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INTRODUCTION

7.1 This Chapter assesses the landscape and visual effects of the Clashindarroch II Wind Farm (the proposed development), which is described in Chapter 3: Description of Development. The assessment has been undertaken by SLR Consulting Limited.

7.2 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is based on an indicative turbine with a 110m hub height, 70m blade length and maximum height to blade tip of 180m, as shown on Figure 3.3.

7.3 The LVIA considers the effects on:

- landscape fabric which would be caused by changes to the physical form of the landscape and its elements as a result of the proposed development;
- landscape character and designated landscapes, which would be caused by changes in the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape as a result of the proposed development; and
- visual amenity which would be caused by changes in the appearance of the landscape as a result of the proposed development.

7.4 Impacts on landscape fabric occur when there is physical change to components of the landscape: landform, land use or land cover. Impacts on landscape character occur when there is change to the key characteristics of the landscape and the associated distinct and recognisable pattern of elements which give it a particular character. Visual amenity impacts comprise changes in views of the landscape and the overall effects on visual amenity.

7.5 The Chapter is supported by the following:

- Technical Appendix 7.1: Visualisation Methodology;
- Technical Appendix 7.2: Viewpoint Assessment;
- Technical Appendix 7.3: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA); and
- a series of Figures contained in Volume 3 of this Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA Report).

LEGISLATION, PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

7.6 A desk study of the national, regional and local planning and landscape guidance relevant to the LVIA has been carried out and the findings summarised in paragraphs 7.7 – 7.23. The Site lies within the administrative area of Aberdeenshire Council.

Legislation

Electricity Act 1989

7.7 The Electricity Act 1989 requires that developers “do what [they] reasonably can to mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects". In accordance with this, the environmental

assessments, including the landscape and visual assessment, have strongly influenced the form of the proposed development, and have sought to mitigate effects on the natural beauty of the countryside.

Planning Policy

Scottish Planning Policy

7.8 Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) (The Scottish Government, 2014, Ref. 7.1) sets out national planning policies. It broadly set out requirements to consider landscapes and landscape character in decision making, with an emphasis placed on nationally designated landscapes and Wild Land.

National Scenic Areas

7.9 Paragraph 212 of SPP sets out the following policy in respect of National Scenic Areas (NSAs): *'Development that affects a National Park, National Scenic Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest or a National Nature Reserve should only be permitted where:*

- *the objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the area will not be compromised; or*
- *any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance.'*

7.10 NSAs have been scoped out of the LVIA as they lie in the outer regions of the 40km LVIA study area and do not have potential for significant effects resulting from the proposed development.

Gardens and Designed Landscapes

7.11 In Paragraph 148 of SPP protection is given to Gardens and Designed Landscapes: *'Planning authorities should protect and, where appropriate, seek to enhance gardens and designed landscapes included in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes and designed landscapes of regional and local importance.'*

Wild Land

7.12 Paragraph 200 of SPP states the importance of Wild Land: *'Wild land character is displayed in some of Scotland's remoter upland, mountain and coastal areas, which are very sensitive to any form of intrusive human activity and have little or no capacity to accept new development. Plans should identify and safeguard the character of areas of wild land as identified on the 2014 SNH map of wild land areas.'*

National Planning Framework 3

7.13 Scotland's third National Planning Framework (NPF3) was published by The Scottish Government in June 2014 (Ref. 7.2). NPF3 is a long-term strategy for Scotland and is the spatial expression of the Government's Economic Strategy and plans for development and investment in infrastructure. It recognises the value of Scotland's landscape in terms of scenic quality, peoples' quality of life, national identity and the visitor economy. It places a particular emphasis on nationally designated landscapes and wild land.

Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan

7.14 The current Local Development Plan (LDP) for Aberdeenshire was adopted in April 2017 (Ref. 7.3).

7.15 Policy C2 Renewable Energy of the Aberdeenshire Council LDP 2017 (Ref. 7.3) states that Aberdeenshire Council support wind developments which are in appropriate sites and of the right design. The policy also refers to detailed supplementary guidance 'Strategic Landscape Capacity Assessment for Wind Turbines' (SLCAWEA) (2014) (Ref. 7.4) as a relevant consideration.

7.16 Policy E2 Landscape of the Aberdeenshire Council LDP 2017 (Ref. 7.3) provides guidance on the approach to development and the landscape. It is supported by supplementary guidance 'Special Landscape Areas' (SLAs) (2017; Ref. 7.5) which defines areas of particular valued landscapes within the county and sets out guidance to ensure their protection.

Strategic Landscape Capacity Assessment for Wind Energy in Aberdeenshire (March 2014)

7.17 The SLCAWEA was produced by Ironside Farrar for Aberdeenshire Council, published in March 2014 (Ref. 7.4). It assesses the landscape sensitivity, the capacity of landscape units to accommodate change and provides advice on how the scale, siting and design of development should be informed by local landscape character.

7.18 In brief, the SLCAWEA (Ref. 7.4) concludes that there is no underlying capacity for wind turbine development in the Moorland Plateaux Landscape Character Areas (LCA) in which the proposed development would be located, primarily due *"to their importance to the Aberdeenshire landscape, high visual prominence, high relative wildness and recreational value."* It is however noted that within the Aberdeenshire Council LDP 2017 (Ref. 7.3), the Site under the Spatial Framework for Wind Energy lies within Group 3 areas which are "*areas with potential subject to detailed consideration"*.

7.19 The scope of an LVIA does not specifically consider capacity but the assessment conclusions regarding the extent and scale of landscape and visual effects of the proposed development contribute to the discussion and interpretation of the capacity guidelines which is responded to in the Planning Statement accompanying this EIA Report.

Guidance

7.20 The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA)'s 'The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Third Edition (GLVIA3) (December 2013; Ref. 7.6) is the key guidance that informs the methodology for the assessment of effects of the proposed development on landscape character and visual amenity.

7.21 Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) also has a number of guidance documents that are of relevance to LVIA. In June 2015, SNH published Spatial Planning for Onshore Wind Turbines – Natural Heritage Considerations (Ref. 7.7). This guidance document focuses on providing advice in developing spatial frameworks for wind energy developments. The guidance is aimed at planning authorities and whilst the document does not set out specific site location advice, or any new policy positions or technical requirements for applicants, it does highlight the importance of natural heritage considerations and provides links to existing policy and guidance documents. Specifically relevant to LVIA, the guidance includes advice on the use of Landscape Character Assessment, Landscape Capacity Studies, and Cumulative Impacts with reference to the specific SNH onshore wind farm

guidance.

7.22 SNH have recently updated their 'Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape' (SNH, 2017; Ref. 7.8) guidance. This, as the title describes, provides guidance on the siting and design of wind farms within the landscape, and also includes advice on assessing the landscape and visual effects of wind farms taking into consideration that this should be done as an iterative process with the design. This guidance was taken into consideration during the design development stages of the proposed development.

7.23 In addition to those mentioned above, the methodology for the LVIA also considers the following best practice guidance (in order of most recent publication date first):

- Landscape Institute (September 2019), Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (Ref. 7.9);
- Scottish Natural Heritage (February 2017), Visual Representation of Wind Farms, Version 2.2 (Ref. 7.10);
- Scottish Natural Heritage (January 2017), Assessing the Impact on Wild Land – Technical Note Consultation Draft (Ref. 7.11);
- Scottish Natural Heritage (September 2015), Guidance on Constructed tracks in the Scottish Uplands (Ref. 7.12);
- Scottish Natural Heritage (September 2019), Good Practice During Wind Farm Construction (Ref. 7.13);
- Scottish Natural Heritage (March 2012), Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy developments (Ref. 7.14);
- Department of Landscape University of Sheffield and Land Use Consultants (2002), Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland, The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (Ref. 7.15).
- Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Agency, (2002) Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity (Ref. 7.16); and
- Scottish Natural Heritage (2002), Policy Statement No.02/03: Wildness in Scotland's Countryside (Ref. 7.17);

SCOPE AND CONSULTATION

Scope

7.24 The LVIA Chapter includes the following key sections.

7.25 Approach and methods – this section sets out the methodology used to carry out the LVIA. It identifies relevant guidance; defines the LVIA study area; describes how the baseline landscape and visual resources within this area have been assessed; how potential landscape and visual receptors have been identified; and sets out the assessment criteria applied; as well as describing the illustrative material which accompanies the LVIA.

7.26 Theoretical Visibility – This section identifies and analyses the visibility predicted on the Zones of

Theoretical Visibility (ZTVs) of the proposed development on its own to provide an overview in identifying the key landscape and visual receptors likely to be affected by the proposed development which are then described in the following baseline condition assessment.

7.27 Baseline Conditions – In this section, the landscape and visual context of the Site and surrounding area are described, including identification of the landscape and visual receptors within the LVIA study area. The key characteristics of the landscape character areas and special qualities of landscape designations are set out and their value identified. Visual receptors are identified for settlements, residents of isolated properties, people using roads and recreation routes.

7.28 Cumulative Zones of Theoretical Visibility – To aid the assessment of cumulative effects, this section analyses the visibility of the proposed development with the agreed cumulative wind farms or groups of wind farms within the LVIA study area with reference to cumulative ZTV figures.

7.29 Assessment of Construction Effects – The construction elements and methods of the proposed development with the potential to cause effects on landscape fabric, landscape character and/or visual amenity are described.

7.30 Assessment of Operational Effects – This section draws on the Viewpoint Assessment (see Appendix 7.2), as well as field survey work and desk-based study to identify the effects of the proposed development on:

- the landscape fabric of the Site;
- landscape character of the Site and surrounding area;
- landscape designations including National Parks (NP), National Scenic Areas (NSA), Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) and Special Landscape Areas (SLA);
- wild land;
- settlements;
- road and rail routes; and
- recreational routes and destinations.

7.31 Summary of Predicted Effects – This section summarises the key findings of the assessment, drawing out the non-significant and significant effects of the proposed development on landscape fabric, landscape character, landscape designations, and visual amenity of the LVIA study area and provides an overview of the proposed development in its landscape and visual context.

Consultation

7.32 A request for a Scoping Opinion was submitted to the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit (ECU) as a draft in February 2017 with a final Scoping Report issued in April 2017 incorporating responses from consultees to the draft version. ECU compiled the final consultation responses from key consultees including Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) and Aberdeenshire Council (AC). Moray Council did not provide any response. A summary of the Scoping Opinion is provided in Technical Appendix 6.2. Key information provided by consultees relevant to this LVIA assessment is provided in Table 7-1. A revised scope of EIA was submitted in September 2018 due to the increase in the height of the proposed turbines from 149.9m to 180m and an increase in the number of turbines from 13 to 14. This document, together

with subsequent exchanges with consultees, set out how the scope of the LVIA would alter due to the changes in the proposed development. A summary of the revised Scoping Opinion is provided in Technical Appendix 6.4. Further consultation has taken place in 2019. This included discussion in relation to night time assessment work and the cumulative assessment.

7.33 All parties agreed in general to the proposed LVIA study area, viewpoints and methodology, and all raised the importance of considering the relationship with the Clashindarroch Wind Farm in the LVIA. Aberdeenshire Council had only general comments and deferred to SNH for a detailed response. There was only one viewpoint request, which came from CNPA.

7.34 Table 7-1 presents a summary of the consultation with SNH, CNPA and AC. Full details of the consultation undertaken throughout the project are presented in the Gatecheck Report provided in Technical Appendix 6.5.

Table 7-1
Key Issues Identified During Scoping

Consultee	Summary of Key Issues	Where Addressed in Chapter
SNH	May 2017 - General LVIA advice, noting new Siting and Design Guidance for Wind Farms document (SNH, 2017; Ref. 7.8) recently published.	Throughout LVIA and specifically Paragraph 7.22
	May 2017 - Careful consideration required of the existing Clashindarroch Wind Farm in the development of the design of the proposed development, including scale of turbines and number of turbines. November 2018 - The above issue was restated in relation to the larger proposed turbine dimensions, also with reference to forestry removal and compensatory planting.	Throughout LVIA and Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution
	May 2017 - Production of photomontages should also consider modelling the access tracks, substation, borrow pits and any deforestation.	Included in relevant visualisations, described in Appendix 7.2, paragraphs 13, 14 and 15.
	May 2017 - Cumulative study area should be agreed with AC and MC based on the understanding of cumulative patterns of development and pressure for change in Aberdeenshire and Moray.	Paragraphs 7.177-7.180
	May 2017 - SNH expressed difficulty in commenting on the potential scope of night time assessment work and requested wirelines to help their understanding. February 2019 - A more detailed scope of night time assessment was provided to SNH with relevant wirelines. Subsequently SNH confirmed that the four viewpoints proposed for assessment were appropriate, with an expectation that this would be used to inform the assessment.	Paragraph 7.33

Consultee	Summary of Key Issues	Where Addressed in Chapter
Cairngorms National Park Authority – May 2017	May 2017 - *"In my view* [Frances Thin, CNPA]*, it is unlikely that Clashindarroch II will have significant adverse effects on the landscape setting of the National Park or upon the SLQs experienced in the Ladder Hills. However, the ES should contain sufficient information and analysis in respect of these topics for the policy tests to be undertaken (NPPP policies 1.3 and 2.3 and SPP para 212)."*	Paragraphs 7.116 - 7.119 and 7.337 – 7.345
	May 2017 - Dorenell and Kildrummy wind farms key cumulative sites to consider.	Considered throughout Chapter.
	Visualisations to be provided from Little Geal Charn in the Ladder Hills including cumulative wind farms.	Viewpoint 19 – see Figure 7.40a-c
	May 2017 - Part of the CNP to be most likely affected by this wind farm is the Ladder Hills. Consideration of the special qualities (including wildness) sufficient for the policy tests to be undertaken.	Paragraphs 7.116 - 7.119 and 7.337 – 7.345
	May 2017 - The baseline for landscape character should be taken from SNH's national coverage of Landscape Character Assessments and the CNP Landscape character Assessment (LA) (2009; Ref. 7.18).	Paragraphs 7.93-7.94
	May 2017 - Boundary of CNP to be clearly shown on all material.	See all relevant figures e.g. Figure 7.1, 7.2a, 7.2b, 7.3a, 7.3b, 7.4a.
	October 2018 - Response to the Revised Scope of EIA document reinforced the above comments and identified the need for consideration of aviation lighting.	Paragraphs 7.108 – 7.112, 7.371-7.374, 7.467-7.475 and Viewpoints 1, 9, 11 and 12 in Technical Appendix 7.2.
Aberdeenshire Council Marr Environmental Team	March 2017 - Flexibility of viewpoint selection during pre-submission stages.	Noted.
	March 2017 - Production of appropriate range of graphic material to illustrate the proposal to accompany the LVIA. Wind monitoring masts should be included.	See all figures.
	March 2017 - Layout of wind farm to be carefully considered to avoid or minimise parts of blades seen on horizon and excessive clustering for example.	Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution
	March 2017 - Significant consideration should be given to the visual relationship between the proposed development and the existing Clashindarroch Wind Farm.	Throughout LVIA and Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution
	March 2017 - Inclusion of forestry plans in relation to the proposed development and landscape and visual implications.	Included in relevant visualisations, described in Appendix 7.2, paragraphs 13, 14 and 15.

Consultee	Summary of Key Issues	Where Addressed in Chapter
	March 2017 - Ensure that a comprehensive cumulative assessment is undertaken. Subsequent consultation took place with Aberdeenshire Council in September 2019 to confirm the scope of the cumulative assessment and refine the status of relevant sites (i.e. constructed, consented or in planning).	Throughout LVIA and Paragraphs 7.177-7.179
	March 2017 - Consideration of access tracks, borrow pits and other infrastructure within the LVIA.	Included in relevant visualisations, described in Appendix 7.2, paras 13, 14 and 15.
	November 2018 - No further comments were made by Aberdeenshire Council in relation to the Revised Scope of EIA document, although note the above reference to further consultation in relation to the scope of the cumulative assessment.	

Effects Scoped Out

7.35 Landscape character areas within the LVIA study area which would not have any visibility with the proposed development are scoped out and listed within Table 7-6.

7.36 A small part of the Highland Council authority area lies within the LVIA study area between 28km to 40km west of the proposed development. The ZTV illustrates no visibility of the proposed development within this area. On this basis, the Highland Council area is scoped out of the LVIA.

APPROACH AND METHODS

7.37 The assessment of effects on landscape character and visual amenity has been carried out in accordance with the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA)'s 'The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Third Edition (GLVIA3) (December 2013).

Study Area

7.38 The initial LVIA study area for the proposed development during the EIA scoping process comprised a 40km distance from the outermost turbines of the proposed development, as recommended in SNH Visual Representation of Wind Farms Guidance (February 2017; Ref. 7.10) for wind turbines between 131-150m to tip height. This was also agreed through consultation with SNH and AC. Following the initial scoping process the proposed turbine height increased from 149.9m to 180m. A revised scope of the EIA was submitted setting out, in relation to the LVIA, that based on a comparative ZTV showing the predicted change in visibility which was limited, the previously agreed viewpoints would remain representative. Therefore, a 40km study area has generally been applied in this assessment. Smaller scale study areas of 20km or 10km have been applied for certain receptors, described where applicable in the LVIA.

7.39 In accordance with SNH's Assessing the Cumulative Impact on Onshore Wind Energy Developments

(March 2012; Ref. 7.14) and as agreed with SNH, a base plan was produced showing the location of all operating, consented, and undetermined applications for wind farms within a 60km study search area. In addition, proposals for wind farms subject to scoping requests in the public domain within a 10km area from the outermost turbines of the proposed development were also included.

7.40 Following review of the cumulative data and draft ZTVs, the detailed cumulative assessment comprises wind farms based on the likely extent of potential significant cumulative effects arising from the proposed development with these other developments.

7.41 The process for establishing the cumulative study area was agreed during the consultation process with SNH and AC. The scope of the cumulative assessment was checked and updated, including further consultation with AC, in September 2019. As part of this update SNH deferred to AC's knowledge on relevant wind energy developments.

7.42 A specific 5km study area was agreed for the residential visual amenity assessment (RVAA) as part of the initial assessment scope and this was also proposed as part of the Revised Scope of the EIA. No adverse comments were received in relation to this element of the proposed revised scope document and therefore a 5km radius has been applied. The RVAA is included in Technical Appendix 7.3.

Information and Data Sources

7.43 The LVIA takes account of information and data within the following publications and websites:

- Aberdeenshire Council/LUC (April 2017). Aberdeenshire Special Landscape Areas, Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan Supplementary Guidance (Ref. 7.5);
- Aberdeenshire Council/Ironside Farrar (May 2014). Strategic Landscape Capacity Assessment for Wind Energy in Aberdeenshire (Ref. 7.4);
- Cairngorms National Park Authority (2009). Cairngorm National Park Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 7.18);
- Historic Scotland, Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes, available online (Ref. 7.19);
- Moray Council/Carol Anderson Landscape Associates (May 2017). Moray Wind Energy Landscape Capacity Study (Ref. 7.20);
- Moray Council/Carol Anderson Landscape Associates (July 2018). Landscape Designation Review (Ref. 7.21);
- Scottish Natural Heritage and Cairngorms National Park Authority (2010). The Special Landscape Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park (Ref. 7.22);
- Scottish Natural Heritage (2010). The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas (Ref. 7.23);
- Scottish Natural Heritage/Cobham Resource Consultants (1997). No.37 Banff and Buchan: Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 7.24);
- Scottish Natural Heritage/Turnbull Jeffery Partnership (1996). No.75 Cairngorm Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 7.25);
- Scottish Natural Heritage/Turnbull Jeffery Partnership (1998). No.101 Moray and Nairn

Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 7.26);

- Scottish Natural Heritage/ERM (1998). No.102 South and Central Aberdeenshire: Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 7.27);
- Scottish Natural Heritage (January 2017). Wild Land Area Descriptions (Ref. 7.28);
- Scottish Natural Heritage (June 2014). Map of Wild Land Areas (Ref. 7.29);
- Visit Scotland, Tourist Routes, available online (Ref. 7.30);
- Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), England's Light Pollution and Dark Skies, available online (Ref. 7.31);
- International Dark-Sky Association, Dark Skies Park details, available online (Ref. 7.32);
- Tomintoul and Glenlivet Landscape Partnership, Dark Skies Park details, available online (Ref. 7.33); and
- Go Stargazing, Star Gazing Locations, available online (Ref. 7.34).

7.44 SNH has a suite of Landscape Character Assessments that cover the entirety of Scotland, produced in the late 1990s. An update landscape character type map has been released in 2019, together with associated landscape character type (LCT) descriptions. The SNH website (Ref. 7.35) identifies that "*where current proposals or projects have analysis based on the 1990s LCT database, that should still be used*". As the majority of the assessment work for the proposed development was undertaken on the basis of the 1990s SNH Landscape Character Assessments these have continued to be applied. The 1990s Landscape Character Assessment documents which cover the LVIA study area are listed above. The relevant LCTs for the detailed assessment are listed and described in Table 7-7. The SNH Landscape Character Assessments were produced when large scale wind farms had yet to appear in the landscape thus relevant changes, such as the presence of wind farm development as a key characteristic in the landscape of the LVIA study area, have been considered in the description of the landscape character baseline within this LVIA.

Field Survey

7.45 Field survey was carried out to verify the relevance of the published landscape character assessments to the LVIA, as well as to identify the main landscape and visual receptor groups within the LVIA study area and visit the agreed viewpoint locations. Walkovers of the Site were also carried out to review any landscape constraints and inform the related layout optimisation process as presented in Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution.

7.46 Field survey work was undertaken during periods of very good or excellent visibility (visibility of between 18km and 44km as defined by the Met Office), in February and June 2017. Field survey work included a walkover of the Site, visits to viewpoints and designated landscapes, as well as extensive travel around the LVIA study area to consider potential effects (including cumulative) on landscape character and on the experience of views seen from routes through the landscape.

