify the areas where the hubs and blades of the turbines would be theoretically visible and areas from where blades only might potentially be seen.
- 7.47 There are some locations of note from which blade tips, but not hubs, would be visible:
- beyond the summits of Beinn a' Chearcaill (264m AOD); Ben Uigshader (246m AOD); Cruachan-Glen Vic Askill (295m AOD) and Beinn a' Ghlinne Bhig to the east and south east theoretical visibility is frequently limited to turbine blades, particularly at lower elevations. In addition, the pattern of theoretical visibility is fragmented, being restricted to high ground such as Beinn na Greine and Ben Duagrigh between 5km and 20km of the proposed turbines and north facing slopes of higher landforms such as The Cuillins and Beinn a' Bhràghad beyond 20km; and
  - from approximately 15km to the west, north west, on lower east facing slopes of Dunvegan Head (which is at the northern extent of Duirinish).
- 7.48 In general, visibility of blade tips only would be limited to some lower-level slopes from which the intervening landform would screen the majority of the turbines.

### **Visibility of Balmeanach and Operational Wind Farms**

- 7.49 Operational wind farms which form part of the baseline for this LVIA are listed within **Table 7-4**. This is because they are known features which influence the existing landscape character and visual context. **Figure 7.10** shows the location of operational wind turbines and wind farms within the study area which comprise turbines over 50m to blade tip height.

**Table 7-4: Operational Wind Farms**

Name	Location	No. of Wind Turbines	Height to Hub (m)	Blade Diameter (m)	Height to Blade Tip (m)
Edinbane	Located directly to the east of the site	18	64	71	100
Ben Aketil and Extension	Located directly to the west of the site	12	64	71	100.5
Sumardale Croft	Located 11km south, south east of the site	1	55	48	79
Meadale Farm	Located 12km south, south east of the site	1	44.44	33.4	53.7

7.50 The following figures provide combined ZTVs for these operational wind farms with the Proposed Development:

- **Figure 7.11:** Combined ZTV – Balmeanach with Edinbane and Ben Aketil; and
- **Figure 7.12:** Combined ZTV – Balmeanach with Sumardale Croft and Meadale Farm.

### *Balmeanach, Edinbane and Ben Aketil*

7.51 The operational wind farms at Ben Aketil and Edinbane are located in close proximity to the Proposed Development (to the west and east respectively). All these developments have a similar ZTV, i.e. in most locations from which the Proposed Development would be visible these two other nearby developments would also be visible. Referring to **Figure 7.11**, the majority of the ZTV coverage shown comprises combined visibility. The majority of the joint visibility of the three wind farms would be within approximately 15km of the site (as was also the case for the Ben Sca Wind Farm in conjunction with the existing developments). Beyond this, the study area either comprises sea or there is more limited visibility due to screening by landform. Therefore, while the Proposed Development would potentially increase the number of turbines visible from locations on Skye which already experience visibility of Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms, it would not materially extend visibility of wind turbines into areas on Skye which do not already view these operational turbines.

### *Balmeanach, Sumardale Croft and Meadale Farm*

7.52 The operational Sumardale Croft wind turbine is located approximately 10.5km south east of the Proposed Development and the operational Meadale Farm wind turbine is located approximately 11.5km south east. Referring to **Figure 7.12**, there would be limited combined visibility of all three wind developments together. The Proposed Development would give rise to the greatest ZTV coverage due to Sumardale Croft and Meadale Farm being single turbine developments with tip heights of 79m and 53.7m respectively.

7.53 Generally, locations which would experience theoretical visibility of the Balmeanach Wind Farm with these two single wind turbine developments are limited to:

- east facing slopes within Duirinish, between approximately 7km and 20km west of the proposed turbines; and

- north facing hills within Minginish, between approximately 10km and 20km south of the proposed turbines.

## Visibility of Balmeanach and Consented Wind Farms

7.54 Potential visibility of the Proposed Development in conjunction with consented wind farms is included in the cumulative assessment section, from **paragraph 7.148**.

## LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

7.55 National and local designations within the 40km LVIA study area are shown on **Figure 7.2** (Landscape Designations). There are no landscape designations within the site but the Proposed Development would be visible from several designated areas as shown on **Figure 7.7** (ZTV with Landscape Designations) which shows an overlay of the designated areas with the ZTV for the Proposed Development.

7.56 **Table 7-5** summarises the characteristics and special qualities of the designated areas defined in published citations/ descriptions that are particularly relevant to the potential landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development.

7.57 The characteristics and special qualities of the designated landscapes influence the value and susceptibility and therefore sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptors in these areas.

**Table 7-5: Landscape Designations, Characteristics and Special Qualities**

Landscape Designation	Distance and Direction from the Nearest Turbine	Landscape Characteristics and Special Qualities Defined in Published Citations/ Descriptions
Trotternish NSA	18km north east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contrast between the west and east sides of the ridge and the low-lying moorland and elevated tops above.</li> <li>• Along the eastern side of the ridge is a landscape of rock pinnacles interspersed with moist green meadows and tiny lochans, resulting in varying enclosure, distant visibility and distinct foci.</li> <li>• From the ridge, there are distant views, including to the sea and the distinctive features of the Quiraing.</li> </ul>
Cuillin Hills NSA	22km south east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A mountain area of dramatic and distinctive outlines of great scenic splendour.</li> <li>• The surrounding wild landscape provides a fitting context for the mountains, as do crofting townships.</li> <li>• The experience of the landscape is influenced by ever-changing weather.</li> <li>• A place of inspiration.</li> <li>• A target for mountaineers, being the most challenging mountains in Scotland.</li> </ul>
Dunvegan Castle Garden and Design Landscape (GDL)	8km to the west	Scoped out of LVIA as there is no predicted visibility of the Proposed Development from the GDL.
Raasay House GDL	21km to the south east	Scoped out of LVIA as there is no predicted visibility of the Proposed Development from the GDL.

Landscape Designation	Distance and Direction from the Nearest Turbine	Landscape Characteristics and Special Qualities Defined in Published Citations/ Descriptions
North West Skye Special Landscape Area (SLA)	3.5km (shortest distance) with this landscape designation lying to the north west, west and south east, the closest part lies to the west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sequence of peninsulas separated by deep penetrating sea lochs and bays around the north western coast, creating one of the most varied and dynamic areas of scenery to be found within a Highland coastal landscape.</li> <li>• The repetitive smooth steeped moorland interior, fashioned by a large expanse of basaltic lava, creates a simple landscape composition which contrasts strongly with the variety, intimacy and intricacy of the coastal seascape.</li> <li>• Extensive sections of remote coastline. There is a varied backcloth of open water, lochs, islands and rising hills.</li> <li>• The distinctive coastal and moorland crofting settlements display simple linear geometric patterns. These are generally clustered in coastal locations and up the sides of small glens.</li> <li>• Extensive moorland landscapes only sporadically interspersed with areas of scrub woodland, small plantations and small-scale agricultural fields.</li> <li>• Frequent large-scale panoramic views over moorland, coastline, small islands, skerries and seascape. The exposure of much of this area to the prevailing west and south westerly winds, and the changing light conditions, emphasise the interplay between land and sea. Coastal roads provide fine views of much of the area.</li> <li>• There is an overriding sense of openness, exposure and a horizontal emphasis of land and seascape, not only due to the distant horizon, but also the stepped landform.</li> <li>• Small-scale dwellings nestle into the landscape along the coast or in narrow glens.</li> </ul>
Greshornish SLA	5km to the north	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stimulating views towards the imposing ridges of the adjacent peninsulas.</li> <li>• Sparse settlement and a largely undisturbed character results in a strong sense of solitude.</li> <li>• Stepped moorland offers alternating containment and exposure.</li> </ul>
Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA	12km to the north east (shortest distance) with this landscape designation lying to the north, east and south east the closest part lies to the north east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This area is characterised by a well-defined ridge crest which extends for more than 27km and reaches a height of over 600m at several points along its length. Along this “spine” of the peninsula, there is a contrast of views and landscape character to the west and east. To the west, there is a succession of basalt lava layers that descend in a gentle dip slope of undulating open moorland towards Loch Snizort. In contrast, to the east lies a steep escarpment accentuated by a sequence of huge rotational landslips.</li> <li>• Walking the ridge in either a northerly or southerly direction is an exhilarating experience.</li> <li>• The underlying geology of the area creates a dramatic sequence of landform features.</li> <li>• Roads cross Trotternish in only one location and, everywhere else, the upland moorland possesses a remote and inaccessible character.</li> </ul>
Raasay and Rona SLA	22km to the south east	Scoped out of LVIA as there is limited predicted visibility of the Proposed Development from the Raasay and Rona SLA.

### Wild Land Areas

- 7.58 The LVIA for the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm assessed potential effects on Wild Land Areas (WLAs) in the landscape surrounding the Proposed Development and a similar approach has been undertaken for this LVIA. Three WLAs are located within the 40km study area:
- WLA 22 Duirinish;
  - WLA 23 Cuillin; and
  - WLA 25 Applecross.
- 7.59 The assessment scope for Ben Sca Wind Farm was established through consultation with NatureScot, which identified that *“given the existing wind farms we would not expect great detail in terms of the Duirinish and Cuillins WLA assessments”* and assessment from the *“Applecross Wild Land Area can be scoped out”*. The same approach has been applied in the preparation of this LVIA.
- 7.60 The Proposed Development comprises 10 turbines located in the context of operational and consented wind farms. In addition, the recently published NPF4 states *“buffer zones around wild land will not be applied, and effects of development outwith wild land areas will not be a significant consideration”*. Therefore, it is considered pragmatic and proportionate to undertake a concise assessment of the likely effects of the Proposed Development on WLAs. As this assessment is concise it is included here in the main LVIA chapter rather than in a technical appendix.
- 7.61 There are two key qualities and attributes associated with the Duirinish WLA:
- a dramatic coastal edge dominated by natural features, open views across the sea and exposure to dynamic weather conditions; and
  - extensive inland peatland, with a stepped landform profile that rises to awe-inspiring distinctive hills and strongly influences accessibility.
- 7.62 There are four key qualities and attributes associated with the Cuillin WLA:
- superlative high, steep, rocky mountains that are extremely rugged and contrast to the surrounding peatland and sea, emphasising a sense of awe;
  - a circle of mountains that contain a remote and secluded interior and a strong sense of sanctuary, with contrasting outward-facing slopes where human elements are more influential;
  - a strong contribution of the sea to remoteness and the sense of naturalness and awe, as well as influencing the perceived extent of the area; and
  - a concentrated mountain area accessed by many different visitors to experience wild land qualities.

## LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

### Introduction

- 7.63 This section sets out the baseline conditions and predicted effects of the Proposed Development on the landscape resource of the study area.

## Landscape Context

- 7.64 The site is located on hilly ground between the settlements of Edinbane and Dunvegan in the north west of Skye. The site lies predominately on the moorland slopes on the south east side of Ben Sca and Ben Aketil. The access track, following sections of existing and consented track would be routed through a large coniferous plantation between the A850 to the north and the lower slopes of Ben Sca and Ben Aketil to the south. In addition, the area of coniferous forestry that would be felled, where peat habitat restoration is proposed to be undertaken, forms part of the same coniferous plantation the access track would be routed through.
- 7.65 The site forms part of the hill backcloth that surrounds lower-lying, coastal and settled landscapes to the north, west and south. The elevation of the proposed turbines ranges from 110m AOD to 130m AOD.
- 7.66 The Proposed Development would be located between two existing wind farms: Edinbane to the east and Ben Aketil to the west. Edinbane Wind Farm comprises 18 wind turbines at 100m to tip which are arranged in an irregular layout and at different elevations within an area of variable slopes. Ben Aketil Wind Farm, in contrast, comprises a simple line of 12 wind turbines that run along a ridge north west to south east. Its wind turbines are the same height as those of Edinbane Wind Farm. The Proposed Development is also located to the south of the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm (seven wind turbines, 135m to tip and two wind turbines, 149.9m to tip).

## Landscape Character

- 7.67 Landscape baseline conditions comprise the NatureScot Landscape Character Types (LCT) (SNH, 2019) as shown on **Figure 7.3** (Landscape Character Types). Taking these LCTs as a starting point, the LVIA focuses on the key landscape characteristics that are relevant to the Proposed Development and upon which there are most likely to be significant landscape effects. To inform this process, **Figure 7.8** (ZTV with Landscape Character Types) shows an overlay of the ZTV and map of LCTs.
- 7.68 The ZTV overlay reveals that the Proposed Development is most likely to give rise to landscape effects within six LCTs:
- No. 357: Farmed and Settled Lowlands - Skye & Lochalsh;
  - No. 358: Low Smooth Moorland;
  - No. 359: Upland Sloping Moorland (the site is located within this character type);
  - No. 360: Stepped Moorland;
  - No. 361: Stepped Hills; and
  - No. 366: Landslide Edge and Undulating Ridge.
- 7.69 Associated with these LCTs, there are a number of key landscape characteristics identified in the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment and through previous assessment work associated with the LVIA's for the consented Ben Sca and Ben Sca Extension Wind Farm developments that are relevant to the potential landscape effects of the Proposed Development:
- simple, open moorland hills, with the skyline creating a focal feature;
  - the hill interior creates a simple backdrop to surrounding settlements, lochs and shorelines,



emphasising the distinctive characteristics of each in contrast;

- the landform is predominantly gently sloped with a prevailing horizontal emphasis. Typically, no specific hill top or ridge dominates others, although Ben Aketil hill top forms a distinctive feature within the local area and MacLeod's Tables form prominent focal features in the distance to the south west;
- the moorland areas are open and exposed and seem extensive in scale. The moorland interior contains few built elements and there is infrequent human activity. This contributes to qualities of remoteness and sanctuary;
- existing built features within the open moorland landscape are highly prominent, including the existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms;
- existing conifer plantations mask the underlying landscape characteristics and create hard vertical edges and incongruous shapes. By extending up the hill slopes of Ben Sca, they seem to diminish its apparent vertical dimension;
- there are a number of small crofting settlements around the edge of the moorland interior. The houses are typically small in scale;
- the landscape is predominantly rural in character. The hill interior is not typically accessed by many people (apart from MacLeod's Tables) and most tend to view this from its margins when travelling along surrounding roads; and
- the existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms contrast in their siting and design. From some locations, the Edinbane wind turbines appear to encroach upon the settlement of Edinbane.

7.70 During consultation in respect of the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, SNH (now NatureScot) advised that there may be scope to reduce the number of LCTs assessed in detail. Accordingly the LCTs were grouped in direct relation to their similarity of baseline conditions relevant to the Proposed Development and potential landscape effects. This resulted in the identification of seven landscape character areas. As the Proposed Development would be located immediately adjacent to the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, this LVIA has adopted the same groupings, which have been accepted previously, are as listed as follows and shown on **Figure 7.3**:

- Interior Skye hills (in which the site is located);
- Trotternish;
- Portree, surrounding hills and strath;
- Waternish;
- Greshornish and coastal edge of Loch Snizort;
- Dunvegan and Duirinish; and
- Bracadale.

7.71 These seven landscape character areas form the basis of the landscape assessment and are shown on **Figure 7.3**. **Figure 7.8** overlays the ZTV for the Proposed Development on the landscape character areas. For each area **Table 7-6** describes: the LCTs within the area; the key landscape characteristics of the LCTs relevant to the Proposed Development (taking information from the SNH LCT descriptions); the magnitude of predicted landscape change resulting from the Proposed Development; and, the predicted level of effects, identifying whether these are judged to be significant or not significant.

- 7.72 Additionally, some indirect effects could occur within certain landscape character types from where the Proposed Development would not be seen. However, this would typically occur through the sequential experience of the landscape; for example, the character of an area could seem affected by having previously viewed the wind turbines while travelling along a road. These potential effects are covered within the assessment of residential, travelling and recreational receptors (from **paragraphs 7.87 to 7.141**).

Table 7-6: Landscape Baseline and Predicted Landscape Effects

Character Area	Included Landscape Character Types	Susceptibility and Value of Key Characteristics in Relation to Development Type and Overall Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change Due to the Proposed Development	Level and Significance of Landscape Effects
Interior Skye Hills	357: Farmed and Settled Lowlands - Skye & Lochalsh 359: Upland Sloping Moorland 360: Stepped Moorland	<p>The majority of this area comprises Upland Sloping Moorland (359) and Stepped Moorland (360) with a subtle transition between these. The following are key characteristics of this area, which are relevant to the Proposed Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expansive moorland which has a simple landcover, mainly of heather. There are some extensive forest plantations to the north of the site and within the south eastern part of this character area whose large extent means they typically appear to integrate within the subtle, undulating landform horizons of moorland but contrast strongly in colour and texture at their edges.</li> <li>- There are few vertical features within the landscape apart from occasional wind turbines (Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms at the northern extent). There is a horizontal emphasis to the landscape, with hills gently sloping.</li> <li>- There is little settlement within the area and that which exists is mainly concentrated around the edges of the interior. The little built form that exists on the periphery tends to be small in scale and has a dispersed pattern.</li> <li>- Distance and scale are typically hard to judge across the moorland, except where there are elements of definite size such as roads or powerlines. Existing wind turbines comprise prominent elements in the northern part of this landscape character area.</li> </ul>	<p>The Proposed Development would be located at the northern part of this area, just to the south of the border with the 'Waternish' and 'Greshornish and coastal edge of Loch Snizort' landscape character areas. Aside from locations within approximately 5km from the proposed turbines, the Proposed Development would be visible from fragmented locations across the character area due to screening by landform undulations. There would be more limited visibility from the southern part of the character area, and these areas of visibility would be fragmented. This is due to the arc of hills within approximately 5km including: Beinn a' Chearcail; Ben Uigshader; Beinn a' Ghlinne Bhig; Beinn na Cloiche, Ben Scudaig and Beinn nan Braclaich restricts visibility of the Proposed Development from locations further south. Refer to <b>Figure 7.8</b> which illustrates theoretical visibility across the area.</p> <p>Where the Proposed Development would be visible (see Viewpoints 5 and 8), it would generally be seen adjacent to one or both of the existing Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms and the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. As a result, the Proposed Development would principally appear as part of an existing group of wind farms, increasing the density of wind turbines seen within the locality, however its position between the existing and consented wind farms would avoid wind farms collectively extending further across this character area.</p> <p>From some locations within the character area, the proposed turbines, together with the consented Ben</p>	<p>Combining the judgements regarding sensitivity and magnitude of change, the Proposed Development is predicted to give rise to a moderate adverse level of effect on this character area. This is considered to be not significant due to the change relative to the baseline wind farm development in this character area.</p>

Character Area	Included Landscape Character Types	Susceptibility and Value of Key Characteristics in Relation to Development Type and Overall Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change Due to the Proposed Development	Level and Significance of Landscape Effects
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is a prevailing sense of remoteness and perceived sanctuary within the interior hills.</li> <li>- Some views are possible out to the coast and sea from the highest ground, although this is not the case from most parts, adding to the sense of remoteness and sanctuary.</li> </ul> <p>Considering all these characteristics, particularly the lack of scale indicators, the simple, horizontal form as well as the presence of some existing wind turbines, the character area is considered to have a medium level of susceptibility to the type of development proposed.</p> <p>The character area borders the North West Skye, Trotternish and Greshornish SLAs, however there are no designations within the character area itself. The level of value attributed to this landscape is therefore medium.</p> <p>Combining the judgement on the level of susceptibility to change and the value attributed to this landscape character area, overall sensitivity is medium.</p>	<p>Sca turbines would appear larger than the existing wind turbines, reducing the consistency in the appearance of the wind farms. However, from many places, the proposed and existing turbines would be seen beyond landform horizons and the relative height and distance of the different turbines would not be obvious (whilst the Proposed Development and Ben Sca turbine blades would appear larger, they may be perceived to be closer if the relative distance between the turbines cannot be discerned).</p> <p>The Proposed Development would relate to the human-influenced character of the existing forest plantation to the north, although it would contrast to its visible edge, texture and colour. In addition to the forest plantation, the proposed turbines, access tracks and crane pads would collectively contrast to the prevailing simplicity of the interior hills, although the use of existing and consented elements (e.g. tracks and borrow pits) and continuation of the linear layout of the turbines would help to limit the magnitude of change.</p> <p>The addition of the 10 turbines and associated infrastructure of the Proposed Development would collectively increase the density of wind farm development within the locality. However, change specifically associated with the Proposed Development would be localised, and predominately the northern part of the character area where the existing wind farms are an established part of the baseline. It would also be seen in relation to a large scale, open landscape. Importantly, the Proposed Development would avoid wind farms collectively extending further across this character area, limiting</p>	

