

TECHNICAL APPENDIX 7.4: RESIDENTIAL VISUAL AMENITY ASSESSMENT

Balmeanach Wind Farm
Prepared for: **Balmeanach Wind Farm Limited**

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1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this Technical Appendix is to provide an assessment of the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the visual amenity of residential receptors living within close proximity to the site.

The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment's 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Third Edition (GLVIA3) (December 2013) states at para. 6.17 that 'Effects of development on private property are frequently dealt with mainly through 'residential amenity assessments'. These are separate from LVIA although visual effects assessment may sometimes be carried out as part of a residential amenity assessment, in which case this supplements and forms part of the normal LVIA for a project. Para. 6.36 of GLVIA3 recommends that the matter of whether a RVAA should be carried out should be agreed with the relevant determining authority.

Residential visual amenity means visual amenity from residential properties including their gardens. It is a subset of residential amenity, which may include aspects such as noise, light, vibration and shadow flicker, traffic etc. This report only addresses the visual component of residential amenity.

The Landscape Institute (LI) has published specific guidance on RVAA: Technical Guidance Note 2/19 (15 March 2019). This guidance is not intended to be prescriptive but provides advice on the approach to RVAA. This assessment has been prepared based on the LI Technical Guidance Note. The Technical Note defines Residential Visual Amenity (RVA) as:

"The overall quality, experience and nature of views and outlook available to occupants of residential properties, including views from gardens and domestic curtilage'. Residential Visual Amenity is one component of 'Residential Amenity'."

The LI Technical Guidance Note sets out the 'steps' to be followed when undertaking a RVAA and highlights how it should be informed by the principles and processes of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact GLVIA3. It explains the purpose of RVAA as follows:

"The purpose of RVAA is to provide an informed, well-reasoned answer to the question: 'is the effect of the development on Residential Visual Amenity of such nature and / or magnitude that it potentially affects 'living conditions' or Residential Amenity'? In this guidance this is referred to as the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold."

RVAA is intended to inform the planning process. It is in this context that the Technical Note makes the following statement:

"It is not uncommon for significant adverse effects on views and visual amenity to be experienced by people at their place of residence as a result of introducing a new development into the landscape. In itself this does not necessarily cause particular planning concern. However, there are situations where the effect on the outlook / visual amenity of a residential property is so great that it is not generally considered to be in the public interest to permit such conditions to occur where they did not exist before."

2.0 Scope and Approach

LI Technical Note identifies four key stages in a RVAA, as follows:

1. **Definition of study area and scope of the assessment** informed by the description of the Proposed Development, defining the study area extent and scope of the assessment with respect to the properties to be included.
2. **Evaluation of baseline visual amenity** at properties to be included having regard to the landscape and visual context and the development proposed.
3. **Assessment of likely change to visual amenity** of included properties, in accordance with GLVIA3 principles, and identify properties requiring further assessment and processes.
4. **Detailed assessment of individual properties identified in Step 3 as having the greatest magnitude of change**, forming a judgement with respect to the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold.

The above steps have been followed in the preparation of the RVAA.

The Proposed Development comprises a new planning application for a wind farm, including 10 variable pitch (three bladed) wind turbines. The turbines would have a maximum blade tip height of up to 149.9m and a rotor diameter of up to 138m and would be positioned on the east and south east facing slopes of Ben Sca, between the settlements of Balmeanach (to the south) and Edinbane/Blackhill/Coishletter (to the north). Ancillary elements comprise tracks, a substation compound, borrow pits and a construction compound, however the RVAA concentrates on the proposed wind turbines, as it is the size of these elements of the Proposed Development that have the potential to result in a level of change in relation to the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold.

The Proposed Development has been the subject of a design evolution process, with an objective of this being to reduce the potential visual effects. This design evolution process is described in Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution of the EIA Report and the Design and Access Statement.

The LI Technical Guidance Note sets out that *“when assessing relatively conspicuous structures such as wind turbines, and depending on local landscape characteristics, a preliminary study area of approximately 1.5 - 2 km radius may initially be appropriate in order to begin identifying properties to include in a RVAA”*.

The LI Technical Guidance Note also sets out that *“as a rule, future cumulative visual effects are not assessed in RVAA, the focus of which concerns effects on existing visual amenity. Existing cumulative development will form part of the baseline visual amenity considered in Step 2 of RVAA; future cumulative development is generally not a RVAA consideration. However, in certain circumstances, it may be appropriate to consider a particular cumulative proposal which is effectively already part of the existing landscape baseline. For example: where an extension to an existing development is consented, or under construction, but not yet built; or where two developments are proposed simultaneously.”*

In the context of the Proposed Development there are no residential properties within 2km of the proposed turbines. However, during consultation, The Highland Council (THC) identified that the RVAA should cover a minimum area of 2km, extended where appropriate.

The operational Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms form part of the baseline landscape in which the Proposed Development is located. In addition, the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and its extension are also a key part of the local context of the site. These wind farm developments are detailed in **Table 2-1**. The locations of these existing and consented cumulative developments referred to above are shown on **Figure 7.10** and **Figure 7.13, Volume 3** of the EIA Report.

Table 2-1: Key Operational and Consented 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
Ben Sca (and extension)	Located within 1km to the north west of the proposed turbines	9	77.5 - 92.5	115	135 – 149.9

In addition, there are a number of proposed wind farm developments at EIA scoping stage, which are also shown on **Figure 7.13, Volume 3** of the EIA Report. 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.

Whilst wind farm developments at scoping stage are identified, cumulative ZTVs have not been prepared for these developments and they have not been included in the cumulative wireline figures nor have they 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.

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.

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.

The representative locations and residential properties that are included in the RVAA are located within 4km of the proposed turbines. The definition of the study area for the RVAA and scope of assessment is described in Section 2.1 of this document. The locations assessed are shown on **Figure 7.4.1**. The locations assessed are

also shown on **Figures 7.4.2** and **7.4.3** which include the blade tip and hub Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) for the Proposed Development.

2.1 Step 1: Definition of the Study Area and Scope of the Assessment

The National Planning Framework 4 (Scottish Government, February 2023) does not recommend a specific community separation distance in relation to potential visual effects resulting from proposed wind energy developments. However, as stated above, the LI Technical Guidance Note suggests a preliminary study area of 1.5 – 2km. During consultation, THC identified the RVAA should cover a minimum area of 2km.

There are no residential properties with 2km of the proposed turbines. However, in order to review residential visual amenity issue thoroughly, a larger area (up to 4km) has been applied. The study area being applied therefore exceeds what is expected for RVAA, partly in recognition of the context of the existing and consented wind farms that lie in the vicinity of the Proposed Development. However, as properties located greater distances from the turbines are being assessed, the RVAA utilises a number of representative locations surrounding the site which reflect the views likely to be experienced by residents. Where a particular property is relatively isolated this has been assessed more specifically, in other circumstances locations representing groups of properties have been assessed. This approach has been taken to ensure a concise and proportionate RVAA has been prepared in relation to the Proposed Development.

There are several residential properties that are situated south and southwest of the site, which extend along the A863, at the northern end of Loch Caroy, and along the minor road through Balmeanach. The nearest properties to the proposed turbines are located approximately 2.5km south-south west of Turbine 8 (north east edge of Balmeanach) and approximately 2.2km to the south east of Turbine 10 (Glen Vic Askill). The settlements of Edinbane, Blackhill and Coishletter are located to the north of the Proposed Development. The shortest distance between the proposed turbines and the residential properties within this group of settlements is approximately 2.8km.

For the purposes of this RVAA for the Proposed Development, seven locations have been selected that are considered representative of the views obtained from the properties included in the RVAA. In most instances residential properties have been grouped, with representative locations used to assess potential effects on residential visual amenity. The locations used for the representative viewpoint locations are shown on **Figure 7.4.1**. The seven locations included in this RVAA reflect the broad distribution of residential properties within 4km of the proposed turbines. These locations are listed in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2
Locations included in the RVAA

Ref. No.	Property Name/Group	Co-ordinates (OS GB)	Approx. Distance to Nearest Turbine	Reason for Inclusion
1	Glen Vic Askill	135979, 844310	2.2km	Represents Glen Vic Askill, an isolated individual property, situated in a relatively remote location. There are views to the site towards the north west.
2	Balmeanach, Alt Ruairidh	132485, 843539	2.5km	Represents a single property located within Balmeanach, located north of a side-road that joins the A863 to the west. There are views to the site towards the north east.

Ref. No.	Property Name/Group	Co-ordinates (OS GB)	Approx. Distance to Nearest Turbine	Reason for Inclusion
3	Balmeanach	132013, 843252	3km	Represents a group of properties in the lower part of Balmeanach. There are views to the site towards the north east.
4	Caroy	130900, 843206	3.7km	Represents a group of properties In Caroy, close to the A863. There are views to the site towards the north east.
5	Upper Feorlig (junction with A863)	129964, 844158	3.8km	Represents a small cluster of properties in Upper Feorlig, close to the junction with the A863. There are views to the site towards the north east.
6	Upper Feorlig	130005, 845165	3.4km	Represents two properties in Upper Feorlig, There are views to the site towards the north east.
7	Blackhill	134528, 850407	2.8km	Represents a concentration of properties in Blackhill, an area within the settlement of Edinbane. This group of properties is represented by a location on the southern edge of the settlement. There are views to the site towards the south.
8	Edinbane Top Road	135063, 850718	3.2km	Represents a concentration of properties in Upper Edinbane. There are views to the site towards the south.

2.2 Step 2: Evaluation of Baseline Visual Amenity

Following the identification of locations to be included in the RVAA, desk based information was analysed and a site visit was carried out to evaluate the baseline visual amenity at each property, having regard to the landscape and visual context and the development proposed. The Technical Note requires the following aspects to be considered from each property as part of the baseline visual amenity evaluation:

- *“the nature and extent of all potentially available existing views from the property and its garden / domestic curtilage, including the proximity and relationship of the property to surrounding landform, landcover and visual foci. This may include primary / main views from the property or domestic curtilage, as well as secondary / peripheral views; and*
- *views as experienced when arriving at or leaving the property, for example from private driveways / access tracks.”*

The evaluation of baseline visual amenity has been carried out from publicly accessible locations adjacent to properties (i.e. pavements, roads and paths) and no access into private properties was considered necessary.

Residential receptors are generally considered to be of high sensitivity to change and this judgement forms the basis of the subsequent assessment of likely change to the visual amenity of the residential receptors scoped into the RVAA.