7.47 Supplementary fieldwork was undertaken in February and September 2019 due to the changes to the height of the proposed turbines which require aviation lighting. Accordingly, a night time survey of baseline conditions and additional viewpoint photography were carried out.

Assessment Methods

7.48 The purpose of the LVIA is to identify, predict and evaluate potential impacts associated with the proposed development. The nature of LVIA requires interpretation by professional judgement. In order to provide a level of consistency to the assessment, the prediction of magnitude of change and assessment of significance of the residual landscape and visual effects have been based on pre-defined criteria.

7.49 As identified in GLVIA3 (December 2013; Ref. 7.6), the effects are identified by establishing and describing the changes resulting from the different components of the proposed development and the resulting effects on individual landscape or visual receptors.

7.50 Assessment of the significance of effects takes account of the nature of the effects (magnitude), as well as the nature of the receptors (sensitivity) and differentiates between them according to the phases (construction and operational) of the proposed development in which they would occur.

Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

7.51 The sensitivity of landscape receptors to change of the nature arising from wind farm development is defined as High, Medium, Low or Negligible based on professional interpretation, combining judgements of the value attached to the landscape and their susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed. Landscape receptors include landscape fabric or elements; the different landscape character types or areas which may be affected by the proposed development, as well as landscape designations and Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDL) within the LVIA study area.

7.52 The value of the landscape is assessed as part of the baseline. The value attached to landscape receptors reflects landscape designations and the level of importance which they signify (national, regional or local authority, community). However, landscape designations are not the sole indicator of landscape value. Where there is no landscape designation or where considered appropriate, the following factors are considered in order to identify valued landscape:

- landscape quality;
- scenic quality;
- rarity;
- representativeness;
- conservation interest;
- recreation value;
- perceptual aspects; and
- cultural associations.

7.53 Value is defined as High, Medium or Low based on an interpretation of the above factors.

7.54 Susceptibility to change means the ability of the landscape fabric/elements and landscape character, including designated landscapes, to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline character and/or the achievement of the prevailing landscape planning policies and strategies.

7.55 Susceptibility of landscape fabric/elements to change is defined as High, Medium or Low based on an interpretation of a combination of parameters including:

- contribution of the landscape element which would be removed/affected to the key characteristics of the surrounding landscape; and
- extent to which the landscape element which would be removed/affected can be replaced.

7.56 Susceptibility of landscape character, including landscape designations, to change is defined as High, Medium or Low based on an interpretation of a combination of parameters including:

- the scale and pattern of the landscape and its elements/features;
- the simplicity or complexity of the landscape;
- the nature of skylines;
- landscape quality or condition;
- existing land use;
- visual enclosure/openness of views; and
- the scope for mitigation, which would be in character with the existing landscape.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

7.57 Sensitivity of visual receptors is defined as High, Medium, Low or Negligible based on professional interpretation, combining judgements of the value attached to the particular views and their susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed. Value is identified through the baseline assessment with susceptibility and overall sensitivity being identified as part of the detailed assessment.

7.58 The judgement of the value attached to the views experienced by people is defined as High, Medium, or Low taking into account the following factors:

- views from residential properties are generally considered to be highly valued;
- recognition of the value attached to a particular view, for example in relation to heritage assets, or through natural heritage/planning designations; and
- indicators of the value attached to views by visitors and references to them in literature or art.

7.59 The susceptibility of different visual receptors to change in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of:

- the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and
- the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at that particular location.

7.60 In relation to the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at the viewpoint, visual susceptibility is defined in Table 7-2.

Table 7-2
Definitions of Level of Susceptibility of Visual Receptors

Level of Susceptibility	Definition
High	Residents at home; users of outdoor recreational facilities including strategic recreational footpaths, cycle routes or rights of way, whose attention may be focused on the landscape; visitors to heritage assets, important landscape features with physical, cultural or historic attributes; and beauty spots or picnic areas.
Medium	Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes.
Low	People engaged in outdoor sports or recreation (other than appreciation of the landscape), commercial buildings, and other locations where people's attention may be focused on their work or activity, not on their surroundings, and where the setting is not important to the quality of working life.

Magnitude of Impact

7.61 The changes caused to the landscape and visual receptors are evaluated in terms of their size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced, and their duration and reversibility.

7.62 The magnitude of change arising from the proposed development in respect of landscape fabric/physical elements of the landscape is described as **Substantial, Moderate, Slight** or **Negligible** based on the interpretation of a combination of largely quantifiable parameters, as follows:

- the extent of existing landscape elements that would be lost;
- the proportion of the total extent of the particular landscape elements that this represents;
- the degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape would be altered by removal of existing components of the landscape;
- the geographic area over which the loss of landscape elements would be perceived;
- the duration of the change; and
- the reversibility of the change.

7.63 The magnitude of change arising from the proposed development at any particular landscape character or visual receptor is described as **Substantial, Moderate, Slight** or **Negligible** based on the interpretation of a combination of largely quantifiable parameters, as follows:

- the distance of the receptor from the proposed development;
- the duration of the predicted impact;
- the proportion of the view affected by the proposed development;
- the angle of view in relation to main receptor activity; and
- the context in which the proposed development would be seen (i.e. similar land uses in the vicinity of the proposed development).

7.64 The criteria utilised in ascribing magnitude of change throughout this assessment are as follows:

Table 7-3
Magnitude of Change

Magnitude	Criteria
Substantial	Total loss or considerable alteration to key elements/ features/characteristics of the landscape character or view, resulting in a substantial change to the baseline condition.
Moderate	Partial loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the landscape character or view. Change perceived as a partial or localised change within a broader, unaltered context.
Slight	Limited loss or small alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the existing landscape character or view. Change is discernible but underlying landscape character or view composition would be similar to baseline.
Negligible	Very limited or imperceptible loss or alteration to one or more key elements/characteristics of the baseline. Change may be barely distinguishable.

7.65 Cumulative change arising from the proposed development when considered in conjunction with other similar developments in the vicinity is determined taking account of the above criteria as well as the following:

- the number of existing, consented and proposed developments visible;
- the distance to each of the visible developments from the receptor location;
- the direction of each development in relation to the viewpoint;
- the extent of the view occupied by each development;
- the cumulative effect of development upon the fabric or key landscape components; and
- in the case of landscape character types (LCTs), residential areas and transportation/recreational routes: the proportion of the area or route subject to cumulative views.

7.66 The criteria utilised in ascribing cumulative magnitude of change throughout this assessment are shown in Table 7-4.

Table 7-4
Cumulative Magnitude of Change

Magnitude	Criteria
Substantial	The proposed development would represent a considerable increase in the proportion of the landscape or view affected by similar development. The result of this change would be a fundamental change to baseline conditions.
Moderate	The proposed development would represent a notable increase in the proportion of the landscape or view affected by similar development. Moderate cumulative change would represent prominent, but localised change, within an otherwise essentially unaltered baseline.
Slight	The proposed development would represent a minor addition to the proportion of the landscape or view affected by similar development. Cumulative change arising from the proposals would be discernible but the original baseline conditions would be fundamentally the same.
Negligible	The proposed development would represent a very minor addition to the proportion of the landscape or view affected by similar developments. Baseline conditions would fundamentally be unaltered. Cumulative change arising from the proposed development would be barely distinguishable.

Potential Effects

7.67 The effect of any identified landscape or visual impact is assessed as Major, Major-Moderate, Moderate, Moderate-Minor, Minor or None. These categories are based on combining landscape or visual sensitivity and the predicted magnitude of change, as shown in Table 7-5.

Table 7-5
Landscape and Visual Effects

Magnitude: Landscape and Visual Sensitivity	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible
High	**Major**	**Major-Moderate**	Moderate	Moderate-Minor
Medium	**Major-Moderate**	Moderate	Moderate-Minor	Minor
Low	Moderate	Moderate-Minor	Minor	Minor-Negligible
Negligible	Moderate-Minor	Minor	Minor-none	None

7.68 In line with the GLVIA3, the matrix is not used as a prescriptive tool and the methodology and analysis of potential effects at any particular location must allow for the exercise of professional judgement. Thus, in some instances a particular parameter may be considered as having a determining effect on the analysis.

7.69 Where the landscape or visual impact has been classified as **Major** or **Major-Moderate**, this is considered to be equivalent to a significant effect as referred to in the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.

Nature of Effect

7.70 Throughout the LVIA, the effects of the proposed development on landscape character have been assessed in relation to the key characteristics of each landscape character area predicted to have visibility of the proposed turbines and therefore potentially impacted by the proposed development. The aim is to provide an objective assessment of the relationship between the proposed development and the landscape in which it would be located and seen. It is also important to consider the nature of the proposed change in the context of the key characteristics of the landscape and the extent to which these may be more, or less, sensitive to change of the nature associated with wind farms and, accordingly, more or less, able to accommodate the predicted changes. It is, however, considered that the effects on landscape character arising from the introduction of large sized, engineered structures and related components to an upland landscape are likely to be adverse.

7.71 In relation to the effects of wind farm development on visual amenity, there is a wide spectrum of opinion regarding the appearance of wind turbines in the landscape which is well documented and has been reported in several research studies. For some people, wind turbines represent the industrialisation of the countryside and are regarded as blots on the landscape, whilst for others, they are sculptural features associated with positive efforts to address the challenges of climate change. Given the diversity and divergence of public opinion on the appearance of wind turbines, no assessment of the nature of effect on visual amenity has been made in this assessment.

Illustrative Tools

7.72 The ZTVs are based on Ordnance Survey (OS) digital terrain data (DTM) supplied as gridded height data at 50m interval resolution. The visibility shown on the ZTVs is more extensive than actual visibility on the ground because the ZTVs do not take account of vegetation or buildings/man-made structures or localised landforms, and therefore represent the worst case scenario. Where the ZTV shows no visibility, it is predicted that no turbines would be seen with the tolerances of the DTM used (see Technical Appendix 7.1 Visualisation Methodology).

7.73 In order to verify the findings of both the baseline appraisal and assist the subsequent assessment of residual landscape and visual effects, a series of representative viewpoints has been utilised. The existing view from each of the selected viewpoints has been illustrated by photography. In order to illustrate the effect of the proposed development on views from key locations within the LVIA study area, photomontages or wirelines of the proposed development have been prepared for each of the viewpoints. The terrain data used for this analysis comprises a combination of Next Map 25 data, Ordnance Survey Terrain 5 data and OS Terrain 50 data. The greatest route mean square error value for the height points in the terrain data used is 4m.

7.74 The photographs were taken in accordance with SNH Visual Representation of Wind Farms (February 2017; Ref. 7.10) using a SLR digital camera with a full frame sensor and a 50mm fixed focal length lens. All photography was taken using a tripod mounted camera at a viewing height of 1.5m, and location data recorded with a hand-held GPS.

7.75 It should be noted that photography is a tool to assist in the visualisation process, and the photomontages produced cannot be expected to replicate the actual view, or predicted view, which would be obtained in the field.

7.76 The graphic outputs of this LVIA have been prepared in accordance with Landscape Institute

Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (September 2019; Ref. 7.9) and SNH's Visual Representation of Wind Farms Good Practice Guidance, (February 2017 Ref. 7.10). The detailed methodology for preparation of the visualisations is provided in Technical Appendix 7.1: Visualisation Methodology.

Mitigation

7.77 Mitigation of the landscape and visual effects of wind turbines is an inherent part of the design development of the layout and is discussed in Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution. The proposed substation compound is located adjacent to the existing substation for the operational Clashindarroch Wind Farm and is surrounded by woodland that is expected to be retained until 2039 – 2043. The proximity to the track and existing substation would reduce the requirement to remove trees specifically for the construction of this element.

Residual Effects

7.78 The LVIA focuses on the effects of the Clashindarroch II Wind Farm in its operational phase which is also considered as the residual effects. Residual effects comprise those that are predicted after all proposed mitigation measures, including site layout and design, have been incorporated.

Assumptions, Limitations and Confidence

7.79 The LVIA is based on an assessment of indicative turbine heights which would represent the realistic worst case in terms of height and rotor diameter. The turbine layout is based on all known hard constraints and turbines have been positioned to take into account design principles as outlined in Chapter 3: Description of the Development.

7.80 It is anticipated that there will be a 50 metre micrositing allowance applied to the proposed development (should it be consented). Consideration has been given to this in the preparation of the LVIA. It is anticipated that should this allowance be applied the pattern of visibility of the turbines may alter to a limited degree. A key consideration throughout this LVIA has been the potential effects of the proposed development on the Deveron Valley to the west of the site. Viewpoints 2 and 3 are representative of views from parts of Deveron Valley to the north west of the Site. These viewpoints show either no or very limited visibility of the proposed turbines. Review of these viewpoints in relation to potential movement of turbines within the micrositing tolerance indicates that whilst there may be some additional turbine visibility, this is unlikely to change the overall findings of the assessment.

7.81 Judgements regarding effects on residential receptors are based on publicly accessible locations and no access has been gained to individual properties or their curtilage. This approach has also been applied in the RVAA in Technical Appendix 7.3.

THEORETICAL VISIBILITY

7.82 The analysis of ZTVs is the starting point in the process of determining the potential effects of a proposed wind farm development on the wider landscape and identifying potentially affected sensitive landscape and visual receptors. The ZTV overviews are shown on a 1:250,000 base map and a more detailed ZTV shown in scale of 1:95,000 on 1:50,000 base map, based on the full turbine height to blade tip (blade tip ZTV) on Figures 7.5a and 7.5b.

7.83 An analysis of the ZTVs is provided below which summarises the extent to which the proposed turbines would theoretically be visible from within the LVIA study area and the nature and location of the receptors likely to be affected. This informs the landscape and visual receptors to be scoped in or out, as set out in the following baseline section.

ZTV Analysis

Blade Tip ZTV of Clashindarroch II Wind Farm

7.84 The blade tip ZTV shown on Figure 7.5a and with more detail on Figure 7.5b, identifies the parts of the LVIA study area where any part of the proposed development turbines up to the blade tip height of 180m would be theoretically visible. It is noted again here that the ZTVs present the worst case and do not include any obstructions such as forestry, shelterbelts, and settlements which would considerably reduce the visibility in some areas.

7.85 The overall pattern of the ZTV is relatively limited and sporadic, covering approximately 15.5% of the 40km study area, of which approximately 7% is hub to blade tip visibility only (i.e. blades only). In general, the main areas of visibility lie from the north west clockwise to the south east with very limited and fragmented visibility beyond 20km on the other side of the LVIA study area.

7.86 Within 10km, beyond the immediate Site area (as identified by the turbine locations), the predicted visibility is largely limited to the higher land east and to the south of the Site, including the prominent summits of Tap O' Noth and The Buck. Due to a ridgeline of higher land on the western edge of the Site, the Deveron River valley to the north and west of the Site is largely sheltered from any visibility of the proposed development with only the upper slopes on the western side of the valley having areas of predicted visibility, and this is mostly limited to visibility of up to six turbines. Elsewhere within 10km of the Site, the predicted visibility is very limited or there is none e.g. along the main transport corridors (A97, A941, and A920) due to their position along valley floors.

7.87 Between 10km and 20km predicted visibility is most prevalent between the north and east of the Site. Elsewhere, the predicted visibility is relatively limited and contained to the upper hillsides and summits, particularly in the south west at the edge of the CNP and the north western edge of the Correen Hills.

7.88 Beyond 20km predicted visibility of the proposed development is very limited to the west, south west and south, with only the summits of the highest hills/mountains in this area having potential visibility of the proposed development. Visibility is also limited in other directions but with wider contiguous coverage on areas of high land north of Keith and north east of Turriff for example. There are few areas of predicted visibility along the coast, except for a small area to the east of Portsoy and south of Lossiemouth around Lossie Forest. Visibility offshore is also limited and where identified, there would be only up to 9 turbines potentially visible.

Comparative ZTV of Blade Tip and Hub Height of the Proposed Development

7.89 A comparative ZTV has been produced on Figure 7.6, showing where the blade tip ZTV and hub height ZTV overlap, in order to identify the areas where the hubs and blades of the turbines would be theoretically visible and areas from where blades only might potentially be seen.

7.90 The pattern of hub height visibility is very different to the blade's visibility, with approximately half of the visibility in the LVIA study area being blades only. The ZTV illustrates that the areas of most

hub and blade visibility are directly around the Site and within 10km from the north east clockwise to the south west. Beyond 10km, the main areas of hub and blade tip visibility are to the north east and on the summits to the south and south west. The areas of visibility to the north and west, and also an area to the east-south-east are blade tip only.

BASELINE CONDITIONS

7.91 This section sets out the landscape and visual conditions of the Site and the surrounding area. The baseline study assists in identifying the important landscape components and key characteristics which may be susceptible to change arising from wind farm development within the LVIA study area.

7.92 The baseline study also identifies sensitive landscape and visual receptors within areas which are predicted to have theoretical visibility of the proposed development on the basis of the ZTV and therefore are included in the assessment. It also filters out those receptors which are unlikely to experience any impact based on the ZTV.

7.93 The baseline study is presented as follows:

- Landscape Context;
- LCTs and LCAs;
- Night Time Context;
- Landscape Related Planning Designations; and
- Principal Visual Receptors and Representative Viewpoints.

7.94 Specific receptors scoped out have been discussed and listed within the relevant baseline areas.

Landscape Context

7.95 The proposed development would be situated between the Grampian Mountains, located to the south west, and the coastal lowlands to the north. The Site lies within an upland landscape which is characterised by a series of rounded hills and interlocking spurs separated by incised river valleys. The majority of the Site is planted in commercial forestry at various stages in the forest cycle, including areas of clear felling.

7.96 Topography ranges from approximately 220m AOD to 525m AOD. The western side forms the most elevated part of the Site and is defined by a series of rounded hills which form a distinctive ridgeline comprising forestry to the east, and moorland/farmland to the west. Notable summits along this ridgeline to the north west, west, south west and south of the Site include Red Hill (522m AOD), Grumack Hill (517m AOD), Black Hill (505m AOD), Mount of Haddoch (521m AOD), and Leids Hill (482m AOD). To the east of this ridgeline and summits, the Site is characterised by a series of rounded hills with interlocking spurs and incised valleys descending towards the River Bogie. However, these underlying topographic elements are difficult to perceive due to the uniformity of forest cover which contrasts sharply with the surrounding farmed landscape.

7.97 Clashindarroch Wind Farm consists of 18 wind turbines with a tip height of 110m. The wind farm is situated adjacent to the south western side of the Site between Craigwater Hill (436m AOD), Cloiche

Dubh (486m AOD), and Black Hill (505m AOD).

7.98 Within the wider area to the north and east, the landscape comprises a series of foothills leading into lowland farmland which is interspersed with blocks of woodland and includes the occasional prominent hill top. To the south and west, the landscape is predominantly upland and includes Tap O' Noth (563m AOD), The Buck (721m AOD), Glenfiddich Forest, and beyond Glen Rinnes, the distinctive hill top of Ben Rinnes (841m AOD).

7.99 The Site location and boundary are shown on Figure 7.1 Site Context and Topography.

Landscape Character Types and Areas in the LVIA Study Area

7.100 Landscape Character Types (LCTs) are tracts of countryside which have a unity of character due to particular combinations of landform, land cover and a consistent pattern of constituent elements. Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) are defined and named areas of a landscape type. Within the LVIA study area, the landscape character is defined in types and areas in the following five assessments:

- Cairngorms National Park Authority (2009). Cairngorm National Park Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 7.18);
- Scottish Natural Heritage/Cobham Resource Consultants (1997). No.37 Banff and Buchan: Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 7.24);
- Scottish Natural Heritage/Turnbull Jeffery Partnership (1996). No.75 Cairngorm Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 7.25);
- Scottish Natural Heritage/Turnbull Jeffery Partnership (1998). No.101 Moray and Nairn Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 7.26);
- Scottish Natural Heritage/ERM (1998). No.102 South and Central Aberdeenshire: Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 7.27);

7.101 The SNH 1996 Cairngorms Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 7.25) has been used to define the baseline landscape character as it is consistent in scale with the adjacent assessments. However, for those areas within the CNP which lie within the ZTV, the smaller scale CNP 2009 study (Ref. 7.18) has been used where relevant to add further detail in the assessment of effects upon the character.

7.102 The boundaries of the LCTs within the LVIA study area are available as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Datasets from SNH and local authorities, based on the published Landscape Character Assessments.

7.103 The distribution of LCTs and LCAs identified within the LVIA study area is shown on Figure 7.2a. An overlay of the blade tip ZTV for the proposed development and the LCTs and LCAs enabled identification of the character types and areas from which the proposed turbines would be potentially visible. This is illustrated on Figure 7.2b, and also differentiates between hub height and blades visibility.

7.104 The landscape character codes used in this Chapter and in Tables 7-6 and 7-7 are listed on Figure 7.2a.

7.105 Whilst the ZTV and LCTs within the 40km LVIA study area were reviewed initially, in practice it is

highly unlikely for there to be significant effects on the landscape character beyond 20km for a development of this type and scale. Taking this into account, together with a review of the pattern of predicted visibility of the proposed development identified using the blade tip ZTVs and the distance from the proposed development, several LCTs have been excluded from further assessment. Those that are excluded from the assessment are presented in Table 7-6.