Character Area	Included Landscape Character Types	Susceptibility and Value of Key Characteristics in Relation to Development Type and Overall Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change Due to the Proposed Development	Level and Significance of Landscape Effects
			<p>the degree of change. The change would also be long term, although it would be theoretically reversible following decommissioning of the Proposed Development. It is judged that the magnitude of change due to the Proposed Development would be medium.</p>	
Trotternish	<p>357: Farmed and Settled Lowlands - Skye &amp; Lochalsh</p> <p>360: Stepped Moorland</p> <p>366 - Landslide Edge and Undulating Ridge</p>	<p>The majority of this area comprises Landslide Edge and Undulating Ridge (366), with a smaller proportion of lower lying land beside the coast comprising Farmed &amp; Settled Lowlands (357) and Stepped Moorland (360). The following are key characteristics of this area, which are relevant to the Proposed Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This is a large scale landscape which is surrounded to the west, north and east by sea and is defined by a central ridge which provides panoramic views of the surrounding land and seascape. The ridge is orientated in a north-south direction. Its western slopes are smoother and fall more gradually towards the sea, whereas the east-facing slopes are more irregular and fall steeper towards the sea. This difference results in a contrast of landscape experience when looking towards the Proposed Development site to the south west compared to the opposite direction.</li> <li>- There is little settlement within the interior of this area and thus distance and scale can be difficult to judge, except where there are elements of definite size such as powerlines. Buildings and roads seen in views to the adjacent 'Greshornish and coastal edge of Loch Snizort' landscape area also provide some scale references in views</li> </ul>	<p>This area is between approximately 10km and 20km from the Proposed Development. The ZTV (<b>Figure 7.8</b>) indicates that there would be visibility of the Proposed Development from the west and south west facing slopes, albeit visibility upon lower slopes would be fragmented by the east-west orientated glens and steep, branched burns which cut into the main north-south ridge.</p> <p>Where visible from this character area, the Proposed Development would appear in close proximity to the existing Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. As such, it would not appear incongruous, although it would increase the collective number and density of vertical structures within the local area.</p> <p>Within views from the elevated parts of this character area (see Viewpoints 15 and 19), the Proposed Development would be seen within a landscape outside the Trotternish landscape character area that includes a complex arrangement of islands, peninsulas and settled coastal bays as well as inland conifer plantations and open moorland. Consequently, the Proposed Development would be seen from the Trotternish landscape character area as one feature within a complex composition of landscape elements.</p>	<p>Combining the judgements regarding sensitivity and magnitude of change, the Proposed Development is predicted to give rise to a moderate/minor adverse level of effect on this character area. This is therefore considered to be not significant. This is considered to be not significant due to the change relative to the baseline wind farm development which forms part of the context of the Proposed Development.</p>

Character Area	Included Landscape Character Types	Susceptibility and Value of Key Characteristics in Relation to Development Type and Overall Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change Due to the Proposed Development	Level and Significance of Landscape Effects
		<p>towards the site.</p> <p>Considering these characteristics, particularly the large scale of the landscape and difficulty of perceiving scale, this character area is considered to have a low level of susceptibility to the Proposed Development outwith the area.</p> <p>Much of the character area is within the Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA. The Trotternish NSA is also located in its north eastern part, although the ZTV identifies that there would be almost no visibility of the Proposed Development from here. Overall the level of value attributed to this landscape is considered to be high.</p> <p>Combining the judgement on the level of susceptibility to change and the value attributed to this landscape character area, its sensitivity is medium.</p>	<p>The change would also be long term, although it would be theoretically reversible following decommissioning of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Considering the effects described above, including the distance to the site, and that the Proposed Development comprises 10 turbines in the context of the existing and consented wind farms, there would be limited change to the character of this landscape area and the magnitude of landscape change is judged as slight.</p>	
Portree, surrounding hills and strath	<p>357: Farmed and Settled Lowlands - Skye &amp; Lochalsh</p> <p>358: Low Smooth Moorland</p> <p>360: Stepped Moorland</p>	<p>This is a relatively small character area and comprises a mix of three character types: Farmed &amp; Settled Lowlands (357); Low Smooth Moorland (358); and Stepped Moorland (360). The main body of the character area comprises types 357 and 360, while the eastern extent comprises type 360, in the vicinity of Ben Tianavaig.</p> <p>The following are key characteristics of this area, which are relevant to the type of development proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Portree is a settlement concentrated at the coast. This, in addition to a strath running to the north west, is contained by surrounding hill slopes apart</li> </ul>	<p>This area lies between approximately 8km and 17km from the Proposed Development. The ZTV indicates theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from the northern part of the character area, with this primarily being restricted to rising ground in the vicinity of Borve, Drumie and Achachork. The majority of the SLA would have no visibility of the Proposed Development apart from the higher ground such as the land above Achachork Ben Tianavaig (see Viewpoint 16). Much of the southern part of the area would not experience views of the Proposed Development and therefore not experience visual change.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would be visible from the</p>	<p>Combining the judgements regarding sensitivity and magnitude of change, the Proposed Development is predicted to give rise to a minor adverse level of effect on this character area. This is therefore considered to be not significant.</p>

Character Area	Included Landscape Character Types	Susceptibility and Value of Key Characteristics in Relation to Development Type and Overall Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change Due to the Proposed Development	Level and Significance of Landscape Effects
		<p>from through a channel out to sea.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Views are generally orientated eastwards towards the sea, while some inland hills, such as Ben Tianavaig, create a backdrop to the coast and give it a locally distinctive appearance. The stepped moorland provides a backcloth to the core of the character area, i.e. Portree and the lower levels of the strath.</li> <li>- Portree is a relatively distinct coastal settlement and provides scale references in views from higher ground within the character area. The strath to the north west contains a mix of landscape elements, such as buildings and infrastructure, although the pattern of these is less distinct.</li> </ul> <p>Considering all these characteristics, particularly the enclosed nature of the character area, it is considered to have a medium level of susceptibility to the type of development proposed outwith the area.</p> <p>Much of the character area falls outwith landscape designations, although the coast, including Portree, is located within the Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA. Therefore, the level of value attributed to this landscape is considered to be medium.</p> <p>Combining the judgement on the level of susceptibility to change and the value attributed to this landscape character area, its sensitivity is medium.</p>	<p>sloping moorland which forms the backcloth to the strath running north west of Portree, tending to appear on the skyline in the far distance. The proposed turbines would, however, typically appear spatially separated from this character area as many of their towers would be screened by intervening moorland horizons.</p> <p>Where the Proposed Development would be visible from this landscape character area, it would typically be seen in close proximity to the slightly broader expanse of the existing Edinbane Wind Farm which is located to the east.</p> <p>Although the Proposed Development would be visible from south west facing slopes within this landscape character area, it would be seen within just a small part of the existing landscape composition and would have a limited influence on its characteristics.</p> <p>The change would also be long term, although it would be theoretically reversible following decommissioning of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>On account of the limited potential change described above, the magnitude of landscape change would be slight.</p>	
Waternish	357: Farmed and Settled Lowlands - Skye &	The majority of the Waternish peninsula comprises Stepped Moorland (360), with smaller areas of lower lying land around the coast comprising Farmed &	This area is located directly to the north of the site and extends between approximately 5km and 20km from the proposed turbines. The ZTV ( <b>Figure 7.8</b> )	Combining the judgements regarding sensitivity and magnitude of change, the



Character Area	Included Landscape Character Types	Susceptibility and Value of Key Characteristics in Relation to Development Type and Overall Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change Due to the Proposed Development	Level and Significance of Landscape Effects
	<p>Lochalsh</p> <p>360: Stepped Moorland</p>	<p>Settled Lowlands (357). The following are key characteristics of this area, which are relevant to the Proposed Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This character area comprises a large peninsula which reaches into the open sea to the north. Views are typically directed towards the north and the sea rather than inland towards the site.</li> <li>- This character area possesses a prevailing simple composition influenced by the landform, openness, wide coastal skies and an unrestricted backcloth to the landscape.</li> <li>- There is little settlement within the interior moorland areas, although there are crofting settlements and houses around the coast, including crofting elements such as field boundaries, patches of trees/ woodland, and low voltage powerlines that contribute to the landscape pattern and create scale references.</li> </ul> <p>Considering all these characteristics, particularly the simplicity of the landscape composition and the large-scale sky backcloth, this character area is considered to have a medium level of susceptibility to the development proposed.</p> <p>The North West Skye and Greshornish SLAs cover approximately half of this character area. The level of value attributed to this landscape is therefore considered to be high.</p> <p>Combining the judgement on the level of susceptibility to change and the value attributed to this landscape character area, its sensitivity is medium.</p>	<p>indicates that there would be no visibility of the Proposed Development from the majority of the Waternish Peninsula, although there would be potential visibility of it from south-facing slopes at the southern extent of the character area in the vicinity of Beinn na Boineide and some high points further north such as Beinn a Sgùmain. There is no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from summits on the northern part of the Peninsula such as Ben Geary and Ben Ghobhainn.</p> <p>The limited visibility of the Proposed Development from this landscape character area would reduce its influence on the key characteristics. In addition, views out from this character area are typically directed towards the sea to the west, north and east of the peninsula, and away from the interior moorlands and the Proposed Development site. Where the Proposed Development is seen, it would intensify the presence of wind farm development. However, the relative change would be limited by the existing Ben Aketil and/or Edinbane Wind Farms and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm.</p> <p>The change would also be long term, although it would be theoretically reversible following decommissioning of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>On account of the potential change to this character area described above, the magnitude of landscape change would be slight.</p>	<p>Proposed Development is predicted to give rise to a minor adverse level of effect on this character area. This is therefore considered to be not significant.</p>

Character Area	Included Landscape Character Types	Susceptibility and Value of Key Characteristics in Relation to Development Type and Overall Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change Due to the Proposed Development	Level and Significance of Landscape Effects
Greshornish and coastal edge of Loch Snizort	<p>357: Farmed and Settled Lowlands - Skye &amp; Lochalsh</p> <p>358: Low Smooth Moorland</p> <p>360: Stepped Moorland</p>	<p>The majority of this area comprises a mix of Stepped Moorland (360) and Farmed &amp; Settled Lowlands (357), with a small amount of Low Smooth Moorland (358). The following are key characteristics of this area, which are relevant to the Proposed Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This character area comprises coastal strips of land which orientate out towards the sea to the north. This includes both lochs and intricate coastlines. Views are typically directed towards the north and the sea (i.e. not inland towards the site).</li> <li>- This character area possesses a prevailing simple composition and horizontal emphasis, as well as a strong influence of exposure.</li> <li>- Small crofting settlements, including Edinbane, are located at regular intervals around the coast, providing scale references and pattern within the character area. These comprise a mix of landscape elements such as buildings, field boundaries, patches of trees/ woodland, and low voltage powerlines.</li> <li>- Within moorland areas, there is typically simple landcover and few buildings.</li> </ul> <p>Considering all these characteristics, particularly the intricacy of spaces and landscape elements around the coast, the character area is considered to have a high level of susceptibility to the type of development proposed.</p>	<p>This area is located to the north of the site and extends approximately 5km away from the proposed turbines. The ZTV (<b>Figure 7.8</b>) indicates that there would be theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from much of this character area, although woodland would provide local screening in many places.</p> <p>Views from this area are typically orientated to the sea to the north and away from the site. Where the Proposed Development is seen, it would typically be viewed in the opposite direction, as illustrated by Viewpoints 2 and 7, within the setting of the Interior Skye Hills landscape character area. Here, it would typically be seen upon the skyline and adjacent to the existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms as well as the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, meaning it would appear as part of an existing group of wind farms.</p> <p>The consented Ben Sca Wind Farm will be located between the existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms, with the Proposed Development also lying between these existing and consented development. The Proposed Development would not appear outwith the existing pattern of wind farm development. The combined development of the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and the Proposed Development would, from locations within the character area, appear more prominent on the skyline to the south than the existing wind farms, such as from Greshornish (refer to Viewpoint 7). This will affect the simple backdrop of this character area and</p>	<p>Combining the judgements regarding sensitivity and magnitude of change, the Proposed Development is predicted to give rise to a moderate adverse level of effect on this character area. This effect is considered to be not significant on account of the operation and consented wind farms, which the Proposed Development would be located in the context of, limiting the relative change.</p>

Character Area	Included Landscape Character Types	Susceptibility and Value of Key Characteristics in Relation to Development Type and Overall Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change Due to the Proposed Development	Level and Significance of Landscape Effects
		<p>The Greshornish SLA covers part of this character area. However, the majority of the area is not designated. The level of value attributed to this landscape is therefore considered to be medium.</p> <p>Combining the judgement on the level of susceptibility to change and the value attributed to this landscape character area, its sensitivity is medium.</p>	<p>may distract from the intricacies around the coast. This change would be established by the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, although the Proposed Development would increase the concentration of turbines.</p> <p>The change would also be long term, although it would be theoretically reversible following decommissioning of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>On account of the potential change to this character area described above, the magnitude of landscape change would be medium.</p>	
Dunvegan and Duirinish	<p>357: Farmed and Settled Lowlands - Skye &amp; Lochalsh</p> <p>358: Low Smooth Moorland</p> <p>360: Stepped Moorland</p> <p>361: Stepped Hills</p>	<p>The majority of this area comprises Stepped Hills (361), with Stepped Moorland (360) and a smaller extent of Farmed and Settled Lowlands (357) around the coast and Low Smooth Moorland (358). The following are key characteristics of this area, which are relevant to the type of development proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This is an area perceived as a discrete character area but contrasting between distinctive large-scale stepped hills in the west, including Macleod's Tables, and lower-lying stepped moorland in the east, wrapped around Loch Dunvegan. This is a coastal landscape which seems fairly contained and shelves reasonably quickly to sea level from higher ground. Views are generally orientated towards the west and north, in the direction of the coast and sea. However, from east facing slopes, views tend to be directed inland and towards the interior moorland areas within which the site is located.</li> <li>- There are some local settlements and buildings</li> </ul>	<p>This area is between approximately 7km and 20km from the proposed turbines. The ZTV (<b>Figure 7.8</b>) indicates that there would be visibility of the Proposed Development from the east facing slopes of the Duirinish Peninsula, with visibility from much of the western side screened by the intervening hills, in particular the distinctive Macleod's Tables. From the east-facing slopes of the hills and moorland, the Proposed Development would appear on the skyline to the east from lower elevations, formed by the sloping moorland upon which the Proposed Development would be located. At higher locations, e.g. from the upper slopes of Macleod's Tables, the Proposed Development would be seen against the landscape in clear conditions, with the more elevated landform that forms part of Trotternish positioned behind the site.</p> <p>As most views from this landscape character area would be in an easterly direction (as illustrated in Viewpoints 11 and 14), the proposed turbines would</p>	<p>Combining the judgements regarding sensitivity and magnitude of change, the Proposed Development is predicted to give rise to a minor adverse level of effect on this character area. This is therefore considered to be not significant.</p>

Character Area	Included Landscape Character Types	Susceptibility and Value of Key Characteristics in Relation to Development Type and Overall Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change Due to the Proposed Development	Level and Significance of Landscape Effects
		<p>within the character area, including the coastal settlement of Dunvegan. These create point foci around the coast in addition to other features such as coral beaches, woodland patches, islands and, more specifically, Dunvegan Castle (GDL).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some views to the east and the adjacent Interior Skye Hills landscape character area include the existing Ben Aketil Wind Farm and there are also glimpses to the existing Edinbane Wind Farm.</li> </ul> <p>Considering all these characteristics, particularly its contained nature and distinctive coastal features, the character area is considered to have a medium level of susceptibility to the type of development proposed outwith the area.</p> <p>The North West Skye SLA covers the majority of this character area and the Duirinish WLA is also located at its western part. The level of value attributed to this landscape is therefore considered to be high.</p> <p>Combining the judgement on the level of susceptibility to change and the value attributed to this landscape character area, its sensitivity is medium.</p>	<p>typically be visible behind or to the right of the existing Ben Aketil turbines and the consented Ben Sca turbines, and in front of the existing Edinbane turbines. The proposed turbines would appear more comparable in layout to Edinbane Wind Farm. However, overall, it would be seen as part of a collective group of turbines against the simple landscape backdrop. The proposed turbines would be larger than those within the existing wind farms, but comparable with the consented Ben Sca turbines. Overall, given the intervening distance they would also appear compatible in scale with the existing and consented turbines. Although the Proposed Development would result in an increase in the density and thus complexity of wind turbines seen within the landscape, they would be reinforcing this baseline pattern rather than introducing new elements.</p> <p>The change would also be long term, although it would be theoretically reversible following decommissioning of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Overall, and on account of the limited potential change to this character area which is described above, the magnitude of landscape change would be slight.</p>	
Bracadale	<p>357: Farmed and Settled Lowlands - Skye &amp; Lochalsh</p> <p>358: Low Smooth Moorland</p>	<p>This is a coastal character area and comprises a mix of three character types (357, 358 and 360) within a concentrated area around Loch Bracadale. There is variance in character type within a relatively small area, however all the character types combine to form one distinct character area. The following are key characteristics of this area, which are relevant to</p>	<p>This area is between approximately 3km and 14km from the Proposed Development. The ZTV indicates that there would be theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from much of this area. Views of the Proposed Development would be orientated towards the sloping moorland which forms the</p>	<p>Combining the judgements regarding sensitivity and magnitude of change, the Proposed Development is predicted to give rise to a moderate adverse level of effect on this character area.</p>

Character Area	Included Landscape Character Types	Susceptibility and Value of Key Characteristics in Relation to Development Type and Overall Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change Due to the Proposed Development	Level and Significance of Landscape Effects
	360: Stepped Moorland	<p>the type of development proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Views from within the area are typically directed out towards the sea, islands and headlands in a westerly and south westerly direction. Inland hills create a backdrop to the coastline and therefore contribute to the setting of this character area.</li> <li>- There is a varied composition of landscape characteristics within this low-lying coastal area. The stepped moorland has a horizontal emphasis which is amplified by peninsulas, islands, lochans, and bays. This results in a susceptibility to new vertical structures, such as wind turbines.</li> <li>- This area has a fairly high density of crofting settlements strung around the bay. These include many houses, farmed slopes and patches of trees nestled within the undulating landform and intricate coastline. These typically contribute to the focus of views towards the coast (especially when the white houses are lit up by dramatic light seen across the loch). In comparison, existing wind farms located outwith this character area (including Ben Aketil) create relatively minor foci. The A683 road passes along the coast, introducing occasional vehicle movements into the landscape.</li> </ul> <p>Considering all these characteristics, particularly the enclosure and importance of a simple hill backcloth to this character area, it is considered to have a high level of susceptibility to the type of development proposed.</p> <p>The North West Skye SLA covers this character area. The level of value attributed to this landscape is</p>	<p>landscape backcloth and skyline.</p> <p>Although there would be visibility of the Proposed Development from this landscape character area, this would typically be in the opposite direction to the key views within this area towards the bay and within the foreground of coastal settlements and related foci.</p> <p>Where visible, the Proposed Development would be seen in the context of the existing Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms as illustrated in Viewpoints 1 and 3). With the Ben Aketil turbines largely seen to the left of the Proposed Development and the Edinbane turbines predominately behind. The consented Ben Sca turbines would also largely be seen to the left of the Proposed Development. The consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm would also be located closer to this character area and therefore more prominent compared with the Proposed development. Therefore, the Proposed Development would not seem to increase the collective extent of turbines within the landscape. The proposed turbines would appear larger than the existing wind turbines but consistent with the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm.</p> <p>The change would also be long term, although it would be theoretically reversible following decommissioning of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Overall, the Proposed Development would give rise to a slight magnitude of change to the view.</p>	<p>This effect is considered to be not significant on account of the operation and consented wind farms, which the Proposed Development would be located in the context of, limiting the relative change.</p>

Character Area	Included Landscape Character Types	Susceptibility and Value of Key Characteristics in Relation to Development Type and Overall Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change Due to the Proposed Development	Level and Significance of Landscape Effects
		<p>therefore considered to be high.</p> <p>Combining the judgement on the level of susceptibility to change and the value attributed to this landscape character area, its sensitivity is high.</p>		

7.73 **Table 7-7** provides a summary of the predicted effects on landscape character areas.