RVAA sheets have been prepared for each of the 8 locations scoped into the RVAA. These sheets comprise **Figures 7.4.4 to 7.4.11** and include the following information:

- an Ordnance Survey map and an aerial photograph showing the location/property being assessed;
- the direction of view towards the Proposed Development and extent of horizontal field of view within which it would be theoretically visible (i.e. based on bare earth visibility modelling and not taking into account screening by features such as vegetation or buildings);
- a 90 degree wireline view of the Proposed Development from the location/property; and
- a description of baseline visual amenity and the assessment of the change predicted from the Proposed Development (which is described below).

2.3 Step 3: Assessment of Likely Change

Following the establishment of the baseline, the next step advocated by the Technical Note is to assess the magnitude and significance of likely visual effect at the included properties and the key aim of Step 3 is to identify those properties subsequently requiring further assessment in Step 4 in relation to the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold judgement.

The Technical Note states that the following considerations should provide a framework for describing and evaluating the predicted magnitude of visual change and related visual amenity effects which may lead to the property being considered in Step 4:

- *“Distance of property from the Proposed Development having regard to its size / scale and location relative to the property (e.g. on higher or lower ground);*
- *Type and nature of the available views (e.g. panoramic, open, framed, enclosed, focused etc.) and how they may be affected, having regard to seasonal and diurnal variations;*
- *Direction of view / aspect of property affected, having regard to both the main / primary and peripheral / secondary views from the property;*
- *Extent to which development / landscape changes would be visible from the property (or parts of) having regard to views from principal rooms, the domestic curtilage (i.e. garden) and the private access route, taking into account seasonal and diurnal variations;*
- *Scale of change in views having regard to such factors as the loss or addition of features and compositional changes including the proportion of view occupied by the development, taking account of seasonal and diurnal variations;*
- *Degree of contrast or integration of new features or changes in the landscape compared to the existing situation in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture, having regard to seasonal and diurnal variations;*
- *Duration and nature of the changes, whether temporary or permanent, intermittent or continuous, reversible or irreversible etc.; and*
- *Mitigation opportunities – consider implications of both embedded and potential further mitigation.”*

As is the case with Step 2, this step has been considered on site and utilises desk based information including the RVAA sheets for each property. The Technical Note states that Step 3 should conclude by identifying the

properties that should be assessed further in the final step in order to reach a judgement regarding the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold.

2.4 Further Assessment of Predicted Change

For any properties identified at Stage 3 as requiring further consideration, this final step of RVAA involves a more detailed examination of the predicted effects on the visual amenity at the relevant properties. This concluding judgement reports whether the predicted effects on visual amenity and views at the property are such that it has reached the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold. For each property where this judgement is made, an explanation is provided setting out why the effects are, or are not, considered to reach the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold.

2.5 Cumulative Assessment

The guidance states that cumulative impacts on the landscape and visual resource are matters to be addressed in the LVIA of a proposed development, as is the case for this Proposed Development. Existing operational wind development (i.e. Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms) forms part of the baseline visual amenity considered in Step 2 of RVAA.

Future cumulative development is generally not a RVAA consideration. However, in this context and as described earlier in this section of the RVAA, there is a clear link relationship between the Proposed Development and the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. Therefore, consideration is given to how the Proposed Development would relate to the Ben Sca Wind Farm.

3.0 Summary of RVAA Results

Table 3-1 summarises the results of the RVAA, based on the assessment contained within the RVAA sheets (Figures 7.4.4 to 7.4.11). This table shows both the judgement that was reached for the consented development and whether the Proposed Development would introduce any factors that would alter this.

Table 3-1
Results of the RVAA for Ben Sca Wind Farm and Implications of the Proposed Development
 (for locations assessed in this RVAA)

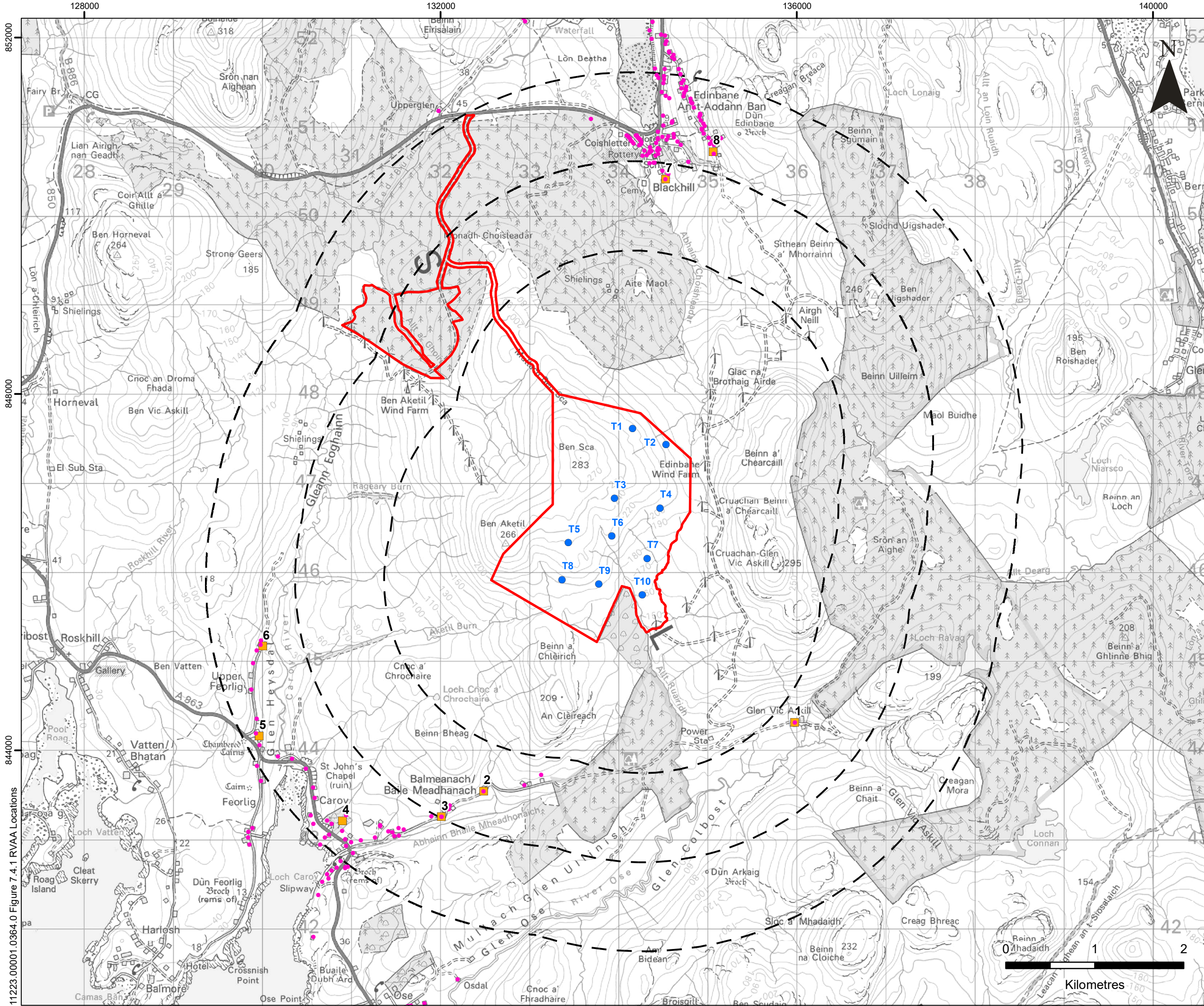
Ref. No.	Property Name/Group	Step 3: Magnitude of Change	Step 4: Further Assessment of Predicted Change	RVAA Threshold Reached?
1	Glen Vic Askill	Negligible	No	No
2	Balmeanach, Alt Ruairidh	Medium	No	No
3	Balmeanach	Slight to Negligible	No	No
4	Caroy	Slight	No	No
5	Upper Feorlig (junction with A863)	Medium	No	No
6	Upper Feorlig	Medium	No	No
7	Blackhill	Medium	No	No
8	Edinbane Top Road	Medium	No	No

There are no residential properties within the 2km buffer suggested in relevant guidance for RVAA. However, to ensure residential visual amenity is considered, this buffer has been extended to take properties in a wider context into account. At the majority of the locations assessed, the Proposed Development would not be more prominent than the existing and consented wind farms in the surrounding area. Whilst the Proposed Development would comprise the addition of large structures into the landscape, these would be comparable with the existing and consented wind farms and would almost always be seen in simultaneous views.

The spacing of the proposed turbines would be broadly consistent with the existing and consented wind farms and the Proposed Development would typically be seen between these existing and consented wind farms. It would intensify wind energy development in this part of the Isle of Skye, but this would be reinforcing an established pattern in the landscape rather than introducing new elements. The positioning of the Proposed Development between the existing and consented wind farms means, in most instances it would not contribute to encircling settlements or properties.

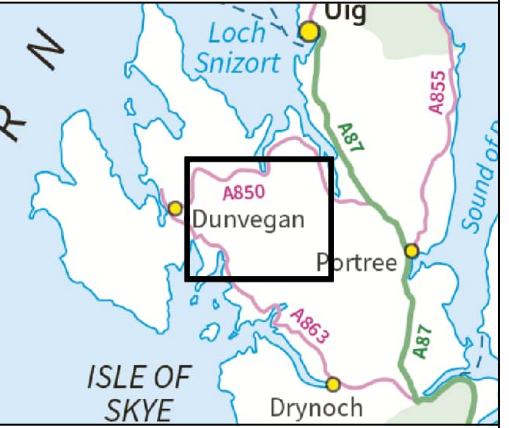
At no location are major adverse visual effects predicted in relation to the Proposed Development. Therefore, at no location assessed is it considered that the residential visual amenity threshold would be reached.