Table 7-6
LCAs Scoped Out of the LVIA

Landscape Character Type*	Scoped out Landscape Character Areas *
Aberdeenshire	
Agricultural Heartlands LCT (ABS2)	Howe of Cromar (6)
	Howe of Alford (7)
	Formartine Lowlands (11)
	Central Wooded Estates (12)
Farmed Moorland Edge LCT (ABS3)	The Cromar Uplands (16)
Straths and Valleys LCT (ABS5)	Donside (19)
	Deeside (20)
Banff and Buchan	
The Coast LCT (BFB1)	The Cliffs of the North and South East Coasts (1)
The Coastal Farmland LCT (BFB2)	Coastal Farmland East of MacDuff (4)
	Western Coastal Farmland (3)
The Agricultural Heartland LCT (BFB3)	Knock Hill and Aberchirder (8)
	Upland Ridges South of the Deveron (9)
	Agricultural Heartland (10)
The River Valleys LCT (BFB4)	Deveron and Upper Ythan Valleys (12)
Moray	
Coastal LCT	Soft Coastal Shore (1)
	Hard Coastal Shore (2)
	Coastal Forest (3)
Coastal Lowlands LCT	Coastal Farmlands (4)
	Rolling Farmlands and Forest (5)
River Valleys LCT	Broad Farmed Valley (7)
Uplands LCT	Upland Moorland and Forestry (9)
Cairngorms National Park	

Landscape Character Type*	Scoped out Landscape Character Areas *
Cairngorms Plateau (CNG1)	The Central Massif (1)
Uplands and Glens (CNG2)	Strathdearn Hills (4)
	Rothiemurchus/Abernethy (5)
Cairngorms Straths (CNG3)	Lower Spey (14)
	Strath Avon (15)
	Glenlivet (16)
	Strathdon (17)
	Upper Deeside Estates (18)
	Muir of Dinnet (19)
	The Cromar Farmlands (20)
*Letters and numbers in brackets refer to the SNH landscape assessment reference.	

7.106 The LCTs which have the potential to be affected by the proposed development are listed in Table 7-7 (in order of proximity to the proposed development), and shown on Figure 7.2a and 7.2b, based on the analysis of the ZTV (Figure 7.2b). Table 7-7 also identifies the key characteristics as defined by SNH's Landscape Character Assessments and CNP's Landscape Character Assessment (in italicised text) and value (identified by this assessment) of each of the listed LCTs.

7.107 According to the GLVIA 3 (Ref. 7.6) the value of the landscape receptor is established in the baseline assessment and susceptibility and overall sensitivity are considered in the Assessment of Effects Section of this Chapter.

Table 7-7
Landscape Character Types and Areas Included in the Assessment, and Descriptions and Value

Landscape Character Type	Key Characteristics and Extent within the LVIA Study Area
Moorland Plateaux LCT (ABS4) Grampian Outliers LCA (Area 17)	The proposed development would be located within the north western part of the Grampian Outliers LCA. The LCA consists of a '*series of moorland spurs*' that extend from the Cairngorms into the north east coastal farmland. The Grampian Outliers LCA is characterised by: • *Smooth, undulating landform which forms dark ridges across skyline when viewed from lowlands;* • *Outcrops stand proud of surrounding low farmland;* • *Extensive tracts of conifer plantation covering much of slopes, mixed to varying degrees with patches of heather moorland;* • *Forms distinct edge with green fields of pasture on lower slopes;* • *Occasional dramatic rocky outcrops, e.g. at Bennachie and Tap O' Noth* • *Promontories present spectacular views over surrounding lowland;* • *Communication masts are dominant feature within skyline views;* • *Settlement restricted to edges with occasional isolated houses and derelict buildings; and*

Landscape Character Type	Key Characteristics and Extent within the LVIA Study Area
	• *Colours and tones vary with the weather and seasons.* Pressures and sensitivities outlined in the SNH assessment relate to commercial conifer plantations and decline in management of the heather moors. In addition, it is noted that the upland location makes these areas highly visible and whilst wind turbines were not a consideration when the assessment was written, mention of telecommunication masts and pylons forming prominent skyline features is relevant. Parts of the Grampian Outliers lie within the Bennachie SLA and Upper Don Valley SLA. The area where the Site lies does not lie within these SLAs. **Value: High-Medium** within the SLA and **Medium** elsewhere.
Moray Uplands LCT (MRN4) Open Uplands (Area 10)	The Open Uplands LCA lies adjacent to the western boundary of the proposed development. It forms the foothills of the Cairngorms Mountains to the south east. The Open Uplands LCA is characterised by: • *Open character consisting of a series of rounded hills with summits of generally similar height, broad smooth ridges and expansive gently undulating plateaux* • *Openness of the hills contrasting with densely wooded lower rolling hills and valleys* • *Distant views across the moray basin and to the coast* • *Rocky outcrops occasionally break up the smooth terrain* • *Small burns flow across the moorland in craggy incised valleys* • *Lochindorb is a unique feature in the landscape* • *Heather moor and blanket bog accentuate the smooth roundness of the landform* • *Patches of stunted native pine and tracts of muir burning create distinctive pattern of colour and texture on some open slopes* • *Sparse settlement, with many derelict farmsteads* The SNH Assessment provides some specific guidelines for wind development which states that there could be a conflict with turbines in the remoter areas but turbines may be more appropriate in the more accessible and human influenced parts of the landscape. The guidelines also state that wind turbines should be avoided on prominent hill tops where they could intrude in views towards the coast or to Ben Rinnes for example. The Open Uplands LCA lies almost all within the Moray AGLV. **Value: High-Medium.**
Agricultural Heartlands LCT (ABS2) Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA (Area 4)	The Agricultural Heartlands LCT contains ten LCAs of which the Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA has most potential visibility within 20km of the proposed development. The Northern Rolling Lowland lies at closest 2.5km to the east of the Site. The Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA is characterised by: • *Simple rolling landform;* • *Simple landcover pattern of large geometric fields and thick bold woodlands and shelterbelts;* • *Well wooded with thick shelterbelts and planted blocks of conifers;* • *Occasional enclosure of coniferous plantations by beech, which softens edges;* • *Farms and settlements cluster in more sheltered valleys and lower slopes, often enclosed by shelterbelts; and*

Landscape Character Type	Key Characteristics and Extent within the LVIA Study Area
	• *Long distance often elevated views.* Pressures and sensitivities outlined in the SNH assessment relevant to wind farm development include '*the large scale rolling hills are sensitive to elements which may disrupt their smooth forms and visual flow*' and '*Long, uninterrupted views are sensitive to intrusive elements, especially on the skyline, which may disrupt the flow or the scale of the landscape features'*. Single and small groups of wind turbines are now a characteristic of much of this LCA. There are no landscape designations within this LCA. **Value: Medium.**
Straths and Valleys LCT (ABS5) Deveron and Bogie Straths (Area 21)	The Straths and Valleys LCT has three LCAs, of which only one, the Deveron and Bogie Straths, has potential visibility of the proposed development. This LCA lies 2.7km at closest to the Site, to the west, north and east. The Deveron and Bogie Straths LCA is characterised by: • *Distinct valley form; constricted valleys associated with schists; wide valley north and south of Huntly associated with softer rocks;* • *Mosaic of diverse land uses; rough sheep grazing, hay fields; commercial forestry plantation and deciduous woodland;* • *Neat farmland patchwork on flood plain dominated by pasture with post and wire fencing and hedges;* • *Patches of neglected farmland with broken stone dykes and derelict pasture;* • *Shallow, rocky rivers lined by broadleaf woods amidst well wooded farmland;* • *Conifer-covered knolls standing proud of open Deveron Strath;* • *Dense settlement within valley, associated with road corridors; and* • *Farmhouses scattered along straths.* Part of the Deveron and Bogie Straths LCA lies within the Deveron Valley SLA. **Value: High-Medium** within the SLA and **Medium** elsewhere.
Farmed Moorland Edge LCT (ABS3) Lumsden Valley (Area 15)	The Lumsden Valley LCA within the Farmed Moorland Edge LCT lies at closest 3.2km to the south of the proposed development. The SNH assessment describes it as *'a tract of upland that, while having the profile of a valley, contains no large river course'*. The Lumsden Valley LCA is characterised by: • *Compact landform, winding roads and small fields produce small-scale landscape pattern which contrasts with open character of surrounding areas;* • *Transition from open productive farming in the east to remote exposed moorland in the west;* • *Numerous glacial features such as moraines and eskers;* • *Woodland is largely shelterbelts and small plantations;* • *Small fields well defined by drystone dykes;* • *Transition to moorland in the west characterised by waterlogged peat and expansive bog;* • *Frequent dereliction adds to remoteness of area;* • *Small evenly spaced grey stone houses and farms, generally of vernacular style; and* • *Views of Moorland Plateaux pronounced, notably Tap O' Noth.* There are no landscape designations within this LCA. **Value: Medium.**

Landscape Character Type	Key Characteristics and Extent within the LVIA Study Area
Farmed Moorland Edge LCT (ABS3) Daugh of Cairnborrow (Area 14)	The Daugh of Cairnborrow LCA lies approximately 6.4km at closest to the north of the proposed development. It is described within the SNH assessment as '*a wedge of upland farmland between the moors of the Clashindarroch Forest and The Scalp and the Agricultural Heartland east of the River Deveron*'. The Daugh of Cairnborrow LCA is characterised by: • *Plateau of low hills with undulating rocky terrain;* • *Rich mosaic of different textures and features and small scale landscape pattern;* • *Marginal upland farms with scattered farm buildings, enclosed sheep grazing and patches of gorse scrub, birch and goat willow scrub;* • *Interspersed with small pockets of Moorland Plateaux which form prominent elevated foci;* • *Extensive derelict drystone dykes, often reinforced by post and wire fencing and encroached by gorse;* • *Stone cairns on edges of high ground;* • *Traditional cottages scattered throughout landscape, with scant tree shelter; vernacular type is local grey/brown stone with simple design; and* • *Some derelict buildings.* The Deveron Valley SLA lies partially within the eastern extents of this LCA. **Value: High-Medium** within the SLA and **Medium** elsewhere.
Agricultural Heartlands LCT (ABS2) Insch Basin LCA (Area 5)	The Insch Basin LCA is one of ten LCAs within the Agricultural Heartlands LCT and lies at closest 6.5km to the south east of the Site. The Insch Basin LCA is characterised by: • *Flat and gently rolling farmland;* • *Large geometric fields forming a colourful patchwork of arable and pastureland studded evenly with farms and small broadleaf copses;* • *Tumbledown dykes have been replaced or reinforced by post and wire fencing along field boundaries;* • *Little substantial woodland planting, with tree cover confined to shelter belts, hilltop clumps and beech avenues;* • *Rich in archaeological remains, most notably recumbent stone circles; and* • *Large farmhouses made of local stone as well as smaller traditional cottages, many enlarged to accommodate modern dormer windows.* Pressures and sensitivities outlined in the SNH assessment relevant to wind farm development include '*the conical hills and subtle undulations are sensitive to changes in land use which may obscure hill shapes'.* There are no landscape designations within this LCA. **Value: Medium.**
Moray Uplands LCT (MRN3) Upland Farmland (Area 8)	The Moray Upland Farmland lies approximately 9.9km at closest to the north west and north of the proposed development. It is a large area of land lying to the east of the Spey, between the Coastal Farmland and Open Uplands. The Upland Farmland LCA is characterised by: • *Large scale landscape with simple vegetation pattern and rural population;* • *Broad, gently undulating slopes rising in close proximity to the coast;* • *Gently graded valleys to the higher lands of the Open Uplands;* • *Punctuated by distinctive conical hills such as the Bin of Cullen and Knock Hill;*

Landscape Character Type	Key Characteristics and Extent within the LVIA Study Area
	• *Large scale coniferous plantations of uniform colour and height to the western edge of the LCA;* • *Pockets of native woodland associated with individual farmsteads;* • *Pasture interspersed with some arable land; and* • *Dispersed settlement pattern of small farms within the broad valleys* The SNH Assessment provides some specific guidelines for wind development, and includes '*the avoidance of intrusion on the long views south east to the Buchan Plain and south to Ben Rinnes from key viewpoints on roads and within settlements'*. There are no landscape designations within this LCA. **Value: Medium.**
CNP Uplands and Glens LCT (CNG2) The North-Eastern Hills LCA	The North-Eastern Hills LCA lies approximately 10.7km to the west at closest to the proposed development. It is an extensive character area which forms the foothills to the north and east of the Central Massif, and is incised by Strathdon, Strathavon, Glenlivet and edged by Deeside. The North-Eastern Hills LCA is characterised by: • *Expansive, open, landscape of successive, interlocking ridges;* • *Lightly dissected hill slopes lead to broad undulating glens;* • *Undulating valley floor with scattered small tree groups;* • *Geometric shapes of plantations conflicts with the gently rounded landform;* • *Upper slopes predominantly covered by heather moorland* • *Muir burning creating distinctive pattern on the landscape in some areas*; • *Native pine and birch and small broadleaved woodlands colonise a few of the more sheltered valleys;* • *Sparse settlement confined to valley floors and lower slopes;* • *Access tracks scar hills in many areas;* • *Negative visual impact of A939 and power lines;* • *Strong sense of remoteness;* • *Extensive horizons of successive hill ranges; and* • *Views to the Cairngorms massif a special feature.* The southern half of the North-Eastern Hills LCA lies within the CNP and the northern half lies within the Moray AGLV. **Value: High** within the CNP and **High-Medium** within the AGLV.

Night Time Context

7.108 The night time character of the LVIA study area has been evaluated as part of the LVIA due to the requirement for aviation lights on the proposed wind turbines. This has involved both fieldwork and desk study during September and October 2019. The fieldwork comprised travelling around the LVIA study area at night, during which time viewpoint photography was taken at four agreed viewpoints. The analysis of the night time viewpoints is included in Technical Appendix 7.2: Viewpoint Assessment. The fieldwork also involved travelling beyond the extent of the viewpoints to obtain a broader understanding of night time character and the principal sources of artificial light. Desk study comprised the analysis of Ordnance Survey mapping and aerial photography, together with reviews of light pollution mapping published by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) (Ref. 7.31, https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps/). Whilst this light pollution mapping has been published by CPRE it covers Scotland and Wales.

7.109 The light pollution mapping clearly shows the close correlation between the existing settlement pattern and sources of artificial light, with the larger settlements, including Huntly, Dufftown, Keith, Alford and Inverrurie being the main concentrations of artificial light. There is also a broad pattern of more sources of light closer to the coastline, with Aberdeen just outside the LVIA study area to the east and a number of settlements along the coastline to the north, and these reducing with greater distance to the south and west. It is apparent from both the desk study and fieldwork that the south western part of the LVIA study area, including the corresponding part of the Cairngorms National Park, is the darkest part of the LVIA study area. This also comprises the part of the LVIA study area with the lowest population density largely due to the increasingly mountainous terrain and relative scarcity of transport infrastructure. The night time photography for viewpoint 11 (Figure 7.32d) on the edge of Huntly provides an indication of lighting associated with a settlement in the LVIA study area.

7.110 In addition to settlement pattern there are other notable light sources including aviation lights on wind turbines, masts and distilleries. Aviation lights on wind turbines are infrequent but examples include the turbines at Upper Wheedlemont Farm, approximately 7km south east of the Site and Myreton Crossroads, 24km to the north of the Site. Masts with aviation lights are infrequent, but present in parts of the LVIA study area. Distilleries are a distinctive and relatively frequent source of light. In some instances, these are within or on the fringes of settlements, notably Dufftown. However, in other instances they are located in more remote rural locations, such as the Glendronach Distillery to the north east of Huntly. The night time fieldwork was undertaken in early September, which coincided with the harvesting of cereal crops. This harvesting work continued into the night, with the headlights of combine harvesters and tractors operating in the fields particularly in the vicinity of Clatt and Kennethmont. Whilst this feature is seasonal specific, it does indicate some seasonal variation in the sources of artificial light.

7.111 In addition to the above, a large proportion of the LVIA study area comprises a rural landscape, where the settlement pattern is typically sparse. There are villages and dispersed properties that interrupt a generally dark backdrop and this is particularly evident at locations such as viewpoint 12 on the Coreen Hills (Figure 7.33e), where the elevation affords a view across and down onto a sparsely populated agricultural landscape. Here the dark landscape is occasionally punctuated by individual and small clusters of lights.

7.112 In more remote locations, there are few sources of light and viewpoint 1 at Tillathrowie (Figure 7.22d) comprises an example of this. There are numerous other examples of dark and relatively remote parts of the LVIA study area, particularly to the south west of the site, such as the Cabrach and towards the Cairngorms National Park. Part of the Cairngorms National Park is identified as a Dark Skies Park by the International Dark-Sky Association and the Tomintoul and Glenlivet Landscape Partnership (Ref. 7.32) and Ref. 7.33). There are also five “Star Gazing Locations” identified by Go Stargazing (Ref. 7.34). These are described in more detail in the landscape designations section. The location and extent of the Dark Skies Park and Star Gazing Locations are identified on Figures 7.3a and 7.3b.

Landscape Designations

7.113 There are no international or national landscape designations within the Site. Details of national and local designations within the 40km LVIA study area are set out in the following text and shown on Figure 7.3a Landscape Designations. Figure 7.3b shows the designated areas with an overlay of the blade tip ZTV.

National Designations

7.114 There are two types of nationally protected areas in Scotland, NPs and NSAs. National landscape designations have statutory protection, and are protected by policies in the relevant development plan.

7.115 The CNP lies within the south west quadrant of the LVIA study area, approximately 12.4km from the nearest turbine. It contains the Cairngorms Mountains NSA and Deeside and Lochnagar NSA which both lie approximately 35km at their closest points, to the south west of the Site. 'The Special Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park' (SNH and CNPA, 2010, Ref. 7.22) states that the special qualities for the Cairngorms Mountain NSA and Deeside and Lochnagar NSA do not differ significantly from the qualities of the CNP as a whole, and therefore the special qualities have not been separately identified for the NSAs in this document.

7.116 The special qualities of the CNP and associated NSAs are defined within nine categories. The qualities referenced in paragraphs 7.117 – 7.119 reflect those that are considered would be most susceptible to wind development taking into account that the proposed development would not lie within the CNP or NSAs.

7.117 General Qualities of the CNP and NSAs as set out in 'The Special Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park' include the following:

- magnificent mountains towering over moorland, forest and strath;
- vastness of space, scale and height;
- strong juxtaposition of contrasting landscapes;
- a landscape of layers, from inhabited strath to remote, uninhabited upland;
- 'The harmony of complicated curves'; and
- landscapes both cultural and natural.

7.118 Visual and Sensory Qualities of the CNP and NSAs as set out in 'The Special Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park' include the following:

- layers of receding ridge lines;
- grand panoramas and framed views;
- a landscape of many colours;
- dark skies;
- attractive and contrasting textures; and
- the dominance of natural sounds.

7.119 Consultation with CNPA highlighted that the Ladder Hills are the part of the CNP most likely to be affected by the proposed development. The CNPA advise, in their consultation response dated 17th May 2017, that the special landscape qualities specific to this area are:

- the surrounding hills;
- extensive moorland, linking the farmland, woodland and the high tops;

- dominance of natural landforms;
- wildness;
- layers of receding ridge lines;
- grand panoramas and framed views; and
- a landscape of opportunities.

7.120 The CNP is considered to be of High value reflecting the national level designation of this landscape.

National Non-Statutory Landscape Designations

Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes

7.121 The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDLs) managed by Historic Environment Scotland (Ref. 7.19) identifies private gardens, parks, country estates and botanical gardens. Inclusion within the Inventory means that the garden or landscape receives recognition and a degree of protection through the planning system.

7.122 Twenty five Historic GDLs have been identified within the 40km LVIA study area and are shown on Figure 7.3a. As illustrated by the blade tip ZTV overlay (Figure 7.3b) only three of the GDLs show potential for predicted visibility of the proposed development, and they all lie beyond 30km from the proposed turbines. The relevant GDLs are listed as follow with distance and direction from the proposed development:

- Forglen, 28-31km north east;
- Hatton Castle, 32.6km north east; and
- Keith Hall, 34.9km east south east.

7.123 On closer review, all these GDLs have a significant amount of woodland and forestry as part of their landscape design and this would limit views out to the wider area. In addition, the designation descriptions do not describe views out to the wider landscape as features of these GDLs. Taking this into account together with the distance from the proposed development and acknowledging that the ZTV does not include forestry, woodlands or settlements as obstructions, the GDLs are scoped out of any further assessment in this LVIA.

Dark Skies Park

7.124 The International Dark-Sky Association (Ref. 7.32) and the Tomintoul and Glenlivet Landscape Partnership (Ref. 7.33) have defined and promoted land that they consider to possess *"an exceptional or distinguished quality of starry nights and a nocturnal environment that is specifically protected for its scientific, natural, educational, cultural heritage, and/or public enjoyment"*. The Tomintoul and Glenlivet Dark Sky Park lies approximately 16km to the south west of the nearest turbine. It is predominately within the CNP, but extends beyond this to the north east. It covers an area of 244km^2 and includes land that forms part of the Crown Estate, together with other privately owned land and lies within the Moray Council area. In addition, five specific places within and close to the Dark Sky Park are promoted as Star Gazing Locations. The location and extent of the Dark Sky Park, together with the Star Gazing Locations, are included on Figures 7.3a and 7.3b.

7.125 The Dark Skies Park has been reviewed in relation to the ZTV for the proposed development. This has identified the ZTV shows that there would be very limited visibility of the proposed development from the Dark Skies Park, restricted to small areas, on high ground, at the very edge of this area. There is no predicted visibility of the proposed development from any of the Star Gazing Locations. No further analysis has been undertaken in relation to the level of value associated with the Dark Skies Park.

Local Landscape Designations

7.126 In March 2006, SNH and Historic Scotland (HS) jointly published Guidance on Local Landscape Designations in order to assist local authorities in their approach to local landscape designations, which can play an important role in promoting awareness and care of the most valued local landscapes, and also in protecting those which are the most vulnerable.