**Table 7-7: Summary of Landscape Effects**

Landscape Character Area	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Residual Landscape Effects	Significance of Residual Landscape Effects
Interior Skye hills	Medium	Medium	Moderate adverse Not significant
Trotternish	Medium	Slight	Moderate/minor adverse Not significant
Portree, surrounding hills and strath	Medium	Slight	Minor adverse Not significant
Waternish	Medium	Slight	Minor adverse Not significant
Greshornish and coastal edge of Loch Snizort	Medium	Medium	Moderate adverse Not significant
Dunvegan and Duirinish	Medium	Slight	Minor adverse Not significant
Bracadale	High	Slight	Moderate adverse Not significant

## VISUAL ASSESSMENT

### Introduction

7.74 The following section assesses the visual baseline conditions within the study area and the predicted visual effects of the Proposed Development on representative viewpoints and key visual receptors. The detailed viewpoint assessment is included in the Viewpoint Assessment in **Technical Appendix 7.3**.

7.75 Although the visual impact assessment considers a range of people that would view the Proposed Development, and these will include residents, it does not include assessment of the effects on visual amenity for residents at specific properties. An assessment of individual properties is included within the Residential Visual Amenity Assessment in **Technical Appendix 7.4**.

### Visual Receptors and Representative Viewpoints

7.76 Selection of the visual receptors and representative viewpoints followed GLVIA and was informed by the ZTV. Whilst the Proposed Development would be visible by people in many different parts of the study area, selection of specific visual receptors was based on assessing whether the Proposed Development would be likely to result in significant visual effects on these receptors. This process resulted in identification of the key visual receptors summarised in **Table 7-8**.

7.77 Assessment of the visual effects of the Proposed Development on visual receptors includes reference to the detailed assessment of representative viewpoints. The viewpoints included in the

LVIA are comparable with those included in the LVIA for the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, with locations added based on consultation during the EIA Scoping process. Consultation undertaken with THC for the Proposed Development confirmed that the viewpoints included in the LVIA would be appropriate. **Table 7-8** identifies the representative viewpoints associated with the various identified key visual receptors.

**Table 7-8: Key Visual Receptors**

Receptor	Location	Closest Viewpoint
Residential receptors	Edinbane, Blackhill, Flashader	2
	Lonmore (south east of Dunvegan)	6
	Borreraig, Colbost, Galtrigill, Husabost, Totaig	14
	Balmore, Feorlig, Harlosh, Vatten	1
	Roag, Ardroag	4
	Earlish, Idrigill (north of Uig), Kingsburgh	17
	Gearymore	3
	Greshornish, Kildonan	7
	Kingsburgh, Eyre	9
	Borve	10
	Fiscavaig	12
Travelling visual receptors	A87 Drumuie – Borve travelling north and Uig – Eyre travelling south	10, 13
	A850 Fairy Bridge – Flashader travelling east and Suledale – Upperglen (by entrance to Ben Aketil Wind Farm)	5, 2
	A863 Ullinish – Roskhill travelling north, Lonmore – Feorlig travelling south	1, 3
	A855 Kilvaxter - Uig travelling south	17
	B884 Colbost – Lonmore travelling south	3, 4
	Minor road through Edinbane	2
	Minor road along Loch Greshornish	7
	Uig – Lochmaddy/ Tarbet ferry route	18
Recreational visual receptors	Skye Trail	15, 19
	Core Path SL07.02 – Edinbane to Greshornish Road end	2
	Core Path SL07.03 – Edinbane Link Path	2
	Core Path SL28.03 – Roag Link Path	4
	Core Path SL28.04 – Orbst to Idrigill Point	4
	Walkers within Duirinish peninsula	11



Receptor	Location	Closest Viewpoint
	Walkers upon Trotternish peninsula and Ben Tianavaig	15, 16, 19
	Walkers within the Cuillins	20
	Boat users within Loch Dunvegan	14
	Boat users within Loch Bracadale	1, 3
	Boat users within Loch Greshornish	7
	Boat users within Loch Snizort Beag	9, 13

7.78 Receptors that were scoped out, mainly due to no or limited visibility (based primarily on analysis of ZTVS), include those listed as follows:

- Settlements: Dunvegan; Orbst; Ullinish; Ardtreck; Portnalong; Uigshader; Glenmore; Achachork; Drumuie; the northern edge of Portree; Kensaleyre; Bernisdale; Treaslane; and Suledale;
- Roads: B885; and B886;
- Core Paths: SL04.04 (Glenbrittle to Sligachan Hill Path); SL26.01 (Ullinish to Ullinish Point); SL28.01 (Loch Caroy to Glen Vic Askill); SL06.01 (Churches Walk); SL06.02 (Healaval Forest); and SL07.01 (Greshornish Forest Path); and
- Visitor attractions: Dunvegan Castle; Dunvegan lochside car park; the coral beaches by Claigan; Fairy Bridge; and Loch Beag viewpoint and picnic area.

7.79 Most rural settlements within the study area comprise dispersed or linear crofting townships in addition to isolated properties, rather than settlements with concentrated centres. Where properties are dispersed, general settlement areas are referred to within the visual assessment rather than identification of individual properties.

7.80 Recreation is popular within the study area, undertaken by both local people and visitors, and comprising a number of different activities such as hill walking, cycling and kayaking/canoeing. As well as the recreational receptors (listed in **Table 7-7**) representing people carrying out these activities, they are also represented in some cases by residential receptors (for accommodation) and travelling receptors (for routes through the landscape).

7.81 There are also some historic built features and GDLs within the study area that are popular for visitors. Potential visual receptors within the GDLs in the study area were scoped out due to having no potential visibility of the Proposed Development. Potential effects on the historic assets are discussed in **Chapter 11: Cultural Heritage**.

### Representative Viewpoint Assessment

7.82 Representative viewpoints are selected to illustrate the range of visual baseline conditions across a study area and the predicted visual effects of a Proposed Development on key visual receptors. They cannot represent every unique visual characteristic, nor every unique visual effect of a Proposed Development, but they do inform judgements regarding the main significant visual effects which would affect various groups of people in different places and undertaking different activities.

7.83 Twenty representative viewpoints were selected for the assessment of the Proposed Development following consultation with NatureScot and THC as listed in **Table 7-9** and as shown on **Figure 7.5a to 7.5d**.

**Table 7-9: Representative Viewpoints**

VP No.	Viewpoint Location	National Grid Reference (NGR)	Visual Receptor Type	Elevation (m AOD)	Approx. Distance to Nearest Proposed Turbine (km)	Direction of View to Proposed Development
1	A863, Junction with Road to Feorlig	129981, 843932	Road users	27	6	North east
2	Edinbane (Top Road)	135090, 850631	Residential	61	3	South west
3	A863 Road	132419, 839863	Road users	42	9.6	North
4	Roag	127193, 844432	Residential & road users	170	7.2	North west
5	A850 between Dunvegan and Edinbane	130559, 850431	Road users	110	1.7	South east
6	Junction of A863 and B884 at Lonmore	126142, 845921	Road users	27	7	North east
7	Minor Road to Greshornish	134012, 853583	Road users	17	4.3	South
8	B885 Road	142744, 844781	Road users	106	11.5	North west
9	Kingsburgh	138963, 858495	Road users	50	11.2	South west
10	A850 / A87 (West of Borve)	144292, 848129	Road users	61	12.1	West
11	Macleod's Table North / Healabhal Mhor	122193, 844507	Recreational – hill walkers	468	11.2	North east
12	Fiscavaig	133335, 834341	Residential and road users	24.7	11.4	North East
13	A87 road	141475, 852680	Road users	20	9.8	South west
14	Totaig	119923, 850878	Road users	60	12.1	East
15	The Storr	149540, 854035	Recreational – hill walkers	713	17.9	South west
16	Ben Tianavaig	151185,	Recreational	413	20.7	North west

VP No.	Viewpoint Location	National Grid Reference (NGR)	Visual Receptor Type	Elevation (m AOD)	Approx. Distance to Nearest Proposed Turbine (km)	Direction of View to Proposed Development
		840977	– hill walkers			
17	Uig (Idrigill)	138804, 864233	Residential and road users	49.4	17.3	South west
18	Uig – Lochmaddy Ferry Route	134781, 864669	Ferry passengers	0	15.2	South
19	Beinn Edra	145574, 862670	Recreational – hillwalkers	609	18.7	South west
20	Bruach na Frithe	146094, 825192	Recreational – hill walkers	958	27.9	North west

7.84 The assessment of predicted visual effects of the Proposed Development on visual receptors was informed by a combination of computer generated wireline diagrams and photomontages **Figures 7.16 to 7.35**, Volumes 3b and 3c (NatureScot visualisations) and **Figures 7.36 to 7.54** Volume 3d and 3e (THC visualisations). These visualisations were produced following good practice guidance, as described in **Technical Appendix 7.2**. Nonetheless, it is important to highlight that there are some limitations to these visualisations, the principal one being that a two-dimensional image or photograph cannot fully convey the experience of viewing a landscape in reality, nor do they show the blade movement of the turbines.

7.85 For each representative viewpoint, the analysis in **Technical Appendix 7.3** describes the baseline conditions (including existing wind farms) and predicted visual effects of the Proposed Development. Following GLVIA, these include a baseline description of the view, assessments of the sensitivity of the visual baseline resource, the magnitude of predicted change arising from the Proposed Development and whether or not the assessed visual effect is considered significant or not.

7.86 **Table 7-10** summarises the visual effects on representative viewpoints.

**Table 7-10: Summary of Visual Effects on Representative Viewpoints**

VP No.	Viewpoint Location	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Residual Visual Effects
1	A863, Junction with Road to Feorlig	Medium (road users)	Medium	Moderate adverse Not significant
2	Edinbane (Top Road)	High (residents)	Medium	Major/moderate adverse Significant
3	A863 Road	Medium (road users)	Medium	Moderate adverse Not significant
4	Roag	High (residents)	Medium	Major/moderate

VP No.	Viewpoint Location	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Residual Visual Effects
		High-medium Road users)		adverse, Significant. Moderate adverse Not significant
5	A850 Road (between Dunvegan and Edinbane)	Medium (road users)	Medium	Moderate adverse Not significant
6	Junction of A863 and B884 at Lonmore	High (residents) Medium (road users)	Medium	Major/moderate adverse, Significant Moderate adverse Not significant
7	Minor Road to Greshornish	High (road users)	Medium	Major/moderate adverse Significant
8	B885 Road	Medium (road users)	Slight	Minor adverse Not significant
9	Kingsburgh	High (residents)	Slight	Moderate adverse Not significant
10	A850 / A87 (West of Borve)	High (residents) Medium (road users)	Slight	Moderate adverse Not significant Moderate/minor adverse, Not significant
11	Macleod's Table North / Healabhal Mhor	High (walkers)	Slight	Moderate/minor adverse Not significant
12	Fiscavaig	High (residents)	Slight	Moderate adverse, not significant
13	A87 Road	Medium (road users)	Slight	Minor adverse Not significant
14	Totaig	High (residents) High-medium (road users)	Slight	Moderate adverse, Not significant Moderate/minor adverse, Not significant
15	The Storr	High (walkers)	Slight – negligible	Minor adverse Not significant
16	Ben Tianavaig	High (walkers)	Slight – negligible	Minor adverse Not significant
17	Uig (Idrigill)	High (residents) Medium (road users)	Slight- negligible	Moderate/minor adverse, Not significant Minor adverse, Not significant
18	Uig – Lochmaddy Ferry Route	Medium (ferry passengers)	Slight – negligible	Minor adverse Not significant

VP No.	Viewpoint Location	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Residual Visual Effects
19	Beinn Edra	High (walkers)	Slight – negligible	Minor adverse Not significant
20	Bruach na Frithe	High (walkers)	Negligible	Minor adverse Not significant

### Predicted Effects on Residential, Travelling and Recreational Receptors (inc. Sequential Effects)

7.87 The following section of the LVIA builds on the preceding assessment judgements to consider how the predicted effects from the Proposed Development are likely to combine and be experienced in key visual receptor locations within the surrounding landscape. It considers the visual effects that would be experienced by people within settlements, whilst travelling along roads, and when undertaking recreation. The following analysis is supported by **Figure 7.4a and b**.

#### *Residential Receptors*

##### **Balmeanach**

7.88 Balmeanach comprises a dispersed, linear settlement to the south west of the Proposed Development. It is located within 4km of the proposed turbines and the effect on residents of properties within Balmeanach are assessed within the Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) in **Technical Appendix 7.4**.

##### **Edinbane, Blackhill/Coishletter and Flashader**

7.89 This area includes: Blackhill, which is a concentrated settlement at the southern end of Loch Greshornish; Edinbane which is a linear crofting settlement along the elevated slopes of Creagan Breaca; and Flashader which comprises a dispersed group of houses extending from Borve to Dun Flashader near the eastern shore of Loch Greshornish. Within Blackhill and Edinbane, the settlements closest to the Proposed Development, the visual amenity of specific residents is assessed within a RVAA in **Technical Appendix 7.4**. Visual receptors are represented by Viewpoint 2 (**Figure 7.17, Volume 3b and Figure 7.37 Volume 3c**) which is located on the Edinbane top road and from which a major/moderate adverse and significant visual effect is predicted for the Proposed Development. Significant adverse visual effects are predicted in relation to residents of Upper Edinbane due to the proximity, orientation and elevation relative to the Proposed Development. However, for residents of Borve and Flashader the visual effects are less likely to be significant due to the position of these properties and orientation towards Loch Greshornish.

7.90 Views of the Proposed Development from Blackhill/Coishletter would be more limited due to its lower-lying elevation and local screening by the surrounding slopes, trees and buildings. Where seen from here, the proposed turbines would lie to the left of the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm typically appearing above the forested skyline to the south, to the right side of the existing Edinbane Wind Farm and in the opposite direction to key views towards Loch Greshornish and distinctive hills beyond.

7.91 From Flashader and Borve, key views focus on Loch Greshornish within the fore and midground and the opposite hill slopes and simple skyline. Houses and other small-scale structures can be seen

near the loch, nestled within more sheltered ground, whilst conifer plantations are extensive across some of the hill slopes and the existing Edinbane turbines can be seen upon the slopes above the Edinbane settlement. Within this context, the Proposed Development would be seen extending to the right of Edinbane Wind Farm, and to the left of the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. The proposed turbines would comprise very large structures and would increase the intensity of wind turbines within views across the loch. The Proposed Development would also extend across the gap between Edinbane Wind Farm and the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. However, wind turbines are an established part of the baseline landscape and therefore, the Proposed Development would not introduce any new or distinctly different elements relative to this baseline.

- 7.92 Edinbane is a small, linear crofting settlement that is located at lower levels beside the southern end of Loch Greshornish and extends partially up the hillside. Each of the houses varies slightly in their orientation and elevation in response to their position upon undulating slopes. This results in the views for some residents being directed towards the opposite, simple moorland hills to the south west with the views of others (typically those further north) directed towards the loch and more irregular Greshornish and Waternish hills to the north west. Reflecting this variability, the Proposed Development would differ in its position in views gained by residents. However, the Proposed Development is located to the south and would typically be present in oblique views from the properties rather than more direct views to the south west. The Proposed Development would lie to the right of Edinbane Wind Farm and extend across the gap between the existing turbines and the consented Ben Sca turbines to the right of the view. The proposed turbines would comprise very large structures, but would not introduce elements that are not already an established part of the baseline landscape.

### Lonmore (east of Dunvegan)

- 7.93 Lonmore comprises a linear settlement along the A863 to the south east of Dunvegan. Key views from this area are towards Loch Dunvegan and Macleod's Tables. So, whilst the Proposed Development would be seen from this area, it would typically be seen as part of the interior backdrop (as represented by Viewpoint 6 (**Figure 7.21, Volume 3b** and **Figure 7.41 Volume 3c**) which is located at the junction of the A863 and B884 and from which a major/moderate adverse, significant visual effect is predicted). As indicated by the ZTV (**Figure 7.5a**), visibility would be theoretically applicable from the majority of Lonmore. However, vegetation and buildings within the settlement will restrict views towards the Proposed Development. In addition, the wind turbine towers would be partially screened by the intervening landform. The Proposed Development would also be visible with the context of the existing Ben Aketil wind turbines and consented Ben Sca wind turbines, reducing the relative change, although increasing the complexity of the collective image of wind farms.

### Borreraig, Colbost, Galtrigill, Husabost, Totaig and Skinidin

- 7.94 Houses throughout these settlements are dispersed along the coast, integrated within a mixed pattern of croftland, woodland and minor roads that respond to the varying landform and aspect. From here, the Proposed Development would be visible intermittently/ partially as people move through the landscape (as represented by Viewpoint 4, **Figure 7.29, Volume 3b** and **Figure 7.49 Volume 3c**), where a moderate and not significant effect is predicted in relation to residents. Whilst the foreground view would vary between different locations, the Proposed Development would appear consistently as a relatively minor element upon the distant hills opposite to the south east, together with the existing Ben Aketil wind turbines and consented Ben Sca wind turbines.

### Balmore, Feorlig, Harlosh and Vatten

- 7.95 This area includes dispersed crofting settlements extending over a low peninsula that projects into Loch Bracadale. Here, the landscape character and visual amenity are most strongly influenced by the surrounding coastline and sea. Within this context, the proposed wind farm would be seen upon the interior hills to the north east but away from the key foci, such as Loch Bracadale as represented by Viewpoint 1, (**Figure 7.16, Volume 3b and Figure 7.36 Volume 3c**), which is located at the junction between the A863 and the road to Feorlig and from which a moderate/minor adverse, not significant visual effect is predicted for road users. Where seen, the Proposed Development would appear to the right of the existing Ben Aketil wind turbines and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, visually separated from these wind farms by the summit of Ben Aketil. The key settlement from which a significant effect on visual amenity has the potential to occur is Upper Feorlig, where the Proposed Development would be seen in relatively direct views across Glen Heysdale.

### Roag, Ardroag

- 7.96 This area includes dispersed and linear crofting settlement upon irregular slopes above Lochs na Faolinn and Pool Roag, part of Loch Bracadale. Properties typically vary in their elevation and aspect, taking advantage of flatter sites, shelter and favourable growing conditions. Open views tend to be focused towards the south east and the bay. In this context, the Proposed Development would be seen upon the interior hill skyline within local views which vary in their screening, framing and/or openness in response to the surrounding landform or vegetation. Where seen, it would appear closely related to the existing Ben Aketil Wind Farm and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, as represented by Viewpoint 4 (**Figure 7.19, Volume 3b and Figure 7.39 Volume 3c**), which is located at Roag and from which a major/moderate adverse, significant visual effect is predicted. Whilst a significant effect is noted in relation to Viewpoint 4 the visual effect at individual properties would depend on their orientation and context. In addition, the Proposed Development would not introduce new elements to the baseline landscape but would reinforce the presence of wind turbines in this location.

### Earlish, Idrigill (north of Uig), Kingsburgh

- 7.97 These settlements extend along the west coast of the Trotternish Peninsula, typically upon elevated seaward-facing slopes or flatter shelves between the slopes. Key views are to the coast, loch and open sea beyond, with a horizontal emphasis and wide skies. Although some local shelter is provided by local landform features, the settlements are typically exposed to onshore winds. Within this setting, the Proposed Development would be seen upon the distant skyline to the south, as represented by Viewpoint 9 at Kingsburgh (**Figure 7.24, Volume 3b and Figure 7.44 Volume 3c**), and Viewpoint 17 at Idrigill (**Figure 7.32, Volume 3b and Figure 7.52 Volume 3c**). It is predicted that a significant effect would not occur at either of these viewpoints, with the Proposed Development comprising a relatively limited addition to wide, panoramic views. The Proposed Development would be seen as one element of many beyond a fore and midground that includes elements of human settlement located around the coast. Uig is concentrated around the lower slopes that surround Uig Bay where the ZTVs show limited visibility of the Proposed Development. However, Idrigill and Earlish are located where the landform provides less visual enclosure and the ZTVs show theoretical visibility of all 10 of the proposed turbines. Where visible, the Proposed Development would be seen in addition to the existing Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms, and the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, which would limit the change attributable to the proposed turbines. The effect of the Proposed Development on residential receptors in these settlements is not predicted to be significant.



## Gearymore, Ose and Eabost West

- 7.98 These are small, rural settlements within Glen Ose and on the edge of Loch Bracadale. They contain dispersed houses within a pattern of crofts, patches of woodland and moorland, local tracks and powerlines. The existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms create prominent features upon the interior hill skyline. However, the ZTVs show theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from these settlements. Viewpoint 3 (**Figure 7.18, Volume 3b and Figure 7.36 Volume 3c**) is located on the A863 road shows the extent of the proposed turbines that is likely to be seen from these settlements. This viewpoint demonstrates the proposed turbines would comprise large and prominent structures, albeit in the context of existing wind farms and the consented Ben Sca and Glen Ullinish Wind Farms. From here a significant adverse effect on visual amenity has the potential to occur, depending on the orientation and local context of specific properties.