FIGURES



LEGEND

- Application Site Boundary
- Proposed Turbine Location
- Proposed Turbine Location 2 - 4 km
- Buffer (1 km Increments)
- Property
- RVAA Assessment Location



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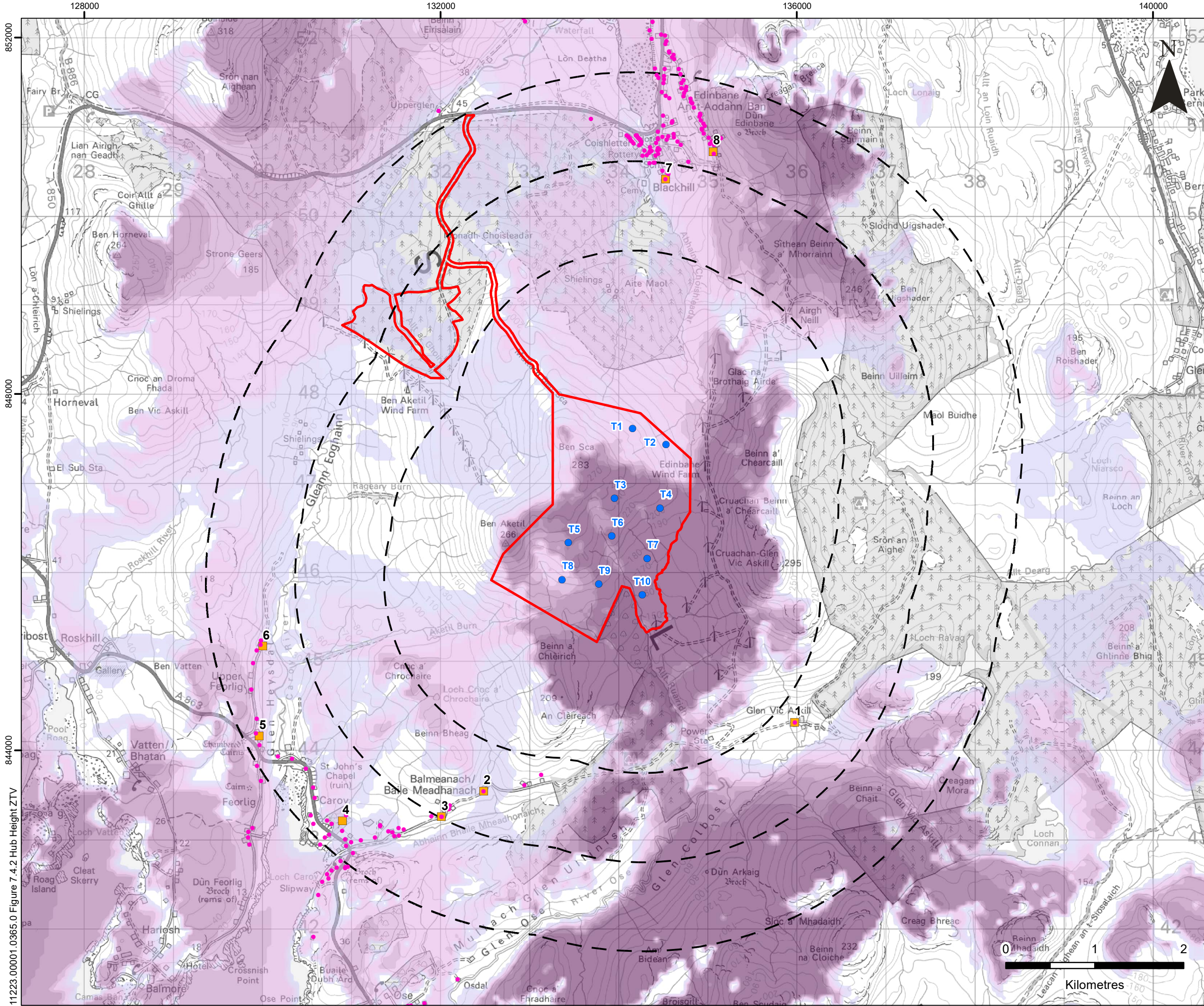
TA 7.4 – RVAA

RVAA LOCATIONS

FIGURE 7.4.1

Scale 1:40,000 @ A3 Date AUGUST 2023

11223.00001.0364.0 Figure 7.4.1 RVAA Locations



LEGEND

- Application Site Boundary
- Proposed Turbine Location
- Proposed Turbine Location 2 - 4 km
- Buffer (1 km Increments)
- Property
- RVAA Assessment

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV):
Bare Earth Hub Height 80.9 m

- High : 10 Turbines Visible
- Low : 1 Turbine Visible

Note

This Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has been generated using ESRI ArcGIS Spatial Analyst extension. The digital terrain model (DTM) has been derived from OS Terrain 5 dataset (+/-2 m) up to 45 km from turbine locations, and OS Terrain 50 dataset (+/-10 m). Earth curvature has been included in the ZTV calculation and refraction of light has been applied using SNH guidance settings. The ZTV has been generated from a viewing height of 2 m above ground level which falls within recommendations by "Visual Representation of Windfarms" prepared for Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) February 2017 - Version 2.2.

The use of ZTV mapping at this stage is limited and the following assumptions should be noted:

- The ZTV has been generated using the proposed turbine locations for Balmeanach Wind Farm.
- The proposed turbine tip heights of 149.9 m have been used for generating the ZTV.
- The ZTV is generated from a bare earth terrain and does not account for the screening effect of features within the landscape such as settlements and woodland. It does not indicate potential visual effects or show the likely significance of effects. It shows potential theoretical visibility only. The ZTV has been produced for the purpose of informing 'on the ground' visual assessment.

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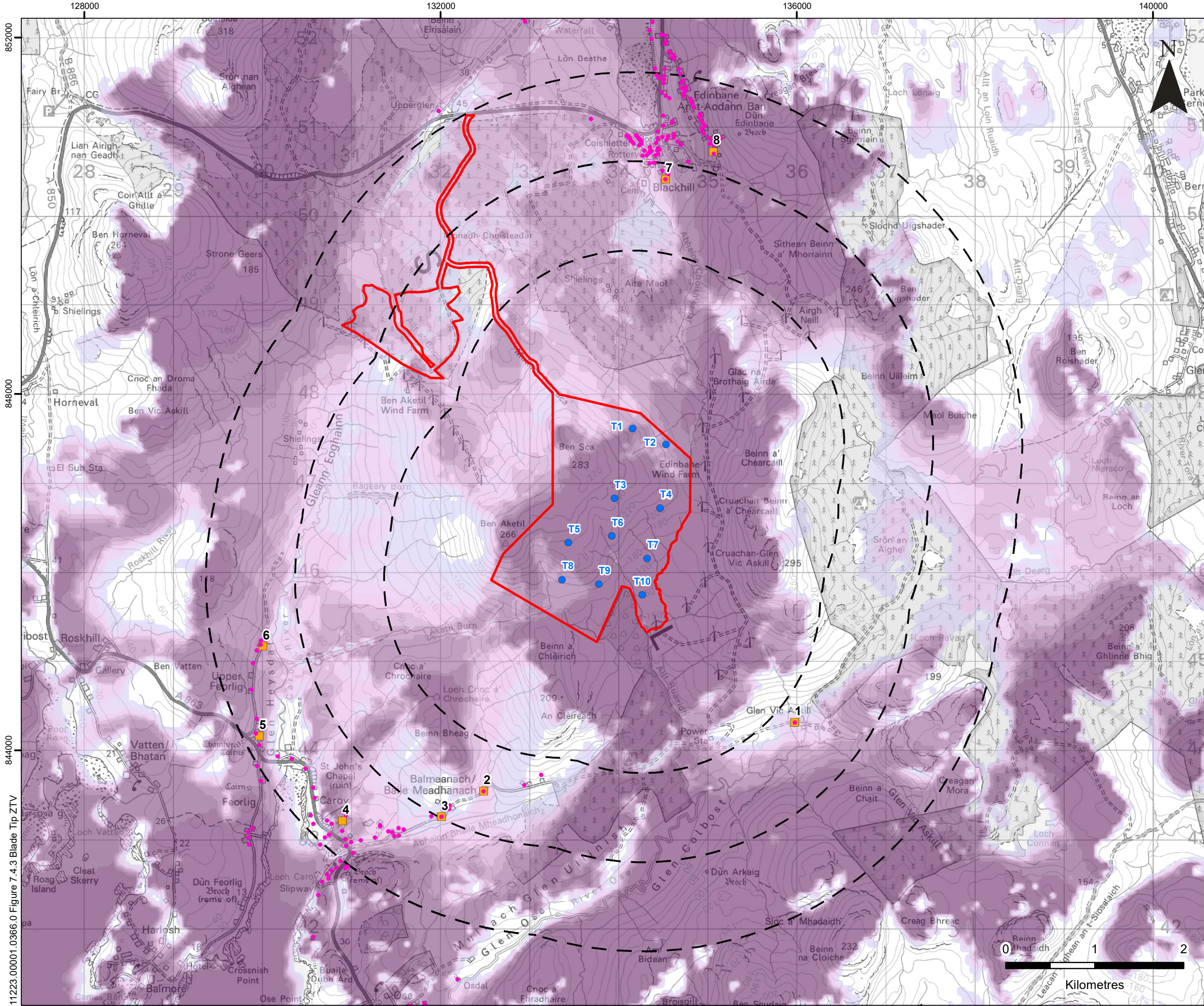
TA 7.4 – RVAA

HUB HEIGHT ZTV

FIGURE 7.4.2

Scale 1:40,000 @ A3 Date AUGUST 2023

11223.00001.0365.0 Figure 7.4.2 Hub Height ZTV



LEGEND

- Application Site Boundary
- Proposed Turbine Location
- Proposed Turbine Location 2 - 4 km
- Buffer (1 km Increments)
- Property
- RVAA Assessment

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV):
Bare Earth Blade Tip 149.9 m

- High : 10 Turbines Visible
- Low : 1 Turbine Visible

Note

This Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has been generated using ESRI ArcGIS Spatial Analyst extension. The digital terrain model (DTM) has been derived from OS Terrain 5 dataset (+/-2 m) up to 45 km from turbine locations, and OS Terrain 50 dataset (+/-10 m). Earth curvature has been included in the ZTV calculation and refraction of light has been applied using SNH guidance settings. The ZTV has been generated from a viewing height of 2 m above ground level which falls within recommendations by "Visual Representation of Windfarms" prepared for Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) February 2017 - Version 2.2.