7.127 Aberdeenshire Council updated and defined their SLAs in April 2016 as supplementary guidance to support Policy E2 of the Aberdeenshire LDP (Ref. 7.3). Ten SLAs were identified, seven of which lie within the LVIA study area. The North Aberdeenshire Coast, Dee Valley, Clachnaben and Forest of Birse, and Howe of Cromar SLAs have no or very limited visibility of the proposed development and lie beyond 25km from the Site, and are scoped out of the assessment. The remaining three SLAs: Deveron Valley, Bennachie, and Upper Don Valley are predicted to have some visibility of the proposed development based on the blade tip ZTV analysis. The Site lies to the south of the Deveron Valley SLA with the northern end of the proposed access track partly within the SLA.

7.128 Moray Council has defined AGLVs in their 2015 LDP (Ref. 7.36). Moray Council does not have any documents that name or define the special qualities of the AGLVs, but the policy refers to landscape characteristics and special qualities identified within the SNH Moray and Nairn landscape character assessment (1998; Ref. 7.26). There are two AGLVs within the LVIA study area: the closest and largest abuts the south western boundary of the Site and extends to approximately 27km to the west and south to the CNP boundary, and follows the Spey valley to Fochabers in the north. The other AGLV/Area of Special Control is a small forested area around Pluscarden, south west of Elgin, 32km to the north west of the Site. The blade tip ZTV illustrates that there would be limited visibility within the Pluscarden area and this AGLV is scoped out of the assessment.

7.129 Moray Council has undertaken a review of its local landscape designations as part of its emerging Local Development Plan (Moray Landscape Designation Review, Carol Anderson Landscape Associates for Moray Council, July 2018, Ref. 7.21). This review has identified 13 areas designated as Special Landscape Areas (SLA), which replace the current AGLVs, Coastal Protection Zone and Pluscarden Area of Special Control and are incorporated in the Moray Local Development Plan 2020 – Proposed Plan. As this plan is still emerging at the time of drafting the EIA Report, the LVIA concentrates on the AGLVs covered by the current Local Development Plan, and these AGLVs are shown on Figures 7.3a and 7.3b. However, the SLAs are considered in the LVIA (in paragraphs 7.366 – 7.367).

7.130 Review of the location and extent the SLAs in relation to the ZTV identifies that the Ben Rinnes SLA is of particular relevance to this LVIA. The other SLAs within Moray have limited or no potential visibility of the proposed development and several are located towards peripheral parts of the LVIA study area. The eastern edge of the Ben Rinnes SLA lies approximately 9.5km to the west of the closest proposed wind turbine.

7.131 All locally designated landscape areas are considered to be of High-Medium value. Details of the

relevant local landscape designations are presented in Table 7-8. The landscape qualities have been defined from the local authority landscape designation reports (as mentioned above) which provide their reasons for designation.

Table 7-8
Local Landscape Designations and their Qualities

Local Landscape Designation (and distance and direction from the nearest turbine)	Defined Landscape Qualities
Deveron Valley Aberdeenshire Special Landscape Area 4.3km north	• Meandering river framed by rolling wooded hills and ridges, providing views into the valley. • Strong network of woodland throughout the valley provides landscape structure and wildlife habitat. A variety of woodland types include coniferous plantations, deciduous hilltop copses, shelter belts and a wealth of roadside trees including beech and ash. • The presence of historic estates has a strong influence along the river, including parkland around Duff House, Forglen and others, but more generally in the wooded landscape. • The valley landscape forms an important part of the setting of various settlements, including the planned town of Huntly and the market town of Turriff. • Distinctive local granite architecture displayed in villages and towns, farms and most notably in castles such as Huntly. • The attractive landscape makes the Deveron a popular setting for a range of outdoor recreation including fishing, canoeing, walking and cycling, with the NCN Route 1 between Banff and Turriff. • A continuous valley landscape, from the hills to the sea.
Bennachie Aberdeenshire Special Landscape Area 12.6km south east	• Bennachie is the iconic hill of central Aberdeenshire, instantly recognisable from across the wider landscape, in both long and short range views. • Intact landcover of heather moorland on the main Bennachie ridge. • Extensive woodland across lowland and upland, including native woods, estate policies and forestry plantations, with a substantial amount recognised as ancient woodland. • Hill forts are found on summits such as Mither Tap and Tillymuick, with cairns and other features emphasising the long history of settlement. • The River Don is a key feature of Aberdeenshire, meandering through the upland glen south of Bennachie, and across the farmland around Kemnay. • The farmland to the east provides the setting to Bennachie, but also typifies lowland Aberdeenshire with its mosaic of wooded estates and open farmland. • A hugely popular area, with walkers enjoying the spectacular views from the Bennachie summits, and Pitfichie being a centre for mountain biking. • Panoramic views from the upland areas, particularly from the Bennachie summits, over the Don Valley and beyond to the patchwork of Aberdeenshire farmland.
Upper Don Valley Aberdeenshire Special Landscape Area 12.3km south	• Distinctive valley landforms, including the steep sided gorge west of Alford and the wider strath around Kildrummy. • The Don is contained by rolling wooded hills with attractive broadleaved woodland and a patchwork of arable farmland and pasture. • Broad open moorland forms the backdrop to views along and across the strath, including views to the higher hills within the Cairngorms National Park.

Local Landscape Designation (and distance and direction from the nearest turbine)	Defined Landscape Qualities
	• Moorland ridges extend almost to the river in places, creating an interlocking visual pattern of upland and lowland. • Substantial and well visited built heritage features include the medieval Kildrummy Castle and its more recent namesake and associated gardens. The designed landscape of Glenkindie House has an influence on the approach to the National Park. • An agricultural but sparsely settled landscape, the settlement pattern is one of dispersed farms, often featuring traditional granite buildings set in small woodlands, rather than nucleated villages. • The meandering, occasionally braided River Don is a key river that contributes to the identity of Aberdeenshire, forming a link between the mountains and the sea. • The Don valley is the route of the A97 Highland Tourist Route, a major gateway into the National Park, with glimpses into the higher hills west of Glenkindie. • The southern ridge of Balderonoch Hill, Broom Hill and The Socach offers panoramic views for walkers over Strathdon and south into the Howe of Cromar.
Moray Area of Great Landscape Value 500m west	Moray Council does not have any documents that name and or define the special qualities of the AGLVs but their policy refers to landscape characteristics and special qualities defined identified within the SNH Moray and Nairn landscape character assessment (1998). Reference should be made to the landscape character description (Table 7.7) for the SNH LCAs MRN4 – Uplands for the area of the AGLV relevant to this assessment.
Moray Ben Rinnes Special Landscape Area 9.5km west	• Ben Rinnes forms a dominant landmark feature, seen well beyond Moray's boundaries due to its height (840m AOD), isolation from other hills and distinctive form. • Two smaller hills of Meikle Conval and Little Conval form the backdrop to Dufftown. • The uplands between Glen Rinnes and Glen Fiddich have a sinuous sculpted appearance with flowing slopes and rounded tops, deeply dissected by narrow valleys. • The uplands are largely covered with heather moorland. • Glen Rinnes and Glen Livet form tranquil and relatively little developed glens which are strongly contained by steep-sided uplands. • Small farms, undulating walled pastures and often extensive birch riparian woodlands are dramatically back-dropped by steep heathery hills. • The narrow Glen Fiddich is more remote with the ruinous Glenfiddich Lodge, Glen Livet in the south, is similarly unsettled with some abandoned buildings. • The 14th century Auchindoun Castle, a former tower house with a great vaulted hall, occupies a strategic position, set on a knoll. • Part of the National Inventory designated Battle of Glenlivet site (1594) extends into the south-western edge of these uplands. • The Corbett hill of Ben Rinnes and the two Conval Hills are very popular with walkers. The hills between Glens Rinnes and Fiddich are less frequented but accommodate a network of Heritage Routes used by mountain bikers and walkers. • Distilleries are present within Glen Rinnes and Glenlivet with some of these comprising attractive historic buildings and adding to the romance associated with this landscape.

Local Landscape Designation (and distance and direction from the nearest turbine)	Defined Landscape Qualities
	• Beneath the lower flanks of this range of hills lie numerous remains of prehistoric settlement, including field clearance cairns and roundhouses, many of which are deemed regionally significant in importance. • This sense of longevity of human activity within this wilder part of Moray is further enhanced with the remains of a prehistoric hillfort surrounding the summit of Little Conval.

Wild Land

7.132 Wild Land Areas (WLA) are the most extensive areas of wildness in Scotland defined by SNH. They are identified as nationally important in Scottish Planning Policy, but are not a statutory designation. SNH published a new map of WLAs in June 2014 (Ref. 7.29) which identified 42 areas. In January 2017 descriptions (Ref. 7.28) were published for each of the WLAs providing context, key attributes and qualities.

7.133 Two WLAs: no.15 Cairngorms and no.16 Lochnagar-Mount Keen, lie partly within the LVIA study area, 31.3km to the south west and 37.5km to the south of the Site respectively, as illustrated on Figure 7.3a. These both lie within the CNP and partly within the NSAs. The Lochnagar-Mount Keen WLA has only a small part within the LVIA study area of which the ZTV illustrates very limited potential visibility. Combined with distance from the Site, the Lochnagar-Mount Keen WLA is scoped out of the assessment. The ZTV shows areas of potential visibility across several summits within the Cairngorms WLA.

7.134 The SNH WLA description (January 2017; Ref. 7.28) sets out the following key attributes and qualities of the Cairngorms Wild Land:

- *"Extensive, open, remote mountain and moorland interior containing few human artefacts or evidence of contemporary land use, and possessing a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude;*
- *Massive, rounded hills and plateaux that appear awe-inspiring due to their superlative scale, openness and elevation, and which offer extensive, panoramic views;*
- *Long, deep, steep-sided glens that cut into the massive hills and plateaux and possess qualities of remoteness whilst also facilitating access;*
- *Corries and gorges carved into the hills and plateaux appear arresting in their vertical form and include features such as cliffs and waterfalls that contribute to perceived naturalness;*
- *Dynamic rivers form key visual and physical features, influence access and contribute to the sense of naturalness, whilst watersheds and bealachs form notable crossing points;*
- *Simple landforms and landcover that contribute to the awe-inspiring qualities of the area, and exposed rock that influences strongly the sense of naturalness;*
- *A variety of recreation activities, including those that are focused, dispersed or occur along through-routes, allowing different wild land attributes and qualities to be experienced; and*
- *Open native woodlands of diverse spatial and visual characteristics that respond directly to the underlying physical conditions, contributing strongly to the sense of naturalness."*

7.135 WLAs are considered to have a High value as a landscape receptor within the LVIA study area due to their rarity and remoteness.

Principal Visual Receptors and Representative Viewpoints

7.136 The settlement and transport patterns are closely correlated to the landscape within the LVIA study area demonstrated by the principal rail and road routes particularly to the north and east of the Site. Settlement and infrastructure are less frequent within the more remote uplands to the south and west of the Site. Parts of the LVIA study area are popular with tourists for the whisky trail, and hill walking is the main attraction within the uplands and CNP. In the winter, cross country skiing within the Clashindarroch Forest is a popular sport.

7.137 The various groups of visual receptors identified within the LVIA study area and included in the assessment are described in the following section.

Settlements

7.138 In order to focus the assessment on assessing potential significant effects, only settlements within 20km of the proposed development are reviewed for assessment. Beyond 20km, the main potential for views from settlements is largely limited to the scattered properties within the Agricultural Heartlands LCT in the north and north east. However, as acknowledged earlier, the potential visibility of the proposed development would be considerably more limited than illustrated on the ZTV as it does not take account of the potential screening by the settlements themselves or any surrounding woodland or forestry.

7.139 A RVVA study area of 5km from the outermost turbine of the proposed development was requested by Aberdeenshire Council. An overview of potential effects on visual amenity for residential receptors within a 5km radius of the proposed development is provided in Technical Appendix 7.3.

7.140 Within the 20km LVIA study area, many towns and villages are sheltered in valleys limiting their wider intervisibility within the area. The ZTV illustrates that there would be no visibility of the proposed development from the following main towns and villages within 20km and they are not considered further within this LVIA:

- Huntly;
- Rhynie;
- Dufftown;
- Keith;
- Insch;
- Alford; and
- Charlestown of Aberlour.

7.141 The settlement pattern outside of the main towns mostly consists of scattered and isolated properties, rather than nucleated villages. As the settlements are largely spread out, general areas are described where the ZTV shows potential visibility rather than identification of individual properties.

7.142 The following settlements and groups of residential properties within 10km of the Site are predicted to have theoretical visibility of the proposed development based on the Blade Tip ZTV (Figure 7.5a and 7.5b) (approximate distances given are to the nearest proposed turbine):

- Tillathrowie, 2km north east;
- Haugh of Glass, 5km north north east;
- Daugh of Invermarkie area, 7km north;
- Bridgend, 7km north east;
- residential properties around The Broback, 7-10km east north east;
- residential properties to south east of Rhynie, Correen hills, 7-12km south east; and
- residential properties to south west of Rhynie, Wheedlemont, 7-8km south south east.

7.143 Within 10-20km of the Site, there are no settlements between the south and west of the Site, with the majority of the settled areas lying to the north east. The following settlement areas between 10-20km of the Site are predicted to have theoretical visibility of the proposed development based on the Blade Tip ZTV (Figure 7.5a and 7.5b) (approximate distances given are to the nearest proposed turbine):

- dispersed residential properties between Glens of Foudland and the A97, 10-20km east north east; and
- Milltown of Rothiemay, 18km north east.

Transport Routes

7.144 The analysis of the blade tip ZTV (Figures 7.5a and 7.5b) has determined that the proposed development has the potential to cause impacts on the routes discussed in paragraphs 7.145 – 7.153. These are illustrated on Figure 7.4a.

7.145 The A96 is the main route through the LVIA study area which connects Aberdeen to Inverness via Inverurie, Huntly, Keith and Elgin which lie within the LVIA study area. It lies across the north east of the LVIA study area, approximately 9.5km at its closest point.

7.146 The Site is surrounded by the A920, A941 and A97. The A920 lies between Huntly and Dufftown, to the north of the Site, and from which access to the Site would be located. The A941 wraps around the south and west of the Site from Rhynie to Dufftown via the Cabrach, 5km distant at its closest point. The A97 lies to the east of the Site, 4km at closest to the Site, and connects Banff to Ballater.

7.147 The A95 is also a main route which lies between Keith and Grantown-on-Spey within the LVIA study area, to the north west of the Site, approximately 18km at its closest point. However, there is no theoretical visibility along the entire length of this route and it is not considered further.

7.148 Within 10km of the Site, in addition to the A roads mentioned above, there is one B road: the B9002 which lies in the Cabrach area between the A97 and A941 south of Rhynie and north of The Buck hill. There is a network of local roads between the scattered settlements with one particularly long unnamed road between Bridgend on the A941 to the A920 near Haugh of Glass.

7.149 The ZTV illustrates that beyond 10km from the Site, there is scattered predicted visibility of the

proposed development across the network of local roads largely which lie to the north east of the Site. There are two roads in particular which are orientated towards the Site: the B9022 (north of Milltown of Rothiemay) and the B9016 (north west of Keith).

7.150 The Highland Tourist Route (Ref. 7.30) follows the A944 and A939 from Aberdeen to Nairn and then follows B roads to Inverness. The ZTV illustrates that there would be no visibility of the proposed development along any of this tourist route and therefore it is scoped out of the assessment.

7.151 The Aberdeen to Inverness rail route lies across the LVIA study area, to the east of the Site, from Inverurie to Elgin, via Huntly and Keith. At its closest point it is approximately 8km from the site where it lies parallel to the A87 to the west of the Site. The ZTV indicates only one very short area of potential visibility near Bridgend to the east of the Site, and in reality the trees and embankments would screen any prolonged open views. It is therefore scoped out of the assessment.

7.152 There is also a short rail route between Keith and Dufftown, parallel to the B9014. The ZTV indicates that there would be no predicted visibility of the proposed development from this route and therefore it is not included in the assessment.

7.153 The following transport routes are considered in the assessment:

- A96;
- A97;
- A920;
- A941;
- B9002;
- B9016;
- B9022; and
- local roads within 10km.

Long Distance Recreational Routes

7.154 Walking is a popular activity within the LVIA study area with many upland tracks and paths being in evidence. Long Distance Recreational Routes which have been identified within the 40km LVIA study area and which are considered for assessment, are described in paragraphs 7.155 – 7.158 and are shown on Figures 7.4a and 7.4b.

7.155 The Gordon Way is an 18km/11mile route which lies on the old peat extraction routes across Bennachie to Suie, approximately 15km to the south east of the Site at its closest point. Parts of the route are shown to have predicted visibility of the proposed development.

7.156 The Speyside Way Long Distance Route lies within the LVIA study area from Buckie to Grantown-on-Spey. The ZTV illustrates that no part of the route would have any visibility of the proposed development due to its largely enclosed valley route and therefore it is not included in the assessment.

7.157 Isla Way is a cycle route between Dufftown to Keith, 21km/13mile long. The ZTV illustrates that there would be no visibility of the proposed development along this route and therefore it is not

included in the assessment.

7.158 The Moray Coast Trail extends along the coast from Cullen in the east to Forres in the west. Predicted visibility for a short stretch south of Lossiemouth is shown on the ZTV, although at over 35km from the Site it is unlikely that there would be any significant effects upon users of this route, and it is therefore scoped out of any further assessment.

SUSTRANS – National Cycle Route 1

7.159 National Cycle Route 01 (Dover to Shetland) (also known as Eurovelo 12 and North Sea Cycle Route) lies at the north east and north edges of the LVIA study area, at closest 30km to the proposed development, near Turriff. The ZTV illustrates some predicted visibility for a short stretch north of Turriff and at Oldmeldrum, both beyond 30km from the proposed development. Taking into account this distance and the very limited extent of the predicted visibility, it is unlikely there would be any significant effects upon the cyclists along this route and the route has been scoped out of any further assessment.

Recreational Routes within 10km LVIA Study Area – Core Paths

7.160 Every local authority and National Park authority (access authorities) in Scotland is required to draw up a plan for a system of paths (core paths) sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable recreational access throughout their area. As highlighted within national guidance (SNH and Paths for All Partnership; core paths Plans - A guide to good practice, July 2005; Ref. 7.37), core paths are of particular importance close to where people live. A core path may comprise a right of way, farm track, an old drove road, a minor public road or a river.

7.161 The Aberdeenshire Core Paths Maps (July 2015; Ref. 7.38) were reviewed in order to inform the assessment and the viewpoint selection within a 10km radius of the proposed development. Potential impacts on core paths within 10km of the Site have been assessed as it is considered that significant effects would be more likely to occur within this distance. The core paths within 10km of the Site are shown on Figure 7.4b.

7.162 There are no core paths within the Site, although there are a number of forestry tracks which are used as recreational routes. The closest core path beyond the Site is the route from the A941 to the summit of Tap O' Noth, to the south east of the Site. There are core paths on the east side of Rhynie which potentially have some visibility of the proposed development. To the east of the Site, at Gartly, there are a series of core paths which cross the A97 and railway line, and extend up the Hill of Corskie.

7.163 Within 10km of the Site in Moray, there is a considerable network of core paths and existing paths. There are interconnecting paths from the A941 south to north west of Cabrach which lead into the Blackwater and Glenfiddich Forests. There are also a series of paths between Dufftown and Haugh of Glass. All have varying potential visibility of the proposed development along their routes.

7.164 The following core paths and groups of core paths have been considered in the assessment:

- Tap O' Noth, 5km south east;
- east of Gartly, 7km east;
- east of Rhynie, 8km south east;

- paths to south west of Cabrach, 6km south west;
- paths west of Bridgend, 6km west; and
- paths between Haugh of Glass and Dufftown (Hill of Mackalea and The Scalp, both approximately 8km north west).

Other Recreational Routes and Destinations

7.165 The Clashindarroch Forest, in which the proposed development would be located is used for walkers, runners and horse riders, and in snow, for cross country skiing. Proximity to the proposed turbines and associated infrastructure means there is the potential for significant effects on people enjoying these activities in the forest.

7.166 The mountainous regions to the west and south west, largely within the CNP, are an attraction for many hill walkers. There are seven Corbetts within the LVIA study area. The closest is Coryhabbie Hill, 15km to the west south west of the Site. There are also nine Grahams in the LVIA study area including The Buck which lies 9km to the south of the Site. The ZTV indicates that all the summits would potentially have visibility of the proposed development. The following of the summits contains the local authority area they lie within:

- Corbetts (2,500-3,000ft/762-914m):
  - Coryhabbie Hill (Moray), 15km west south west;
  - Ben Rinnes (Moray), 18km west (Viewpoint 13);
  - Carn Mor (Glen Livet) (CNP), 22km south west (near Viewpoint 19);
  - Carn Elasaid (CNP), 28km south west;
  - Morven (CNP), 28km south;
  - Brown Cow Hill (CNP and RSA), 35km south west; and
  - Geal Charn (CNP), 39km south west.
- Grahams (2,000-2,500ft/609m-762m):
  - The Buck (Aberdeenshire/Moray), 9km south (Viewpoint 5);
  - Cooks Cairn (Moray), 14km west south west;
  - Ladylea Hill (CNP), 18km south west;
  - Pressendye (Aberdeenshire), 24km south;
  - Mona Gowan (CNP), 28km south south west;
  - Carn a' Ghillie Chearr (CNP), 29km west;
  - Creagan a Chase (CNP), 33km, west south west;
  - Gealing Hill (CNP), 36km south south west; and
  - Cnap Chaochan Aitinn (CNP), 36km south west.

7.167 The CNP is also an attraction for other outdoor activities. The ZTV illustrates that visibility of the proposed development is very limited within the CNP except for the isolated summits within the LVIA study area which are included in the list above.

7.168 The Speyside Malt Whisky Trail which includes distilleries in Keith and Dufftown within the LVIA study area, is largely within the valleys that lie outwith the ZTV and are not considered further in the LVIA.

