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Introduction

7.1 **Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual** of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report which accompanied the application considered the potential significant landscape and visual effects that could arise from the Proposed Development. This SEI Chapter considers any change to landscape and visual effects that would be caused by the revised layout of the Proposed Development, in comparison to the effects previously presented in **EIA Chapter 7**.

7.2 The following key documents should be read in conjunction with this SEI Chapter, SEI Figures and Visuals:

- EIA Report Volume 2 – **Chapter 3: Landscape and Visual**;
- EIA Report Volume 3a – **EIA Figures 3.1 to 3.11**;
- EIA Report Volume 3b-e – **EIA Visualisations**; and
- EIA Report Volume 4 – **Technical Appendices 7.1 to 7.4**.

Consultee Responses to EIA Report

7.3 The consultee responses on landscape and visual effects are set out in **Table 7-1.**

Table 7-1: Consultee Responses

Consultee	Summary of Key Issues	Responses to Comments
NatureScot **12 April 2024**	Advise that the Proposed Development would result in significant adverse effects on the character of parts of the Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Skye and Lochlash and Stepped Moorland Landscape Character Types and on the wider seascape character of Loch Bracadale. However, NatureScot conclude that these significant effects would be limited in extent.	**EIA Chapter 7** notes that whilst the Proposed Development is predicted to give rise to some moderate adverse level effects on parts of these character areas; these are considered to be not significant.
	Consider that the Proposed Development would also contribute to the widespread cumulative significant effects on this distinctive landscape and the wider area. Significant combined cumulative effects would be likely to arise with consented and proposed development scenarios.	Due to the greater height and extent of other cumulative wind farms, it is not considered likely that any increased cumulative landscape and visual effects would occur due to the Proposed Development.
THC Outdoor Access Officer **29 November 2023**	Require an Access Management Plan (AMP) to be developed in consultation with the Highland Council as Access Authority and other relevant partner organisations such as NatureScot. No development shall commence until a detailed Outdoor Access Plan of public access across the site (as existing, during construction and following completion) has been submitted to, and	Further consultation with the Outdoor Access officer confirmed that they were satisfied that the access management proposals and requirement for an AMP has been fully addressed in **EIA Report TA14.2: Preliminary Access Management Plan (PAMP)** of Volume 4b of the EIA Report. **EIA TA14.2** remains valid and will be updated to a final version via a planning

Consultee	Summary of Key Issues	Responses to Comments
	approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. Would like to see existing access routes improved as part of the development and waymarked, to secure their continued enjoyment for all access users.	condition. An updated proposed paths plan figure (**SEI Figure 14.2.1**) has been provided.

Design Amendments

7.4 The design amendments from the Proposed Development application layout (as detailed in the EIA Report) to the revised layout relevant to the landscape and visual assessment are detailed in **SEI Chapter 2**, and include:

- removal of Turbine 1 (T1), associated track to T1 and associated foundation and crane hardstanding;
- amendments to track to reduce the length of track required, remove spurs and turning heads where possible and reorientate T4 and T5 crane hardstandings;
- relocation of the proposed substation from the Ben Sca ridgeline to within the area of Borrow Pit 3, to provide a closer connection route to the Grid Supply Point (GSP) at Edinbane;
- inclusion of proposed link track to be part of the Proposed Development in the event that the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm does not get built; and
- addition of the permanent construction compound (Compound 1) to the south of the A850 to ensure that the proposed link track would be able to be built to the site (in the absence of the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm).

7.5 No other changes to the site layout (turbines and associated infrastructure) are proposed. A description of the site design and detail of the Proposed Development is provided in **Chapter 2: Site Design** and **Chapter 3 Description of Development**.