## Greshornish and Kildonan

- 7.99 The settlements of Greshornish and Kildonan are located upon the opposite shores of Loch Greshornish and key views are across the loch, respectively east to west. The settlements occupy small shelves in the undulating coastal landform from where there would be limited visibility of the Proposed Development from the buildings themselves, as indicated in the ZTVs. The Proposed Development would mainly be seen when moving to or from properties. In the case of Greshornish the vegetation to the south of the settlement would also constrain potential views towards the Proposed Development. There would, however, be occasional views of the Proposed Development, which would be located to the south, from a few residences. In such instances the proposed turbines would be seen along the skyline of the hill backdrop between the existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms and lying to the left of the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. The view from the road to Greshornish is represented by Viewpoint 7 (**Figure 7.22, Volume 3b and Figure 7.42 Volume 3c**) and from this location with more open views, a major/moderate adverse, significant visual effect is predicted. However, based on the ZTV, potential for vegetation to limit views and main focus of the properties, visual effects at the actual settlements are not predicted to be significant.

## Eyre

- 7.100 This is a linear settlement which extends parallel to the shore of Loch Snizort Beag. The houses are typically elevated and focus upon the loch to the south west, followed by a series of stepped moorland peninsulas beyond. The ZTVs indicate the potential visibility of the Proposed Development from Eyre would be limited, and largely restricted to turbine blades and blade tips. The closest viewpoint to Eyre is Viewpoint 9 at Kingsburgh (**Figure 7.24, Volume 3b and Figure 7.44 Volume 3c**), which was selected due to the higher elevation of the properties at this location compared with those at Eyre. At this location a moderate and not significant effect on visual amenity is predicted due to factors including the limited extent of the turbines that would be seen and the context of operational and consented wind farms. Where visible at Eyre, it would appear as a distant element beyond a fore and midground that includes many human elements located around the coast. The potential effects on visual amenity are not predicted to be significant.

## Borve

- 7.101 This is a predominately linear settlement located at the junction between the A87 and A850, represented by Viewpoint 10 (**Figure 7.25, Volume 3b and Figure 7.45 Volume 3c**). The houses are typically slightly elevated and have potential views of a series of stepped moorland ridgelines. The ZTVs indicate the potential visibility of the Proposed Development from Borve. At this viewpoint a



moderate and not significant effect on visual amenity is predicted due to factors including the limited extent of the proposed turbines that would be seen and the context of operational and consented wind farms. Where visible at Borve, the Proposed Development would appear as a distant element beyond a fore and midground that includes many human elements. It would form a relatively small part of a broad panoramic view, with the proposed turbines seen above a horizontal, stepped horizon. The existing Edinbane Wind Farm is visible, albeit to a limited degree due to the intervening landform. However, the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm would be more conspicuous on the skyline.

### **Fiscavaig, Ardtreck and Portnalong**

7.102 Fiscavaig, Ardtreck and Portnalong comprise adjoining, predominately linear settlements located along the narrow twisting road to the south of the entrance to Loch Harport and Fiscavaig Bay. Viewpoint 12 (**Figure 7.27, Volume 3b and Figure 7.47 Volume 3c**) is located at Fiscavaig and represents views seen from this settlement. The houses vary considerably in their elevation, with some located at lower elevations close to the shorelines of Loch Harport and Fiscavaig Bay, and others on more elevated ridges. The ZTVs indicate the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from these settlements, although this will vary based on the orientation of particular properties and surrounding vegetation. At this viewpoint a moderate and not significant effect on visual amenity is predicted due to factors including the intervening distance and the context of operational and consented wind farms. Where visible at Fiscavaig, Ardtreck and Portnalong, the Proposed Development would appear as a distant element beyond a fore and midground that includes many human elements and with Fiscavaig Bay and entrance to Loch Harport as the key points of focus in the view. It would form a relatively small part of a broad panoramic view, with the proposed turbines seen above a horizontal, stepped horizon together with existing and consented wind farms.

### *Travelling Visual Receptors*

#### **A87 Drumuie – Borve Travelling North, and Uig – Eyre Travelling South**

7.103 Travelling along the A87 north from Portree, views extend over the strath of Lòan an Eireannaich, framed to the north east by the linear settlement of Borve upon the foot slopes of Bealach a' Chaòl-reidh and to the north west by a series of stepped moorland horizons. The ZTVs show theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development for approximately 7km of the A87 in the vicinity of Borve (see Viewpoint 10, Figure 7.25, Volume 3b and Figure 7.45 Volume 3c). This theoretical visibility is also partly limited to turbine blades and the lower parts of the proposed turbines would be screened by the intervening landscape, although the hubs of some turbines would be seen. The shortest distance to the proposed turbines is approximately 10km, in the vicinity of Borve. Where seen, the proposed turbines would appear as a minor element upon the distant skyline, in the context of the existing Edinbane Wind Farm and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and, their prominence would be reduced by the multitude of landscape and visual elements within the intervening area such as houses and settlements, woodland blocks, fences and electricity poles. At Viewpoint 10 the effect on visual amenity for road users is predicted to be moderate/minor and not significant.

7.104 Travelling along the A87 south from Uig, the A87 passes through an irregular landform with variable views out to sea, across Loch Snizort Beag and along the road corridor towards the prominent focus of the Cuillin mountains to the south. Between Uig and Hinnisdal Bridge, the Proposed Development would theoretically be visible for a length of road of approximately 8km (in two sections). It would appear relatively distant as shown by Viewpoint 13 (Figure 7.28, Volume 3b and

Figure 7.48 Volume 3c), from which a minor adverse, not significant visual effect is predicted. The Proposed Development, as one of many visual elements and foci within the visual composition, including the existing Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms, and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm.

- 7.105 Overall, the effect of the Proposed Development on road users travelling on the A87 is not predicted to be significant.

### **A850 Fairy Bridge – Flashader Travelling East and Flashader – Upperglen (by entrance to Ben Aketil Wind Farm) Travelling West**

- 7.106 Along this stretch of road, the Proposed Development would theoretically be visible intermittently for a distance of approximately 14km. The Proposed Development would be theoretically visible for approximately 2km in the vicinity of Dunvegan, however buildings and vegetation would restrict or prevent such views towards the proposed turbines.
- 7.107 Travelling east from Fairy Bridge, the A850 passes up and through a narrow gap between Beinn na Boineide and Ben Hornegal, which focuses views upon the moorland surrounding Ben Sca hill, before curving around to the east and more distant views are gained across the interior moorland hills of Skye towards the Trotternish ridge in the distance. At present, the Ben Aketil Wind Farm appears very prominent from parts of this stretch of road, as views are gained along its line of turbines, whilst the Edinbane turbines are seen further to the east contrasting with their varying elevation and spacing. This is the closest section of the A850 from which the Proposed Development would be seen, as represented by Viewpoint 5 (**Figure 7.20, Volume 3b and Figure 7.40 Volume 3c**). From this location on the A850, a moderate adverse, and not significant visual effect is predicted. As this section of the A850 passes the site it would be potentially visible for approximately 5km whilst travelling in either direction. As well as the existing wind farms, the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm would also be seen from the same section of the A850. The layout of the Proposed Development would differ from the existing Ben Aketil Wind Farm and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. However, it would also be more recessive, clearly positioned behind these turbines and beyond the Ben Sca and Ben Aketil ridgeline. Any additional effects of the wind farm access track and other infrastructure requirements for the Proposed Development would be limited as it would predominately utilise existing and consented infrastructure. The Proposed Development includes some additional track that would continue from the consented track associated with Ben Sca Wind Farm. The majority of the proposed tracks that form part of the Proposed Development would be screened by the intervening landform. The proposed substation would be visible from the section of the A850 between Fairy Bridge and Upper Glen, located near the summit of Ben Sca. However, the substation would be seen at a distance of over 4km from the A850 and would comprise a limited element in the view. The proposed area of forestry clearance, where habitat enhancement would take place, would be visible from this location. This would take place close to Ben Aketil Wind Farm. However, in the context of the overall area of coniferous forestry, this change would be relatively limited and the restored landscape would appear comparable with the moorland slopes of Ben Sca and Ben Aketil.
- 7.108 Travelling west along the A850, the Proposed Development would be visible for approximately 2km in the vicinity of Borge, as represented by Viewpoint 10 (**Figure 7.25, Volume 3b and Figure 7.45 Volume 3c**). At this viewpoint a moderate/minor, not significant effect is predicted in relation to road users. There would be no visibility of the Proposed Development after this short section near Borge until Flashader. In the vicinity of Flashader, the A850 runs broadly parallel to the coast, although views to the coast and the interior hills are limited by the screening effects of local landform undulations and vegetation. As the road rises over the shoulder of the hill by Flashader, open views are revealed to the south west across the crofting settlement in the foreground, to

interior moorland and forest as well as distant hills. At Borge (on the edge of Loch Greshornish), these views become focused upon the Loch below and the location of Edinbane at its southern end, before the road descends to Blackhill and then skirts around the foot of forested slopes to the west. Along this route, there would be visibility of the Proposed Development for a distance of approximately 3km between Flashader and the southern end of Loch Greshornish. Along this latter stretch, the Proposed Development would be prominent upon the skyline of the hill backdrop, similar to views represented by Viewpoint 2 (**Figure 7.17, Volume 3b and Figure 7.37, Volume 3c**), where major/moderate adverse, and significant effects are predicted for residents. The Proposed Development would relate to the operational and consented wind farms, intensifying the presence of turbines in the view, which would limit the associated change. The proposed turbines would occupy the gap between the existing Edinbane Wind Farm and the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, and the turbine spacing for the Proposed Development would appear comparable with these existing and consented wind farms. Combined with the existing and consented wind farms, the Proposed Development, would relate to the horizontal emphasis of the landscape and visual composition as travellers move along the A87.

- 7.109 Overall, the effect of the Proposed Development on road users travelling on the A850 is not predicted to be significant.

### A863 Bracadale – Roskhill Travelling North, Lonmore – Feorlig Travelling South

- 7.110 Travelling along the A863 in the vicinity of Bracadale/Ullinish, heading north, the road winds and undulates through the coastal landform, with views intermittently screened by adjacent slopes and then subsequently revealed within open areas. Where visible, the focus of view is Loch Bracadale and its peninsulas and islands, with the interior hills providing a simple backdrop that emphasises the contrast with the intricacies of the coast. Within this context, the ZTVs (**Figure 7.5a to 7.5d**) reveal that the Proposed Development would theoretically be visible intermittently for approximately 10km. This visibility would be variable, with the hub height ZTV (**Figure 7.5c**) in particular demonstrating that a variable extent of the proposed turbines would be seen. The Proposed Development would always be seen along with the existing Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm from this part of the A863. Views from this section of the A863 are represented by Viewpoint 1 (**Figure 7.16, Volume 3b and Figure 7.36 Volume 3c**) and Viewpoint 3 (**Figure 7.18, Volume 3b and Figure 7.36 Volume 3c**) from which moderate adverse, and not significant visual effects have been assessed for road users. Combined with the existing Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms, and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, the Proposed Development would reinforce the pattern of wind turbines along this stepped horizontal skyline. The consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm would be located closer to part this section of the A850 (in the vicinity of Ullinish, Gearymore and Ose) and would be comparatively more prominent.
- 7.111 From Lonmore, travelling south along the A863, the ZTVs shows that the Proposed Development would be intermittently visible for approximately 5km (up to the vicinity of Feorlig). Beyond which the Proposed Development would effectively be to the rear of the view seen by road users travelling south and therefore any potential visual effects would be very limited. As with the more southerly section of the A863 the focus of view is Loch Bracadale and its peninsulas and islands, with the interior hills providing a simple backdrop. Views from this section of the A863 are represented by Viewpoint 1 (**Figure 7.16, Volume 3b and Figure 7.36 Volume 3c**) and Viewpoint 6 (**Figure 7.21, Volume 3b and Figure 7.41 Volume 3c**) from which moderate adverse, and not significant visual effects have been assessed for road users.
- 7.112 Overall, the effect of the Proposed Development on road users travelling on the A863 is not predicted to be significant.

### B884 Colbost – Lonmore Travelling South

- 7.113 Between Colbost and Skinidin, travelling south along the B884, the road winds and undulates around the coast, with views intermittently screened by foreground landscape elements such as woodland nestled within the landform alcoves. Where views are open to the south east, the main focus along this section is to Loch Dunvegan and its islands, seen against a backdrop of the hills. Between Skinidin and Lonmore, the road passes through flatter and simpler moorland, with much more open and wide views, including the distinctive focal features of Macleod's Tables. Along this route, the ZTVs indicate that the Proposed Development would theoretically be visible along most its length (totalling approximately 7.8km), although this visibility would be reduced significantly by local screening north of Skinidin. Where seen, the proposed turbines would typically be visible upon the distant skyline. The Proposed Development would relate to the adjacent Ben Aketil Wind Farm and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, following its linear form along the horizon, seen as one of many elements within the landscape and visual composition. Viewpoint 6 (**Figure 7.21, Volume 3b and Figure 7.41 Volume 3c**) is located at the southern end of the B884, the closest part this road to the Proposed Development and from which moderate adverse, and not significant visual effects are predicted for road users.
- 7.114 Overall, the effect of the Proposed Development on road users travelling on the B884 is not predicted to be significant.

### B855 Portree – Bracadale Travelling West

- 7.115 From Portree, this single-track road winds up the northern flanks of Beinn no Greine, Creag Bhàn and Ben Grasco, reaching a high point in the vicinity of Glengrasco and Coulnacraggan, then generally descending south west towards Leacan Nighean an t-Siosalaich and Bracadale. Realistically the Proposed Development would only be visible for people travelling in a westerly direction, as the site would be located behind for people travelling east. Whilst the Proposed Development would be visible from this road, the ZTVs show this would be applicable to less than 1km of the route the view from this route is represented by Viewpoint 8 (**Figure 7.23, Volume 3b and Figure 7.43 Volume 3c**) from which a minor adverse, not significant visual effect is predicted. It is predicted that there would not be a significant adverse effect on road users travelling west along this minor road.

### Minor Road Through Edinbane Travelling South

- 7.116 This no-through single-track road passes through the crofting settlement of Edinbane. Whilst the settlement is linear in layout, subtle variations in the landform means the road winds up and around undulations and the buildings vary slightly in their orientation and elevation. Travelling south along the road, foreground views are complex with elements associated with crofting, such as houses, agricultural steadings, animals, fields and their boundaries, electricity poles and patches of trees. Beyond these, views are typically directed to the glen below, surrounding hills and the prominent focus of Edinbane Wind Farm to the south, which is seen part-way up/down slopes. The Proposed Development would theoretically be visible along the entire length of this road. However, foreground elements such as houses and vegetation would restrict potential views of the proposed turbines. Where it is seen, it would appear in relatively direct views for people travelling in a southerly direction. The wind turbines would comprise large and prominent structures on the skyline to the south west, although they would form a simple, linear feature that would relate to the landform.
- 7.117 The Proposed Development would be located between the existing Edinbane Wind Farm and

consented Ben Sca Wind Farm extending the line of turbines along the horizon. With the exception of two of the proposed turbines (Turbines 1 and 2), the lower parts of the turbines would be screened by the landform, helping to create a degree of visual separation. The view from this area is represented by Viewpoint 2 (**Figure 7.17, Volume 3b and Figure 7.37 Volume 3c**), from which a major/moderate adverse, significant visual effect is predicted for residents, noting that the majority of people using this road are the local residents.

- 7.118 Overall, the effect of the Proposed Development on road users travelling on the minor road is predicted to be significant.

### Minor Road Along Loch Greshornish Travelling South

- 7.119 From Greshornish, this no-through single-track road runs parallel with the edge of Loch Greshornish before crossing moorland at the southern end of the loch. Along this road, views are focused upon the loch and to the opposite hill slopes, with human elements forming prominent elements around the lower slopes, including the houses and crofts of Blackhill, Edinbane, Borve and Flashader. Upon the higher slopes, there are some extensive forest plantations as well as existing wind farms. The Ben Aketil turbines appear partly above the skyline of Mullach Ben Sca to the south west whilst the Edinbane turbines are more prominent, seen upon the slopes above the settlement, in an irregular layout and at variable elevation. The existing Edinbane Wind Farm forms a prominent element in views to the south from this road and similar would be case for the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, which would form a prominent, linear feature along the horizontal ridge, above the conifer plantation.
- 7.120 The Proposed Development would comprise an array of 10 additional turbines between the existing Edinbane Wind Farm and the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. Overall, the combined array of turbines would be seen upon the hill backcloth in the main line of travel, as represented by Viewpoint 7 (**Figure 7.22, Volume 3b and Figure 7.42 Volume 3c**) from which a major/moderate adverse, significant visual effect is predicted. The overall array of wind turbines, with the existing and consented wind farms, combined with the Proposed Development, creates a striking feature along the hill skyline. A small section of proposed access track would be theoretically visible, along with the proposed substation near the summit of Ben Sca, although the intervening distance would limit the prominence of these elements. The proposed turbines would appear large and, thereby, seem to diminish the vertical dimension of the hills to the south, but no more so than the other wind farms in this location, particularly the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. In addition, they would increase the intensity of such development seen within the main view from the road. Although, the Proposed Development would be contained within the extent of wind turbines already visible from this location.
- 7.121 It is predicted that there would be a significant adverse effect on road users travelling south along this minor road.

### Uig – Lochmaddy/ Tarbet Ferry Route

- 7.122 These are two commercial ferry routes which connect Uig on the Isle of Skye with the Outer Hebrides at two different locations: Lochmaddy and Tarbert. Each route takes approximately 1 hour 45 minutes. At the time of undertaking the fieldwork for the Proposed Development these ferries were not operating due to work being undertaken on the Pier at Uig. Based on the LVIA for the Ben Sca Wind Farm, for ferries travelling from Skye to Outer Hebrides, once they leave Loch Snizort, after approximately 30 minutes of the journey, no views of the site are possible (conversely with views of the site for only the last 30 minutes of the return journey). In **Technical Appendix 7.3**

(Viewpoint Assessment) an assessment from a fixed representative point along the Lochmaddy ferry route has been provided (Viewpoint 18). From within the ferry, views outward are most likely experienced from the external seating area at the rear of the boat, whereas the interior of the boat offers less opportunity for views outward. A minor adverse and not significant visual effect is predicted from Viewpoint 18.

- 7.123 Travelling west from Skye (Uig) to the Outer Hebrides, the Proposed Development would be screened from view in the most part. However, for the relatively short duration east of the Waternish Peninsula the Proposed Development would be visible. It would be seen as one small visual element within the panoramic view of Skye which wraps around the view to the west, south and east and at approximately 17km from the closest proposed turbine, which would be minor elements in the overall view. The proposed turbines would also be located to the south of Loch Greshornish, with the Waternish and Trotternish strips of land coming closer to the view and heightening the sense of separation from the ferry with the Ascrib Islands also forming closer features.
- 7.124 Travelling east from either Lochmaddy or Tarbert, the assessment for the westward journey can be replicated, albeit it would occur at the end of the journey to Skye and views are more restricted as the rear of the boat, where the main viewing area is located, faces away from the Proposed Development.
- 7.125 When visible, the Proposed Development would be seen alongside the two operational wind farms, Ben Aketil and Edinbane and the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. Whilst the Proposed Development would be visible from the ferry routes, it would typically be seen only for a small extent of the ferry journey and primarily by passengers choosing to sit outside on the rear deck of the ship. It would also form part of a large, wide panoramic view of the Isle of Skye and would be seen in the context of two operational wind farms and the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. Accordingly, the potential effects of the Proposed Development would be minor and not significant.

### *Recreational Visual Receptors*

#### **Core Path SL07.02 – Edinbane to Greshornish Road End**

- 7.126 This path runs parallel to the A850 main road, linking Blackhill to the end of the Greshornish road. From here, views are focused towards Loch Greshornish to the north as well as the distinct crofting settlement pattern of Edinbane upon the hill slopes to the east. The elevation of the path provides open visibility across the moorland and loch below, framed by the hills either side. Whilst the ZTVs indicate theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from this route, views are directed away from the forested slopes that rise to the south in the direction of the Proposed Development. The visibility of the proposed turbines is expected to be restricted by the existing conifer plantation, particularly due to the intervening distance of over 4km to the nearest proposed turbine. The visual amenity of users of this path is already affected by its proximity to the A850. In addition, primary views from this route are in the opposite direction to the Proposed Development, towards Loch Greshornish. Overall, it is predicted there would not be significant adverse effects on the users of this path.