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TA 7.4 – RVAA

BLADE TIP ZTV

FIGURE 7.4.3

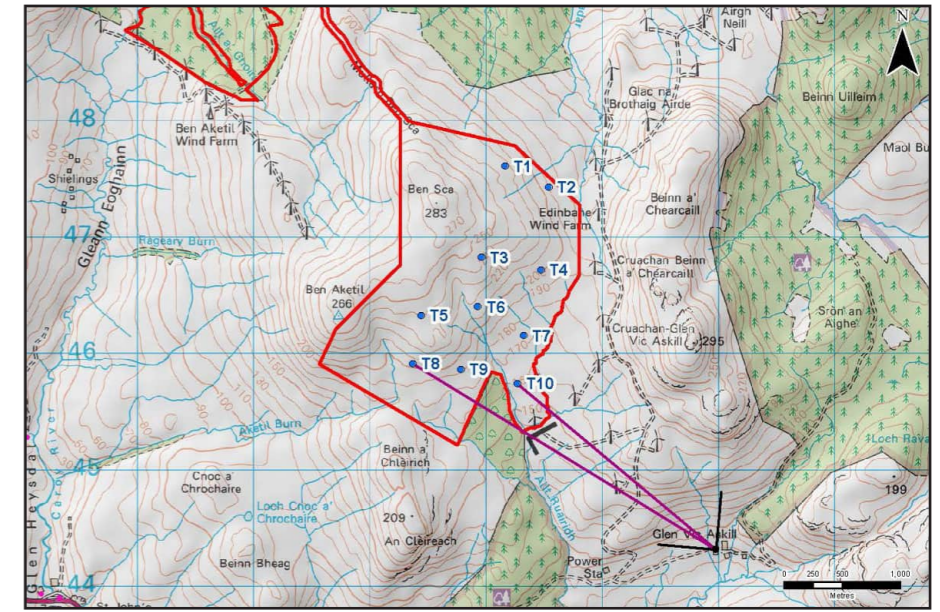
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11223.00001.0366.0 Figure 7.4.3 Blade Tip ZTV

Figure 7.4.4
Location 1: Glen Vic Askill

Property location
 OS reference: 135979 E 844309 N
 Elevation: 75.6 m AOD
 Direction of view: 320°
 Nearest turbine: 2.234 km

Ben Sca Extension theoretical visibility
 Horizontal field of view: 8.3°
 No. blade tips visible: 3
 No. hubs visible: 0



Step 2, evaluation of baseline visual amenity:

This is a single property which is accessed from a track/ minor road that joins the A863 at Caroy. The property is two storey and is isolated within the landscape; there are two barns/outbuildings located to east of the building. The property outdoor space/garden is focussed to the south of the house. The house is also primarily orientated to the south, away from the Proposed Development. However, there are open views over the landscape to the north, which comprise the lower slopes of Cruachan-Glen Vic Askill.

Three turbines that form part of Edinbane Wind Farm are present in views to the north west, with the majority of two turbines visible, together with the upper parts of the tower, hub and blades of the third turbine.

Step 3, assessment of likely change:

The wireline shows that a limited extent of the Proposed Development would be visible above the skyline. This is predicted to comprise the blade tips of T8, T9 and T10, which would intermittently be seen as they rotate. The closest turbine would be T10, located at a distance of approximately 2.2km. These would be present to the north west of the property, between the Edinbane turbines, and away from the principal views.

The approach to this property is along the minor road through Balmeanach and then along a track, which is partly routed through commercial forestry. The ZTVs for the Proposed Development show theoretical visibility from this route is limited and fragmented due to the intervening landform. The visibility of the Proposed Development would be further constrained by the commercial forestry.

The Proposed Development would result in a negligible magnitude of change in relation to this location. The sensitivity of the residential receptors to the Proposed Development is high. However, the Proposed Development is predicted to be visible and would be seen in the context of the operation Edinbane turbines. Therefore, the Proposed Development would result in a minor adverse, and not significant effect on visual amenity for the residents of this property. As the predicted effect is less than major, it is considered that Step 4 of RVAA is not required.

Elements of the Skye Reinforcement grid connection project would be located close to this property, including the proposed substation and overhead lines. However, this would not alter the fact that the Proposed Development would result in limited effects on visual amenity at this property.

Step 4, further assessment of predicted change:

No further assessment is required.

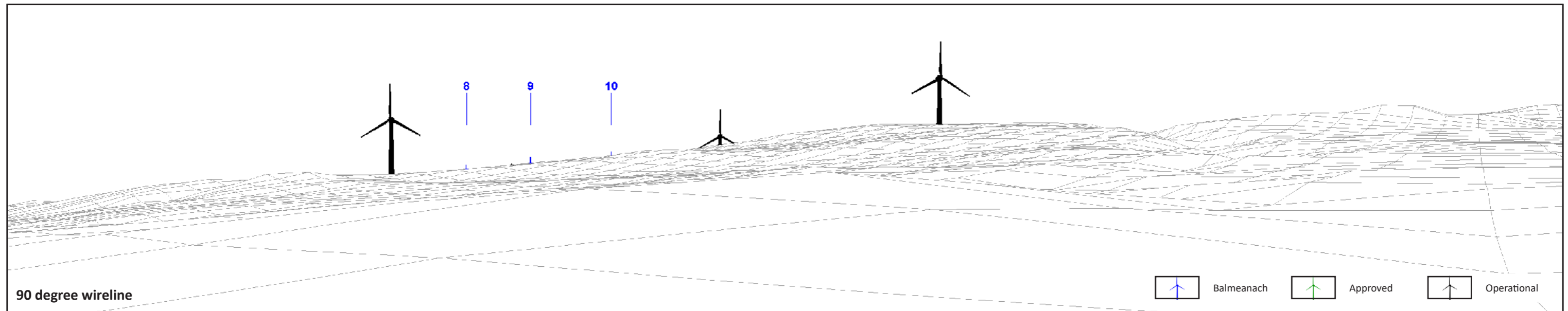
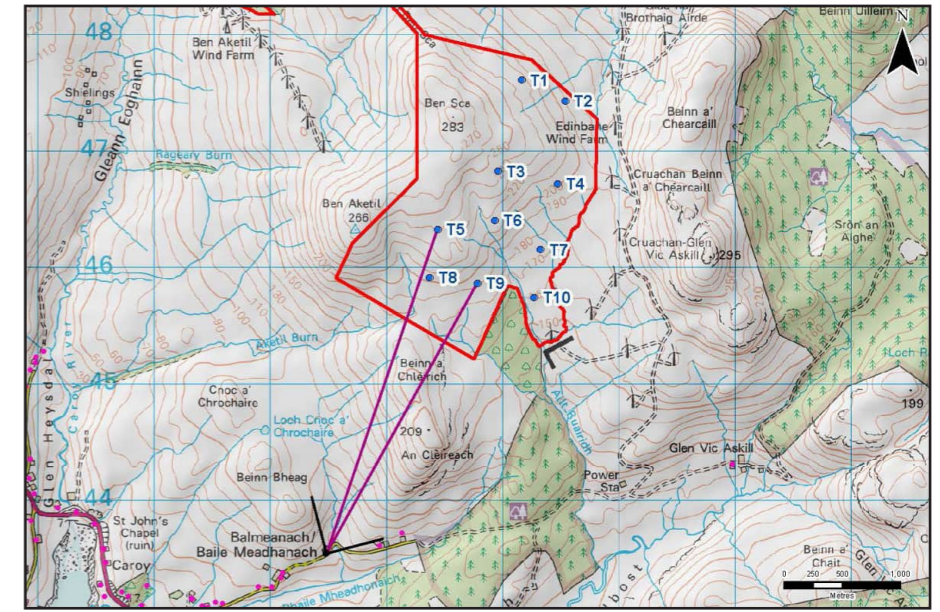
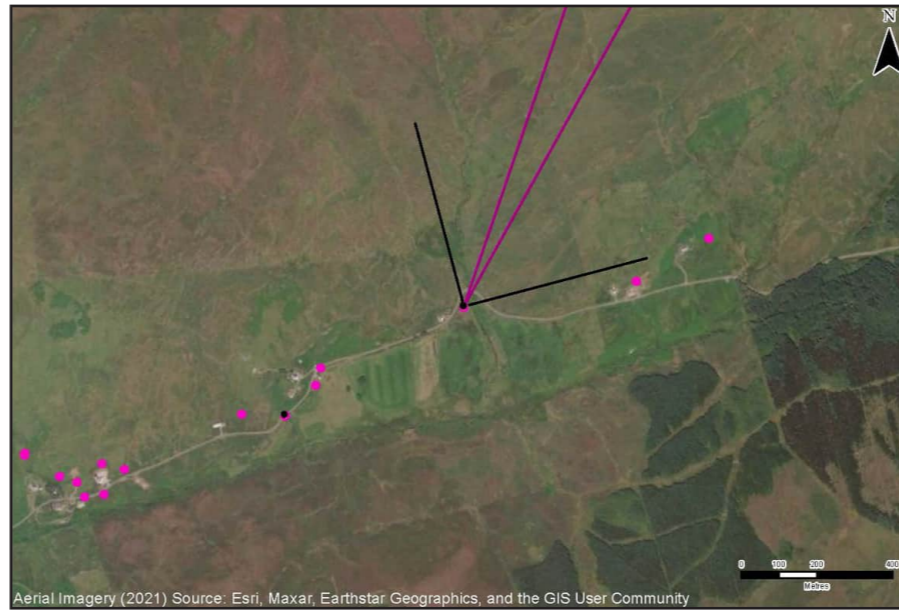


Figure 7.4.5
Location 2: Balmeanach, Allt Ruairdh

Property location
 OS reference: 132485 E 843539 N
 Elevation: 57.98 m AOD
 Direction of view: 30°
 Nearest turbine: 2.534 km



Ben Sca Extension theoretical visibility
 Horizontal field of view: 10.3°
 No. blade tips visible: 5
 No. hubs visible: 2



Step 2, evaluation of baseline visual amenity:

Allt Ruairdh comprises a single residential property located towards the central part of Balmeanach. It is a two-storey property with dormer windows in the roof. The primary facade appears to be on the south side of the building, facing away from the Proposed Development, with large windows facing towards the glen to the south. An outbuilding and storage container are located to the east of the house. The house is surrounded by a garden, from which there are relatively open views over the surrounding landscape. However, localised vegetation on the boundary of the property, together with the outbuilding and storage container limit views in places.

Step 3, assessment of likely change:

The wireline shows the Proposed Development would be visible from this property, with five turbines visible above the skyline. The closest turbine would be T8, located at a distance of approximately 2.5km. The blades and the upper parts of the towers, hubs and blades of T5 and T8 would be visible on the skyline to the north east. The blade tips of T3, T6 and T9 would also intermittently be seen as they rotate. The wireline also shows the blade tips of existing turbines within Edinbane Wind Farm would be visible, together with the blade tips of one turbine within the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm.

The proposed turbines would comprise prominent structures on the skyline to the north east. However, a large proportion of the turbines, particularly T3, T6 and T9 would be screened by the intervening landform. This intervening landform would also provide a sense of separation from the Proposed Development. The residential properties to the west of Allt Ruairdh have also been reviewed through the preparation of specific wirelines. These illustrate that there would be very limited (blade tips of T8) or no visibility of the Proposed Development.

While turbines would be more prominent than the existing Edinbane Wind Farm, when considering a full view of any turbines proposed within Balmeanach wind farm is not visible and in light of the 10 wooden poles from the Skye reinforcement project which can be seen, there is a small degree of change to the existing landscape compared to its existing form. In addition, the summit at An Cleireach and the presence of vegetation/shrubs helps screen the proposed turbines. Moreover, the primary view of the property is situated in the opposite direction to the proposed Balmeanach wind farm and any secondary views are screened by the metal shed that sits northeast of the property.