Revised Figures, Wirelines, and Visualisations

Revised Figures

7.6 In order to update the graphic information previously issued with the EIA Report, a series of revised figures have been produced for the SEI as follows (superseding the EIA Figures with the same numbering where relevant):

- **SEI Figure 7.1**: Study Area
- **SEI Figure 7.5e**: Tip Height Comparative ZTV – Application Vs. Revised Layout
- **SEI Figure 7.6**: Proposed Substation ZTV
- **SEI Figure 7.7**: Landscape Designations and Visibility
- **SEI Figure 7.8**: Landscape Character and Visibility
- **SEI Figure 7.9**: Key Routes and Settlements with Visibility
- **SEI Figure 7.13**: Cumulative Sites within 15km

- **SEI Figure 7.15a**: Cumulative ZTV Revised Balmeanach With Other Proposed Wind Farm Developments

7.7 Note that **SEI Figure 7.15a** comprises a new figure and has been numbered in this way to ensure the viewpoint photography and visualisations figures can remain consistent with the EIA Report.

Revised Visualisations

7.8 In order to update the visualisations previously issued with the EIA Report, a series of revised figures have been produced for the SEI as contained in **SEI Volumes 3b** to **3e**:

- **SEI Volume 3b** – NatureScot Visualisations for VP1 to VP10
- **SEI Volume 3c** – NatureScot Visualisations for VP11 to VP20
- **SEI Volume 3d** – THC Visualisations for VP1 to VP10
- **SEI Volume 3e** – THC Visualisations for VP11 to VP20

Assessment of Design Amendment Effects

7.9 Consideration has been given to the design changes between the application layout assessed in the EIA Report and revised layout in terms of the following aspects:

- landscape fabric – due to ground works and hardstandings, access tracks, substation, compounds and borrow pits including direct or perceptual effects;
- landscape character;
- visual change – extent of wind farm visible in landscape, prominence in the landscape, aesthetic considerations including stacking and complexity; and
- nature of effect in terms of adverse or beneficial.

7.10 Any landscape and visual changes identified have then been cross-referenced to the levels of effect identified in **EIA Chapter 7**. A judgement has then been made as to whether the level and nature of effects have altered due to the amendments made to the Proposed Development.

Comparative ZTV

7.11 **SEI Figure 7.5e** shows a ZTV study comparing the application layout to the revised layout. The green tone illustrates the extent of visibility for both layouts, the blue tone where only the revised layout is visible and the yellow tone where only the application layout is visible. The difference being the removal of T1, in the revised layout. The yellow tone represents areas where only T1 of the application layout would be visible. The removal of T1 from the revised layout therefore removes theoretical visibility from the yellow tone areas across the ZTV area.

7.12 The removal of T1 in the Proposed Development results in a reduction in turbine visibility overall. However, this is of limited extent and more apparent from more distant parts of the study area. The most notable areas where visibility would be reduced as result of the removal of T1 are within areas of sea in the north western part of the study area.

Landscape Effects

7.13 A reduction in foundations and associated turbine/crane hardstanding would occur due to the removal of T1. This would lead to a reduced adverse effects on the landscape fabric as a result of the Proposed Development. Similarly, the reduction in the length of track required would comprise a beneficial change compared with the application layout.

7.14 The relocation of the proposed substation from the top of the Ben Sca hill ridgeline to a position within Borrow Pit 3 would also result in reduced adverse effects compared with the application layout. The ZTV for the substation (**SEI Figure 7.6**) shows that the pattern of visibility would be considerably different to the ZTV included in the EIA Report (**EIA Figure 7.6**). In the application layout, the visibility associated with the proposed substation primarily relates to land to the north west, west and south west of the site. However, visibility for the revised layout would be to the south west and south. The lower elevation of the substation in the revised layout means the ZTV is less extensive and does not overlap with areas that are more likely to be accessed by the public, e.g. residential areas, local roads and core paths. Overall, the movement of substation would result in this element of the Proposed Development being moved from a more conspicuous location within the site to a more recessive position. In addition, the baseline landscape within Borrow Pit 3 would be disturbed by the extraction activities and utilising this land for the substation will limit the extent of disturbance across the site overall.