Representative Viewpoints

7.169 The assessment of landscape and visual effects has been informed by consideration of the predicted changes arising from the proposed development at 20 viewpoints. An initial list of 21 viewpoints was proposed in the Scoping Report and through the consultation process and taking into account the design development, the list was finalised as shown on Figures 7.5a and 7.5b.

7.170 The viewpoints were selected to be representative of the main landscape and visual receptors within the LVIA study area. They include locations of specific importance including: recognised viewpoints (for example the OS identified viewpoint in the Correen Hills), designated landscapes (for example SLAs and the CNP), important recreational routes (The Gordon Way) and destinations such as Battle Hill, Huntly. A variety of landscape character types and locations at different directions, distances and elevations from the Site have been represented in the selected viewpoints. The viewpoint list includes two locations in close proximity to the Site (Viewpoints 2 and 3) where there is no, or negligible, predicted visibility of the proposed development although the first scoping layout had shown visibility. It was considered appropriate to retain these due to the location and sensitivity of these viewpoints and to illustrate the lack of visibility in this area. It is also relevant to note the details in paragraph 7.81 which describes the potential implications of micrositing turbines, including specific reference to viewpoints 2 and 3.

7.171 All the viewpoints were reviewed to identify appropriate locations for the assessment of the effects of aviation lighting. This review concentrated on two key attributes: predicted visibility of the turbine nacelles (where the highest lights would be positioned on the proposed turbines); and the likelihood of people seeing the turbines at night, in particular, residential receptors and road users. Four locations were selected and agreed with SNH and these are identified in Table 7-9. The viewpoint list considered and used where relevant, those viewpoints used in the Clashindarroch Wind Farm 2009 ES LVIA.

7.172 The assessment of landscape and visual effects, including cumulative effects, at the viewpoint locations informs identification of the likely extent of significant effects arising from the proposed development. The detailed assessment of these effects is set out in Technical Appendix 7.2: Viewpoint Assessment and the findings used to inform the Assessment of Effects Section of this Chapter.

7.173 The assessment has involved the production of computer-generated wirelines and, in some cases, photomontages, to illustrate predicted views of the proposed development from each of the agreed viewpoints which are shown on Figures 7.22 – 7.41 presented in Technical Appendix 7.2 of the EIA Report.

7.174 Table 7-9 lists the viewpoints and provides information on their location and distance from the nearest turbine of the proposed development.

Table 7-9
Representative Viewpoints

No.	Viewpoint	Landscape Receptor Type	Visual Receptor Type	Distance from Nearest Turbine	Direction from Nearest Turbine	Elevation (m AOD)
1	Minor Road near Tillathrowie (also night time viewpoint)	Agricultural Heartlands LCT/Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA	Local Residents Road users	3.7km	NE	267m
2	Minor road near Backside	Straths and Valleys LCT/ Deveron and Bogie Straths LCA, Aberdeenshire Deveron Valley SLA	Local Residents Road users	3.9km	NW	292m
3	Haugh of Glass	Straths and Valleys LCT/ Deveron and Bogie Straths LCA, Aberdeenshire Deveron Valley SLA	Local Residents	6.2km	NNW	210m
4	Tap O' Noth	Moorland Plateau LCT/Grampian Outliers LCA	Walkers	4.8km	SE	563m
5	The Buck	Moorland Plateau LCT/Grampian Outliers LCA and Uplands LCT/Open Uplands LCA, Moray AGLV	Walkers	8.7km	S	721m
6	Clashmach Hill	Moorland Plateau LCT/Grampian Outliers LCA	Walkers	7.2km	NE	375m
7	A920 between Huntly and Dufftown	Moorland Plateau LCT/Grampian Outliers LCA	Road users	7.6km	NNW	314m
8	Minor Road, near Corse, south east of A97	Agricultural Heartlands LCT/Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA	Local Residents	17.2km	NE	183m
9	Minor Road off B9117 near Milltown of Rothiemay (also night time viewpoint)	Uplands LCT/Upland Farmland LCA	Local Residents	19.7km	NE	140m
10	A96 between Huntly and Keith	Uplands LCT/Upland Farmland LCA	Road users	12.5km	N	229m
11	Battle Hill, Huntly (also night time viewpoint)	Straths and Valleys LCT/Deveron and Bogie Straths LCA	Local residents Walkers	11.0km	NE	143m
12	Correen Hills, Old Military Road (also night time viewpoint)	Moorland Plateau LCT/Grampian Outliers LCA	Walkers	13.5km	W	381m
13	Ben Rinnes	Uplands and Glens	Walkers	17.8km	NNE	840m

No.	Viewpoint	Landscape Receptor Type	Visual Receptor Type	Distance from Nearest Turbine	Direction from Nearest Turbine	Elevation (m AOD)
		LCT/North Eastern Hills LCA, Moray AGLV				
14	Knock Hill	Uplands LCT/Upland Farmland LCA	Walkers	23.6km	NW	428m
15	Ben Aigan	Uplands LCT/Upland Farmland LCA, Moray AGLV	Walkers	19.6km	ENE	470m
16	A96, Leys of Dummuies	Agricultural Heartlands LCT/Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA	Road users	11.8km	ESE	175m
17	Oxen Craig	Moorland Plateau LCT/Grampian Outliers LCA, Aberdeenshire Bennachie SLA	Walkers	23.8km	N	522m
18	Burnside, north of Newmill	Uplands LCT/Upland Farmland LCA	Local Residents	19.7km	SW	209m
19	Ladder Hills, Little Geal Charn	Uplands and Glens LCT/North-Eastern Hills LCA, Cairngorms National Park	Walkers	18.1km	W	742m
20	Meikle Balloch	Uplands LCT/Upland Farmland LCA	Walkers	16.2km	N	365m

CUMULATIVE ZONES OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY

7.175 The locations of all wind energy developments including wind farms above 50m blade tip height (for which data is publicly available) within approximately 40km of the proposed development are shown on Figure 7.7a. This figure also identifies the current status of each site i.e. operational, under construction, consented, or application stage within 40km. No sites at EIA Scoping stage have been identified through consultation. The status of the wind farms is taken to be current as of September 2019. The Hill of Glaschyle Wind Farm is included in the assessment because, although it lies just beyond the 40km LVIA study area, it is in close proximity to the Berry Burn and Pauls Hill Wind Farms and has potential to be seen as grouped with them.

7.176 As illustrated on Figure 7.7a, the cumulative context in the 40km radius LVIA study area agreed for the Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (CLVIA) is very complex with over 100 sites. These include numerous small single turbines in Aberdeenshire as well as very large wind farms in the uplands of Moray. Single turbines have been considered in the LVIA study area where they are over 50m in blade tip height.

7.177 An initial comparison review of the ZTVs of wind farm sites within the LVIA study area against the proposed development's ZTV was undertaken to consider whether cumulative effects would be likely. A judgement was then made on the wind farm sites to be included in the assessment based on the extent of simultaneous cumulative visibility predicted, size and proximity of each wind farm

relative to the proposed development. This review also considered potential sequential cumulative effects on the key transport routes in the LVIA study area. Based on this review, the list of wind farms to be included in the detailed cumulative assessment was prepared as presented in Table 7-10 and shown on Figure 7.7b. This totals 31 operational sites, four consented and four proposed (at application stage).

Table 7-10
Wind Farm Development within 40km of the Proposed Development Considered in the CLVIA

Status	Wind Farm	No. of Turbines	Height of Turbines to Blade Tip (m)	Direction from Proposed Development	Distance from Proposed Development (km)
Operational	Bailiesward Farm	1	79.6	NNE	4.9
	Balnamoon Crossroads	1	69	N	22.5
	Berry Burn	29	99.5	W	34.3
	Cairnborrow	5	100	N	8.9
	Cairnmore	3	81	SE	9.6
	Clashindarroch	18	110	SSW	0.5
	Cowhill	1	79.6	ENE	29.9
	Crannabog Farm	1	79	ENE	28.2
	Dorenell	59	126	WSW	9.3
	Dummuie	7	78	ENE	11.7
	Edintore	6	124	NNW	13.1
	Followsters	1	77	NNW	21.7
	Garelhill Newmill	1	74	N	22.4
	Glens of Foudland	20	78	ENE	15.9
	Greenmyres	1	84	ENE	12.4
	Hill of Glaschyle	12	99.5	W	41.7
	Hill of Tillymorgan	3	100	ENE	20.2
	Hill of Towie I	21	100	NW	14.5
	Hunthill	3	67	WNW	24
	Kellas	4	110	WNW	31.3
	Kildrummy	9	93	S	10.9
	Mains of Balquhain	1	80	E	29.7
	Mains of Meadaple	1	79	ENE	28.2
	Meikle Folla	1	79	ENE	28.1

Status	Wind Farm	No. of Turbines	Height of Turbines to Blade Tip (m)	Direction from Proposed Development	Distance from Proposed Development (km)
	Midtown of Glass	1	79	NNW	9.3
	Myreton Crossroads	3	79	N	24.1
	Newton of Edingight Grange	1	77	N	24.8
	Pauls Hill	28	100	W	31.2
	Rothes	22	100	WNW	29.5
	Rothes Extension	18	110-125	WNW	29.8
	Upper Wheedlemont Farm	2	81	SE	7.0
	Westerton of Folla	1	79	ENE	26.4
Consented	Aultmore	13	110	N	25.1
	Hill of Burns	1	79.6	ENE	29.7
	Hill of Towie II	16	125	NW	13.9
	Meikle Hill	6	126.5	WNW	32.3
App	Clash Gour	48	130-180	WNW	32.9
	Meikleton of Ardonald	1	135	N	9.8
	Pauls Hill II	7	149.9	WNW	30.6
	Rothes III	29	149.9-225	WNW	25.3
App = Application					

7.178 ZTVs for all of these wind farms have been prepared and grouped to reflect similar planning status and where possible, the pattern of predicted visibility, for the purpose of being presented on the cumulative ZTVs. The grouped and individual wind farms are identified in Table 7-11 and on Figure 7.7c.

Table 7-11
Wind Farm Development Groupings Considered in the CLVIA

Group	Status	Wind Farm	No. of Turbines	Height of Turbines to Blade Tip (m)	Direction from Proposed Development	Distance from Proposed Development
G1	Operational	Cairnmore	3	81	SE	9.6
	Operational	Upper Wheedlemont Farm	2	81	SE	7.0
G2	Operational	Hill of Towie I	21	100	NW	14.5
	Consented	Hill of Towie II	16	125	NW	13.9

Group	Status	Wind Farm	No. of Turbines	Height of Turbines to Blade Tip (m)	Direction from Proposed Development	Distance from Proposed Development
G3	Operational	Dummuie	7	78	ENE	11.7
	Operational	Greenmyres	1	84	ENE	12.4
G4	Operational	Glens of Foudland	20	78	ENE	15.9
	Operational	Hill of Tillymorgan	3	100	ENE	20.2
G5	Operational	Westerton of Folla	1	79	ENE	26.4
	Operational	Mains of Meadaple	1	79	ENE	28.2
	Operational	Crannabog Farm	1	79	ENE	28.2
	Operational	Meikle Folla	1	79	ENE	28.1
	Consented	Hill of Burns	1	79.6	ENE	29.7
	Operational	Cowhill	1	79.6	ENE	29.9
G6	Operational	Followsters	1	77	NNW	21.7
	Operational	Garrelhill Newmill	1	74	N	22.4
G7	Operational	Balnamoon Crossroads	1	69	N	22.5
	Operational	Myreton Crossroads	3	79	N	24.1
	Consented	Newton of Edingight Grange	1	77	N	24.8
G8	Operational	Rothes	22	100	WNW	29.5
	Operational	Rothes Extension	18	110-125	WNW	29.8
	Consented	Meikle Hill	6	126.5	WNW	32.3
	Consented	Kellas	4	110	WNW	31.3
	Operational	Hunthill	3	67	WNW	24
G9	Operational	Pauls Hill	28	100	W	31.2
	Operational	Berry Burn	29	99.5	W	34.3
	Operational	Hill of Glaschyle	12	99.5	W	41.7
G10	Proposed	Clash Gour	48	130-180	WNW	32.9
	Proposed	Pauls Hill II	7	149.9	WNW	30.6
WF	Operational	Clashindarroch	18	110	SSW	0.5
WF	Operational	Cairnborrow	5	100	N	8.9
WF	Operational	Bailiesward Farm	1	79.6	NNE	4.9

Group	Status	Wind Farm	No. of Turbines	Height of Turbines to Blade Tip (m)	Direction from Proposed Development	Distance from Proposed Development
WF	Operational	Midtown of Glass	1	79	NNW	9.3
WF	Operational	Kildrummy	9	93	S	10.9
WF	Operational	Dorenell	59	126	WSW	9.3
WF	Operational	Edintore	6	124	NNW	13.1
WF	Consented	Aultmore	13	110	N	25.1
WF	Operational	Mains of Balquhain	1	80	E	29.7
WF	Proposed	Meikleton of Ardonald	1	135	N	9.8
WF	Proposed	Rothes III	29	149.9-225	WNW	25.3
WF = Individual wind farm not assessed as part of a group.						

7.179 For the purposes of the CLVIA, the cumulative wind farms are defined as being operational, consented or proposed. Wind farms under construction are considered under the consented definition.

7.180 The relevant Cumulative Zones of Theoretical Visibility (CZTVs) are provided on Figures 7.8 to 7.20. Each CZTV has been calculated to blade tip based on the available turbine dimensions and layouts for each site at the time of assessment.

7.181 The following text describes the theoretical cumulative visibility of the proposed development considered in addition to the identified groups and single wind farms listed in Table 7-9.

Analysis of CZTVs

Proposed Development and Clashindarroch Wind Farm (Figure 7.8)

7.182 A comparative ZTV has been produced, showing where the blade tip ZTV of the proposed development and Clashindarroch Wind Farm ZTV overlap, in order to identify the areas where the proposed development would introduce new visibility of turbines beyond those already with visibility of Clashindarroch Wind Farm.

7.183 The turbines of Clashindarroch Wind Farm lie on land which on average is approximately 64m higher than the turbine positions of the proposed development. Taking this into account and due to the proposed development's position to the north east of Clashindarroch Wind Farm, most areas of new visibility lie to the north east of the Site. Within 10km, the new visibility from the proposed development would occur in small areas extending from the existing areas of visibility of Clashindarroch Wind Farm, particularly around Tillathrowie.

7.184 Between 10km and 20km, there is one main area of new visibility which lies between Ruthven and Meikle Balloch to the north of the Site. Other areas of new visibility are small visual extensions to the Clashindarroch Wind Farm ZTV with some isolated new areas at Kildrummy to the south,

Glenfiddich to the west and small areas to the north west.

7.185 Beyond 20km, predicted visibility of the proposed development on its own is limited and fragmented. There are small areas of new predicted visibility along the A96 corridor to the east and north, a small area near Glen Tanar in the south, isolated areas on the Hills of Cromdale to the south west, and on high land to the north west of Knockando. There is also a patch of new visibility on the coast, east of Lossiemouth.

7.186 On review of the comparison ZTV on Figure 7.8, it is also worth noting that there are larger areas of visibility of Clashindarroch Wind Farm on its own than the proposed development on its own. These areas are largely to the south and south east within 20km.

CZTV Cairnborrow and Meikleton of Ardonald with the Proposed Development (Figure 7.9)

Cairnborrow

7.187 The operational Cairnborrow Wind Farm lies 8.9km to the north of the proposed development. Its theoretical visibility is largely limited to approximately 5km surrounding the wind farm and within the wider area to the north with sporadic areas to the north west and north east. There is also some visibility from isolated summits to the south, west and south east. Figure 7.9 illustrates that the main areas of cumulative visibility with the proposed development are located beyond 10km; to the north east around the Balloch area extending to Knock Hill; to the east north east between the A92 and A96; and to the north of Keith, near Aultmore. There is also cumulative visibility from the isolated summits such as Ben Rinnes and Tap O' Noth.

7.188 Representative viewpoints (VP) illustrating cumulative views of the proposed development with Cairnborrow Wind Farm include VPs 4-6, 8-11, and 13-20.

Meikleton of Ardonald

7.189 The proposed single turbine at Meikleton of Ardonald would be located approximately 9.8km to the north of the proposed development. It would be located close and to the north west of Cairnborrow Wind Farm. Therefore, its theoretical visibility would be very similar to the operational Cairnborrow Wind Farm. The exceptions to this are around the edge of the predicted visibly, e.g. on the east facing slopes of Aultmore, to the north east of Keith. Overall it is very likely that the Meikleton of Ardonald turbine would be visible in combination with the Cairnborrow Wind Farm in the majority of instances.

7.190 Representative viewpoints (VP) illustrating cumulative views of the proposed development with the proposed Meikleton of Ardonald wind turbine include VPs 4, 6, 8-11, and 13-20.

CZTV Bailiesward Farm and Midtown of Glass and with the Proposed Development (Figure 7.10)

Bailiesward Farm

7.191 Bailiesward Farm is an operational single turbine that lies approximately 5km to the north north east of the proposed development. Its theoretical visibility is largely limited to a narrow cone shape extending out to the north east for approximately 20km. Excluding the immediate area around Bailiesward Farm Turbine and also an area around Cairnborrow, Figure 7.10 illustrates that there would be theoretical cumulative visibility of the proposed development with the Bailiesward Farm

Turbine for the rest of its limited ZTV. This includes the areas south of The Balloch and Knock Hill, and an area north of Keith.

7.192 Representative viewpoints illustrating cumulative views of the proposed development with the Bailiesward Farm turbine include VPs 5, 6, 9, 14, 18 and 20.

Midtown of Glass

7.193 Midtown of Glass is an operational single turbine that lies approximately 9.75km to the north north west of the proposed development. Its theoretical visibility is limited within an approximate 20km radius to the north and north east. Figure 7.10 illustrates that cumulative visibility with the proposed development would occur within three main areas; around the Hill of Towie; the area north of Keith and an area east of Knock Hill. There are also some areas of cumulative visibility from isolated summits in the northern half of the LVIA study area such as Ben Aigan and Ben Rinnes.

7.194 Representative viewpoints illustrating cumulative views of the proposed development with Midtown of Glass include VP6, VP9, VP13, VP15 and VP20.

CZTV Dorenell Wind Farm with the Proposed Development (Figure 7.11)

Dorenell

7.195 The operational Dorenell Wind Farm lies approximately 9.3km to the west of the proposed development. Its ZTV covers a large sporadic area, mostly uplands, extending across the whole LVIA study area, although there is less coverage to the south east. Figure 7.11 shows that the cumulative ZTV with the proposed development is most extensive within the northern and north eastern parts of the LVIA study area. Within 10km, there is some potential cumulative visibility at Tap O' Noth and The Buck, as well as the upland areas to the north east of Dorenell. Within 10-20km, the cumulative visibility is primarily to the north, north east and east, particularly on areas of higher ground , and also to the south east at the Correen Hills. Beyond 20km, the main areas of cumulative visibility are to the north of Keith, Knock Hill, and sporadic areas to the north east around Turriff, and to the east around Old Meldrum. There is also cumulative visibility from isolated summits within the LVIA study area, such as Ben Rinnes, Ben Aigan and Oxen Craig.

7.196 Representative viewpoints illustrating cumulative views of the proposed development with Dorenell Wind Farm include VPs 4-9, 12-15, and 17-20.

CZTV G1 and Kildrummy with the Proposed Development (Figure 7.12)

Kildrummy

7.197 The operational Kildrummy Wind Farm lies approximately 10.9km to the south of the proposed development. Its ZTV is mostly contained to the southern and eastern sides of the LVIA study area with theoretical visibility in the Cairngorms to the south and south south west, to the south east and east, and smaller more fragmented areas of visibility to the north east. Figure 7.12 illustrates the theoretical cumulative visibility with the proposed development which is very limited and quite sporadic. The main areas within 20km lie within the Cabrach area to the south west of the proposed development; to the south east around the west of the Correen Hills; and to the north east near Milltown of Rothiemay. Beyond 20km, cumulative theoretical visibility is largely to the north east around Knock Hill, and further out near Turriff and to the east around Old Meldrum. There is also

cumulative visibility from isolated summits within the LVIA study area, such as Ben Rinnes, Ben Aigan and Oxen Craig.

7.198 Representative viewpoints illustrating cumulative views of the proposed development with Kildrummy Wind Farm include VPs 4-6, 13-15, 17, 19, and 20.

Group 1: Cairnmore and Upper Wheedlemont Farm

7.199 The operational Cairnmore and Upper Wheedlemont Wind Farms lie approximately 9.6km and 7km to the south east respectively of the proposed development. Their combined cumulative visibility is relatively limited and contained to an area largely within 5km of their sites, with some sporadic visibility on higher isolated areas to the east and south. Cairnmore Wind Farm also has theoretically visible to the north, near Milltown of Rothiemay. Cumulative visibility with the proposed development is also very limited, and is mostly confined to the north western edge of the Correen Hills, Tap O' Noth and the area around Milltown of Rothiemay. There are some other areas of cumulative visibility on the ridgeline at the west of the proposed development, and on small areas of uplands in the Blackwater Forest. There is also a large area of theoretic cumulative visibility around Oldmeldrum, beyond 30km from the proposed development.

7.200 Representative viewpoints illustrating cumulative views of the proposed development with G1 Wind Farms include VPs 4, 9, 12, 13, 14, and 17.

CZTV G2 and Edintore with the Proposed Development (Figure 7.13)

Group 2: Hill of Towie I and II

7.201 The operational Hill of Towie I and consented Hill of Towie II Wind Farms lie approximately 15km to the north west of the proposed development. Their ZTVs are largely within the north western quadrant of the LVIA study area with more sporadic areas of visibility to the north east and isolated patches to the south. Within the north western quadrant, their theoretical visibility is expansive between Knock Hill in the east to Paul's Hill in the west, and the area from Spey Bay in the north to Elgin and south to Rothes. Figure 7.13 illustrates that the cumulative theoretical visibility with the proposed development is limited with the main area occurring to the north of Keith, beyond 20km from the proposed development. Within 20km, the potential cumulative visibility is very limited and only from the higher upland areas such as Tap O' Noth and The Buck. There is sporadic visibility within the farmland areas between the A96 and A97 between 10 and 20km. This sporadic visibility continues in this direction, to a lesser extent, to beyond 30km around Turriff.