The Proposed Development would result in a medium magnitude of change in relation to this location. The sensitivity of the residential receptors to the proposed development is high. Whilst the Proposed Development would introduce large structures to the view experienced from this residential property, the extent to which they would be visible would be limited by the intervening landform. In addition, the primary orientation of the house is to the south east, away from the Proposed Development and the intervening distance to the closest turbine is approximately 2.5km. The visibility of the existing and consented wind farms is limited from this location, meaning the Proposed Development would introduce turbines to a view where the baselines wind farms are not prominent elements. Therefore, the Proposed Development would result in a major/moderate adverse, and significant effect on visual amenity for the residents of this property. However, as the predicted effect is less than major, it is considered that Step 4 of RVAA is not required. The Skye Reinforcement electricity transmission project (which is at application stage) would be visible in the simultaneous view. However, the part of the overhead line that would be seen from this property comprises wooden poles, which would replace the existing overhead line. Therefore, once operational, there would be limited change compared with the baseline context, which would limit any potential cumulative effects with the Proposed Development.

Step 4, further assessment of predicted change:

No further assessment is required.

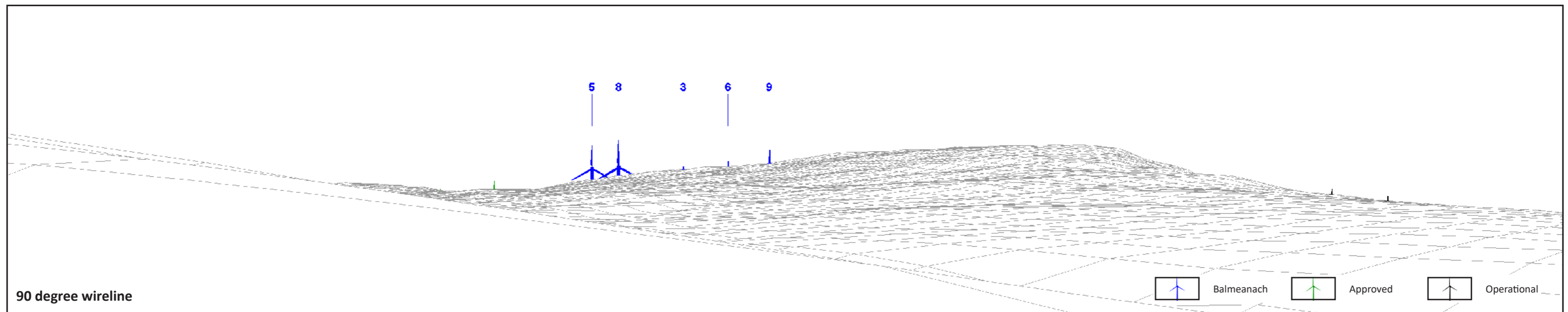
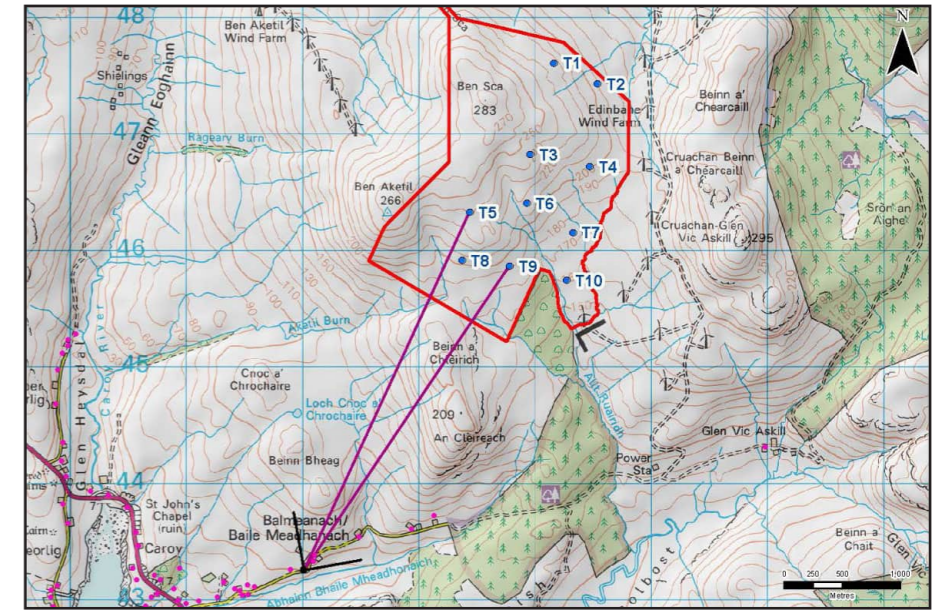


Figure 7.4.6
Location 3: Balmeanach

Property location
OS reference: 132013 E 843253 N
Elevation: 49.92 m AOD
Direction of view: 35°
Nearest turbine: 2.986 km

Ben Sca Extension theoretical visibility
Horizontal field of view: 9.2°
No. blade tips visible: 4
No. hubs visible: 0



Step 2, evaluation of baseline visual amenity:

This location represents group of properties that are located near the centre of Balmeanach. There is a small cluster of residential properties, including existing and proposed houses. These include Spindrift, a detached Bungalow (the occupant of which is financially involved in the Proposed Development), Balmeanach House and a plot of land which has been granted planning permission for development on which Stirrat Cottage is being built. The properties are all detached and comprise one and two storeys and are generally set with driveways and relatively open gardens. The primary orientation of each house varies, although open views over the surrounding landscape can be obtained from each property. The land rises to the north east, towards Beinn Bheag, limiting views in this direction, with more open views available across the Glen to the south. Up to three turbines in the southern part of Edinbane Wind Farm can be seen in views to the north east, with the majority of two of these turbines visible and the blades of the third turbine.

Step 3, assessment of likely change:

The wireline shows a limited extent of the proposed Balmeanach Wind Farm would be visible above the skyline. This is predicted to comprise the blade tips of T5, T6, T8 and T9. The blade movement would be apparent as the turbines rotate. The turbines would be evenly spaced, with no overlapping of the blades. The Proposed Development would be located to the north east, and therefore away from the more open views to the south.

The Proposed Development would result in a slight to negligible magnitude of change in relation to this location. The sensitivity of the residential receptors to the Proposed Development is high. Given the factors described above, it is considered that the Proposed Development would result in a minor effect on visual amenity for the residents of these properties. Given that this represents a not significant effect, it is considered that Step 4 of the RVAA is not required.

The Skye Reinforcement electricity transmission project (which is at application stage) would be visible in the simultaneous view. However, the part of the overhead line that would be seen from this property comprises wooden poles, which would replace the existing overhead line. Therefore, once operational, there would be limited change compared with the baseline context, which would limit any potential cumulative effects with the Proposed Development.

Step 4, further assessment of predicted change:

No further assessment is required.

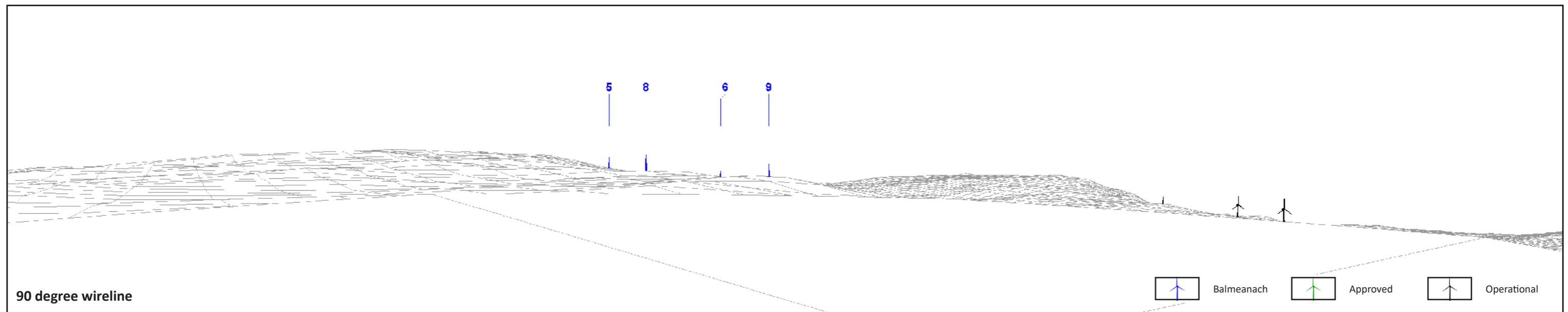
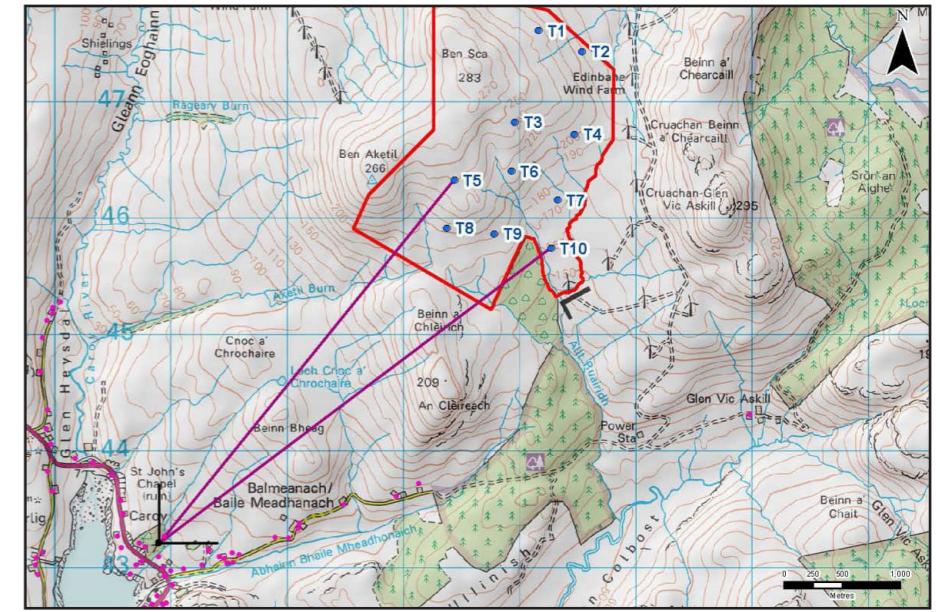


Figure 7.4.7
Location 4: Caroy

Property location
OS reference: 130899 E 842752 N
Elevation: 20.7 m AOD
Direction of view: 45°
Nearest turbine: 4.011 km

Ben Sca Extension theoretical visibility
Horizontal field of view: 13.9°
No. blade tips visible: 8
No. hubs visible: 5



Step 2, evaluation of baseline visual amenity:

This represents a group of properties that are located at Caroy, along the A863, to the east of Loch Caroy. They comprise a mix of detached one and two storey houses. The houses are generally orientated towards Loch Caroy to the west. The landform also rises to the north east, constraining views in the direction of the Proposed Development and reinforce the focus of views towards Loch Caroy. Vegetation around the cluster of properties also limits views to the north east, with this frequently extending above the landform. The operational Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms are theoretically visible in views to the north west, although the extent of these wind farms that can be seen from the properties is limited by the intervening landform and vegetation. The blade tips of turbines within the consented Ben Sca wind farm would also be theoretically visible from this location, but restricted or prevented by the intervening landform and vegetation.