7.15 The addition of a permanent construction compound (Compound 1) to the south the A850 would increase the footprint of the Proposed Development. However, this proposed construction compound would be positioned in an area which has already been disturbed as it was used for the Ben Aketil construction compound and is within commercial forestry, limiting the perception of any change in relation landscape and visual receptors.

7.16 The changes caused by the revised layout of the Proposed Development would alter the effects of on landscape fabric, with some changes being positive compared with the application layout and other changes being negative. The most notable change would be the removal of T1 and the associated infrastructure. However, overall, the changes would not influence the judgements included within the **EIA Chapter 7**.

7.17 The reduction in turbine numbers to nine in the revised layout of the Proposed Development is considered result in a reduced adverse change in terms of effects on the landscape and its character. However, the perception of that change would be limited, due to the remaining nine turbines included, although reduced compared with the application layout.

7.18 T1 would have been one of the more elevated turbines, positioned within the northern part of the site and to the east of the summit of Ben Sca and its cairn. Its removal from the Proposed Development layout would reduce the horizontal extent of the wind farm from certain locations, contributing to a more compact array. It would also remove one of the turbines that is closer to the settlement of Edinbane. In addition, as T1 would have been one of the more elevated turbines within the wind farm, its removal would make a small contribution to reducing the overall prominence of the Proposed Development

7.19 It is predicted that the above factors would generate a reduced adverse change in landscape effects overall on the landscape character of LCT 359 Upland Sloping Moorland, compared with the application layout. However, this change would not be sufficient to reduce the level of landscape effects originally presented in **EIA Chapter 7**.

7.20 The landscape and visual assessment (LVIA) for the application layout of the Proposed Development grouped certain LCTs together to form landscape character areas. This grouped LCT 359 with adjacent LCTs in the Interior Skye Hills character area. In respect

of this character area, the LVIA identified that beyond 5km of the site the pattern of visibility would become fragmented. It also notes that Balmeanach Wind Farm would form part of a group of existing wind farms, with the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm also located in the immediate context. The sensitivity of the landscape character area to the Proposed Development, with consideration of the influence of baseline wind farms, was considered to result in a moderate and not significant effect.

7.21 In relation to a wider context, moderate, not significant, adverse effects were identified in relation to the Greshornish and coastal edge of Loch Snizort landscape character area and Bracadale landscape character area. The predicted effects on other landscape character areas assessed were less than moderate and not significant.

7.22 In relation to landscape character **EIA Chapter 7** identified moderate adverse effects on three landscape character areas: Interior Skye Hills, Greshornish and Coastal Edge of Loch Snizort, and Bracadale. These effects were assessed as being not significant. For the Interior Skye Hill Character Area, the effect was considered to be not significant due to the change relative to the baseline pattern of operation wind farms. 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.

7.23 The nature of the revised layout of the Proposed Development, and changes compared with the application layout would not alter these judgements. The key change comprises the removal of T1, which would result in a limited reduction in the size/scale of the Proposed Development.

7.24 In relation to landscape designations the **EIA Chapter 7** concluded:

"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.

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."

7.25 The revised layout would not alter the assessment judgements in relation to national and local landscape designations. The limited degree of change defined by the revised layout of the Proposed Development, would not alter the predicted effects on the designated landscapes within the LVIA study area.

Visual Effects

7.26 Reductions in visual effects are identified at a number of viewpoints as illustrated in the updated viewpoint visualisations (**Volumes 3b-3e**). These viewpoints are from the same locations as those used for the EIA Report and have the same numbering as the EIA viewpoints. The removal of T1 inevitably generates a reduced adverse visual effect

compared with the application layout. The visual change differs with location around the site due to the Proposed Development comprising a cluster of turbines.