#### **Core Path SL07.03 – Edinbane Link Path**

- 7.127 This path runs along the A850 main road, linking Blackhill to the end of the Edinbane top road. From here, views are focused towards Loch Greshornish to the west and north west and to the hills opposite, although the landscape experience is strongly influenced by passing vehicles. The ZTVs



indicate theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from this route.

- 7.128 For people walking southwards along this path, whilst views are likely to be directed away from the direction of the Proposed Development, towards Loch Greshornish, the wind turbines would be seen clearly upon the hill backdrop to the south west. The proposed turbines would relate to the existing Edinbane Wind Farm and be seen between this and the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm to the north west. The visual amenity of users of this path is also affected by the proximity to the A850.
- 7.129 Overall, the effect of the Proposed Development on the users of this path is not predicted to be significant.

### Core Path SL28.03 – Roag Link Path

- 7.130 This path links Ardroag and Greep, south of Roag. From this route, the focus of views is upon the foreground intricacies of the shoreline and the characteristics of the bay beyond, surrounded by a distinct crofting landscape highlighted by a dispersed pattern of light-coloured, small-scale houses. The landscape is exposed, with a horizontal emphasis and wide skies. The blade tip and hub ZTV (**Figure 7.5d**) shows that theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development would be limited to turbine blades. Based on this and in the context of the existing wind farms and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, the Proposed Development would make a very limited contribution to the view seen from this route and the visual effect for users of this path is not predicted to be significant.

### Core Path SL28.04 – Orbst to Idrigill Point

- 7.131 This path follows the south eastern coast of Duirinish, passing through both woodland and open moorland or grassland, and crossing a variable landform, which results in varying aspect, elevation and openness of views. To the east, there are some spectacular views of Loch Bracadale, revealing its distinctive combination of peninsulas, inlets, islands and open sea, seen against the distant angular profile of the Cuillin mountains. Along this route, the Proposed Development would be visible from some stretches as part of the interior hill backdrop, seen adjacent to the existing Edinbane and/or Ben Aketil Wind Farms, together with the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. As such, it would be seen as one element within a panorama of many elements and not within the main focus of views and the visual effect for users of this path is not predicted to be significant.

### Walkers within Duirinish Peninsula

- 7.132 Hillwalking within the Duirinish Peninsula tends to be focused around Macleod's Tables (representative Viewpoint 7), the bothy in Glen Ollisdal, the path between Orbst and Idrigill (described above) and the footpath between Ramasaig and Lorgill. Apart from the latter two of these, access across the area is off-path and thus tends to follow varied routes. Many walkers visit the area for its wild land qualities.
- 7.133 The ZTVs show that the Proposed Development would mainly be visible from the north and eastern edge of the area. From here, as represented by Viewpoint 11 (**Figure 7.26, Volume 3b and Figure 7.46 Volume 3c**), it would be seen as a distant element upon the interior hills, adjacent to the existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms, and the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. The effect for walkers in this area is assessed as moderate/minor adverse and not significant.

### Walkers upon Trotternish Peninsula and along Skye Trail

- 7.134 The Skye Trail is 128km in length, linking Rubha Hunish in the north with Broadford in the south of

Skye, passing through a variety of landscape and seascape types (<https://www.skyetrail.org.uk/>). Within the study area for the Proposed Development, the ZTVs show that the Proposed Development would theoretically be visible intermittently from the Skye Trail over a total distance of approximately 14km, where this passes over the ridge north east of Portree (including Sithearn a' Bhealaich Chumhaing) and along the Trotternish Ridge between The Storr, represented by Viewpoint 15 (**Figure 7.30, Volume 3b and Figure 7.50 Volume 3c**), and Bìoda Buidhe, including Beinn Edra, represented by Viewpoint 19 (**Figure 7.34, Volume 3b and Figure 7.54 Volume 3c**). From both of these locations a minor adverse and not significant visual effect is predicted for hill walkers.

- 7.135 The Proposed Development would not be seen in the main direction of views from the Trotternish Ridge and the Skye Trail which are along the ridge itself, to the Cuillin mountains to the south, and out to sea to the east. Rather, where seen from here, the proposed turbines would be seen within the views across the interior moorland hills extending to the south west. Here, it would be seen as just one element within a wide panorama that contains numerous visual elements, including the adjacent Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm.

### Walkers within the Cuillins

- 7.136 Hillwalking and climbing within the Cuillins tends to be focused upon the mountain tops and ridges, the coast and the glens in-between. Many walkers visit the area for its wild land qualities.
- 7.137 The ZTVs (**Figures 7.5a-d**) reveal that the Proposed Development would not be visible from most parts of the Cuillin mountains, but it would be seen from the upper slopes and tops of the northern ridge as well as Blàbheinn, Marsco, Glamaig, Beinn Dearg Mhòr and Garbh-bheinn. From here, the Proposed Development would be seen as a distant element within the interior hills, appearing as just one element of many human elements within views to the north, including conifer plantations, roads and settlements, the adjacent Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. Views from the Cuillins are represented by Viewpoint 20 (**Figure 7.35, Volume 3b and Figure 7.55 Volume 3c**), where a minor adverse and not significant visual effect is assessed.

### Boat Users within Loch Dunvegan

- 7.1 Loch Dunvegan extends between the peninsulas of Duirinish and Waternish, being wider and more open in the north and narrower and more enclosed in the south, amplified by numerous islands, skerries and inlets near the head of the loch. The ZTVs indicate that the Proposed Development would mainly be seen on the western side of the loch in the vicinity of Totaig. From here, the upper sections of up to all 10 proposed turbines would be seen beyond the hill skyline on the eastern side of the loch, as represented by Viewpoint 14 (**Figure 7.29, Volume 3b and Figure 7.49 Volume 3c**), from which a moderate/minor to minor adverse, not significant visual effect has been predicted. The proposed turbines would, however, not seem prominent, partly due to the intervening distance and partly due to the stronger focal attention of the coastal and loch features within the fore and midground.

### Boat Users within Loch Bracadale

- 7.138 Loch Bracadale extends between Idrigill Point in the north west and Rubha nan Clach in the south east. Within the loch, there is a multitude of peninsulas, islands, skerries and beaches, and views across the loch include a mixed composition of land and sea. This has a horizontal emphasis given the expanse of sea, distinctive stepped landform and wide skies. The ZTVs show that the Proposed Development would be seen from most of the loch, apart from on the lee sides of coastal slopes



and islands. Where visible, it would appear upon the interior hills, adjacent to the existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms, and the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. It would not appear highly prominent due to its distance and the multitude of foci within the fore and midground of views. The closest viewpoints to Loch Bracadale are Viewpoint 1 (**Figure 7.16, Volume 3b and Figure 7.36 Volume 3c**) and Viewpoint 3 (**Figure 7.18, Volume 3b and Figure 7.36 Volume 3c**) where moderate adverse and not significant effects on visual amenity are predicted. The attention of boat users within the Loch is also more likely to be focused on the stronger focal attention of the coastal and loch features within the fore and midground of views.

### Boat Users within Loch Greshornish

- 7.139 Loch Greshornish is a narrow loch that runs south west to north east, with the settlements of Blackhill and Edinbane at its head. Given its limited size, there are not large numbers of boat users upon the loch, but it is accessed locally by recreational visitors, including from the campsite at Borve. From the loch, views tend to be directed around the shore and to the distinctive pattern of crofting and settlement upon the surrounding slopes in addition to the simple hill backdrop of Ben Sca.
- 7.140 The ZTVs show that the Proposed Development would be visible from much of the loch and all 10 turbines would typically be seen (apart from in the lee of some small hills between Borve and Lyndale). From Loch Greshornish, the Proposed Development would be seen together with the existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms and the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. The proposed and consented developments would collectively form a simple linear feature following the skyline of the hill backcloth to the south. There is also a small part of Loch Greshornish from which the Proposed Development would be seen without Ben Sca Wind Farm due to screening by local landform as shown by the ZTVs. Viewpoint 7 (**Figure 7.22, Volume 3b and Figure 7.42 Volume 3c**) represents the view seen from the minor road to the west of Loch Greshornish, from which a major/moderate adverse, significant visual effect is predicted from the Proposed Development for road users. The Proposed Development would relate to the presence of the existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms, and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, being seen in the same field of view and also appearing above an extensive conifer plantation. Collectively, the proposed turbines would appear as very large structures. The visual effects of the Proposed Development on boat users within Loch Greshornish would vary with location, with potential for significant effects towards the southern end of the Loch.

### Boat Users within Loch Snizort Beag

- 7.141 Loch Snizort Beag is a long loch that extends from Lyndale Point in the north to Skeabost in the south and contains several side lochans and peninsulas. The ZTVs shows that the Proposed Development would be seen from few and very small parts of the loch to the north west of Kingsburgh. Further analysis of the blade tip and hub ZTV (**Figure 7.5c**) shows that this would be largely limited to turbine blades. As a consequence, and due to the Proposed Development being seen in the context of the existing Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, any changes and visual effects would be very limited and not significant.

## LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

7.142 In reference to the landscape and visual assessments described previously, and the landscape designations scoped into the assessment (listed within **Table 7-5**), the following table (**Table 7-11**) sets out how the landscape and visual effects identified are predicted to affect the special qualities of the identified landscape designations. **Figure 7.7** illustrates the ZTV of the Proposed Development overlaid on the designation boundaries.

**Table 7-11: Effects on Landscape Designations**

Landscape Designation and Value	Distance and Direction from the Nearest Turbine	Effects of Proposed Development Upon Area
Trotternish NSA National value	18km north east of the site	<p>Referring to <b>Figure 7.7</b>, there would be very limited visibility of the Proposed Development from the Trotternish NSA. Within the limited extent of the ZTV that is shown, specifically from the south western edge of the NSA, Viewpoint 19 (<b>Figure 7.34, Volume 3b and Figure 7.54 Volume 3c</b>) has been selected (as assessed <b>Technical Appendix 7.3</b>) to represent potential visual effects from Beinn Edra. A minor adverse, not significant, visual effect is predicted for this viewpoint as the Proposed Development would not be seen in the main direction of views along the Trotternish Ridge. When seen, it would appear as one element in the distance within a mixed composition of diverse landscape elements.</p> <p>Overall, it is considered that there would be minor to negligible, not significant, landscape and visual effects on the Trotternish NSA and the Proposed Development would not compromise its key characteristics.</p>
Cuillin Hills NSA National value	22km south east of the site	<p>Referring to <b>Figure 7.7</b>, there would be very limited visibility of the Proposed Development from the Cuillin Hills NSA. Within the small ZTV coverage that is identified, specifically from the northern extent of the NSA, Viewpoint 20 has been selected (as assessed in <b>Technical Appendix 7.3</b>) to represent potential visual effects from Bruach na Frithe. A minor adverse, not significant, visual effect is predicted for this viewpoint as the Proposed Development would not be seen in the main direction of views into the Cuillin mountains. The Proposed Development would be seen in conditions of good visibility but it would not seem prominent due to the intervening distance, as well as existing human elements within the view which are closer and more extensive. It would also be seen in the context of the existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm.</p> <p>Overall, it is considered that there would be minor to negligible, not significant, landscape and visual effects on the Cuillin Hills NSA and the Proposed Development would not compromise its key characteristics.</p>
North West Skye Special Landscape Area (SLA)	4.7km to the west	<p>Referring to <b>Figure 7.7</b>, the Proposed Development would be screened from the majority of the SLA, with much of the ZTV coverage occurring on the sea and not land. However, there are three key areas within the SLA which are within the ZTV:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• east facing slopes and summit in Duirinish, including: Macleod's Tables, which is represented by Viewpoint 11 (<b>Figure 7.26, Volume 3b and Figure 7.46 Volume 3c</b>);</li> <li>• the landscape in the general vicinity of Roag, which is a lower level</li> </ul>

Landscape Designation and Value	Distance and Direction from the Nearest Turbine	Effects of Proposed Development Upon Area
		<p>coastal position north of Loch Bracadale and is represented by Viewpoint 4 (<b>Figure 7.19, Volume 3b and Figure 7.39 Volume 3c</b>); and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• north east facing slopes in Minginish.</li> </ul> <p>Reviewing these representative viewpoints, a moderate/minor adverse, not significant, effect is predicted at Viewpoint 11, and a major/moderate (significant) to moderate (not significant) effect at Viewpoint 4. Whilst the Proposed Development has the potential to conflict with the simple moorland backcloth to the view, it would appear in the context of the existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms, and the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. Whilst potentially significant effects have been identified at Viewpoint 4, this location is on the eastern edge of the SLA. Therefore, it is not fully representative of views from within this designated landscape.</p> <p>Considering potential landscape effects and the special qualities of this area, the following characteristic of the SLA has the potential to be impacted by the Proposed Development; <i>“The repetitive smooth steeped moorland interior, fashioned by a large expanse of basaltic lava, creates a simple landscape composition which contrasts strongly with the variety, intimacy and intricacy of the coastal seascape.”</i> However, as has been set out in the analysis of potential effects from within the character area, there would be a limited impact from the Proposed Development, which overall would not fundamentally conflict with the special qualities of the SLA, particularly given the relationship between the Proposed Development, the existing wind farms, and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm.</p> <p>Overall, it is considered that there would be minor to moderate, not significant, landscape and visual effects on the North West Skye Special Landscape Area (SLA) and the Proposed Development would not compromise its key characteristics.</p>
Greshornish SLA	5km to the north	<p>Referring to <b>Figure 7.7</b>, there would be theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from much of the Greshornish SLA, although a key attribute of the designation relates to the landform sloping towards the sea, away from the site. In such locations, views are very much focused away from the site to the north. However, from south facing slopes the Proposed Development would be seen as an addition to the existing wind farms and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm.</p> <p>Viewpoint 7 (<b>Figure 7.22, Volume 3b and Figure 7.42 Volume 3c</b>) has been selected to represent potential visual effects from Greshornish and it is located within the southern extent of the SLA. A significant effect has been identified from this specific location where it has been identified that the Proposed Development would be clearly visible, albeit seen in the context of the existing and consented wind farms. Collectively the Proposed Development and existing and consented wind farms would create a simple linear feature following the hill skyline. The more irregular layout of the Proposed Development would relate more closely to Edinbane Wind Farm. Whilst the Proposed Development would increase the concentration of wind turbines in views from the SLA, it would be set within the overall extent of the view occupied by the</p>

Landscape Designation and Value	Distance and Direction from the Nearest Turbine	Effects of Proposed Development Upon Area
		<p>existing and consented wind farms rather than increasing this.</p> <p>Considering the special qualities of this SLA, as identified in <b>Table 7-5</b>: given its position, the Proposed Development is unlikely to conflict with the views out towards the imposing ridges of the sea and adjacent peninsulas, which is key to the potential for effects on this designation. While it could conflict with the sense of solitude, the Proposed Development would be seen in the context of operational and consented wind farms. Therefore, the relative change attributable to the Proposed Development would be relatively limited.</p> <p>Overall, it is considered that there would be some adverse effects experienced within the SLA, not least a significant visual effect at Viewpoint 7. The Proposed Development would result in additional wind turbines in the context of the existing and consented wind farms. Whilst there would be potential for a major/moderate and significant adverse effect on this SLA, overall the introduction of these turbines would not prevent the special qualities of this landscape being appreciated.</p>
Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA	12km to the north east	<p>Referring to <b>Figure 7.7</b>, there would be a low level of visibility of the Proposed Development from the Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA relative to the overall extent of the designation. Within the areas of theoretical visibility, specifically from the western extent of the SLA and specifically west facing slopes, Viewpoints 15 (<b>Figure 7.30, Volume 3b and Figure 7.50 Volume 3c</b>), 16 (<b>Figure 7.31, Volume 3b and Figure 7.51 Volume 3c</b>) and 19 (<b>Figure 7.34, Volume 3b and Figure 7.54 Volume 3c</b>) have been selected (as assessed in <b>Technical Appendix 7.3</b>) to represent potential visual effects from The Storr, Ben Tianavaig and Beinn Edra respectively within this SLA. No significant effects have been identified from these locations and it is predicted that the Proposed Development would not be seen in the main direction of views along the Trotternish Ridge. When seen, it would appear in the distance within a mixed composition of landscape features. The proposed turbines would intensify wind energy development in the vicinity of the site. However, this would be in the context of the existing Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm.</p> <p>Referring to the landscape assessment earlier in this chapter, the assessment identifies that, where visible from the Trotternish character area, the Proposed Development would increase the number and density of vertical structures in this location, however given the panoramic views afforded from this SLA, and the relatively small number of wind turbines proposed, viewed in the context of the existing and consented wind farms in the vicinity of the site, it is considered that the Proposed Development would have a limited influence. Views out from the elevated parts of the character area (and SLA) comprise a complex arrangement of islands, peninsulas and settled coastal bays as well as inland conifer plantations and open moorland. The main focus of views from the ridge is not in the direction of the Proposed Development, rather they are towards the coast and islands to the east, taking in the features of the landslip landscape. Overall, the Proposed Development would form one feature in a complex composition of landscape elements which influence this SLA. In addition, the proposed turbines would be</p>

Landscape Designation and Value	Distance and Direction from the Nearest Turbine	Effects of Proposed Development Upon Area
		<p>clearly connected with the surrounding existing and consented wind farms.</p> <p>Overall, it is considered that there would be moderate/minor to minor, not significant, landscape and visual effects on the Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA and the Proposed Development would not compromise its key characteristics.</p>

## Wild Land Areas

7.143 As set out in the baseline section of the LVIA two WLAs are relevant to the LVIA:

- WLA 22 Duirinish; and
- WLA 23 Cuillin.

**Table 7-12: Wild Land Areas – Key Qualities/Attribute and Potential Effects**

Wild Land Area	Key Quality/Attribute	Potential Effects of Proposed Development
WLA 22 Duirinish	A dramatic coastal edge dominated by natural features, open views across the sea and exposure to dynamic weather conditions.	The ZTVs show that the Proposed Development would be theoretically visible from parts of the coastline, e.g. in the vicinity of Idrigill Point. However, any views to the site would be inland and away from the WLA and not viewed in the context of any open views across the sea. Any effect on this quality/attribute as a result of the Proposed Development would be very limited.
	Extensive inland peatland, with a stepped landform profile that rises to awe-inspiring distinctive hills and strongly influences accessibility.	The Proposed Development would not affect the peatland or landform within the WLA. The Proposed Development would also not affect the perception of the scale of the landform. Any effect on this quality/attribute as a result of the Proposed Development would be very limited.
WLA 23 Cuillin	Superlative high, steep, rocky mountains that are extremely rugged and contrast to the surrounding peatland and sea, emphasising a sense of awe.	The WLA is approximately 18km from the closest proposed turbine. The Proposed Development would not directly affect the mountains, nor would it be located within the surrounding peatland. The location of the site and intervening distance means the Proposed Development would not influence the perception of the scale of Cuillin Mountains. Any effect on this

Wild Land Area	Key Quality/Attribute	Potential Effects of Proposed Development
		quality/attribute as a result of the Proposed Development would be very limited.
	A circle of mountains that contain a remote and secluded interior and a strong sense of sanctuary, with contrasting outward-facing slopes where human elements are more influential.	The Proposed Development would not affect the circle of mountains or the secluded interior. <b>Figure 7.7</b> shows the extent of theoretical visibility associated with the Proposed Development in relation to the extent of the WLA. These demonstrate visibility of the Proposed Development would only occur from the north facing slopes and summits, predominately around the northern edge of the WLA, with the closest proposed turbine being located approximately 18km to the north. It would be seen as a relatively small component in views to the north, in the context of other human elements in this direction. Any effect on this quality/attribute as a result of the Proposed Development would be very limited.
	A strong contribution of the sea to remoteness and the sense of naturalness and awe, as well as influencing the perceived extent of the area.	The Proposed Development would also be positioned to the north and therefore away from views over the sea. There would be no effect on this quality/attribute.
	A concentrated mountain area accessed by many different visitors to experience wild land qualities.	The Proposed Development would be seen from mountain tops and some north facing slopes, which are visited by people. However, this would be in the context of existing human elements present to the north of the Wild Land Area. The Proposed Development would not affect access to the mountains. Any effect on this quality/attribute as a result of the Proposed Development would be very limited.