7.202 Representative viewpoints illustrating cumulative views of the proposed development with G2 Wind Farms include VPs 4-6, 8, 10, and 13-20.

Edintore

7.203 The operational Edintore Wind Farm lies approximately 13.1km to the north of the proposed development. It has a very limited ZTV, with its main area of theoretical visibility immediately to the south and west of its turbines. There are some smaller areas of potential visibility to the east and south east of Huntly and also to the west on isolated upland areas. Figure 7.13 illustrates that cumulative visibility with the proposed development is also very limited and largely contained to the north, east and south east of Huntly within 20km of the proposed development. There are also isolated small areas of cumulative visibility on the uplands to the north west, including Ben Rinnes.

7.204 Representative viewpoints illustrating cumulative views of the proposed development with Edintore Wind Farm include VPs 4-6, 8-11, 13-17 and 20.

CZTV G3 and G4 with the Proposed Development (Figure 7.14)

Group 3: Dummuie and Greenmyres

7.205 The operational Dummuie Wind Farm and Greenmyres Turbine lie approximately 12km to the east north east of the proposed development. Figure 7.14 illustrates that their theoretical visibility is largely confined to the north eastern quadrant of the LVIA study area with only small isolated areas of visibility in other parts. Within the north eastern quadrant, visibility is theoretically expansive within 5km either side of the A96 between Hill of Tillymorgan and Huntly, extending further north to Aultmore, north east to Aberchirder and beyond Turriff. Figure 7.14 illustrates that the cumulative theoretical visibility with the proposed development covers much of the same area as G3's ZTV except for the corridor along the A96 and around Huntly and also the area south of Aberchirder.

7.206 Representative viewpoints illustrating cumulative views of the proposed development with G3 Wind Farms include VPs 4, 6-8, 10-17, 19 and 20.

Group 4: Glens of Foudland and Hill of Tillymorgan

7.207 The operational Glens of Foudland and Hill of Tillymorgan Wind Farms lie between approximately 16 and 20km east of the proposed development. Figure 7.14 illustrates that their ZTV is largely contained within the north eastern quadrant of the LVIA study area with expansive theoretical visibility across it roughly on the north side of the A96 from Inverurie to Keith. There are some small areas of sporadic visibility within the wider area associated with isolated upland areas. Figure 7.14 illustrates the cumulative visibility with the proposed development which shows intermittent cumulative theoretical visibility in this north eastern area with the largest continuous areas beyond 30km around Turriff. Within 20km the cumulative visibility is limited to the parts of the proposed development Site, The Balloch area, Correen Hills, areas of the Blackwater Forest, and around the Glens of Foudland.

7.208 Representative viewpoints illustrating cumulative views of the proposed development with G4 Wind Farms include VPs 4, 6, 8, 10, 12-17, 19 and 20.

CZTV G5 and Mains of Balquhain with the Proposed Development (Figure 7.15)

Group 5: Single Turbines at Westerton of Folla, Mains of Meadaple, Crannabog Farm, Meikle Folla, Hill of Burns and Cowhill

7.209 This group of turbines has been included in the cumulative assessment due to their proximity to the A96 and potential for sequential effects with the proposed development on users of this route. All are operational apart from Hill of Burns which is consented. They lie between 26km and 30km to the east of the proposed development. Figure 7.15 illustrates that their ZTV is largely within a 10km radius of their location with some more sporadic areas of visibility to the north east and to the south. The cumulative visibility with the proposed development is very limited, with the largest areas beyond 30km from the Site; to the north east around Turriff and south east at Oldmeldrum. There are smaller areas of cumulative visibility in other parts of the LVIA study area on isolated upland areas such as at Meikle Balloch and The Buck.

7.210 Representative viewpoints illustrating cumulative views of the proposed development with G5 Turbines include VPs 4, 6, 13-15 and 20.

Mains of Balquhain

7.211 The single operational turbine at the Mains of Balquhain has been included in the cumulative assessment due to its proximity to the A96 and potential for sequential effects with the proposed development on users of this route. The turbine lies approximately 30km to the east south east of the proposed development.

7.212 As Figure 7.15 illustrates, the turbine has a relatively limited ZTV, confined to the south eastern quadrant of the LVIA study area, largely around the A96 from Inverurie to Hill of Tillymorgan. The cumulative visibility with the proposed development is very limited, with the main areas beyond 30km from the Site, to the west of Oldmeldrum. There are some potential very small areas of predicted visibility within 20km on isolated points such as The Buck and in the Correen Hills.

7.213 Representative viewpoints illustrating cumulative views of the proposed development with the Mains of Balquhain Turbine include VPs 4 and 14.

CZTV G6 and G7 with the Proposed Development (Figure 7.16)

Group 6: Followsters and Garrelhill Newmill

7.214 The single operational turbines at Followsters and Garrelhill Newmill lie approximately 22km to the north of the proposed development in an area of elevated land to the north of Keith. Figure 7.16 illustrates that they have a relatively limited ZTV which beyond the immediate 5km surrounding the turbines, extends approximately 20km to the north west, west, south and south east. Figure 7.16 illustrates the cumulative visibility with the proposed development which is largely confined to the elevated land surrounding the cumulative sites north of Keith and the elevated land between the A96 and A97 near Huntly. There are also some potential very small areas of cumulative visibility within the wider LVIA study area on isolated high points such as Ben Rinnes and Tap O' Noth.

7.215 Representative viewpoints illustrating cumulative views of the proposed development with G6 Turbines include VPs 4-6, 8, 10, 13-15, and 17-20.

Group 7: Balnamoon Crossroads, Myreton Crossroads, and Newton of Edingight Grange

7.216 The single turbines at Balnamoon Crossroads (operational) and Newton of Edingight Grange (consented), and the three operational turbines at Myreton Crossroads lie between 23km and 25km to the north of the proposed development. Figure 7.16 illustrates that their ZTVs cover a limited area within approximately the northern half of the LVIA study area, largely to the north east and around Keith. The cumulative visibility with the proposed development illustrated on Figure 7.16 is relatively limited and mostly between Aultmore and Knock Hill, beyond 20km from the proposed development. There is also some cumulative visibility to the east of Huntly between 10 and 20km from the proposed development. In addition, there are some potential very small areas of cumulative visibility within the wider LVIA study area on isolated high points such as Ben Rinnes and Ben Aigan.

7.217 Representative viewpoints illustrating cumulative views of the proposed development with G7 Wind Farms include VPs 4-6, 8, 10, 13-15, and 17-20.

CZTV Aultmore with the Proposed Development (Figure 7.17)

Aultmore

7.218 The consented Aultmore Wind Farm lies approximately 25km to the north of the proposed development. Figure 7.17 illustrates that its theoretical visibility is expansive across the northern extents of the LVIA study area becoming more sporadic to the east and west with very limited visibility in the southern half of the LVIA study area. The cumulative theoretical visibility with the proposed development illustrated on Figure 7.17 is intermittent with the largest areas occurring between Aultmore Wind Farm and Keith, and also across the farmland to the north east and east within 20km of the proposed development. Cumulative visibility is also shown beyond 30km to the north east around Turriff, and on isolated high points within the wider LVIA study area such as Ben Rinnes and Tap O' Noth.

7.219 Representative viewpoints illustrating cumulative views of the proposed development with Aultmore Wind Farm include VPs 4-6, 9, 12-17, and 19.

CZTV G8 and Rothes III with the Proposed Development (Figure 7.18)

Group 8: Rothes, Rothes Extension, Meikle Hill, Kellas and Hunthill

7.220 The operational wind farms at Rothes and Rothes Extension, together with the consented developments at Meikle Hill and Kellas lie between approximately 30km and 34km to the north west of the proposed development. The operational Huntill development comprises a smaller three turbine wind farm at approximately 24km to the north west of the proposed development. Figure 7.18 illustrates that their ZTV within the LVIA study area is largely beyond 25km of the proposed development, to the north west around Elgin and Spey Bay, as well as an area on the hills to between Dufftown and Glenlivet. Small areas of potential visibility lie closer to the proposed development along ridges of high ground and isolated promontories. Figure 7.18 illustrates the theoretical cumulative visibility with the proposed development is very limited due to the distance between the sites and the intervening topography. There are small areas of cumulative visibility on elevated areas to the north Keith, north of Milltown of Rothiemay, and Glens of Foudland, as well as on a few distinctive hills such as The Buck and Ben Rinnes.

7.221 Representative viewpoints illustrating cumulative views of the proposed development with G8 Wind Farms include VPs 4-6, 13-15, 18 and 20.

Rothes III

7.222 The proposed Rothes III Wind Farm would be located between the Hunthill site and Rothes/Rothes Extension sites. The proximity to these existing sites means that the pattern of visibility and interaction with the proposed development is very similar to that described for Group 8 above. There are occasional additional areas where Rothes III only would visible, particularly in the north west part of the LVIA study area. However, these are limited in extent and the interaction with the proposed development would be also limited. Representative viewpoints are also the same as stated for Group 8, i.e. VPs 4-6, 13-15, 18 and 20.

CZTV G9 and G10 with the Proposed Development (Figure 7.19)

Group 9: Pauls Hill, Berry Burn, and Hill of Glaschyle

7.223 The operational Pauls Hill, Berry Burn and Hill of Glaschyle Wind Farms lie between 31km and 42km to the north west of the proposed development. Within the LVIA study area, their ZTVs lie across the north west corner extending from the Hills of Cromdale in the south west to Buckie on the coast, with the most extensive coverage within 10-15km of their sites. Figure 7.18 illustrates that cumulative visibility with the proposed development is very limited and only within small isolated areas such as to the north of Keith and near Milltown of Rothiemay, as well as on isolated hills including Ben Rinnes, Ben Aigan and Knock Hill.

7.224 Representative viewpoints illustrating cumulative views of the proposed development with G9 Wind Farms include VPs 4, 6, 14, 15 and 20.

Group 10: Clash Gour and Pauls Hill II

7.225 The proposed Clash Gour and Pauls Hill II Wind Farms would be located between approximately 31km and 33km to the north west of the proposed development. The Clash Gour proposal wraps around three sides of Berry Burn Wind Farm, and the Pauls Hill II proposal comprises an extension to the north east of the operational Pauls Hill Wind Farm. The proximity of these proposed developments to the existing wind farms means that the pattern of visibility and interaction with the proposed development would be very similar to that described for Group 8 above. There are additional areas where only Group 10 would be visible, particularly in the north west part of the LVIA study area. However, these are limited in extent and the potential interaction with the proposed development is also limited. Representative viewpoints are also the same as stated for Group 9, i.e. VPs 4, 6, 14, 15 and 20.

ZTV of all Operational and Consented Wind Farms with the proposed development (Figure 7.19)

7.226 Figure 7.19 illustrates that the majority of the LVIA study area has visibility of one or more of the operational and/or consented wind farms except for more sporadic coverage in the southern part of the LVIA study area, including the CNP, and along narrow river valleys including sections of the River Spey and Deveron River. It also shows that the proposed development only introduces new areas of potential visibility to a minimal extent within close proximity, and generally to the south east, of, the Site. Elsewhere within the LVIA study area, Figure 7.19 shows that theoretical visibility of the proposed development would be cumulative with one or more operational or consented wind farms, as would be expected given its location adjacent to Clashindarroch Wind Farm.

FUTURE BASELINE

7.227 In the case that the proposed development is not developed, baseline landscape conditions within the LVIA study area will still be subject to future change. The main forces for change identified relate to the commercial forestry activities on and around the Site. It is also anticipated that there would be continuing development of onshore wind farms, particularly the repowering of existing sites, in the LVIA study area. There would also be anticipated future development of settlements, associated recreational pressures, and changes relating to agricultural land uses.

ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS - OVERVIEW

7.228 Effects refer to the landscape and visual effects which are predicted to occur from the proposed development after the mitigation outlined in Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution (embedded mitigation) and Chapter 18: Schedule of Mitigation have been taken into account.

7.229 The predicted residual effects are described in relation to landscape fabric, landscape character; landscape designations; and principal visual receptors. The significance of the effects has been determined according to the criteria established in the methodology section and Table 7-4. As also described in the methodology section, residual effects that have been assessed as **Major** and **Major-Moderate** are regarded as significant.

7.230 Cumulative effects with the existing, consented and proposed wind developments are considered for each landscape and visual receptor as part of the main assessment rather than as a separate section.

ASSESSMENT OF CONSTRUCTION EFFECTS

Embedded Mitigation and Good Practice Measures

7.231 The design of the proposed development was informed by a number of landscape and visual considerations, particularly the relationship with Clashindarroch Wind Farm. Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution provides a detailed review of the design process undertaken. In addition to Clashindarroch Wind Farm, other landscape and visual considerations included:

- selection of a turbine height which could be accommodated by the scale of the landform across the Site and be reasonably consistent with the turbines of Clashindarroch Wind Farm;
- achievement of a layout which relates reasonably satisfactorily to the varied landform across the Site and the turbines of Clashindarroch Wind Farm, when seen from multiple directions and elevations around the Site and taking account of the location of key sensitive receptors such as Tap O' Noth and the western ridgeline;
- consideration of the cumulative landscape and visual impacts from a wind farm on the Site in addition to Clashindarroch Wind Farm as well as other nearby operational, consented and proposed wind farms; and
- potential visibility from the closest residential receptors particularly the Tillathrowie area to the north east and the Deveron Valley to the west.

7.232 The layout of the proposed development turbines and ancillary components, with the potential to impact the landscape and visual resource, evolved through an iterative process bringing together the key considerations above. This has resulted in a layout of the proposed development consisting of up to 14 wind turbines, a reduction of three turbines from the scoping layout, as well as turbine repositioning. Further detail is provided in Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution.

Construction Effects

7.233 The construction phase of the development would last approximately 18 months as outlined in Chapter 3: Description of the Development. During construction the following activities and

elements have the potential to cause an effect on the landscape fabric within the application Site, as well as the landscape character and/or visual amenity of the LVIA study area:

- removal of forestry for new tracks and turbine locations as shown on the Wind Farm Felling Plan (Figure 3.2.6);
- temporary construction compound (50m x 50m);
- approx. 33.8km of track with passing places, including approx. 10.9km of new access tracks with a typical 5m running width and associated drainage; upgrading of up to 1.9km of the existing onsite access tracks; and approx. 21km of track which would not be upgraded, except in a limited number of locations where vertical and horizontal realignment is required; construction of 10.9km of new access track (where not possible to use existing forestry tracks), with an average running width of 5m;
- widening of the existing access bell mouth to the Site from the A920 for construction traffic;
- creation of up to three borrow pits, either as an extension to the existing borrow pit or near to the existing borrow pit location;
- excavation and construction of flat ground hardstanding compound (circa (c.) 150m x 100m) for central laydown area including batching plant compound;
- excavation and construction of reinforced concrete foundations for the turbines;
- excavation and construction of the crane hardstandings adjacent to each turbine location;
- excavation and construction of one 112m anemometer mast with foundation;
- excavation and construction of 20m x 20m hardstanding adjacent to anemometer mast;
- construction of a substation and single storey control building (15m x 8m, 5.5m high) within a compound (30m x 35m);
- HGV and Abnormal load deliveries to Site and movement of vehicles onsite;
- erection of up to 14 turbines (maximum 180m blade tip height);
- up to 14 external transformers (6.25m long, 4m wide, 3.6m high);
- underground cabbing along access tracks to connect the turbines and electrical substation; and
- reinstatement works, including removal of temporary construction compound and accommodation.

7.234 The proposed locations and details of these elements are shown on Figures 3.1 – 3.11. The location and management of these construction elements have been carefully considered to reuse existing infrastructure from the Clashindarroch Wind Farm and minimise environmental effects wherever possible. In addition, where relevant, works would be undertaken in accordance with SNH's Good Practice During Wind Farm Construction (4th edition, 2019; Ref. 7.13) guidance. Reference should also be made to the proposed development's Draft Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) (EIA Report Volume 4, Technical Appendix 3.1).

7.235 Effects arising from the process of decommissioning would occur at the end of the 30 year operational phase of the proposed development, at which stage the related processes and restoration procedures may have changed from those currently deployed. The decommissioning

procedures are likely to be of a similar nature to construction activities, but of a shorter duration. Any effects associated with decommissioning are expected to be comparable with, and no worse than, those resulting from construction.

Effects on Landscape Fabric

7.236 The potential effects of the proposed development on the fabric of the landscape can be either direct or indirect. Direct effects occur where changes to the fabric of the landscape arise as a result of physical disturbance, for example the loss of landscape elements such as vegetation cover. Indirect effects are consequential changes that are separate from the source of the change in a temporal or spatial manner, for example changes in vegetation in a lower part of a river catchment, as the result of modifications to surface water patterns upstream due to the proposed development.

Sensitivity

7.237 As the Site is currently managed for commercial forestry, the landscape fabric is constantly changing. Whilst there are areas of permanent broadleaf woodland and mature pines within the Site and water courses which add diversity, it is largely a monoculture habitat. Taking this into account the value of the landscape fabric is considered to be Medium.

7.238 The susceptibility of the landscape fabric to change of the nature associated with wind farm development is considered to be Medium given the frequently changing nature of commercial forestry.

7.239 Forestry would be removed as shown in the Wind Farm Felling Plan (Figure 3.2.6). This would result in change to the baseline landscape. However, this is in the context of the forestry comprising a commercial crop which would be harvested in the future notwithstanding the proposed wind farm. Some of the areas of proposed felling already form part of the Baseline Felling Plan in Figure 3.2.4.

7.240 All ground disturbances would be confined, as far as practicable, to the Site compound, construction access tracks, borrow pits, laydown area, turbine base areas, and routes for underground cables. Working widths utilised during construction operations would be restricted and carefully monitored. As a result of these measures, physical disturbance to the Site would be minimised.

7.241 The main access route to the turbines would utilise the existing Clashindarroch forestry spine track. New access tracks to the turbine locations would be from spurs on the existing tracks. New Site access tracks would be constructed to a minimum running width of 5m with widening on bends as necessary. All tracks would be un-metalled and constructed from locally derived or locally imported stone. The edges of the entire new track would be reinstated using materials excavated, retained and stored onsite during the construction phase.

7.242 The temporary construction compound would be located as shown on Figure 3.1. Reserved soils, stripped to form the area, would be stored in low stockpiles and used to reinstate the Site compound on completion of the construction phase. No excess spoil would be present post remediation.

7.243 It is anticipated that the proposed turbines would be erected using two large mobile cranes. The turbines themselves would be delivered, mobilised and erected over a period of up to four months

during which time cranes would be present on the Site.

Magnitude of Change and Effect upon the Landscape Fabric

7.244 The proposed temporary construction compound, localised ground disturbance alongside the new access tracks and existing tracks caused by undergrounding of the proposed cabling, cut and fill to accommodate the access tracks and hardstandings, and any further areas subject to disturbance during construction, would be reinstated after construction is complete. The borrow pits would be created on the upper slopes of Craigend Hill. It is intended that material would initially be extracted by extending the existing borrow pit that was created for the operational Clashindarroch Wind Farm. Search areas for two potential additional borrow pits lie adjacent to the existing borrow pit.

7.245 The relatively limited extent of the disturbance, the short duration of the effects and the reinstatement of working areas would ensure that the effects of the construction phase on the landscape fabric would be minimised. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that the magnitude of change from the construction phase within the Site would be **Substantial**. Consequently, there would be localised **Significant** effects on the landscape fabric of the Site.

Effects on Landscape Character

7.246 The proposed development would be located in the Grampian Outliers area of the Moorland Plateaux LCT which is considered to be of Medium sensitivity to wind farm development. The changes that would occur during the construction phase described in the preceding paragraphs would affect a relatively small part of the LCA. It is considered that the forest felling identified in the Wind Farm Felling Plan (Figure 3.2.6) would be an extension of forest felling regularly associated with the forested parts of the Moorland Plateaux. However, the extent of felling combined with the introduction of man-made elements and related activities associated with the infrastructure of the proposed development would result in a **Moderate** magnitude of change to part of the Moorland Plateaux. The main effects on landscape character resulting from the proposed development are assessed in the following sections which address the operational phase of the proposed development.

Effects on Visual Amenity

7.247 The construction phase effects of the proposed developments on visual amenity would be localised with the felling identified on the Wind Farm Felling Plan (Figure 3.2.6) extending forestry activity already apparent in views of the landscape in the northern part of Clashindarroch Forest. There would also be increased activity and vehicle movement associated with the formation of access tracks, and all the elements identified in paragraph 7.235 being constructed. It is considered that, with the exception of the construction of the turbines, this would result in a localised **Moderate** magnitude of change. These elements would be intermittently visible in views depending on intervening landform from parts of the surrounding area by local residents (High sensitivity) and road users (Medium sensitivity). This would result in a **Major/Moderate** and **Significant** effect for local residents and a **Moderate** and **Not Significant** effect for road users. The introduction of the proposed turbines to views would be as assessed under the Operational Effects.

ASSESSMENT OF OPERATIONAL EFFECTS

Effects on the Landscape Fabric

7.248 The key impacts on the landscape fabric of the proposed development are all direct effects that would occur during the construction phase and assessed in paragraphs 7.235 – 7.247.

7.249 The changes to the landscape fabric after construction of the proposed development would mainly affect the landcover: mostly forestry and some areas of open pasture. Where keyhole felling for turbines is considered feasible the effects would be minimised. Felling of full forestry stands would only be carried out if it was to be done as part of the wider forestry management plan.