7.27 The change resulting from the removal of T1 is most notable from locations closer to the site. This is demonstrated by Viewpoint 2 at Edinbane Top Road where the removal of T1 removes one of the closest turbines to this viewpoint. T1 was located towards the centre of the wind farm and its removal would not alter the horizonal extent of the Proposed Development but would remove one of the more prominent turbines. It would also improve the composition of the wind farm from this location by reducing the overlap between the turbines in seen towards the centre of the array. Similar would be the case for Viewpoint 5 (A850 between Dunvegan and Edinbane) and Viewpoint 7 (Minor road to Greshornish) where T1 was one of the more prominent turbines within the Proposed Development.

7.28 As T1 was positioned on the northern edge of the Proposed Development, there are locations where its removal would reduce the horizontal extent of the wind farm. Examples of where this is evident are Viewpoint 6 (Junction of A863 and B884 at Lonmore), Viewpoint 10 (A850/A87 (West of Borve), Viewpoint 11 (Macleod's Table North/Healabhal Mhor) and Viewpoint 15 (The Storr).

7.29 The arrangement of turbines within the site means there are locations where the removal of T1 would improve the composition of the wind farm by reducing the potential for overlapping turbines. This change is described above in relation to Viewpoint 2, but would also be notable at other locations such as Viewpoint 3 (A863 road near Gearymore) and Viewpoint 17 (A87 road near Cuidrach).

7.30 At certain locations the influence of removing T1 is less apparent. The change becomes less noticeable with increasing distance, particularly when this is considered in the context of the baseline wind farms close to the site. There are also locations where the intervening landform limits the visibility of T1 and therefore reduces the change associated with its removal. This is notable at locations such as Viewpoint 1 (A863, Junction with road to Feorlig), Viewpoint 8 (B885 Road) and Viewpoint 14 (Totaig).

7.31 Overall, it is concluded that the visual change from the application layout to the revised layout of the Proposed Development would be limited but result in reduced adverse effects.

7.32 The level of visual effect identified in the **EIA Chapter 7** (paragraphs 7.225 and 7.228) is summarised as follows:

"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 7 (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 Borve); 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." (Paragraph 7.225)

"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." (Paragraph 7.228)

7.33 Given the low level of change identified from the viewpoints, there is no reason to anticipate any change to the levels of effects identified in the summary of **EIA Chapter 7** and therefore judgements remain valid.

Cumulative Development Update

Cumulative Baseline

7.34 In this section the revised layout of the Proposed Development is considered against the operational/approved and application/scoping wind farm scenarios as set out in **Table 5-1** of **SEI Chapter 5**. The key changes to schemes which were not considered previously in the **EIA Chapter 7** are:

- Ben Sca Redesign (application - revised layout)
- Ben Aketil Repowering and Extension;
- Glen Ullinish II Redesign (application – revised layout)
- Beinn Mheadhonach Redesign (application)
- Breakish (Scoping layout);
- Edinbane Repowering and Extension (Scoping layout); and
- Edinbane – Land at 4 Edinbane (Screening Layout).

Cumulative Scenarios

7.35 The combined effects which would result, should the Proposed Development be constructed alongside the proposed Ben Sca Wind Farm, are discussed in **Volume 5** of this **SEI Report**.

7.36 The cumulative effects of the Proposed Development are reviewed below in terms of all other existing/consented wind farm sites and application/scoping scenarios as identified in **Table 5-1 in SEI Chapter 5.**

- Cumulative Scenario 1 – The Proposed Development with operational and consented wind farm developments including:
  - Ben Aketil Wind Farm and Extension;
  - Edinbane Wind Farm;
  - Ben Sca Wind Farm and Extension;
  - Sumardale Croft Wind Turbine;
  - Meadale Farm Wind Turbine;
  - Beinn Mheadhonach; and
  - Glen Ullinish Wind Farm.