## Overview of Potential Effects on Duirinish Wild Land Area

7.144 The Duirinish WLA is located approximately 11km from the closest proposed turbine. Therefore, no physical changes to the WLA area would result from the Proposed Development. **Figure 7.7** shows the ZTV for the Proposed Development in relation to the extent of the WLA. This demonstrates visibility of the Proposed Development would only occur from the north east facing slopes, predominately around the eastern edge of the WLA. Viewpoint 11 (**Figure 7.26, Volume 3b and Figure 7.46 Volume 3c**) represents the view seen from Macleod’s Table North/Healabhal Mhor

within the WLA, at a distance of approximately 11km. The proposed turbines would be seen in the context of the existing Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. The Proposed Development would be set within the overall extent of existing and consented wind farms and would not increase the horizontal extent of wind turbines in the views from the WLA. Consequently the change resulting from the Proposed Development on the qualities of the WLA would be very limited.

- 7.145 Overall, based on the factors described above, the Proposed Development would have limited effects on the Duirinish WLA and the associated key qualities and attributes, including the perception of these qualities and attributes. Therefore, it is considered that the Proposed Development would not have a significant effect on the Duirinish WLA. It is also noted that, in relation to WLAs, NPF4 (Scottish Government, 2023) states that *“buffer zones around wild land will not be applied, and effects of development outwith wild land areas will not be a significant consideration”*.

### *Overview of Potential Effects on Cuillin Wild Land Area*

- 7.146 The Cuillin WLA is located approximately 18km from the closest proposed turbine. Therefore, no physical changes to the WLA area would result from the Proposed Development. **Figure 7.7** shows the ZTV for the Proposed Development in relation to the extent of the WLA. This demonstrates visibility of the Proposed Development would only occur from the north facing slopes and summits, predominately around the northern edge of the WLA. Viewpoint 20 (**Figure 7.35, Volume 3b and Figure 7.55 Volume 3c**) is positioned on Bruach na Frithe within the WLA at a distance of approximately 24km from the nearest proposed turbine.
- 7.147 The Proposed Development would not be seen in the main direction of views into the Cuillin Mountains. The proposed turbines would be seen in good visibility conditions but they would not seem prominent due to the intervening distance, as well as being seen in the context of existing human elements within the view which are closer and more extensive. The Proposed Development would be set within the overall extent of existing and consented wind farms and would not increase the horizontal extent of wind turbines in the views from the WLA.
- 7.148 Overall, based on the factors described above, the Proposed Development would have limited effects on the Cuillin WLA and the associated key qualities and attributes, including the perception of these qualities and attributes. Therefore, it is considered that the Proposed Development would not have a significant effect on the Cuillin WLA. The points made above in relation to NPF4 and the reference to buffer zones and development proposed outwith WLAs are also applicable to the Cuillin WLA.



## CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT

7.149 An assessment of the cumulative landscape and visual effects (CLVIA) of the Proposed Development in addition to other proposed infrastructure developments has been undertaken in accordance with good practice guidance. Based on the advice provided by THC and following a review of potential cumulative wind farms the focus of the cumulative assessment of the Proposed Development is within the LVIA study area as shown on **Figure 7.13**. The assessment considers the predicted cumulative landscape and visual effects of the consented wind farms listed in **Table 7-13**.

**Table 7-13: Consented Wind Farms Considered in the CLVIA**

Name	Location	No. of Wind Turbines	Height to Hub (m)	Blade Diameter (m)	Height to Tip (m)
<b>Consented Wind Farms</b>					
Ben Sca	Located within 1km to the north west of the proposed turbines	9	77.5 - 92.5	115	135 – 149.9
Glen Ullinish	Located approximately 7km south of the proposed turbines	11	83	133	149.9
Beinn Mheadhonach	Located approximately 14km south, south east of the proposed turbines	4	64	71	99.5

7.150 The locations of the cumulative developments referred above are shown in **Figure 7.13**. In addition, there are a number of proposed wind farm developments at EIA scoping stage, which are also shown on Figure 7.13. These comprise:

- Ben Aketil Wind Farm Repowering;
- Ben Crokaig Wind Farm;
- Breakish Wind Farm;
- Edinbane Wind Farm Repowering;
- Glen Ullinish II Wind Farm; and
- Waternish Wind Farm.

7.151 Whilst wind farm developments at scoping stage are identified on **Figure 7.13**, cumulative ZTVs have not been prepared for these developments and they have not been included in the cumulative wireline figures nor have they have been included in the assessment in any detail. This is due to uncertainty in relation to the design of these sites and how they will progress to application stage. The added complication in relation to the site list above is the fact several of these could replace existing or consented developments, meaning several different future scenarios could be applicable depending on how these potential developments evolve.

7.152 The wind developments that are at EIA scoping stage in the vicinity of the site have the potential to fundamentally change the local context, to the extent that the Proposed Development would be very recessive in relative terms. As a consequence, there is limited benefit in repeatedly making



similar comments throughout this section of the LVIA in relation to each receptor.

- 7.153 In addition to the wind farms detailed above, the Skye Reinforcement electricity transmission project is currently at application stage. The key considerations for the LVIA are the overhead transmission lines that form part of this cumulative project. To the north of the proposed Edinbane Substation, the Skye Reinforcement Project would comprise replacement overhead lines on wooden poles. South of the Edinbane Substation the Skye Reinforcement project would comprise a combination of overhead lines on metal pylons and underground cables (in the vicinity of the Cuillin mountains). The proposed wooden poles and pylons are included in the wirelines and are referred to in the cumulative assessment where relevant.

### Analysis of CZTVs

#### *Introduction*

- 7.154 To enable assessment of the potential cumulative landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development in combination with the consented wind farms identified above, it is important to firstly analyse the comparative theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development with each of these wind farms. All the consented wind farms are considered in this analysis. Whilst there is a high level of expectation that these developments would be implemented revised applications are currently be prepared for the consented Glen Ullinish and Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farms. The following cumulative ZTVs are provided:

- **Figure 7.14: CZTV – Balmeanach Wind Farm with Ben Sca Wind Farm, and Glen Ullinish;** and
- **Figure 7.15: CZTV – Balmeanach Wind Farm with Beinn Mheadhonach.**

- 7.155 The combination of wind farms within these ZTVs reflects groupings due to proximity as best as possible, as also taking account of the limitation that overlapping ZTVs cannot clearly represent multiple ZTVs for more than three developments. The ZTVs indicate potential cumulative visibility by overlapping colour. The nature of potential visibility of the Proposed Development with other developments has the potential to affect the nature of landscape and visual effects. The following sections describe the distribution of theoretical cumulative visibility as presented by the ZTVs.

#### *Balmeanach, together with Ben Sca and Glen Ullinish*

- 7.156 The consented Ben Sca Wind Farm is located within 1km north west of the Proposed Development. Glen Ullinish Wind Farm will be located within 3km south of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development, together with these two additional wind farms would have a similar ZTV. Referring to **Figure 7.14**, the majority of ZTV coverage shown comprises combined visibility of all three wind farms. The majority of the joint terrestrial visibility of the wind farms would be within approximately 15km of the site. Beyond this, the study area either comprises sea or there is limited theoretical visibility due to screening by landform.
- 7.157 One key exclusion to the similar pattern of cumulative visibility, is to the north of the site around Blackhill and Edinbane, and in the Greshornish area, where only the Proposed Development and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm would be visible. This is due to the position of Glen Ullinish being located further south than the Proposed Development, with intervening landform undulations screening them in this location.

### *Balmeanach, together with Beinn Mheadhonach*

- 7.158 The consented Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm will be located approximately 9km south east of the Proposed Development. **Figure 7.14** illustrates that there would be areas of cumulative visibility of the Proposed Development together with this Beinn Mheadhonach. However, the overall pattern of visibility associated with these developments is different, with more areas where the Proposed Development would be visible in the northern part of the study area, and more areas where Beinn Mheadhonach would be seen in the southern part of the study area. Key areas of overlap, where both the Proposed Development and Beinn Mheadhonach would be visible, are elevated east, north east and north facing slopes on Duirinish and Minginish, and south east facing slopes of Trotternish.

### Cumulative Landscape Assessment

- 7.159 The following section describes the cumulative landscape effects of the Proposed Development in addition to other consented and proposed developments.

### *Effects on Landscape Character Areas*

#### **Interior Skye Hills**

- 7.160 Ben Sca, Glen Ullinish and Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farms would be located within this character area and would therefore be visible. Therefore, as described in the landscape assessment, where visibility of the proposed Ben Sca Wind Farm would occur, it would generally be visible adjacent to one or both of the existing wind farms: Ben Aketil and Edinbane, within the northern extent of the character area.
- 7.161 The Skye Reinforcement electricity transmission project would cross this character area and a new Edinbane Substation would be located in Glen Ullinish, to the south of Edinbane Wind Farm. The substation would be positioned towards the base of the Glen, and the surrounding landform, together with coniferous forestry, would restrict potential visibility of this element within the character area. The overhead line to the north of the substation would comprise a replacement overhead line on wooden poles, which would be comparable with the existing transmission line, limiting potential change relative to the baseline. The overhead transmission lines south of the proposed substation would be on metal pylons, which would be larger than the existing infrastructure.
- 7.162 Given the proximity of the adjacent wind farms to the Proposed Development, where seen within this landscape character area, the Proposed Development would principally appear as part of an existing cluster of wind farms. Whilst the Proposed Development would increase the density of turbines in this location, its position between the existing wind farms would avoid wind development extending further across this character type, limiting change to the landscape.
- 7.163 The addition of the proposed cumulative developments further south within the character area, particularly Glen Ullinish Wind Farm, will extend wind development across the character area and away from the cluster in which the Proposed Development would consolidate rather than extend development. The cumulative developments could compromise the key characteristics of this character area and give rise to a significant landscape effect, however the contribution of the Proposed Development to cumulative landscape effects is limited, given its strong association with the adjacent operational wind farms.

- 7.164 The Skye Reinforcement project would also add to infrastructure development in this character area. However, the potential for the elements of this project to be prominent in combination with the Proposed Development would be limited by the local landform. Within Glen Ullinish key elements of both proposed and consented developments would be located close to each other and it is here where the cumulative effects are likely to be greatest. However, this would only be applicable to a small part of the overall character area and would occur in a location which is already affected by the existing wind farms and will change further as a result of the consented developments.
- 7.165 Overall, the contribution of the Proposed Development in conjunction with the consented developments would give rise to a medium to slight magnitude of change to the view and a moderate/minor adverse level of effect, in relation to a medium sensitivity landscape, which is not significant.

### Trotternish

- 7.166 None of the consented wind farms would be located within this character area. Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm will be theoretically visible from some locations, however given its distance from the character area (more than 10km) and intervening landform screening, it will be glimpsed and also will influence landscape character to a limited extent; whereas Glen Ullinish Wind Farm will be visible in most views from this area in which the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and adjacent operational wind farms (Ben Aketil and Edinbane) will be visible.
- 7.167 Referring to the landscape assessment of the Proposed Development, it was assessed as increasing the number and density of vertical structures in the adjacent character area. Given the panoramic views afforded from this character area, it would have a limited influence on the key characteristics of Trotternish. Overall, the Proposed Development would comprise a relatively limited addition in a complex composition of landscape elements which have an influence on this character area. However, the addition of the Proposed Development with Ben Sca Wind Farm and, in particular Glen Ullinish Wind Farm, in a cumulative sense would have a slightly greater influence on the Trotternish character area as Glen Ullinish Wind Farm will extend wind farm development further south. Overall, and despite the extension of wind development, the cumulative developments would form additional small features in a complex composition of landscape elements which have an influence on this character area, including operational wind farms. Therefore, there would not be a significant cumulative landscape effect on this character area.
- 7.168 Overall, the contribution of the Proposed Development, in the context of the consented wind farms, would give rise to a slight cumulative magnitude of change in addition to the consented cumulative wind farms and a moderate/minor adverse level of effect, in relation to a medium sensitivity landscape, which is not significant.

### Portree, Surrounding Hills and Strath

- 7.169 None of the consented wind farms would be located within this character area. The cumulative ZTVs also demonstrate that there would be very limited visibility of the cumulative wind farms from this character area. In addition, the assessment of landscape effects for the Proposed Development identified negligible adverse effects on this character area, partly based on the very limited theoretical visibility. As a consequence, the contribution the Proposed Development would give rise to a slight cumulative magnitude of change, in relation to a medium sensitivity landscape, and a minor, not significant level of effect.

### Waternish

- 7.170 The cumulative ZTVs demonstrate that there would be very limited visibility of the cumulative wind farms from this character area. Glen Ullinish would be theoretically visible from the southern extent of this character area, with some potential for simultaneous visibility with the Proposed Development, consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and operational wind farms (Ben Aketil and Edinbane). However, this would be a limited, glimpsed view as Glen Ullinish Wind Farm will be set behind the Proposed Development and would be visible below the skyline. There would be limited visibility of the cumulative wind farms from this character area.
- 7.171 Overall, the Proposed Development would give rise to a slight cumulative magnitude of change in addition to the consented cumulative wind farms and a minor adverse level of effect, in relation to a medium sensitivity landscape, which is not significant.

### Greshornish and Coastal Edge of Loch Snizort

- 7.172 The cumulative ZTVs demonstrate that the key consented development that the Proposed Development would be seen in conjunction with is Ben Sca Wind Farm. There would also be theoretical visibility of the consented Glen Ullinish and Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farms, but this would be limited to the higher land to the north west of Loch Greshornish and both these developments would be beyond the Proposed Development and Ben Sca Wind Farm. Both the Proposed Development and Ben Sca would be visible throughout much of this character area, including the south east facing slopes of Greshornish. However, this is in the context of the existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms.
- 7.173 Overall, the Proposed Development would give rise to a slight cumulative magnitude of change in addition to the consented cumulative wind farms and a Moderate adverse level of effect, in relation to a medium sensitivity landscape, which is not significant. The moderate level of effect is not considered to be significant due to the prominence of the existing and consented wind farms and way in which the Proposed Development would be positioned amongst these.

### Dunvegan and Duirinish

- 7.174 Glen Ullinish and Ben Sca Wind Farms would be the cumulative developments most visible in conjunction with the Proposed Development, and operational wind farms (Ben Aketil and Edinbane).
- 7.175 The consented Glen Ullinish and Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farms would be seen further to the south than the Proposed Development, the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and the existing Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms. In most views from the character area Glen Ullinish Wind Farm would appear more closely associated with the lower-lying moorland extending between Dunvegan and the Cuillin mountains rather than the hills on the opposite side of Loch Dunvegan against which the Proposed Development would be seen.
- 7.176 Overall, the Proposed Development would give rise to a slight cumulative magnitude of change in addition to the consented cumulative wind farms and a minor adverse level of effect, in relation to a medium sensitivity landscape, which is not significant.

### Bracadale

- 7.177 Of the consented wind farms, Ben Sca, Glen Ullinish and Bheinn Mheadhonach will be theoretically

visible from this character area. Glen Ullinish is likely to be more prominent due to its location and alignment relative to the character area. The closer proximity of Glen Ullinish Wind Farm to the Proposed Development, the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and the operational Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms means they are more likely to be seen collectively in views, with Glen Ullinish positioned to the south.

- 7.178 Glen Ullinish Wind Farm is likely to comprise a prominent development from this character area, reducing the simplicity of the interior backcloth. In addition to Glen Ullinish in particular, the Proposed Development would appear clearly separate in views from this character area. The Proposed Development would add to the collective extent of wind farms which have an influence on this character area. However, it would be closely aligned with the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and located in the context of the operational wind farms.
- 7.179 Overall, the Proposed Development would give rise to a slight cumulative magnitude of change in addition to the consented cumulative wind farms and a moderate adverse level of effect, in relation to a high sensitivity landscape, which is not significant. The moderate level of effect is not considered to be significant due to the relative prominence of the existing and consented wind farms.

### Summary of Cumulative Landscape Effects

**Table 7-14** provides a summary of predicted cumulative effects on landscape character areas.

**Table 7-14: Summary of Cumulative Landscape Effects**

Landscape Character Area	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Cumulative Landscape Change	Significance of Cumulative Effect
Interior Skye hills	Medium	Medium/slight	Moderate/minor adverse Not significant
Trotternish	Medium	Slight	Moderate/minor adverse Not significant
Portree, surrounding hills and strath	Medium	Slight	Minor adverse Not significant
Waternish	Medium	Slight	Minor adverse Not significant
Greshornish and coastal edge of Loch Snizort	Medium	Medium	Moderate adverse Not significant
Dunvegan and Duirinish	High	Slight	Minor adverse Not significant
Bracadale	High	Slight	Moderate adverse Not significant

## Cumulative Visual Assessment

### Viewpoint Assessment

7.180 **Table 7-15** identifies which consented wind farms scoped into the cumulative assessment would be visible from each representative viewpoint.

**Table 7-15: Visibility of Consented and Proposed Wind Farms from Representative Viewpoints**

No.	Viewpoint name	Ben Sca	Glen Ullinish	Beinn Mheadhonach
1	A863, Junction with road to Feorlig	✓	✓	✓
2	Edinbane (Top Road)	✓	✗	✗
3	A863 Road	✓	✓	✗
4	Roag	✓	✓	✓
5	A850 between Dunvegan and Edinbane	✓	✗	✗
6	Junction of A863 and B884 at Lonmore	✓	✓	✗
7	Minor Road to Greshornish	✓	✗	✗
8	B885 Road	✓	✗	✗
9	Kingsburgh	✓	✓	✓
10	A850 / A87 (West of Borve)	✓	✗	✓
11	Macleod's Table North / Healabhal Mhor	✓	✓	✓
12	Fiscavaig	✓	✓	✓
13	A87 Road	✓	✗	✓
14	Totaig	✓	✓	✓
15	The Storr	✓	✓	✓
16	Ben Tianavaig	✓	✗	✓
17	Uig (Idrigill)	✓	✗	✗
18	Uig – Lochmaddy Ferry Route	✓	✓	✓
19	Beinn Edra	✓	✓	✓
20	Bruach na Frithe	✓	✓	✓

7.181 Wireline diagrams illustrating visibility of the Proposed Development and cumulative developments from representative viewpoints have been produced in **Figures 7.16 to 7.35 (Volume 3b)**. The following section describes the predicted visual effects of the Proposed Development in addition

to the separate cumulative wind farms. The Skye Reinforcement electricity transmission project is also referred to where relevant.

- 7.182 Throughout the following cumulative viewpoint assessment, the additional effect of the Proposed Development (in the context of operational wind farms of Edinbane and Ben Aketil), and the consented wind farms listed in **Table 7-13** is assessed.

### Viewpoint 1 – A863 Junction with Road to Feorlig

- 7.183 The consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm will be visible across a large part of the midground hills when looking to the south east and towards the Cuillin mountains. In the same direction, the consented Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm will also be seen in the far distance as a line of overlapping turbines. The consented Ben Sca Wind Farm will be seen to the north east, overlapping with the existing Ben Aketil Wind Farm. The Skye Reinforcement project would also be visible from this location, extending across the view. However, this section of the proposed transmission line would comprise overhead lines on wooden poles, replacing the existing similar infrastructure, which would limit its potential effects.
- 7.184 In addition to these wind farms, the Proposed Development would appear clearly separate within the view, seen in a different direction to the north east and in close association with the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and the existing Ben Aketil Wind Farm. Whilst the Proposed Development would add to the collective number of turbines visible from this viewpoint, it would be reinforcing a pattern of development established by the existing and consented developments. The scale of this change would result in a medium cumulative magnitude of change, in relation to medium sensitivity visual receptors, and a moderate adverse not significant effect in addition to the consented wind farms.

### Viewpoint 2 – Edinbane (Top Road)

- 7.185 The consented Ben Sca Wind Farm would be a prominent element from this location, comprising a line of turbines along the ridge on the opposite side of the Glen. Ben Sca Wind Farm would be located in front of Ben Aketil Wind Farm, although only the blade tips of this existing wind farm are visible due to the intervening landform. Edinbane Wind Farm is prominent to the south of this viewpoint.
- 7.186 In addition to these wind farms, the Proposed Development would effectively fill in the gap between the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and the existing Edinbane Wind Farm. Whilst the Proposed Development would add to the collective number of turbines visible from this viewpoint, it would be positioned within the part of the view already occupied by turbines and would not extend the overall horizontal extent of turbines. The relative scale of this change would result in a medium cumulative magnitude of change, in relation to high sensitivity visual receptors, and a major/moderate adverse significant effect in addition to the consented wind farms.