7.250 As described in the preceding paragraphs, the landscape fabric of the Site is considered to be of medium sensitivity to the change envisaged as a result of the proposed development. When considered in the context of the existing baseline condition of the Site (i.e. commercial forestry) the proposed development would represent a moderate magnitude of change on the landscape fabric resulting in a **Moderate** and **Not Significant** effect.

Effects on Landscape Character

7.251 The effects of the proposed development on the landscape character of the LVIA study area have been assessed through review of the ZTVs (Figures 7.2b, 7.5a and 7.5b), field survey work and the assessment of impacts at the 20 agreed viewpoints (Technical Appendix 7.2). The assessment of effects on landscape character has been carried out firstly on the basis of the addition of the proposed development in the context of other existing or consented wind farms, and secondly based on the introduction of the proposed development with the baseline of existing and consented wind farms as well as the application stage developments included in the cumulative assessment. Where there would be no application stage developments visible, the effect has been noted as not applicable: 'n/a'.

7.252 The findings of the Viewpoint Assessment (Technical Appendix 7.2) are summarised in Table 7-12 for ease of reference.

Table 7-12
Summary of Effects and Cumulative Effects on Landscape Character as Assessed at Each Viewpoint

No.	Viewpoint	Landscape Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Cumulative Magnitude of Change: Existing/ Consented + Proposed Development	Effect on Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Magnitude of Change: Existing/ Consented/ Proposed + Proposed Development	Effect on Landscape Receptor
1	Minor Road near Tillathrowie	Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA	Medium	Substantial	**Major-Moderate**	n/a	n/a
1	Minor Road near Tillathrowie (Night)	Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA	Medium	Substantial (night time magnitude of change)	**Major-Moderate**	n/a	n/a

No.	Viewpoint	Landscape Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Cumulative Magnitude of Change: Existing/ Consented + Proposed Development	Effect on Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Magnitude of Change: Existing/ Consented/ Proposed + Proposed Development	Effect on Landscape Receptor
2	Minor road near Backside	Deveron and Bogie Straths LCA Aberdeenshire Deveron Valley SLA	n/a	No visibility	No effect	n/a	n/a
3	Haugh of Glass	Deveron and Bogie Straths LCA Aberdeenshire Deveron Valley SLA	n/a	No visibility	No effect	n/a	n/a
4	Tap O' Noth	Grampian Outliers LCA	Medium	Substantial	**Major-Moderate**	Substantial	**Major-Moderate**
5	The Buck	Grampian Outliers LCA and Open Uplands LCA	Medium	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
6	Clashmach Hill	Grampian Outliers LCA	Medium	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
7	A920 between Huntly and Dufftown	Grampian Outliers LCA	Medium	Slight	Moderate-Minor	n/a	n/a
8	Minor Road, near Corse, south east of A97	Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA	Medium	Slight	Moderate-Minor	Slight	Moderate-Minor
9	Minor Road off B9117 near Milltown of Rothiemay	Upland Farmland LCA	Medium	Slight	Moderate-Minor	Slight	Moderate-Minor
9	Minor Road off B9117 near Milltown of Rothiemay (Night)	Upland Farmland LCA	Medium	Moderate (night time magnitude of change)	Moderate	n/a	n/a
10	A96 between Huntly and Keith	Upland Farmland LCA	Medium	Negligible	Minor	Negligible	Minor
11	Battle Hill, Huntly	Deveron and Bogie Straths LCA	Medium	Slight	Moderate-Minor	n/a	n/a
11	Battle Hill, Huntly (Night)	Deveron and Bogie Straths LCA	Medium	Negligible (night time magnitude of change)	Minor	n/a	n/a
12	Correen Hills, Old Military Road	Grampian Outliers LCA	Medium	Substantial	**Major-Moderate**	n/a	n/a

No.	Viewpoint	Landscape Receptor	Receptor Sensitivity	Cumulative Magnitude of Change: Existing/ Consented + Proposed Development	Effect on Landscape Receptor	Cumulative Magnitude of Change: Existing/ Consented/ Proposed + Proposed Development	Effect on Landscape Receptor
12	Correen Hills, Old Military Road (Night)	Grampian Outliers LCA	Medium	Moderate (night time magnitude of change)	Moderate	n/a	n/a
13	Ben Rinnes	North Eastern Hills LCA Moray AGLV	Medium	Slight	Moderate-Minor	Slight	Moderate-Minor
14	Knock Hill	Upland Farmland LCA	Medium	Slight	Moderate-Minor	Slight	Moderate-Minor
15	Ben Aigan	Upland Farmland LCA Moray AGLV	Medium	Slight	Moderate-Minor	Slight	Moderate-Minor
16	A96, Leys of Dummuies	Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA	Medium	Negligible	Minor	Negligible	Minor
17	Oxen Craig	Grampian Outliers LCA Aberdeenshire Bennachie SLA	High-Medium	Slight	Moderate to Minor	Slight	Moderate to Minor
18	Burnside, north of Newmill	Upland Farmland LCA	Medium	Negligible	Minor	Negligible	Minor
19	Ladder Hills, Little Geal Charn	North-Eastern Hills LCA Cairngorms National Park	High	Slight	Moderate	Slight	Moderate
20	Meikle Balloch	Upland Farmland LCA	Medium	Slight	Moderate-Minor	Slight	Moderate-Minor

7.253 An assessment follows of the predicted impacts of the proposed development on its own and also cumulatively on the LCAs that occur in the LVIA study area and are predicted to have visibility of the proposed development with operational and consented wind farms. The assessment also takes account of the proposed wind farms in the LVIA study area; Clash Gour, Pauls Hill II, Rothes III and Meikleton of Ardonald.

7.254 The key characteristics, extent and value of the LCAs identified as having potential to be affected by the proposed development are set out in Table 7-5 in the Baseline Assessment.

7.255 The sensitivity of each LCA is derived by considering its susceptibility to change of the nature associated with wind farm development and its value as set out in Table 7-5.

7.256 The findings of the Viewpoint Assessment set out in Technical Appendix 7.2 have been used to inform the assessment of impacts on LCAs described in the following text.

Grampian Outliers LCA

7.257 The Grampian Outliers LCA is one of two LCAs within the Moorland Plateaux LCT in Aberdeenshire. The other LCA (The Mounth) lies to the south and is outside of the LVIA study area. The Grampian Outliers LCA consists of a series of moorland spurs which lie at the transition between the Moray Open Uplands LCT and the North Eastern Hills LCT to the lower rolling farmland across Aberdeenshire. The proposed development would be located within one of the larger areas of the Grampian Outliers LCA which extends from the A941 in the south to the A920 west of Huntly in the north, and between the Moray authority boundary in the west to Gartly in the east. The Grampian Outliers LCA extends to the south of the A941 to Kildrummy but is regarded as a separate unit in the SNH assessment largely due to a change in coverage of forestry to heather moorland to the south. The division between the two areas of the Grampian Outliers LCA is shown in Figure 7.2a. The conifer plantations of the Clashindarroch Forest are within the same unit as the Site, and are the principal characteristic of this landscape, as well as the prominent outcrop of the Tap O' Noth. The landform within the forestry area is also distinctive with numerous incised valleys and ridgelines including the western boundary of the Grampian Outliers LCA which comprises a series of high hills overlooking the Deveron valley to the west.

7.258 The undulations and the forestry cover interspersed with open moorland hilltops create a contrast of enclosure and openness within the Grampian Outliers LCA where the Site would be located. Views towards the Grampian Outliers LCA from the surrounding lowland are an important characteristic.

Sensitivity

7.259 The character of the Grampian Outliers LCA unit where the proposed development would be located is primarily defined by the undulating landform covered by commercial forestry and Clashindarroch Wind Farm, as well as the distinctive summit of Tap O' Noth. The Grampian Outliers LCA is also influenced by the proximity to the settled areas to the north east and surrounding transport corridors. Taking these factors into account it is considered that the susceptibility of the LCA unit that the Site lies within to wind farm development is Medium.

7.260 Within the Grampian Outliers LCA as a whole, the more northerly parts are less remote and influenced by infrastructure and have wind farms within or surrounding them. To the south, the Grampian Outliers LCA has a more remote character and is influenced by the closer proximity to the Cairngorms. The generally large scale and openness of the Grampian Outliers has attracted some wind turbine development and also the promontories allow panoramic views across the surrounding landscape where, particularly within the Agricultural Heartlands LCT, wind turbines are a defining characteristic. It is therefore considered that the susceptibility of the Grampian Outliers LCA as a whole to wind farm development is Medium.

7.261 The Grampian Outliers LCA unit where the proposed development would be located does not lie within a designated landscape and it is considered to have a Medium value, as set out in Table 7-7.

7.262 The Bennachie SLA and Upper Don Valley SLA cover the eastern and southern units of the Grampian Outliers LCA and the value of these parts of the LCA is considered High-Medium, as set out in Table 7-7. Elsewhere within the Grampian Outliers LCA, the value is considered Medium.

7.263 It is considered that the Grampian Outliers LCA units which lie within local landscape designations (Bennachie SLA and Upper Don Valley SLA) have a High-Medium sensitivity to wind farm

development and elsewhere including where the Site is located have a Medium sensitivity to wind farm development.

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farm Baseline

7.264 The ZTV on Figure 7.2b illustrates that the proposed development would theoretically be visible across much of the Grampian Outliers unit to the south, south east and north east of the proposed development. The series of higher hills on the western side of the proposed development partly screens views to the west within the Grampian Outliers LCA. Within the wider Grampian Outliers LCA, theoretical visibility of the proposed development is limited to the slopes facing the Site (largely north and north west facing slopes) and isolated summits with large areas having no visibility of the proposed development. The cumulative ZTVs illustrate that from these areas there would always be at least one other wind farm visible in addition to the proposed development. The only exception to this is within the valleys directly on, or adjacent to, the Site, within approximately 5km, where only the proposed development would be visible.

7.265 Five of the assessment viewpoints lie within the Grampian Outliers LCA (two within the same unit as the proposed development) and the assessed magnitude of change demonstrates the varying effects the proposed development would have across it:

- **Substantial** magnitudes of change were assessed at Tap O' Noth (VP4) at just over 5km south east from the proposed development, and also from the Correen Hills (VP12) at 13.75km to the south east which relates to the view of Tap O' Noth with the proposed development and the Clashindarroch and Dorenell Wind Farms.
- **Moderate** magnitudes of change were assessed from Clashmach Hill (VP6) and The Buck (VP5) which lie at 7.2km to the north east and 8.7km to the south of the proposed development respectively. In these directions there is considerable overlap between the proposed development and the Clashindarroch Wind Farm which would limit the effects on the landscape.
- **Slight** magnitudes of change were assessed at Viewpoint 7 on the A920 to the north of the proposed development which is only 7.6km from the development, but the ridgeline to the west of the Site obscures views of it all but a single turbine blade. Views from Bennachie, more specifically Oxen Craig (VP17) at just under 24km from the Site also would experience a **Slight** magnitude of change.

7.266 The character of the Grampian Outliers LCA unit in which the proposed development would be located (i.e. the part of the Grampian Outliers LCA to the north of the A941), would change locally within the vicinity of the Site, although it would not be a fundamental change due to the presence of the Clashindarroch Wind Farm. The proposed development would extend the presence of large turbines north within the Grampian Outliers LCA, but would retain some separation from landscape features such as Tap O' Noth and the adjacent Deveron Valley.

7.267 Within the wider Grampian Outliers LCA, from the limited areas of visibility, the proposed development would generally become a minor addition to the characteristic panoramic views available from the isolated summits and elevated slopes towards the Site. The only exception to this is from the Correen Hills where the cumulative effects of the proposed development with Clashindarroch and Dorenell Wind Farms creates a considerable increase in the proportion of the landscape in the views towards Tap O' Noth that would be affected by turbines.

7.268 It is therefore considered that the magnitude of change from the proposed development upon the unit of the Grampian Outliers LCA within which the proposed development would be located, would be **Substantial**. As the sensitivity was judged as Medium, the resulting effect would be **Major-Moderate** and **Significant.**

7.269 Within the wider Grampian Outliers LCA, the magnitude of change is considered overall to be **Slight**. As the sensitivity varies between High-Medium and Medium relating to local landscape designations, the resulting effect would be at most **Moderate** within the parts of the Grampian Outliers LCA within Bennachie SLA and Upper Don Valley SLA, and **Moderate-Minor** elsewhere, and **Not Significant.**

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farms and Proposed Wind Farms

7.270 The proposed Meikleton of Ardonald development would comprise one turbine in close proximity to the existing Cairnborrow Wind Farm. The cumulative ZTV in Figure 7.9 shows theoretical visibility from parts of the Grampian Outliers LCA, particularly north facing slopes, but this would be mostly in combination with the operational Cairnborrow Wind Farm.

7.271 The proposed Clash Gour, Pauls Hill II and Rothes III wind farms all would be located in the north west part of the LVIA study area. The ZTVs included in Figure 7.18 and 7.19 demonstrate limited theoretical visibility from the Grampian Outliers LCA. The separation distance of over 25km between these proposed wind farms and the Site would also limit the potential cumulative effects.

7.272 Therefore, in addition to the baseline and proposed wind farms, the magnitude of cumulative change of the proposed development is considered to remain **Substantial** or **Moderate**. The effect on the LCA would remain **Major-Moderate** and **Significant** for the unit of LCA that the proposed development would be located in and **Moderate** and **Not Significant** within the wider Grampian Outliers LCA.

Open Uplands LCA (Moray)

7.273 The Open Uplands LCA is one of two LCAs within the Uplands LCT in Moray considered in this assessment. It lies directly to the west of the Site. It shares similar characteristics to the adjacent Grampian Outliers LCA but has a slightly larger scale and more open landscape which has a stronger relationship to the Cairngorms that lie to the south west of the Open Uplands LCA. This results in a more remote character but is also influenced by the settled valleys and transport routes which lie within it, as well as existing wind farms.

Sensitivity

7.274 The susceptibility of the Open Uplands LCA to wind farm development is considered Medium-Low due to the large and open scale of the landscape which is a factor which reduces susceptibility to wind farm development, the existing presence of wind farms, and also taking into account the remoter areas and distinctive landmark hills such as Ben Rinnes. The SNH assessment identifies that the could be a conflict with turbines in remoter parts of the Open Uplands LCA, but turbines may be more appropriate in more accessible and human influenced parts of the landscape. The guidelines also state that wind turbines should be avoided on prominent hill tops.

7.275 The Open Uplands LCA lies almost entirely within the Moray AGLV and is considered to have a High-Medium value, as set out in Table 7-7.

7.276 The overall sensitivity of the Open Uplands LCA to wind farm development is Medium.

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farm Baseline

7.277 The ZTV on Figure 7.2b illustrates that the proposed development would theoretically be visible across a relatively limited proportion of the Open Uplands LCA. The closest areas of the ZTV lie on a series of hills directly west of the proposed turbines and Clashindarroch Wind Farm. There is also predicted visibility on Mount Haddoch and The Buck (VP5) to the south of the Site, where the magnitude of change has been assessed as **Moderate**. The main areas of theoretical visibility lie on the upland areas of the Blackwater Forest and the hills to the south and west of the Cabrach. There are also areas of blade visibility predicted to the north west of the proposed development on the hills around The Scalp (487m AOD).

7.278 Whilst parts of the Open Uplands LCA are in close proximity to the proposed development, the Clashindarroch Wind Farm is already a presence in these views. From other areas of the LCA, the proposed development would be seen as a visual extension to Clashindarroch Wind Farm within wide and distant panoramic views, recessive in comparison to the much closer Dorenell Wind Farm. The magnitude of change is considered to be **Moderate** at most. As the Open Uplands LCA has a Medium sensitivity to wind farm development, the resulting effect would be **Moderate** and **Not Significant.**

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farms and Proposed Wind Farms

7.279 The proposed Meikleton of Ardonald development would comprise one turbine in close proximity to the existing Cairnborrow Wind Farm. The cumulative ZTV in Figure 7.9 shows theoretical visibility from parts of Open Uplands LCA. The visibility pattern for the Meikleton of Ardonald wind turbine is fragmented and there are few places where this proposed development would be seen without the Cairnborrow Wind Farm.

7.280 The proposed Clash Gour, Pauls Hill II and Rothes III wind farms are all located in the north west part of the LVIA study area. The ZTVs included in Figure 7.18 and 7.19 demonstrate limited theoretical visibility from the Open Uplands LCA. The high ground to the north west of Dufftown largely contains visibility of these proposed wind farms and limits potential visual connections with the Open Uplands LCA and the predicted pattern of visibility of these proposed developments. The separation distance of over 25km between these proposed wind farms and the Site, together with their relationship with the existing wind farms in the vicinity of these proposed developments e.g. Berry Burn and Rothes, would also limit potential cumulative effects with the proposed development.

7.281 Therefore, in addition to the baseline and proposed wind farms, the magnitude of cumulative change of the proposed development is considered to remain **Moderate** and the effect on the Open Uplands LCA would remain **Moderate** and **Not Significant**.

Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA

7.282 The Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA is one of ten LCAs of the Agricultural Heartlands LCT and one of two within the LVIA study area. It lies 2.5km at closest to the east of the proposed development and extends to beyond 20km.

Sensitivity

7.283 The susceptibility of the Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA to wind farm development is considered Medium due to the existing presence of numerous turbines and wind farms and its simple rolling landform but also taking into account the settlement clusters and long distance elevated views. Notwithstanding these points, the SNH assessment identifies that the landscape is sensitive to elements that may interrupt their smooth form and visual flow, and the long uninterrupted views are sensitive to intrusive elements especially on the skyline.

7.284 The Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA does not lie within any landscape designation and is considered to have a Medium value, as set out in Table 7-7.

7.285 The overall sensitivity of the Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA to wind farm development is Medium.

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farm Baseline

7.286 The ZTV on Figure 7.2b illustrates that the proposed development would theoretically be visible across much of the Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA within approximately 20km of the proposed development. In reality, it is considered that this visibility would be much less as although long distance views are atypical, the other characteristics of a rolling landform with shelterbelts and woodland blocks (which are not modelled on a ZTV), would interrupt and also screen most views from all but the open elevated areas. Viewpoint 1 at Tillathrowie illustrates the closest assessed viewpoint within the Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA at just under 4km from the nearest proposed turbine. A **Substantial** magnitude of change has been assessed due to the proximity but the forestry and intervening hillside provides some screening and separation. Further within the Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA, Viewpoint 16 along the A96 near Dummuie illustrates the rolling landform and woodland screening with only a **Negligible** magnitude of change assessed. Viewpoint 8 near Corse provides a characteristic elevated view across the landscape but given the distance and intervening features, the magnitude of change has been assessed as **Slight**.

7.287 Given the general separation and relatively limited visibility of the proposed development, the magnitude of change is considered to be overall **Slight** on the Northern Rolling Lowland LCA, with a higher magnitude of change occurring at the western extents in closer proximity to the proposed development. As the Northern Rolling Lowland LCA has a Medium sensitivity to wind farm development, the resulting effect would be **Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant.**

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farms and Proposed Wind Farms

7.288 ZTV analysis identifies that there would be limited theoretical visibility of the proposed cumulative wind farms in the north western part of the LVIA study area, and these areas of potential visibility within the LCA would be at a distance of over 30km. While the Meikleton of Ardonald proposal would be seen from a greater extent of the Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA, as this comprises a single turbine adjacent to an existing wind farm the additional change would be very limited. Therefore, in addition to the baseline and proposed wind farms, the magnitude of cumulative change of the proposed development is considered to remain **Slight** and the effect on the Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA would remain **Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant**.

Deveron and Bogie Straths LCA

7.289 The Deveron and Bogie Straths LCA is one of three LCAs within the Straths and Valleys LCT and the

only one to have potential visibility of the proposed development. The Deveron and Bogie rivers run to the north west, north and east of the proposed development, and the LCA lies at closest 2.7km to the north west of the proposed development and approximately 18km to the north east at its furthest point.

Sensitivity

7.290 The susceptibility of the Deveron and Bogie Straths LCA to wind farm development (outwith the LCA) is considered High-Medium. This is due to its relatively enclosed valley landform which limits views out to the wider landscape, but any views of wind farms would potentially become a noticeable feature. The Deveron and Bogie Straths LCA does however have a diverse mosaic of land uses with a dense settlement pattern and main transport corridors which are factors that can reduce the susceptibility.

7.291 The Deveron Valley SLA is a designation that covers much of the Deveron Strath within the LCA. As such it is considered the value of the Deveron and Bogie Straths LCA is High-Medium, as set out in Table 7-7.

7.292 The overall sensitivity of the Deveron and Bogie Straths LCA is considered High-Medium.

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farm Baseline

7.293 The ZTV on Figure 7.2b illustrates that the proposed development would theoretically be visible on sporadic areas correlating with the elevated valley sides of the Deveron and Bogie Straths LCA. The closest areas of visibility would be to the south and to the north of the Haugh of Glass where the ZTV illustrates that it would be only blades that would be theoretically visible. The Cairnborrow Wind Farm lies on the northern edge of this LCA and is a prominent feature from much of the LCA between Huntly and Haugh of Glass. The turbine hubs and blades of the proposed development would also be potentially visible on either side of the Bogie River from a small area around Bridgend, which lies to the east of the Site. The largest areas of potential visibility lie on the valley sides to the north east of Huntly and to the south of Milltown of Rothiemay. In these areas, forestry and shelterbelts within and beyond are likely to considerably reduce the visibility of the proposed development. Where the proposed development is seen, there would also potentially be views of other wind farms such as Cairnborrow, Edintore and Hill of Towie I and II.