- Cumulative Scenario 2 - The Proposed Development with the application and scoping site wind farms[1]:
  - Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm (revised layout);
  - Ben Aketil Repowering and Extension;
  - Glen Ullinish II Wind Farm (Redesign);
  - Beinn Mheadhonach Redesign;
  - Breakish Wind Farm;
  - Edinbane Repowering and Extension; and
  - Edinbane – Land at 4 Edinbane.

Cumulative ZTV Studies

7.37 The baseline cumulative wind farm context is unchanged compared with the assessment included in the EIA Report. **SEI Figure 7.15a** shows a ZTV study comparing the visibility of the revised layout of the Proposed Development to the visibility of the combined layouts of all other proposed wind farm developments. The green tone therefore illustrates the extent of visibility where both of these scenarios are visible, the blue tone where only the Proposed Development would be visible, and the yellow tone represents where at least one of the proposed wind farms would be visible but not the Proposed Development.

7.38 As illustrated by the green tone, the Proposed Development would always be visible in conjunction with at least one other cumulative wind farm within the 15km area presented in **SEI Figure 7.15a**.

7.39 A series of wireline drawings have been produced to illustrate the cumulative visual effects of the various wind farms in the two cumulative scenarios. Similar wirelines were prepared for the cumulative assessment in **EIA Volume 3b to 3e** and should be compared with the wirelines presented in **SEI Volume 3b to 3e** to provide an illustration of the predicted cumulative changes.

Cumulative Effects

7.40 Scenario 1 represents the scenario comprising existing operational wind farms and the consented Ben Sca and Extension Wind Farm. The removal of T1 in Scenario 1 is anticipated to have a small reduction in adverse effects due to the reduction of the overall cumulative turbine numbers. However, this reduction in turbine numbers is unlikely to be perceived within the overall spread of cumulative turbines in this scenario.

7.41 The Scenario 2 developments have been reviewed to focus on identifying any notable cumulative changes between the application layout and the revised layout of the Proposed Development. A number of proposed wind developments in Scenario 2 could replace certain existing/consented sites or not, depending on planning decisions, creating a large number of potential combinations. These potential repowering developments were not included in the cumulative assessment for the application layout in the EIA Report. In

[1] Note that the operational single wind turbines at Sumardale Croft and Meadale Farm (which would not be replaced by proposed developments) are not included in this scenario as they are located relatively far from the site and do not make a notable contribution to cumulative effects.

addition, there are further proposed wind farms that were not included in the cumulative assessment for the application layout in the EIA Report, with these comprising:

- Ben Sca Wind Farm Redesign (revised layout);
- Glen Ullinish II Wind Farm (Redesign);
- Beinn Mheadhonach Redesign;
- Breakish Wind Farm;
- Edinbane – Land at 4 Edinbane.

7.42 The Proposed Development would clearly contribute to the cumulative effects of wind farms, particularly where perceived in combination with adjacent wind farm layouts.

7.43 Seen from the north and north east (e.g. Viewpoint 2 (Edinbane Top Road), Viewpoint 7 (Minor road to Greshornish), Viewpoint 9 (Kingsburgh) and Viewpoint 13 (A87 road near Cuidrach), the Proposed Development would be seen within the context of Ben Aketil Repowering and Ben Sca Redesign, and Edinbane Repowering and Extension, with Glen Ullinish II visible in the background behind the Edinbane development. Balmeanach would continue to occupy the ridgeline between these wind farms. The removal of T1 from Balmeanach Wind Farm within this context would have little effect with a marginal change to the complexity of visible turbines.