### Viewpoint 3 – A863 Road

- 7.187 At this viewpoint all 10 turbines of the Proposed Development would extend above the ridge in the vicinity of the summit of Ben Sca. These would be seen in the context of Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms, located between these existing wind farms. The consented Ben Sca Wind Farm will be located to the left of the Proposed Development, although a large proportion of these turbines would be screened by the intervening landform. Glen Ullinish Wind Farm will be seen at a closer distance and more prominently to the south, (right) of Edinbane. The Skye Reinforcement project



would also be visible from this location, extending across the view. However, this section of the proposed transmission line would comprise overhead lines on wooden poles, replacing the existing similar infrastructure which, together with the intervening distance, would limit its potential effects. Therefore, the Proposed Development would result in a slight magnitude of change, in relation to medium sensitivity visual receptors, and a moderate/minor adverse not significant cumulative effect in addition to the other consented wind farms.

### Viewpoint 4 – Roag

7.188 From this representative viewpoint, the consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm would be seen across the moorland to the south side of Loch Bracadale, in the same direction of views looking towards the Cuillin mountains. In the same direction, the consented Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm would also be seen in the far distance as a row of overlapping turbines upon the skyline. In addition to these wind farms, the Proposed Development would be seen in a slightly different direction to the east/north east and in close association with the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and existing Ben Aketil Wind Farm. In addition, the existing Edinbane Wind Farm would appear upon the skyline part-way between the Glen Ullinish Wind Farm and the Ben Sca/Ben Aketil Wind Farm group, although the visibility of this consented development is limited by the intervening landscape. The Proposed Development would comprise a relatively compact group of turbines beyond the summit of Ben Aketil. In this context, the addition of the Proposed Development would affect this viewpoint to a limited degree in addition to the consented wind farms. The Skye Reinforcement project would also be visible from this location, extending across the view. However, the majority of this section of the proposed transmission line would comprise overhead lines on wooden poles, replacing the existing similar infrastructure which, together with the intervening distance, would limit its potential effects. Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development would result in a slight cumulative magnitude of change, in relation to high and medium sensitivity visual receptors, and a major/moderate to moderate adverse effect in addition to the consented wind farms. In the case of residents this effect is considered to be significant, in the case of road users this is considered to be not significant.

### Viewpoint 5 – A850 Road between Dunvegan and Edinbane

7.189 The Proposed Development would be conspicuous in the view from this location. However, it would be positioned beyond the ridge of Ben Sca and Ben Aketil and also beyond the consented Ben Sca and Ben Aketil Wind Farms, and the Proposed Development would be more recessive in comparison. The existing Ben Aketil Wind Farm comprises a prominent element to the right, and Edinbane Wind Farm visible to the left. Consequently, there would be a medium cumulative magnitude of change, in relation to medium sensitivity visual receptors, and moderate not significant effect as a result of the Proposed Development in addition to cumulative consented wind farms.

### Viewpoint 6 – Junction of A863 and B884 at Lonmore

7.190 The consented Ben Sca Wind Farm would be seen to the east, overlapping with the existing Ben Aketil Wind Farm. The consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm would be theoretically visible from this location, however this would only comprise the blade tips of one turbine. The Skye Reinforcement project would also be visible from this location, extending across the view. However, this section of the proposed transmission line would comprise overhead lines on wooden poles, replacing the existing similar infrastructure, which would limit its potential effects. In addition to these wind farms, the Proposed Development would appear adjacent (to the right of), and closely associated with the Ben Sca and Ben Aketil Wind Farms. The proposed turbines would lie on the horizon with

lower parts of the turbines screened by the intervening landform. Whilst the Proposed Development would add to the collective number of turbines visible from this viewpoint, it would be reinforcing a pattern of development established by the existing and consented developments. The scale of this change would result in a medium cumulative magnitude of change, in relation to high and medium sensitivity visual receptors, and a major/moderate to moderate adverse effect in addition to the consented wind farms. Therefore, the Proposed Development is predicted to result in a significant cumulative effect at this location due to its relative prominence.

### Viewpoint 7 – Minor Road to Greshornish

- 7.191 The consented Ben Sca Wind Farm will be a prominent element from this location, comprising a line of turbines along the ridge on the opposite side of Loch Greshornish. Ben Sca Wind Farm will be located in front of Ben Aketil Wind Farm. Edinbane Wind Farm is also prominent to the left of these developments.
- 7.192 In addition to these wind farms, the Proposed Development would effectively fill in the gap between the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and the existing Edinbane Wind Farm. Whilst the Proposed Development would add to the collective number of turbines visible from this viewpoint, it would be positioned within the part of the view already occupied by turbines and would not extend the overall extent of the view occupied by turbines. The relative scale of this change would result in a medium cumulative magnitude of change, in relation to high sensitivity visual receptors, and a Major/moderate adverse significant effect in addition to the consented wind farms.

### Viewpoint 8 – B885 Road

- 7.193 The only consented development that would be visible from this location is Ben Sca Wind Farm. The extent of this development that would be seen would also be limited by the intervening landform. The existing Edinbane turbines are visible along the distant ridge from this location, but again the prominence of these is very limited due to the intervening landform. In addition, the view would be experienced by people travelling westwards along a twisting, undulating road, and for a short duration. Whilst the Proposed Development would add to the collective number of turbines visible from this viewpoint, it would also result in a relatively limited change to the view. Consequently, there would be a slight cumulative magnitude of change, in relation to medium sensitivity visual receptors, and minor adverse not significant effect as a result of the Proposed Development in addition to cumulative consented wind farms.

### Viewpoint 9 – Kingsburgh

- 7.194 The consented Ben Sca Wind Farm would be visible from this viewpoint. However, the extent of this development that would be seen would also be limited by the intervening landform. The consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm will also theoretically be visible, but this will be limited to the blade tips of one turbine and therefore it will make a very limited contribution to the view. The existing Edinbane turbines are visible along the distant ridge from this location, but again the prominence of these is very limited due to the intervening landform. The Proposed Development would add to the collective number of turbines visible from this viewpoint, it would also result in a relatively limited change to the view, the scale and extent of the turbines that would be seen being comparable with those that form part of the consented and existing wind farms. Consequently, there would be a slight cumulative magnitude of change, in relation to high sensitivity visual receptors, and moderate adverse not significant effect as a result of the Proposed Development in addition to cumulative consented wind farms.

### Viewpoint 10 – A850/A87 (West of Borve)

- 7.195 The consented Ben Sca Wind Farm will be visible from this viewpoint, in the same part of the view as the Proposed Development. However, the extent of this development that will be seen will also be limited by the intervening landform. The consented Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm will also be visible in the sequential view, with the four turbines positioned on a distant ridge to the south west. The existing Edinbane turbines are visible along the distant ridge from this location, but again the prominence of these is very limited due to the intervening landform. The Proposed Development would add to the collective number of turbines visible from this viewpoint, it would also result in a relatively limited change to the view, the scale and extent of the turbines that would be seen being comparable with those that form part of the consented and existing wind farms. Consequently, there would be a slight cumulative magnitude of change, in relation to high and medium sensitivity visual receptors, and moderate to moderate/minor adverse not significant effect as a result of the Proposed Development in addition to cumulative consented wind farms.

### Viewpoint 11 – Macleod's Table North / Healabhal Mhor

- 7.196 The consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm will be visible from this viewpoint and, unlike the existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms, will seem to extend over the lower slopes close to the crofting settlements around the edge of Loch Bracadale. It will be positioned to the right of, and separate from, the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and existing Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms. The four turbines of the consented Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm will also be seen further to the south east, positioned close to the Cuillin mountains in the view. The Proposed Development would be positioned amongst the turbines of the Ben Sca, Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms and would further consolidate wind farm development in this part of the view. In the overall context, the Proposed Development would appear as a relatively limited addition to the consented and operational developments.
- 7.197 Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development would result in a slight cumulative magnitude of change, in relation to high sensitivity visual receptors, and a moderate/minor adverse not significant effect in addition to the consented wind farms.

### Viewpoint 12 – Fiscavaig

- 7.198 The consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm will be visible from this viewpoint and would predominately be seen as turbine blades rotating above the skyline (together with the hubs of three turbines). Similar would be the case with Ben Sca Wind Farm, which will be visible further to the north. The upper parts of the towers, hubs and blades of two turbines would be visible, but only the blades of a further three turbines will be seen above the intervening landform. Edinbane Wind Farm is comparably screened by the landform, but the Ben Aketil turbines are largely visible along a sloping ridgeline. The four turbines of the consented Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm will also be theoretically visible in the sequential view towards the east. However, the vegetation on the near ridge would restrict such visibility from this viewpoint.
- 7.199 The Proposed Development would be positioned amongst the turbines of the Glen Ullinish, Ben Sca, Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms and would further consolidate wind farm development in this part of the view. As a greater proportion of the turbines would be seen, particularly compared with Glen Ullinish Wind Farm, the Proposed Development could add more legibility to the overall composition. In the overall context, the Proposed Development would appear as a noticeable, relatively limited addition to the consented and operational developments.

- 7.200 Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development would result in a slight cumulative magnitude of change, in relation to high sensitivity visual receptors, and a moderate adverse not significant effect in addition to the consented wind farms. This is not considered to be a significant effect due to the relative prominence of the consented and operational wind farms.

### Viewpoint 13 – A87 Road

- 7.201 The consented Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm would be seen to the south from this viewpoint, appearing as an evenly spaced line of four wind turbines above the skyline to the right of the Cuillin mountains. The Proposed Development would appear clearly separate from this within the view, seen further to the south west and in the context of the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil and Wind Farms. The Proposed Development would extend the line of the existing and consented wind farms, positioned within this combined group of turbines.
- 7.202 Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development would result in a slight to negligible cumulative magnitude of change, in relation to medium sensitivity visual receptors, and a minor adverse not significant effect in addition to the consented wind farms.

### Viewpoint 14 – Totaig

- 7.203 From this viewpoint, the consented Glen Ullinish and Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farms will be seen further to the east than the existing Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms. In this location, they will appear more closely associated with the lower-lying moorland extending between Dunvegan and the Cuillin mountains (seen as a prominent feature upon the skyline), rather than the hills on the opposite side of Loch Dunvegan against which the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm will be seen. The Proposed Development would be located to the right of the Ben Sca turbines and behind the operational Edinbane turbines. The proposed turbines would be comparatively more prominent than these adjacent developments due to a combination of turbine size and their position in relation to the local landform. Consequently, the Proposed Development would result in a slight cumulative magnitude of change, in relation to medium sensitivity visual receptors, and a moderate to moderate/minor adverse effect in addition to the consented wind farms. This moderate effect is not considered to be significant due to the relative prominence of the consented and operational wind farms.

### Viewpoint 15 – The Storr

- 7.204 The consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm will be seen from this viewpoint, appearing as a concentrated cluster of wind turbines separate from the operational wind farms. Slightly further to the south, the consented Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm will also be seen in the far distance as a simple line of four wind turbines within the interior moorland. The consented Ben Sca will appear further west, closely associated with the existing Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms. In addition to the consented wind farms, the Proposed Development would also be positioned where it would relate to the existing wind farms and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. It would lie behind Edinbane Wind Farm and in front of, and slightly to the left of, Ben Aketil and Ben Sca Wind Farms. The Proposed Development would add to the collective image of wind farms seen from this viewpoint. However, it would have a limited effect in addition to a scenario that includes the consented cumulative wind farms compared to the existing baseline conditions.
- 7.205 Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development would result in a slight to negligible cumulative magnitude of change, in relation to high sensitivity visual receptors, and a minor adverse not significant effect in addition to the consented wind farms.

### Viewpoint 16 – Ben Tianavaig

- 7.206 To the west, the consented Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm will be seen upon the elevated skyline of moorland hills extending towards the Cuillin mountains. The consented Ben Sca Wind Farm will lie to the north west closely associated with the existing Edinbane turbines. The Proposed Development would also lie to the north west, also relating to the combined group of the existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms, and the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. The position of this development relative to the landform and the height of the proposed turbines means it would extent above the skyline and would contribute to the collective image of wind farms seen from this viewpoint. However, in addition to the consented and other proposed turbines it would result in a relatively limited change to the view experienced.
- 7.207 Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development would result in a slight to negligible cumulative magnitude of change, in relation to high sensitivity visual receptors, and a minor adverse not significant effect in addition to the consented wind farms.

### Viewpoint 17 – Uig (Idrigill)

- 7.208 The consented Ben Sca Wind Farm will be seen in front of, and overlapping with, the turbines of Ben Aketil Wind Farm, with Edinbane Wind Farm located to the left. The Proposed Development would be seen between these wind farms, positioned in the gap between Edinbane Wind Farm and the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. The Proposed Development would be positioned on the skyline and would increase the density of turbines visible from this location. However, it would be strongly associated with the existing and consented developments.
- 7.209 Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development would result in a slight to negligible cumulative magnitude of change, in relation to high to medium sensitivity visual receptors, and a moderate/minor to minor adverse not significant effect in addition to the consented and other proposed wind farms.

### Viewpoint 18 – Uig – Lochmaddy Ferry Route

- 7.210 The blade tips of one wind turbine of the consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm will theoretically be visible from this viewpoint but this will be a minor component in the view and seen behind the Edinbane Wind Farm, and therefore will not be clearly visible. The Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm will be distantly visible to the left of Edinbane Wind Farm, but will only comprise a small element in the view. The Proposed Development would be seen between these wind farms, positioned in the gap between Edinbane Wind Farm and the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. The Proposed Development would be positioned on the skyline and would increase the density of turbines visible from this location. However, it would be strongly associated with the existing and consented developments.
- 7.211 Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development would result in a slight to negligible cumulative magnitude of change, in relation to medium sensitivity visual receptors, and a minor adverse not significant effect in addition to the consented and other proposed wind farms.

### Viewpoint 19 – Beinn Edra

- 7.212 The consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm will be visible within the interior moorland, located to the left of the existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms, and the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. The Glen Ullinish Wind Farm will appear to follow a similar pattern on the low ridgelines from this

viewpoint. Slightly further to the south, the consented Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm will also be seen in the far distance as a simple line of four wind turbines. The consented Ben Sca Wind Farm will appear further to the north, closely associated with the existing Ben Aketil Wind Farm and to the right of Edinbane Wind Farm. In addition to the consented wind farms, the Proposed Development would be more closely associated with Edinbane Wind Farm, but it would also relate to the overall group of existing and consented wind farms in the northern part of the Isle of Skye. The Proposed Development would add to the collective image of wind farms seen from this viewpoint. However, it would have a limited effect in addition to a scenario that includes the consented cumulative wind farms compared to the existing baseline conditions.

- 7.213 The Proposed Development would result in a slight to negligible cumulative magnitude of change, in relation to high sensitivity visual receptors, and a minor adverse not significant effect in addition to the consented wind farms.

### Viewpoint 20 – Bruach na Frithe

- 7.214 The consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm will be seen from this viewpoint, extending over the moorland south west of the existing Edinbane Wind Farm. The consented Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm will also be seen closer to the viewpoint as a line of four turbines. The consented Ben Sca will appear further to the north, closer to the existing Edinbane Wind Farm, but with the layout relating more to Ben Aketil Wind Farm (located to the left in the view). The Proposed Development more closely associated with Edinbane Wind Farm, partly due to its more irregular layout, but it would also relate to the overall group of existing and consented wind farms in the northern part of the Isle of Skye. The Proposed Development would add to the collective image of wind farms seen from this viewpoint. However, it would have a limited effect in addition to a scenario that includes the consented cumulative wind farms compared to the existing baseline conditions. The prominence of the Proposed Development would also be limited due to the intervening distance, multitude of human elements in this direction and the dominating scale of the landscape in the fore and mid ground.
- 7.215 Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development would result in a negligible cumulative magnitude of change, in relation to high sensitivity visual receptors, and a minor adverse not significant effect in addition to the consented and other proposed wind farms.

### Summary of Cumulative Visual Effects

- 7.216 **Table 7-16** summarises the cumulative visual effects at representative viewpoints.

**Table 7-16: Summary of Cumulative Effects at Viewpoints**

No.	Viewpoint name	Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Cumulative Visual Change	Significance of Cumulative Effects
1	A863, Junction with road to Feorlig	Medium	Medium	Moderate adverse Not significant
2	Edinbane (Top Road)	High	Medium	Major/moderate adverse Significant
3	A863 Road	Medium	Slight	Moderate/minor Not significant

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No.	Viewpoint name	Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Cumulative Visual Change	Significance of Cumulative Effects
4	Roag	High High-medium	Medium	Major/moderate adverse Significant Moderate adverse Not significant
5	A850 between Dunvegan and Edinbane	Medium	Medium	Moderate adverse Not significant
6	Junction of A863 and B884 at Lonmore	High Medium	Medium	Major/moderate adverse Significant Moderate adverse Not significant
7	Minor Road to Greshornish	High	Medium	Major/moderate adverse Significant
8	B885 Road	Medium	Slight	Minor adverse Not significant
9	Kingsburgh	High	Slight	Moderate adverse Not significant
10	A850 / A87 (West of Borve)	High Medium	Slight	Moderate adverse Not significant Moderate/minor adverse Not significant
11	Macleod's Table North / Healabhal Mhor	High	Slight	Moderate/minor adverse Not significant
12	Fiscavaig	High	Slight	Moderate adverse Not significant
13	A87 Road	Medium	Slight to negligible	Minor adverse Not significant
14	Totaig	High High-medium	Slight	Moderate adverse Not significant Moderate/minor adverse Not significant
15	The Storr	High	Slight to negligible	Minor adverse Not significant
16	Ben Tianavaig	High	Slight to negligible	Minor Not significant
17	Uig (Idrigill)	High Medium	Slight to negligible	Moderate/minor adverse Not significant Minor adverse Not significant
18	Uig – Lochmaddy Ferry Route	Medium	Slight – negligible	Minor adverse Not significant



No.	Viewpoint name	Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Cumulative Visual Change	Significance of Cumulative Effects
19	Beinn Edra	High	Slight – negligible	Minor adverse Not significant
20	Bruach na Frithe	High	Negligible	Minor adverse Not significant

### Cumulative Visual Effects on Residential, Travelling and Recreational Receptors

7.217 The findings of the cumulative visual assessment (summarised above) have been considered together with the findings of the assessment of effects on residential, travelling and recreation receptors (described from **paragraph 7.87** onwards). The key effects associated with the Proposed Development are associated with the introduction of the turbines relative to the baseline. The cumulative visual assessment predicts no significant visual effects from the Proposed Development at the majority of viewpoints which represent the travelling and recreational receptors, the exception being Viewpoint 7 at Greshornish. Consistent with the assessment of the Proposed Development in relation to the baseline condition, it is predicted that Balmeanach Wind Farm would result in significant effects, in addition to cumulative wind farms, for localised residential receptors that are positioned closer to the site.

### ONSHORE WIND ENERGY SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE

7.218 As set out in **paragraph 7.10**, the site is located within the area covered by the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (LDP) (THC, 2012). **Table 7-17** provides an analysis of the Proposed Development in relation to the 10 landscape and visual criteria that are contained in the OWESG. This analysis draws on the findings of the LVIA presented both in this chapter of the EIA Report and the associated Technical Appendices.