Step 3, assessment of likely change:

T7 and 10 and the blades, hubs and upper parts of the towers of T3, T5, T6, T8 and T9. The Proposed Development would be located to north east, away from the primary focus of Loch Caroy in views. In addition, vegetation around Caroy would restrict views towards the proposed turbines. Where the Proposed Development is visible this is likely to be in the context of the existing wind farms, although the proposed turbines would be larger than the existing turbines.

The Proposed Development would result in a slight magnitude of change in relation to this location. Such a change is also only likely to occur where the local landform and vegetation allows more open views to the north east. The sensitivity of the residential receptors to the Proposed Development is high. Given the factors described above, it is considered that the Proposed Development would result in a moderate/minor effect on visual amenity for the residents of these properties. Given that this represents a not significant effect, it is considered that Step 4 of the RVAA is not required.

Step 4, further assessment of predicted change:

No further assessment is required.

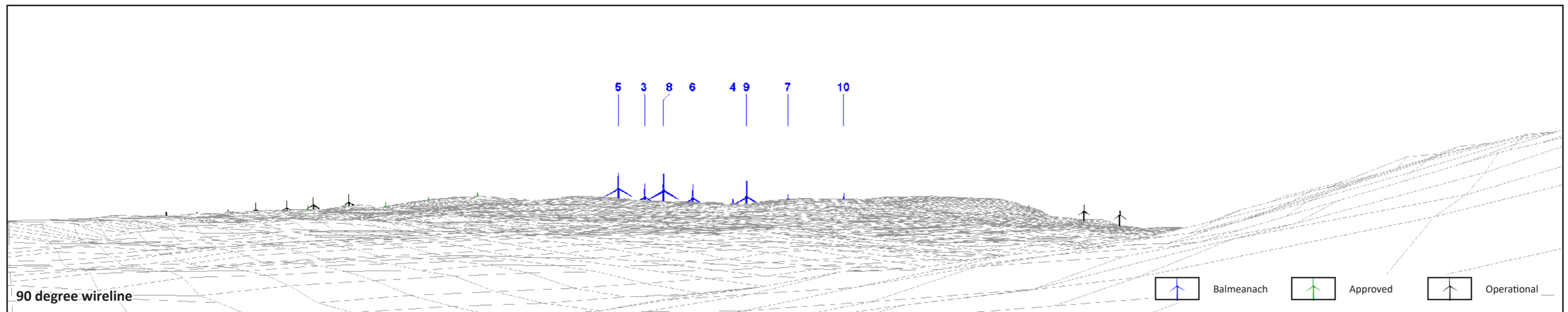
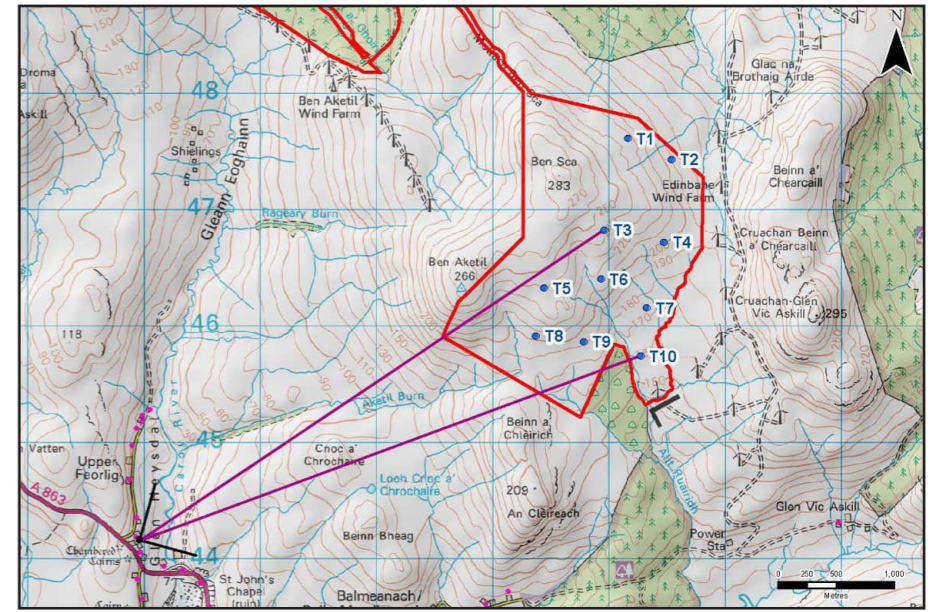


Figure 7.4.8
Location 5: Upper Feorlig (junction with A863)

Property location
 OS reference: 129963 E 844158 N
 Elevation: 29.88 m AOD
 Direction of view: 60°
 Nearest turbine: 3.830 km

Ben Sca Extension theoretical visibility
 Horizontal field of view: 13.5°
 No. blade tips visible: 8
 No. hubs visible: 5



Step 2, evaluation of baseline visual amenity:

This location represents three detached residential properties within Upper Feorlig, at the junction between the A863 and the minor road to Upper Feorlig. These properties are to the north east of the location assessed at Viewpoint 1 in the LVIA. One property comprises a two-storey house with skylights in the roof, the other two houses are bungalows. The houses are set within gardens that allow for views over the surrounding landscape, although vegetation on the boundary of the most northerly of these properties would filter views towards the east. The properties are broadly orientated in an easterly direction, with views over Glen Heysdale.

The operational Ben Aketil Wind Farm is visible to the north east, lying to the left of the summit of Ben Aketil, with the full extent of the turbines seen on the ridge above the skyline. The consented Ben Sca Wind Farm would be seen in the same part of the view, with the turbines positioned behind the Ben Aketil turbines, and with the lower parts of these turbines screened by the intervening landform.

Step 3, assessment of likely change:

The wireline shows the proposed Balmeanach Wind Farm would be visible above the skyline. This comprises the upper parts of towers, hubs and blades of T5, T6 and T8, together with the blades or blade tips of T4, T7 and 10 and the hubs and blades of T3 and T9. The direction to the Proposed Development is slightly oblique, to the north east. Whilst the proposed turbines are closer to the properties and appear larger in the view than the operational Ben Aketil Wind Farm and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, they would be adding turbines to a view where wind turbines are already clearly visible. The Proposed Development would comprise a compact cluster of evenly spaced turbines. Whilst there would be some overlapping of blades, particularly T4 and T6, the relative height differences between the turbines (due to spacing and distance) would help to retain a degree of simplicity in the appearance of the Proposed Development. The turbines would also clearly be located beyond the ridge to the right of the summit of Ben Aketil, helping to provide a degree of separation in the view. The closest turbine would also be located at a distance of approximately 3.8km, limiting the potential prominence of the Proposed Development.

The creation of a more complex collective wind farm image would appear to diminish the simplicity of the interior hill backcloth. Although this pattern has been established by the operational and consented developments and added to by the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development would result in a medium magnitude of change in relation to this location. The sensitivity of the residential receptors to the Proposed Development is high. Given the factors described above, it is considered that the Proposed Development would result in a major/moderate effect on visual amenity for the residents of this property. Given that the predicted effect is less than major, it is considered that Step 4 of the RVAA is not required.

The Skye Reinforcement Electricity Transmission Project (which is at application stage) would be visible in the simultaneous view. However, the part of the overhead line that would be seen from this property comprises wooden poles, which would replace the existing overhead line. Therefore, once operational, there would be limited change compared with the baseline context, which would limit any potential cumulative effects with the Proposed Development.

Step 4, further assessment of predicted change:

No further assessment is required.

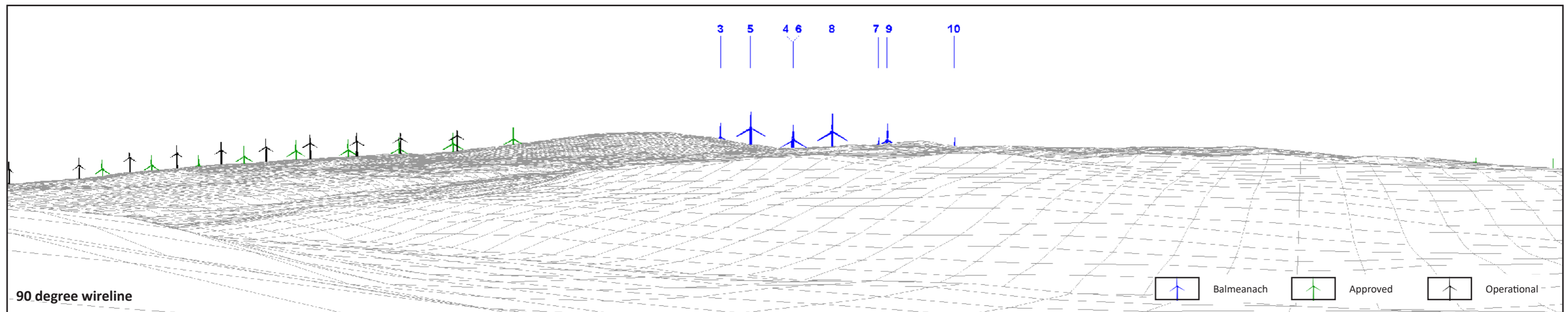
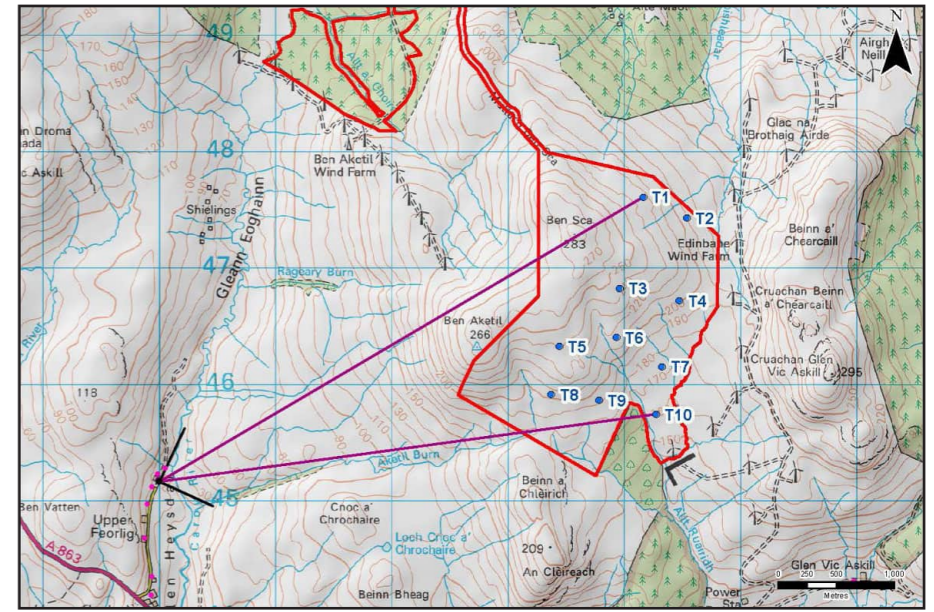