7.44 In views from the north west i.e. Viewpoint 5 (A850 between Dunvegan and Edinbane), the Proposed Development would be positioned behind the Ben Sca ridgeline. It would be seen between Ben Sca Redesign and Ben Aketil Wind Farms, which would comprise the more prominent wind farms from this viewpoint. The Edinbane Repowering and Glen Ullinish II developments would also be visible to the south east, behind Ben Sca Redesign. The removal of T1 would have a limited effect cumulative effects in this scenario. However, T1 would have been visible behind the Ben Sca Redesign development and therefore its removal would result in a limited simplification of the view towards the Proposed Development

7.45 In views to the west, Balmeanach would be seen between Ben Aketil Repowering, Ben Sca Redesign, to the left, and Edinbane Repowering and Glen Ullinish II to the right. In this context Balmeanach would make a relatively limited contribution to cumulative effects The removal of T1 in the context would make minimal difference as much of this turbine is screened by the intervening landform from Viewpoint 1 (A863, Junction with road to Feorlig), Viewpoint 4 (Roag) and Viewpoint 6 (Junction of A863 and B884 at Lonmore). At a greater distance to the east, such as Viewpoint 11 (Macleod's Table North/Healabhal Mhor), the increased elevation of the landform means a greater proportion of the Proposed Development would be seen, but as stated in relation to the closer locations this would made a limited contribution to cumulative effects in the context of the proposed wind developments that form part of Scenario 2.

7.46 To the south of the site, reflected in Viewpoint 3 (A863 road near Gearymore), the contribution Balmeanach Wind Farm would make to cumulative effects in the context of Scenario 2 would be limited. It would lie between Ben Aketil Repowering, Ben Sca Redesign, to the left, and Edinbane Repowering and Glen Ullinish II. Whilst it would intensify the overall pattern of development, it would not extend to the overall horizontal angle of view occupied by wind turbines. Balmeanach Wind Farm would also be less prominent due to the fewer turbines in the Proposed Development and the lower blade tip height.

7.47 To the west and south west, Balmeanach Wind Farm would be positioned behind the Edinbane Repowering and Glen Ullinish II development. The presence of these proposed

wind farms in front of Balmeanach Wind Farm would greatly limit the contribution the Proposed Development would make to cumulative effects. In this context, the removal of T1 would make discernible differences to cumulative effects.

7.48 The cumulative changes between the application and revised layout of the Proposed Development comprise the removal of T1, movement of the borrow pit and introduction of an additional construction compound to the south of the A850. The key change to the Proposed Development is the removal of T1, with the other changes being less conspicuous elements. The above analysis supports this approach, and changes linked to the removal of T1 would result in limited reductions in adverse effects compared with the application layout.

Cumulative Effects on Landscape Character

7.49 A number of Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) are identified in **EIA Chapter 7** and used to assess the level of landscape effect.

7.50 The changes to the Proposed Development would not increase the extent of the visibility of the Proposed Development (as illustrated by **SEI Figure 7.5e**) and therefore would not alter the nature of visibility in relation to baseline cumulative wind farms as described in the **EIA Chapter 7**. **SEI Figure 7.15a** demonstrates that, in relation to proposed wind farms (as included in Scenario 2 described above) Balmeanach Wind Farm would not be seen where other proposed wind farms are not predicted to be visible. In addition, the proposed changes to the Proposed Development would result in relatively limited changes to the landscape of the site. These factors, as a result of the Proposed Development, would combine to limit the level of change in terms of landscape character identified in the EIA Report.

7.51 Cumulative Scenario 2 was not assessed in the EIA Report for Balmeanach Wind Farm. It is clear from the ZTV in **SEI Figure 7.15a** and the visualisations included in **Volumes 3b** to **3e** that, in the context of Scenario 2, Balmeanach Wind Farm would make a notably reduced contribution to cumulative effects resulting from proposed wind farm developments, compared with the current baseline scenario. Similar to the baseline scenario, Balmeanach Wind Farm would be located between the proposed wind farms. It would reinforce the overall pattern of development. However, Balmeanach Wind Farm is relatively limited in relation to the number of turbines proposed, with nine turbines included in the Proposed Development. In addition, the Proposed Development involves a lower blade tip height compared with Ben Aketil Repowering, Glen Ullinish II and Edinbane Repowering and this height difference is apparent in the cumulative wireline visualisations. The lower height of the turbines within the Proposed Development also means that visible aviation lighting would not be required on the nacelles. The removal of T1 would result in limited alterations to the appearance of the Proposed Development and a reduction in its potential landscape and visual effects, including its contribution to cumulative effects.