**Table 7-17: Evaluation of Balmeanach Wind Farm in Relation to OWESG Criteria**

Criterion	Measure	Evaluation
Criterion 1		
Relationship between Settlements/Key locations and wider landscape respected.	The extent to which the proposal contributes to perception of settlements or key locations being encircled by wind energy development.	The majority of the area of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is consistent with the ZTVs for the adjacent existing and consented wind farms. Whilst it would add to the intensity of wind energy development visible, it would not add elements to the landscape that are not consistent with those already present. The existing pattern of wind farm development already respects key locations in the landscape, although noting that there are settlements and landscape designations in the area surrounding the site.
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	Turbines are not visually prominent in the majority of views within or from settlements/Key Locations or from the majority of its access routes.	<p>Settlements within the landscape surrounding the site are predominately linear crofting settlements, with a relatively dispersed form. There is predicted visibility of the Proposed Development from several settlements surrounding the site, including Edinbane, Blackhill and Coishletter to the north, Balmeanach, Ose, Gearymore and Eabost West to the south, Vatten, Roag and Lonmore to the west and Skeabost, Carbost and Borge to the east.</p> <p>There are no residential properties within 2km of the proposed turbines, with the closest properties being at Balmeanach and Blackhill/Coishletter. The most north westerly properties in Balmeanach lie approximately 2.2km to the south. However, visibility of the Proposed Development from Balmeanach is restricted by the ridge of An Clèireach and Beinn a Chlèrich. The most southerly properties in Blackhill/Coishletter lie approximately 2.8km to the north. However, overall visibility from Blackhill/Coishletter is restricted by a combination of vegetation within and around the settlement, the rising landform and the commercial forestry on the lower northern slopes of Ben Sca. The closest settlement from which the Proposed Development is likely to be most visible is Upper Edinbane, due to the relative elevation of the house and open aspect, the closest part of which lies over 3km to the north. The properties in Upper Edinbane are primarily orientated to the south west and views to the proposed turbines are oblique to the south.</p> <p>The potential for significant (major/moderate) adverse effects has been identified in relation to Upper Edinbane. In addition, the potential for significant effects has also been identified at several other settlements within approximately 7.5km of the proposed turbines, including at Roag, Lonmore, Gearymore, Ose, Eabost West and</p>

Criterion	Measure	Evaluation
		<p>Upper Feorlig.</p> <p>However, in relation to the majority of these settlements and properties, a key exception being Upper Feorlig, the view to the interior hills is not the primary focus or comprises a broad backcloth.</p> <p>Other settlements within the study area are located at greater distances and/or there would either be no or more limited visibility.</p> <p>The proposed wind farm would not encircle any settlements. The Proposed Development would be located in the context of existing wind farms which form an established part of the baseline. This pattern of existing development would also be reinforced by the development of consented wind farm developments. The Proposed Development would be seen in the context of such development, frequently between these existing and consented developments. This context would limit the change associated with the Proposed Development.</p>
<b>Criterion 2</b>		
Key Gateway locations and routes are respected	The extent to which the proposal reduces or detracts from the transitional experience of key Gateway Locations and routes.	The key routes that the Proposed Development would be seen are the A863, A850, and A87. The ZTVs on <b>Figures 7.5a to 7.5d</b> demonstrate the theoretical visibility from these roads is fragmented and intermittent. Whilst the roads are the key transport routes around the Isle of Skye for local residents and visitors, the relevant sections of the road are not at any notable gateways or transitions in the landscape.
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise detract from landscape characteristics which contribute to the distinctive transitional experience found at key gateway locations and routes.	<p>The analysis of these roads has not identified any significant adverse effects. Whilst there would be recurrent or sequential visual effects for users of these routes, almost all visibility of the Proposed Development would be in the context of operational and consented wind farms.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would not add new elements to the landscape but would reinforce the existing and emerging pattern of similar developments. The Proposed Development would also be set within this pattern rather than expanding it into the wider landscape. In addition, the overall size of the Proposed Development is relatively modest in relation to the existing and consented wind farms and it would not overwhelm or detract from the key characteristics of the landscape.</p>

Criterion	Measure	Evaluation
<b>Criterion 3</b>		
Valued natural and cultural landmarks are respected	The extent to which the proposal affects the fabric and setting of valued natural and cultural landmarks.	<p>The Proposed Development is not located within any designated landscape. There are landscape designations in the local context of the site and wider study area. These are assessed earlier in this chapter (from <b>paragraph 7.142</b>). The closest designation in the vicinity of the Proposed Development is the Greshornish SLA. The Proposed Development is located approximately 5km to the south of this SLA and would not affect its fabric. However, the Proposed Development would be clearly visible from locations within the SLA and the turbines would be seen in views to the south, above the Loch, as demonstrated by Viewpoint 7. There would be some adverse effects experienced from within the SLA, including a significant visual effect at Viewpoint 7. However, the effects of the Proposed Development would be limited due to it comprising additional wind turbines in the context of the existing and consented wind farms, reinforcing an established element in the landscape rather than introducing completely new elements. The adverse effects would result from the intensification of wind farm development but in the context of the baseline, the introduction of these turbines would not prevent the special qualities of this landscape being appreciated.</p> <p>In a wider context, the potential effects on designated landscapes and Wild Land Area are predicted to be limited. The Proposed Development would comprise additional structures, which would be closely related to the existing and consented wind farm development, seen in the context of a backcloth of simple moorland hills. Potential visibility would be fragmented in its extent and, where seen, the turbines would typically add to the existing and consented wind farms above a simple stepped horizon. Alternatively, from more elevated locations such as the Trotternish Ridge and Cuillin mountains, the Proposed Development would be seen as a distant elements, against the landscape and in the context of a range of other human influences.</p>
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	The development does not, by its presence, diminish the prominence of the landmark or disrupt its relationship to its setting.	
<b>Criterion 4</b>		
The amenity of key recreational routes and ways is respected.	The extent to which the proposal affects the amenity of key recreational routes and ways (e.g.	There are no recreational routes within the site. There are Core Paths within the study area and the potential effects on these has been assessed in the LVIA. It is predicted there would not be significant adverse effects on the users of these routes, due to a

Criterion	Measure	Evaluation
	Core Paths, Munros and Corbetts, Long Distance Routes etc.).	combination of the distance to the Proposed Development, the context in which it would be seen and the primary focus of fore and mid ground elements.
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of key routes and ways.	<p>The Proposed Development would be visible from the Skye Trail. However, it would be seen for a relatively limited part of this 128km route. The closest part of this route, from which the Proposed Development is predicted to be visible, is over 15km to the east, which would also limit potential adverse effects. The proposed turbines would be visible as people walk along the Trotternish Ridge, particularly from high points which as The Storr (Viewpoint 15) and Beinn Edra (Viewpoint 19). However, significant effects are not predicted from these locations, as the Proposed Development would form a distant element in the context of operational and consented wind farms, seen against the landscape and away from the main points of focus in the views.</p> <p>Similar would be the case for locations in the Cuillin mountains. The Proposed Development would form a distant element amongst other human influences, and the predicted effect on visual amenity for people climbing these mountains would not be significant.</p>
<b>Criterion 5</b>		
The amenity of transport routes is respected	The extent to which the proposal affects the amenity of transport routes (tourist routes as well as rail, ferry routes and local road access)	As set out in relation to Criterion 2, the key routes that the Proposed Development would be seen are the A863, A850, and A87. The ZTVs on <b>Figures 7.5a to 7.5d</b> demonstrate the theoretical visibility from these roads is fragmented and intermittent. These roads are the key parts of transport routes around the Isle of Skye for local residents and visitors.
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of transport routes	The analysis of these roads has not identified any significant adverse effects. Whilst there would be recurrent or sequential visual effects for users of these routes, almost all visibility of the Proposed Development would be in the context of operational and consented wind farms.
<b>Criterion 6</b>		
The existing pattern of Wind Energy Development is respected.	The degree to which the proposal fits with the existing pattern of nearby wind energy development, considerations include:	The Proposed Development would be located in the Interior Skye Hills landscape (predominately LCT 359 Upland Sloping Moorland and transitioning to LCT 360 Stepped Moorland) a relatively large scale, open and simple landscape within which the nearby wind farm development is also located.

Criterion	Measure	Evaluation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Turbine height and proportions;</li> <li>density and spacing of turbines within developments;</li> <li>density and spacing of developments;</li> <li>typical relationship of development to the landscape;</li> <li>previously instituted mitigation measures; and</li> <li>Planning Authority stated aims for development of area.</li> </ul>	<p>The Proposed Development is set within an existing pattern of wind energy development. It would reinforce this pattern, with a relatively modest sized wind farm on the eastern and southern slopes of Ben Sca. Whilst it would intensify this pattern of development it would be largely surrounded by the existing and consented wind farms rather than extend the overall footprint of such development into the wider landscape.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is irregular in form, which is comparable with Edinbane Wind Farm but differs from the more linear forms of Ben Aketil wind Farm and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. However, the layout has sought to take account of the neighbouring wind farms during the iterative design process to maximise its compatibility with this context. Key design considerations for the Proposed Development included avoiding the upper slopes of Ben Sca and Ben Aketil to limit the prominence of the turbines; limiting the spread of turbines to the south west to avoid stepping over the local ridge of Beinn a Chlèirich; and avoiding overlapping of turbines where possible, both within the site and with neighbouring developments.</p> <p>The height and proportion of the Proposed Development would be comparable with the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. The turbines would be larger than the existing wind farms. However, these projects are between approximately 16 and 13 years old and are subject to emerging proposals for repowering, which are likely to be comparable in scale with the Proposed Development.</p>
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	The proposal contributes positively to existing pattern or objectives for development in the area.	
<b>Criterion 7</b>		
The need for separation between developments and/ or clusters is respected	The extent to which the proposal maintains or affects the spaces between existing developments and/ or clusters	The Proposed Development would reduce the separation between neighbouring existing and consented wind farms. This would result in a more consolidated group or cluster of wind farms. However, this would help to confine or limit the overall spread of such development in one location and build on a pattern that forms an established part of the baseline landscape.
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	The proposal maintains appropriate and effective separation between developments and/ or clusters	
<b>Criterion 8</b>		
The perception of landscape scale	The extent to which the proposal	The Proposed Development would be located within a relatively large scale, simple

Criterion	Measure	Evaluation
and distance is respected	maintains or affects receptors' existing perception of landscape scale and distance.	<p>landscape, with few scale references. The wind turbines would be relatively large in relation the height of the landform in a local context. However, more broadly the turbines would be seen in the context of long, stepped, horizontal horizons, as parts of open, sweeping panoramic views. The Proposed Development would also be seen in the context of the existing and consented wind farms, which already comprise large scale structures in the landscape.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is set back from the smaller scale coastal, loch and crofting landscapes, where it would typically be seen as part of a relatively simple backcloth. In most instances the turbines would be partially set behind intervening landform, which would help to provide a degree of separation from these smaller scale landscapes. In a wider context, the Proposed Development would be seen from large scale dramatic landscapes that lie within the study area, such as the Trotternish Ridge and the Cuillin mountains. However, in such instances the turbines would comprise relatively distant elements, set in the context of the simpler interior hills and seen together with the existing and consented wind farms in the northern part of the Isle of Skye. The Proposed Development would also not form the primary point of focus from such locations and would not detract from the large scale dramatic landforms and expansive open views.</p>
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	The proposal maintains the apparent landscape scale and/or distance in the receptors' perception.	
<b>Criterion 9</b>		
Landscape setting of nearby wind energy developments is respected	The extent to which the landscape setting of nearby wind energy developments is affected by the proposal.	<p>The Proposed Development would extend across gaps between the existing and consented developments, which would result in visual coalescence of these wind farms. However, careful consideration has been given to the way the proposed turbines would relate to these existing and consented wind farms. It would intensify the wind energy development within the local landscape. However, it would be set with the existing and consented wind farms, consolidating an existing pattern and not extending this into the wider landscape.</p> <p>Combined, these factors would limit the relative prominence of the Proposed Development.</p>
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	Proposal relates well to the existing landscape setting and does not increase the perceived visual prominence of surrounding wind turbines.	
<b>Criterion 10</b>		
Distinctiveness of Landscape character is respected	The extent to which a proposal affects the distinction between	Whilst the site extends into the adjoining LCT 360 Stepped Moorland, the proposed turbines would be fully located within the Interior Skye Hills character area, LCT 359



Criterion	Measure	Evaluation
	neighbouring landscape character types, in areas where the variety of character is important to the appreciation of the landscape.	Upland Sloping Moorland. It is located close to existing and consented wind farms which are also located within the same character areas and LCTs, focussing the potential effects of such development and maintaining the distinction with other neighbouring character areas and LCTs. Therefore, the location and extent of the Proposed Development would help to limit the extent of potential effects associated with wind farm developments and reinforce, rather than extend an existing pattern in the landscape.

## SUMMARY OF PREDICTED EFFECTS

7.219 This LVIA has assessed the predicted effects of the Proposed Development upon landscape character, visual amenity and areas of recognised landscape value (including as experienced along sequential routes). This is accompanied by a Viewpoint Assessment (**Technical Appendix 7.3**) and Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (**Technical Appendix 7.4**). The assessment takes account of the mitigation measures that are embedded in the Proposed Development. No secondary or additional mitigation measures are proposed and this section summarises the findings of the LVIA and, specifically, highlights the predicted residual landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development.

### Landscape Character

7.220 The Proposed Development would be visible from all seven of the landscape character areas included in the assessment to a greater or lesser degree. The level of effect on the character areas differs primarily due to: the level of intervening landform screening; their variable sensitivity to wind farm development; and the existing influence of the operational wind farms at Ben Aketil and Edinbane.

7.221 It is assessed that the Proposed Development would result in a moderate/minor or minor adverse level of effect (not significant) within five character areas and a moderate level of effect (not significant) within Greshornish and Coastal Edge of Loch Snizort Character Area. Although landscape effects are specific to each character area, some of the general effects identified or influences on those effects are:

- visibility of the Proposed Development from character areas is primarily limited by the undulating landform and the assessment of change to the characteristics of each character area is generally from the perspective of slopes which orientate towards the site. The Proposed Development would generally be more prominent from character areas to the north of the site. This is due to the position of the Proposed Development in relation to the local landform and the hill summits that restrict theoretical visibility to the south and south east. From none of the character areas would there be blanket ZTV coverage of the Proposed Development, which has been a consideration in the assessment of effects on each area;
- the addition of the Proposed Development would appear to collectively extend the effects of the existing and consented wind farms on the character areas. However, this change would be localised, visible from only parts of the character areas and would generally be seen in relation to a large scale, open landscape; and
- the location of the development is within the moorland interior of Skye which provides a backcloth to adjacent character areas and therefore the assessment of change to those character areas generally focuses on the influence that the Proposed Development would have on that backcloth and the extent to which that influences the key characteristics of each area.

7.222 Overall, no significant adverse landscape effects have been identified. The moderate adverse effects on two landscape character areas are not considered to be significant. In relation to the Greshornish and Coastal Edge of Loch Snizort Character Area, and Bracadale Character Area, the Proposed Development would comprise a compact group of turbines between two existing wind farms. It would appear more prominent on the skyline in parts of these character areas. In the

case of both character areas, the Proposed Development could affect the simple backdrop and would distract to a limited degree from the intricacies around the coast. However, it would not introduce new elements to the landscape and would reinforce an established pattern of wind farm development.

- 7.223 The Proposed Development would contribute to the presence of wind farm development in the north western part of the Isle of Skye. However, given the context of the baseline Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms, together with the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, the addition of the Proposed Development would result in relatively limited additional change and the key characteristics of the landscape character areas from where the Proposed Development would be visible, would not be fundamentally altered.

### Visual Amenity

- 7.224 Visibility of the Proposed Development within the study area would be restricted from many places in the south and east by number of hills approximately 2 - 5km away from the Proposed Development, including: Beinn a' Chearcaill (264m AOD); Ben Uigshader (246m AOD); Cruachan-Glen Vic Askill (295m AOD), Beinn a' Ghlinne Bhig (208m AOD); and Beinn na Cloiche (232m AOD). Similarly, visibility of the Proposed Development would be limited from locations to the west by Ben Horneval (264m AOD) and Ben Vic Askill (180m AOD). This has the effect of limiting the extent of potential visual effects and focuses the area where the key effects are likely to occur.
- 7.225 For the visual impact assessment of the Proposed Development, visual effects have been assessed from 20 viewpoints which represent key receptor locations within the study area. These viewpoints were scoped and agreed through consultation, particularly with THC, and also draw on the locations that were used in LVIA's for other nearby developments. The selected viewpoints vary from medium to high in their sensitivity of visual resource as described in **Table 7-10**. In summary, of the viewpoints assessed:
- major/moderate and significant adverse effects have been identified at four viewpoints: Viewpoint 2 (Edinbane Top Road); Viewpoint 4 (residents at Roag); Viewpoint 6 (Lonmore); and Viewpoint 12 (Greshornish), all of which lie within 7.5km of the Proposed Development;
  - moderate adverse and not significant effects have been identified at eight viewpoints: Viewpoint 1 (A863 at Feorlig); Viewpoint 3 (A863); Viewpoint 4 (road users at Roag), Viewpoint 5 (A850); Viewpoint 9 (Kingsburgh) Viewpoint 10 (residents at Borge); Viewpoint 12 (Fiscavaig); and Viewpoint 14 (residents at Totaig). These effects are considered to be not significant due to the relative prominence of the baseline wind farms; and
  - moderate/minor to negligible and not significant effects were assessed at the other eight viewpoints.
- 7.226 In all the representative views, the Proposed Development would be seen as part of the operational and consented wind farms located in the northern part of the Isle of Skye. At no location assessed is the Proposed Development seen in isolation in the view. Therefore, it would not add any new elements to the view but would reinforce a pattern and type of development that forms an established feature. In most instances the proposed turbines would be positioned between the Edinbane and Ben Aketil turbines and also the consented Ben Sca turbines. In some instances they would appear in the same part of the view as the consented Glen Ullinish turbines. They would intensify the level of wind energy development in the northern part of the Isle of Skye. However,

in most cases they would be seen amongst the pattern of operational and consented turbines rather than increasing the overall extent of the view occupied by wind farm developments. The Proposed Development would also frequently be seen above the existing conifer plantation and in the context of other human influences in the landscape. Whilst the proposed turbines would be distinctly larger than those in the operational wind farms, they would be broadly consistent with the consented development. In addition, consideration is currently being given to the repowering of the operational Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms, meaning these may be replaced with larger turbines in the future.

- 7.227 The more irregular pattern of the turbines would be more consistent with the layout of Edinbane Wind Farm, although the design of the Proposed Development has considered the composition of turbines in relation to all the neighbouring wind farms, existing and consented. Significant effects have generally been identified where the proposed turbines would appear as large, prominent structures, particularly in relation to the existing wind farms. Similar is the case where the Proposed Development would noticeably extend the horizontal angle occupied by the wind farm developments, such as Viewpoint 6 at Lonmore. As with the consented turbines, whilst their scale would seem to relate to the open horizontal space of their surroundings, they would seem to diminish the perceived vertical scale of the moorland hills.
- 7.228 Overall, the visual effects of the Proposed Development would be limited by the context, particularly in relation to operational and consented wind farms. The local landform of the surrounding undulating moorland would help to restrict views of the Proposed Development. There would also be a relationship with the operational Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms meaning the Proposed Development would be located within the space between them and would be seen in the same part of the view, rather than increasing the overall extent occupied by wind farms.

### Designated Landscapes

- 7.229 The Proposed Development is not sited within a designated landscape.
- 7.230 The assessment has identified that there would be minor to negligible landscape and visual effects on the two NSAs within the study area (the Cuillin Hills and Trotternish) and that views of the Proposed Development would not compromise their key characteristics.
- 7.231 The assessment acknowledges that there would be some adverse effects experienced within parts of the two closer SLAs (North West Skye and Greshornish), including significant visual effects at particular viewpoints. However, given its location and the presence of existing operational wind farms, views of the Proposed Development would not overall fundamentally conflict with the key characteristics of either designation. It is further concluded that there would be negligible landscape and visual effects on the third more distant SLA (Trotternish and Tianavaig) and that distant visibility of the Proposed Development would not compromise its key characteristics.

### Cumulative Effects

- 7.232 A cumulative assessment has been carried out and no significant cumulative landscape or visual effects have been identified. The cumulative assessment identified that, the addition of the consented cumulative developments further south of the Proposed Development, would extend wind development across the study area. The Proposed Development would comprise the addition of more turbines, which would continue the intensification and consolidation of wind farm

development in the northern part of the Isle of Skye. Overall, the contribution of the Proposed Development to cumulative effects would be limited by its association with the adjacent operational Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm.

### Residential Visual Amenity

7.233 **Technical Appendix 7.4** summarises the findings of an assessment of effects on residential amenity within approximately 3km of the proposed turbines. Overall, it considered that the potential effects of the Proposed Development would not reach the residential visual amenity threshold at any of the locations assessed.

### Wild Land Areas

7.234 Three Wild Land Areas (WLA) are located within the study area:

- WLA 22 Duirinish;
- WLA 23 Cuillin; and
- WLA 25 Applecross.

7.235 Applecross has been scoped out of the assessment, which is consistent with the LVIAs for the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and the associated extension. The Proposed Development is located approximately 10km from the Duirinish WLA and 18km from the Cuillin WLA (based on the distance to the closest turbine), therefore would not have a physical effect on either of these. However, the Proposed Development would be visible from both WLAs. The key qualities and attributes of both WLAs have been considered as part of the assessment. Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development would not have a significant effect on either WLA. In both instances this is due to a number of factors including, potential effects on the key qualities/attributes, the intervening distance and the operational wind farms, and emerging consented wind farms, that form part of the context for the Proposed Development. It is also noted that, in relation to WLAs, NPF4 (published in early 2023) states that *“buffer zones around wild land will not be applied, and effects of development outwith wild land areas will not be a significant consideration”*.

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