Figure 7.4.9
Location 6: Upper Feorlig

Property location
OS reference: 130005 E 845164 N
Elevation: 31.5 m AOD
Direction of view: 70°
Nearest turbine: 3.444 km

Ben Sca Extension theoretical visibility
Horizontal field of view: 22.8°
No. blade tips visible: 8
No. hubs visible: 3



Step 2, evaluation of baseline visual amenity:

This location represents two detached residential properties within Upper Feorlig, at the junction between the A863 and the minor road to Upper Feorlig. Both properties appear to comprise single storey houses, although access to the more northerly of the properties is limited. The houses are set with open gardens that allow for views over the surrounding landscape. The properties are broadly orientated in an easterly direction, with views over Glen Heysdale.

The operational Ben Aketil Wind Farm is visible to the north east, lying to the left of the summit of Ben Aketil, with the full extent of the turbines seen on the ridge above the skyline. The consented Ben Sca Wind Farm would be seen in the same part of the view, with the turbines positioned behind the Ben Aketil turbines, and with the lower parts of these turbines screened by the intervening landform.

Step 3, assessment of likely change:

The wireline shows the proposed Balmeanach Wind Farm would be visible above the Skyline. This comprises the upper parts of towers, hubs and blades of T5, T8 and T9, together with the blades or blade tips of T3, T6 and T7, and T10. T1 is theoretically visible, but this may not be discernible as such a small proportion of the blade tip is shown in the wireline. The direction to the Proposed Development is slightly oblique, to the north east.

Whilst the turbines are closer to the properties and appear larger in the view than the operational Ben Aketil Wind Farm and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, they would be adding turbines to a view where wind turbines are already clearly visible. The Proposed Development would comprise a compact cluster of evenly spaced turbines. Whilst there would be some overlapping of blades, the relative height differences between the turbines (due to spacing and distance) would help to retain a degree of simplicity in the appearance of the Proposed Development. The turbines would also clearly be located beyond the ridge to the right of the summit of Ben Aketil, helping to provide a degree of separation in the view. The closest turbine would also be located at a distance of approximately 3.4km, limiting the potential for the Proposed Development to be overbearing. The creation of a more complex collective wind farm image would appear to diminish the simplicity of the interior hill backcloth. Although this pattern has been established by the existing and consented developments and added to by the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development would result in a medium magnitude of change in relation to this location. The sensitivity of the residential receptors to the Proposed Development is high. Given the factors described above, it is considered that the Proposed Development would result in a major/moderate effect on visual amenity for the residents of this property. Given that the predicted effect is less than major, it is considered that Step 4 of the RVAA is not required.

The Skye Reinforcement Electricity Transmission Project (which is at application stage) would be visible in the simultaneous view. However, the part of the overhead line that would be seen from this property comprises wooden poles, which would replace the existing overhead line. Therefore, once operational, there would be limited change compared with the baseline context, which would limit any potential cumulative effects with the Proposed Development.

Step 4, further assessment of predicted change:

No further assessment is required.

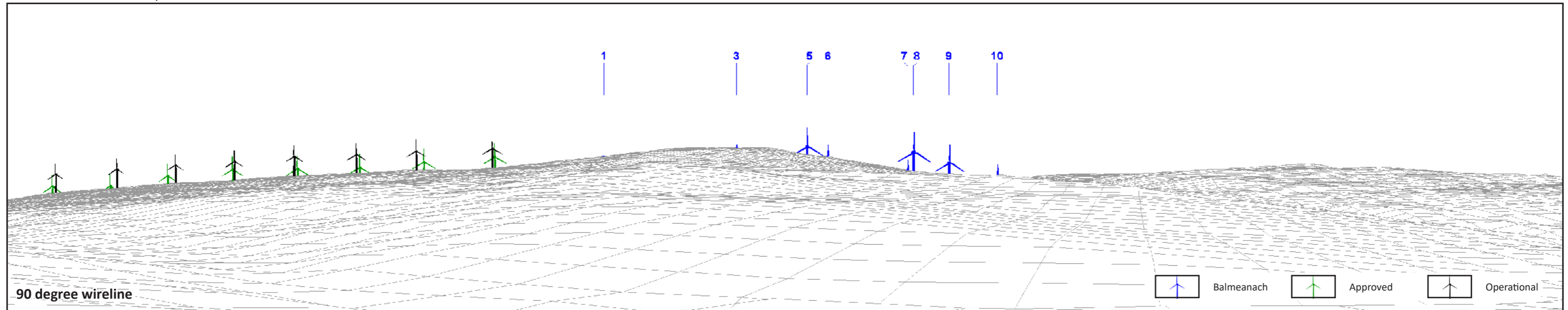
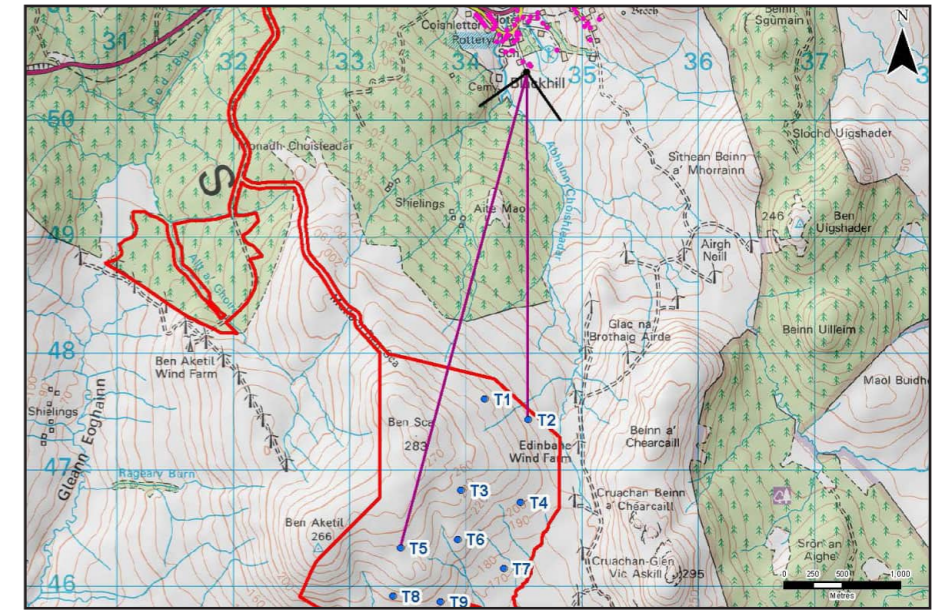
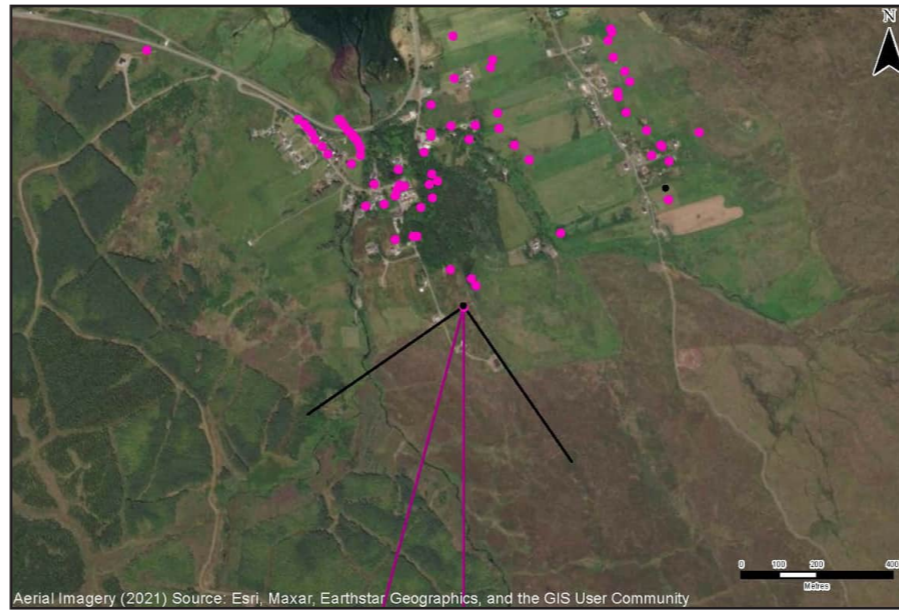


Figure 7.4.10
Location 7: Blackhill

Property location
OS reference: 134528 E 850407 N
Elevation: 32.05 m AOD
Direction of view: 190°
Nearest turbine: 2.821 km

Ben Sca Extension theoretical visibility
Horizontal field of view: 15.1°
No. blade tips visible: 7
No. hubs visible: 4



Step 2, evaluation of baseline visual amenity:

This location is at the southern end of the track which leads south at Blackhill, on the edge of the settlement. The properties comprise a mix of one and two storey properties set within gardens, There is a relatively high degree of enclosure within Blackhill, and also Coishletter to the north east. A mix of the local landform, buildings within the settlement and vegetation all contribute to the sense of enclosure. The orientation of properties within Blackhill and Coishletter varies, but some have open views to the south, towards the Proposed Development.

The location selected represents a worst case view toward the site due to its position on the edge of the settlement, in a slightly elevated position. The view towards the site comprises the low, inland hills, with forestry on part of the skyline.