7.52 The sensitivity of the landscape in the context of Balmeanach Wind Farm is assessed as being between medium and high. In the context of the baseline assessment and cumulative assessment for Balmeanach Wind Farm the magnitude of change resulting from the addition of the Proposed Development was assessed as being between medium and slight, and the landscape effects were assessed as being between moderate and minor and, in all cases not significant. Cumulative Scenario 2 would increase the scale of wind farm development surrounding the site. It would result in a greater number of turbines being present and those turbines would also be larger, with the majority of the proposed developments having a maximum blade tip height of 200m. Assessed in relation to this pattern of proposed wind farm developments, Balmeanach Wind Farm

would make a reduced contribution to cumulative effects compared with the cumulative scenarios assessed in **EIA Chapter 7** and therefore it is predicted that the level of cumulative effect would not be significant. It is also notable that, as with the baseline pattern of wind farm development, Balmeanach Wind Farm would be set within the pattern of developments that make up Scenario 2. Therefore, the Proposed Development would continue to be seen in the context of other wind farms.

7.53 No significant effects are identified in relation to landscape designations for the Proposed Development, although it is acknowledged that significant visual effects are identified at certain viewpoints within landscape designations. As described above in relation to landscape character, when considered in relation to Scenario 2, the relative increase in the scale of wind farm development surrounding the site would mean that the contribution that Balmeanach Wind Farm would make to cumulative effects would reduce. Therefore, the potential contribution that Balmeanach Wind Farm would make to cumulative effects, in the context of Scenario 2, are not predicted to be significant.

Cumulative Effects on Visual Receptors

7.54 In **EIA Chapter 7**, significant effects are predicted in relation to visual receptors at Edinbane, Roag, Lonmore and Greshornish, within 7.5km to the north east, north, west and south west of the site and this judgement would be applicable to Scenario 1. This results from the high sensitivity of the visual receptor and a medium magnitude of change. The restricted scale of visual change (identified in the review of visual effects viewpoints) as a result of the revised layout of the Proposed Development i.e. the removal of turbine T1, indicates that no notable changes to this judgement would occur for any visual receptors considered in the EIA Report and therefore effects remain significant for these visual receptors within 7.5km of the site.

7.55 The cumulative scenario that includes all proposed wind farm developments (Scenario 2) would reduce the overall contribution that Balmeanach Wind Farm would make to cumulative visual effects. It would result in a situation where Balmeanach Wind Farm would be less prominent due to the relative size/scale of the other proposed wind farms, in terms of the number of turbines proposed and/or the blade tip height of the proposed turbines. As stated in relation to cumulative effects on landscape receptors, the lower height of the turbines within the Proposed Development also means that visible aviation lighting would not be required on the nacelles. Therefore, no additional significant cumulative effects are identified for Scenario 2 and significant effects would remain at visual receptors with 7.5km of the site.

Summary of Changes to the Significance of Effects

7.56 The proposed visual or landscape changes, due to the revised layout of the Proposed Development, would not lead to any increase or decrease in the levels of effect reported in the **EIA Chapter 7**. The cumulative scenario that includes all proposed wind farm developments would reduce the overall contribution that Balmeanach Wind Farm would make to cumulative visual effects. It would result in a situation where Balmeanach Wind Farm would be less prominent due to the potential context of the proposed wind farm developments.

Conclusions

7.57 The landscape and visual assessment contained within **EIA Chapter 7** remains valid due to the limited reduction in landscape and visual change, caused by the amendments to the

Proposed Development. The cumulative scenario that includes all proposed wind farm developments would reduce the overall contribution that Balmeanach Wind Farm would make to cumulative visual effects. It would result in a situation where Balmeanach Wind Farm would be less prominent due to the potential context of the proposed wind farm developments.