There are views to the operational Edinbane Wind Farm to the south, and also the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm to the south west. The Edinbane turbines all extend above the skyline, although the bases of more northerly turbines are positioned on the lower slopes of the hillside. The consented Ben Sca turbines are all seen above the skyline, with the lower parts of the towers screened by the intervening landform.

Step 3, assessment of likely change:

The wireline shows seven of the proposed turbines would be visible above the skyline. Turbines T1 and T2 would be the most visible with the upper parts of the towers, hubs and blades seen above the ridge. Turbines T3 and T4 would be set further back, with the tops of the towers, hubs and blades visible. In addition, the blades or blade tips of T5, T6 and T7 would also be visible. However, the landform and forestry would screen the base and sections of the lower base of the proposed turbines.

The proposed turbines would be positioned between Edinbane and Ben Sca Wind Farms, occupying much of the gap between these operational and consented developments. Whilst it would reinforce the pattern of wind farms developments and would infill the gap in between the operational and consented turbines, it would not increase the overall horizontal extent of turbines in views to the south. The Proposed Development would comprise a compact and fairly balanced cluster of turbines. The proposed turbines do not stack behind each other in the view, but there would be a degree of overlap between them. There would be no overlap with either Edinbane or Ben Sca Wind Farms.

The Proposed Development would not be more prominent than the consented turbines, with the closest turbine at a distance of approximately 2.8km and there would be consistency in the overall appearance of the combined development, with the same rotor diameter being used and the similar spacing between turbines apparent. The turbines would also be positioned on the far side of the ridge to the south, beyond the forestry, helping to create a degree of separation.

The Proposed Development would result in a medium magnitude of change in relation to this location. The sensitivity of the residential receptors to the Proposed Development is high. Given the factors described above, it is considered that the Proposed Development would result in a major/moderate effect on visual amenity for the residents of this property. Given that the predicted effect is less than major, it is considered that Step 4 of the RVAA is not required.

Step 4, further assessment of predicted change:

No further assessment is required.

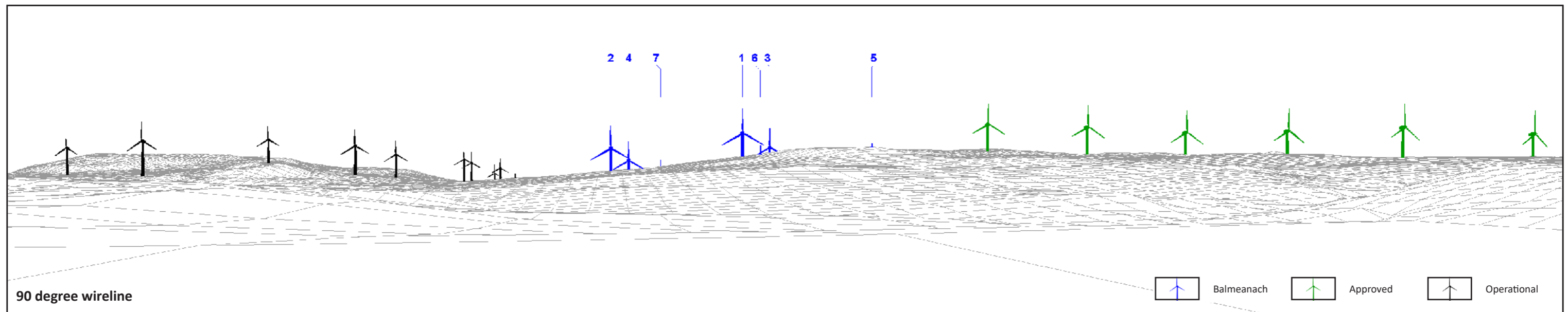
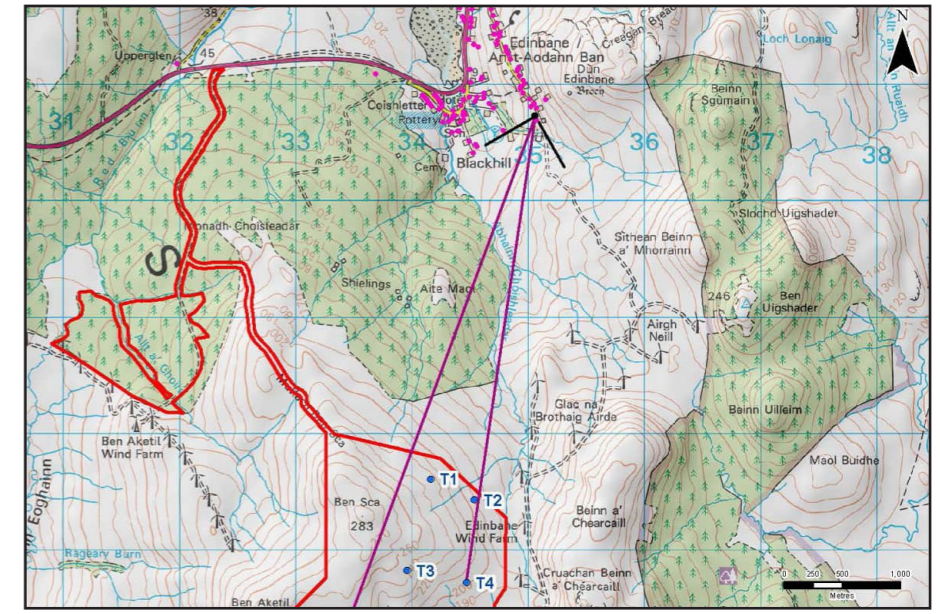


Figure 7.4.11
Location 8: Edinbane Top Road

Property location
 OS reference: 135063 E 850717 N
 Elevation: 64.23 m AOD
 Direction of view: 195°
 Nearest turbine: 3.235 km

Ben Sca Extension theoretical visibility
 Horizontal field of view: 11.9°
 No. blade tips visible: 10
 No. hubs visible: 5



Step 2, evaluation of baseline visual amenity:

This location has been selected to assess the potential effects on residential visual amenity in Upper Edinbane. There are multiple properties along Edinbane Top Road, and this location is positioned at the south end of the road, closer to the Proposed Development. The properties along Edinbane Top Road comprise a mix of one and two storey properties and are all generally positioned in a linear arrangement alongside the road. The main orientation of the properties varies a little, but generally they face southwest, with open views across the glen. The houses are generally set within relatively open gardens, allowing open views over the surrounding landscape. There are views to Loch Greshornish and the Greshornish peninsula to the northwest.

There are views to the operational Edinbane Wind Farm to the south, and also the blade tips of Ben Aketil Wind Farm to the south west. The consented Ben Sca Wind Farm would be positioned to the south west. The Edinbane turbines all extend above the skyline, although the bases of more northerly turbines are positioned on the lower slopes of the hillside. The consented Ben Sca turbines are all seen above the skyline, with the lower parts of the towers screened by the intervening landform.

Step 3, assessment of likely change:

The wireline shows all 10 of the proposed turbines would be visible above the skyline. The full extent of proposed Turbines 1 and 2 would be seen, together with the majority of proposed Turbines 3 and 4 further south. The hubs and blades of a further two turbines (Turbine 7 and 6) would also be visible, together with the blades and blade tips of four turbines (Turbines 5, 8, 9 and 10). The Proposed Development would be seen above the skyline and occupy a limited extent of the horizon. The Proposed Development would relate to the presence of operational and consented wind turbines in the view, and above the existing conifer plantation. Whilst wind farms are an established part of the view from this location, and the consented Ben Sca development would continue this pattern, the Proposed Development would occupy part of the horizon where wind turbines are currently absent.

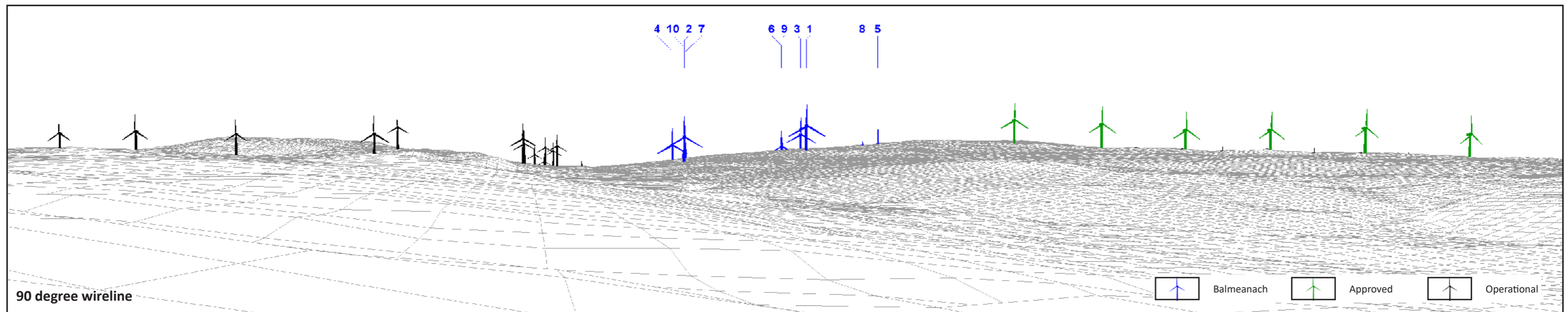
The proposed turbines would appear as large structures within the landscape. From this viewpoint the taller turbines of the Proposed Development would appear similar in size to the consented Ben Sca turbines. The scale and layout of the consented and Proposed Development would relate to some degree to the extensive horizontal scale of their surroundings. By being seen partly beyond the skyline, they would appear as part of the distant landscape, rather than seeming to directly impose upon the immediate space surrounding the properties and the middle ground of the view formed by the glen. Nonetheless, they would seem to diminish the perceived vertical scale of the hill slopes facing this viewpoint.

The consented Ben Sca turbines and those of the Proposed Development would appear larger than the existing Edinbane turbines, marked most obviously by their difference of rotor diameter and rotation (when orientated towards the viewer) rather than their variation of tip height. The location of the Proposed Development between Edinbane Wind Farm and Ben Sca Wind Farm would infill the gap and help alleviate the difference in scale between the existing and consented wind farms forming a single cluster combining to be read as 'one wind farm'. As the proposed turbines would be located to the south, views towards them would be oblique to the main orientation of the properties. They would also be away from Loch Greshornish, which forms a key point of focus in views from the settlement.

This RVVA concludes that Balmeanach Wind Farm would result in a medium magnitude of change in relation to this location. The sensitivity of the residential receptors to the Proposed Development is high. However, given the proposed wind farm would be less prominent than the operational and consented windfarms within the skyline, a moderate effect would accrue to the properties. As the predicted effect is less than major, it is considered that Step 4 of the RVAA is not required.

Step 4, further assessment of predicted change:

No further assessment is required.



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