7.294 As visibility is limited and views out to the wider landscape are not a characteristic, the magnitude of change is considered to be **Slight**. As the Deveron and Bogie Straths LCA has a High-Medium sensitivity to wind farm development, the resulting effect would be **Moderate to Minor** and **Not Significant.**

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farms and Proposed Wind Farms

7.295 ZTV analysis identifies that there would be extremely limited/no visibility of the proposed cumulative wind farms in the north western part of the LVIA study area. The Meikleton of Ardonald proposal would be seen from a greater extent of the Deveron and Bogie Straths LCA and is positioned adjacent to Cairnborrow Wind Farm, which is noted above as comprising a prominent feature from much of the Deveron and Bogie Straths LCA. However, as this comprises a single turbine adjacent to the existing Cairnborrow Wind Farm the additional change would be very limited. Therefore, in addition to the baseline and proposed wind farms, the magnitude of cumulative change of the proposed development is considered to remain **Slight** and the effect on

the LCA would remain **Moderate to Minor** and **Not Significant**.

Lumsden Valley LCA

7.296 The Lumsden Valley LCA is one of two LCAs within the LVIA study area within the Farmed Moorland Edge LCT. It lies between approximately 3km and 15km to the south of the proposed development.

Sensitivity

7.297 The susceptibility of the Lumsden Valley LCA to wind farm development is considered Medium having regard to its small scale landscape pattern and characteristic views out towards the Grampian Outliers surrounding it, including notably Tap O' Noth, as well as the are two small but prominent wind farm developments at Upper Wheedlemont Farm and Cairnmore in the Lumsden Valley.

7.298 The Lumsden Valley LCA is not within a designated landscape and is considered to have a Medium value, as set out in Table 7-7.

7.299 The overall sensitivity of the Lumsden Valley LCA to wind farm development is Medium.

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farm Baseline

7.300 The ZTV on Figure 7.2b illustrates that the proposed development would theoretically be visible across the northern and eastern extents of the Lumsden Valley LCA. This includes the landscape that lies adjacent to Tap O' Noth and south of it, to the west of Rhynie. The other main area is to the east of the A97 on the edge of the Correen Hills. As the ZTV does not model in settlement or woodland, the visibility from this area is likely to be much less than shown on the ZTV. The small scale of the landscape with drystone dykes, large shelterbelts and small areas of conifer plantations alongside the scattered settlement would restrict visibility on the lower parts of the valley. However, it is considered that there would be intermittent open views to the proposed development seen beside Clashindarroch Wind Farm from areas of open farmland.

7.301 The characteristic views of the surrounding Moorland Plateau from the Lumsden Valley LCA have potential to change with the presence of the proposed development although this would be seen in the context of Clashindarroch Wind Farm and with some separation to Tap O' Noth. There are also existing views of Kildrummy Wind Farm, the Upper Wheedlemont Farm turbines, and Cairnmore Wind Farm. Taking the above into account and considering that a large part of the Lumsden Valley LCA has no visibility of the proposed development, the magnitude of change upon the character of the Lumsden Valley LCT is considered to be **Slight**. As the Lumsden Valley LCA has a Medium sensitivity to wind farm development, the resulting effect would be **Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant**.

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farms and Proposed Wind Farms

7.302 ZTV analysis identifies that there would be no theoretical visibility of the proposed cumulative wind farms from the Lumsden Valley LCA, with this being contained by the intervening Grampian Outliers. Therefore, in addition to the baseline and proposed wind farms, the magnitude of cumulative change of the proposed development is considered to remain **Slight** and the effect on the Lumsden Valley LCA would remain **Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant**.

Daugh of Cairnborrow LCA

7.303 The Daugh of Cairnborrow LCA is one of two LCAs within the LVIA study area within the Farmed Moorland Edge LCT. It lies between approximately 6km and 15km to the north of the proposed development.

Sensitivity

7.304 The susceptibility of the Daugh of Cairnborrow LCA to wind farm development is considered Medium due to the presence of existing wind farms (Cairnborrow Wind Farm) and turbines within an upland landscape containing a mosaic of contrasting farmland, forestry and moorland at various scales.

7.305 The eastern extents of the Daugh of Cairnborrow LCA which includes The Bin (313m AOD), lie within the Deveron Valley SLA which corresponds to the edge of the Deveron Valley. As such, the area within the SLA is considered to have a High-Medium value, and elsewhere a Medium value, as set out in Table 7-7.

7.306 The sensitivity of the Daugh of Cairnborrow LCA to wind farm development is considered to be High-Medium within areas that lie within the SLA and Medium elsewhere.

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farm Baseline

7.307 The ZTV on Figure 7.2b illustrates that the proposed development would theoretically be visible on some of the south facing slopes of the southern extents of the Daugh of Cairnborrow LCA (just north of the A920) and also the south facing slopes of Meikle Balloch and The Bin. The majority of this theoretical visibility is blade only, with the tops of Meikle Balloch and The Bin having potential visibility of more of the proposed turbines. Viewpoint 20 on the summit of Meikle Balloch at just over 16km distance, illustrates that the blades and top of the proposed turbine towers would be potentially visible although difficult to discern and it has been assessed as a **Slight** magnitude of change. There is a considerable area of forestry around Meikle Balloch and The Bin which would limit the potential visibility in the areas around these summits. In addition, shelterbelts and individual smaller stands of forestry across the Daugh of Cairnborrow LCA would reduce the theoretical visibility. Therefore, visibility of the proposed development is likely to be relatively limited within the Daugh of Cairnborrow LCA and, where seen, would be within the context of much closer and prominent wind farms such as Cairnborrow, Edintore and Hill of Towie I and II. As such, the overall magnitude of change from the proposed development is considered to be **Slight**. As the Daugh of Cairnborrow LCA has a High-Medium sensitivity in areas of the Deveron SLA, and Medium sensitivity elsewhere to wind farm development, the resulting effect would be **Moderate** within the Deveron Valley SLA areas and **Moderate-Minor** elsewhere and **Not Significant**.

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farms and Proposed Wind Farms

7.308 ZTV analysis identifies that there would be limited visibility of the proposed cumulative wind farms in the north western part of the LVIA study area. The Meikleton of Ardonald proposal is located within the Daugh of Cairnborrow LCA, along with the adjacent Cairnborrow Wind Farm., As this comprises a single turbine adjacent to the existing wind farm, the additional change would be very limited. Therefore, in addition to the baseline and proposed wind farms, the magnitude of cumulative change of the proposed development is considered to remain **Slight** and the effect on the LCA would remain **Moderate to Minor** and **Not Significant**.

Insch Basin LCA

7.309 The Insch Basin LCA is one of ten LCAs within the Agricultural Heartlands LCT and one of two within the LVIA study area. It lies 6.5km at closest to the south east of the proposed development and extends beyond 20km to the east.

Sensitivity

7.310 The susceptibility of the Insch Basin LCA to wind farm development is considered Medium due to the gently rolling and generally large scale agricultural landscape, as well as the presence of existing wind farms and turbines. It is noted that in the SNH character description (1998; Ref. 7.27) the LCA is described as sensitive '*to changes of landuse which may obscure hill shapes.*'

7.311 The Insch Basin LCA does not lie within any landscape designation and is a working agricultural landscape and as such has a Medium value, as set out in Table 7-7.

7.312 The overall sensitivity of the Insch Basin LCA is Medium.

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farm Baseline

7.313 The ZTV on Figure 7.2b illustrates that the proposed development would theoretically be visible in one main area at the lower slopes and base of the Correen Hills, 8km south east of the proposed development. There are also some very small patches of visibility predicted to the west of Insch on small isolated hilltops. In both areas, forestry and shelterbelts would restrict open visibility to some degree. From the lower slopes of the Correen Hills, the views of the proposed development would be seen in the context of the Clashindarroch Wind Farm (and also the nearby Cairnmore and Upper Wheedlemont Farm turbines) as well as Tap O' Noth which would be a particular feature in the views available from this area, although not noted as a specific characteristic in the SNH Landscape Character Assessment (SNH, 1998; Ref. 7.27).

7.314 Overall, the majority of the Insch Basin LCA has no predicted visibility of the proposed development. Whilst the character assessment (SNH, 1998; Ref. 7.27) considers there are sensitivities relating to obscuring hill shapes, the proposed development would be seen beyond the LCA and within the context of Clashindarroch Wind Farm, retaining clear views of Tap O' Noth. The overall magnitude of change is considered to be **Slight**. As the Insch Basin LCA has Medium sensitivity to wind farm development, the resulting effect would be **Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant**.

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farms and Proposed Wind Farms

7.315 ZTV analysis identifies that there would be almost no theoretical visibility of the proposed cumulative wind farms from the Insch Basin LCA, with this being contained by the intervening Grampian Outliers. Therefore, in addition to the baseline and proposed wind farms, the magnitude of cumulative change of the proposed development is considered to remain **Slight** and the effect on the Insch Basin LCA would remain **Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant**.

Upland Farmland LCA

7.316 The Upland Farmland LCA is within the Uplands LCT. It lies 9.9km at closest to the north west and north of the proposed development and extends north beyond 20km.

Sensitivity

7.317 The susceptibility of the Upland Farmland LCA to wind farm development is considered Medium due to the large scale landscape with simple land use pattern including existing wind farms, but also taking into account the characteristic distinctive conical hills and sensitivities around long views to Ben Rinnes in the south identified in the SNH assessment.

7.318 The Upland Farmland LCA does not lie within any landscape designation and comprises a rural agricultural landscape and as such has a Medium value, as set out in Table 7-7.

7.319 The overall sensitivity of the Upland Farmland LCA is Medium.

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farm Baseline

7.320 The ZTV on Figure 7.2b illustrates that the proposed development would theoretically be visible with blades only, from several of the more elevated areas within the Upland Farmland LCA, many of which contain commercial forestry which would reduce the actual visibility. There are also some areas of hub and blade visibility predicted around Meikle Balloch and to the north of Milltown of Rothiemay. Viewpoint 9 near Milltown of Rothiemay illustrates that the top of the towers, hubs and blades of the turbines would be seen above the distant skyline within a narrow horizontal extent in front of Clashindarroch Wind Farm at just under 20km distance, and it has been assessed as a **Slight** magnitude of change. Viewpoint 20 at Meikle Balloch has been assessed also as having a **Slight** magnitude of change with three hubs and blades visible above the distant horizon within expansive panoramic views.

7.321 Overall, the visibility of the proposed development from the Upland Farmland LCA would be minimal taking into account forestry and intervening landscape features, distance and the presence of existing wind farms. The proposed development would not affect the views of Ben Rinnes or other distinctive hills within the area. The magnitude of change is considered to be overall **Slight**. As the Upland Farmland LCA has Medium sensitivity to wind farm development, the resulting effect would be **Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant.**

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farms and Proposed Wind Farms

7.322 The proposed Meikleton of Ardonald wind turbine would be in close proximity to the existing Cairnborrow Wind Farm. The cumulative ZTV in Figure 7.9 shows fragmented theoretical visibility from parts of Upland Farmland LCA. This visibility pattern for the Meikleton of Ardonald wind turbine is fragmented and there are few places where this proposed development would be seen in the absence of Cairnborrow Wind Farm.

7.323 The proposed Clash Gour, Pauls Hill II and Rothes III wind farms are all located in the north west part of the LVIA study area. The ZTVs included in Figure 7.18 and 7.19 demonstrate considerable theoretical visibility from the Upland Farmland LCA. The Upland Farmland LCA lies between these proposed wind farms and the Site. However, as described above, visibility of the proposed development would be limited. This together with the potential relationship between these proposed wind farms and the existing wind farms at Berry Burn and Rothes, would limit the potential cumulative effects with the proposed development.

7.324 Therefore, in addition to the baseline and proposed wind farms, the magnitude of cumulative change of the proposed development is considered to remain **Slight** and the effect on the Upland

Farmland LCA would remain **Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant**.

North Eastern Hills LCA

7.325 The North Eastern Hills LCA is within the Uplands and Glens LCT. Within the 2009 CNP Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 7.18), this area within the CNP is also named the same and retains the same characteristics. It lies approximately 10km to the west at its closest point to the proposed development and extends beyond 20km in this direction. The southern half of the North Eastern Hills LCA lies within the CNP and the northern half lies mostly within the Moray AGLV.

Sensitivity

7.326 The susceptibility of the North Eastern Hills LCA to wind farm development is considered High due to the strong sense of remoteness and extensive views of hill ranges. There is no wind farm development within the North Eastern Hills LCA, but wind farms are a feature within views to the north and north east.

7.327 As the North Eastern Hills LCA partially lies within the CNP and the Moray AGLV, the value is considered High in the CNP and High-Medium within the AGLV, as set out in Table 7-7.

7.328 It is therefore considered that the sensitivity of the North Eastern Hills LCA is High within the CNP, reducing to High-Medium elsewhere.

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farm Baseline

7.329 The ZTV on Figure 7.2b illustrates that the theoretical visibility of the proposed development is limited to a number of hill summits where the intervening hill ranges are low enough to allow views towards the Site. This includes views from the Ladder Hills, Glenfiddich Forest, and Ben Rinnes. Viewpoint 19 is located at Little Geal Charn in the Ladder Hills at just over 18km from the proposed development. A **Slight** magnitude of change has been assessed at this location due to the proposed development lying within the same horizontal extent as Clashindarroch Wind Farm and largely below the horizon line at a considerable distance. Viewpoint 13 at Ben Rinnes has been assessed as having a **Slight** magnitude of change as the proposed development would be seen as mainly hubs and blades with the turbine towers largely screened by intervening hills. It would be below the horizon line and recessive in the view which also includes a large number of more prominent wind farms, particularly Dorenell occupying a large portion of the nearby view.

7.330 Overall, the visibility of the proposed development from the North Eastern Hills LCA is minimal and where visible it would be seen within views that already include wind farms and would not affect the key characteristics of the North Eastern Hills LCA. As such, the magnitude of change is considered to be **Slight**. As the North Eastern Hills LCA has a High to High-Medium sensitivity to wind farm development, the resulting effect would be **Moderate** within the CNP and **Moderate-Minor** elsewhere and **Not Significant**.

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farms and Proposed Wind Farms

7.331 As with the proposed Clashindarroch II Wind Farm, the visibility of the proposed wind farms that form part of the cumulative assessment primarily would be visible from the elevated parts of the North Eastern Hills LCA, with a similar pattern of visibility evident in the ZTVs. The Meikleton of Ardonald proposal would comprise one turbine in close proximity to the existing Cairnborrow Wind

Farm. The other larger proposed wind farms would be located to the north west and seen in the context of existing large wind farms. They would be generally in the opposite direction to the Site. Overall, it is considered that in addition to the baseline and proposed wind farms, the magnitude of cumulative change of the proposed development would remain **Slight** and the effect on the North Eastern Hills LCA would remain **Moderate** or **Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant**.

Summary of Effects on Landscape Character

7.332 Nine LCAs occur within 20km of the proposed development. These have been assessed for effects of the proposed development on landscape character with the existing baseline, including operational and consented wind farms. The findings are summarised in Table 7-13.

7.333 Significant effects on landscape character as a result of the proposed development would occur within the Grampian Outliers LCA unit within which the Site lies. The effects would not be a fundamental change to the LCA due to the existing presence of wind farms within and in close proximity to the Grampian Outliers LCA.

7.334 The potential additional cumulative effects that would result from the proposed development in combination with the other proposed wind farms in the LVIA study area has been assessed. For all LCAs it is considered that there would not be a greater cumulative effect than that which would occur in relation to the existing and consented wind farms. This is primarily due to the positioning of these sites in relation to the proposed development and their proximity to existing and consented wind farms.

Table 7-13
Summary of Effects on Landscape Character

Landscape Character Area (LCA)	LCA Susceptibility	LCA Value	LCA Sensitivity	Cumulative Magnitude of Change: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development	Effect on LCA
Grampian Outliers - Site Unit	Medium	Medium	Medium	Substantial	**Major-Moderate**
Grampian Outliers	Medium	High-Medium to Medium	High-Medium to Medium	Slight	Moderate to Moderate-Minor
Open Uplands	Medium-Low	High- Medium	Medium	Moderate	Moderate
Northern Rolling Lowlands	Medium	Medium	Medium	Slight	Moderate-Minor
Deveron and Bogie Straths	High-Medium	High-Medium	High-medium	Slight	Moderate to Minor
Lumsden Valley	Medium	Medium	Medium	Slight	Moderate-Minor
Daugh of Cairnborrow	Medium	High-Medium to Medium	High-Medium to Medium	Slight	Moderate to Moderate-Minor

Landscape Character Area (LCA)	LCA Susceptibility	LCA Value	LCA Sensitivity	Cumulative Magnitude of Change: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development	Effect on LCA
Insch Basin	Medium	Medium	Medium	Slight	Moderate-Minor
Upland Farmland	Medium	Medium	Medium	Slight	Moderate-Minor
The North-Eastern Hills	High	High to High-Medium	High to High-Medium	Slight	Moderate to Moderate-Minor

Effects on Landscape Designations

7.335 The effects of the proposed development on the landscape designations of the LVIA study area have been assessed through review of the ZTVs (Figures 7.3b, 7.5a and 7.5b), field survey work and the assessment of effects on the LCAs and at the 20 agreed viewpoints (Technical Appendix 7.3).

7.336 The key characteristics, extent and value of the landscape designations within the LVIA study area which have the potential to be affected by the proposed development are described in the baseline assessment.

Cairngorms National Park

7.337 The CNP lies to the south west of the proposed development, approximately 12km at its closest point. As outlined in the baseline, the special landscape qualities (SLQs) of the CNP are clearly set out by SNH (2010; Ref. 7.22) and further qualities were highlighted in consultation with the CNPA. Draft guidance 'Assessing Effects on Special Landscape Qualities' (2015; Ref. 7.38) provides an approach and examples for assessing the effects on the relevant SLQs. The draft guidance highlights that the SLQs are essentially perceptual qualities and separate to the landscape characteristics, albeit they are interconnected. The assessment follows this approach and in addition also provides an assessment of the effects upon the landscape character through sensitivity, magnitude and effect consistent with the approach for the rest of the LVIA.

Special Landscape Qualities

7.338 The ZTV on Figure 7.3b illustrates that the visibility within the CNP is very limited, largely restricted to the summits in the Ladder Hills area. There are also some small areas of visibility predicted on the summits of the higher mountains at the edge of the 40km LVIA study area. These areas of visibility all lie within the North Eastern Hills LCA.

7.339 As the Ladder Hills are the part of the CNP most likely to be affects by the proposed development, the SLQs of these hills are considered in Table 7-14.

Table 7-14
CNP SLQ Assessment

SLQs that are Relevant to the Ladder Hills Part of the CNP	Landscape Characteristics that Underpin the SLQs (SNH, 1996. Ref 7.23)	Effect of the Proposed Development
The surrounding hills Extensive moorland, linking the farmland, woodland and the high tops Dominance of natural landforms Wildness Layers of receding ridge lines Grand panoramas and framed views A landscape of opportunities	Low and rounded summits, gentle slopes and long, smooth interlocking spurs. Predominantly covered by heather moorland which emphasises the smoothness of the topography. Muir burning creates a distinctive pattern on the landscape. Small scale coniferous plantations form geometric blocks which are poorly integrated with rolling character of the hills. Sparse settlement. Strong sense of remoteness emphasised by the openness by the of the landscape and extensive horizons of successive hill ranges, which coalesce in the distance and from which views to the Cairngorms massif are a special feature.	The proposed development would lie mostly behind Clashindarroch Wind Farm. It would increase the density of turbines within a narrow horizontal extent already characterised by wind turbines within the expansive views available from the Ladder Hills (as illustrated by Viewpoint 19 Figures 7.40-7.40f). The proposed development would lie separately from other wind farms within the view, and would be recessive in comparison to the closer Dorenell Wind Farm which would occupy a considerable horizontal extent to the north of the viewpoint.

7.340 Taking into account the information in Table 7-14, it is considered that due to the intervening distance and location of the proposed development adjacent to, and behind Clashindarroch Wind Farm, the SLQs of the Ladder Hills would not be significantly affected by the proposed development.

Landscape Character of the CNP

Sensitivity

7.341 As a national designation, the CNP has a High susceptibility to wind farm development and a High value resulting in a High sensitivity.

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farm Baseline

7.342 The North Eastern Hills LCA assessed in paragraphs 7.326 – 7.331 covers the areas within the CNP that would have visibility of the proposed development.

7.343 The ZTV on Figure 7.3b illustrates that the visibility within the CNP is very limited, largely restricted to the summits in the Ladder Hills area. There are also some small areas of visibility predicted on the summits of the higher mountains at the edge of the 40km LVIA study area. As described above, Viewpoint 19 is located at Little Geal Charn which is within the Ladder Hills at 20km from the proposed development. It has been assessed that there would be a **Slight** magnitude of change as the turbines would be seen behind Clashindarroch Wind Farm and would not be a particularly apparent addition resulting in an increased density of closely grouped turbines. As one of the closest areas of predicted visibility within the CNP, this viewpoint is representative of the worst case. Elsewhere, the views would be more distant, and due to the direction of the CNP from the Site, the proposed development would always be behind or partially behind Clashindarroch Wind

Farm. It is also within the portion of view that already has an existing baseline of many wind farms, some, such as Dorenell, which are much closer and more prominent.

7.344 Given the restricted visibility and limited change in the view where visible, it is considered that the proposed development would be a minor change to the proportion of view affected by wind farms and the existing landscape character would remain fundamentally the same. The magnitude of change would be minor within the Ladders Hills area of the CNP, resulting in a **Moderate** and **Not Significant** effect. It is considered that within the overall CNP, the proposed development would have a negligible magnitude of effect, resulting in a **Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant** effect.

7.345 The same considerations and resulting **Not Significant** effects are applicable to the Cairngorm Mountain NSA and Deeside and Lochnagar NSA which share the same qualities as the CNP and lie within the CNP at closest 35km from the proposed development.

Deveron Valley SLA

7.346 The Deveron Valley SLA lies approximately 4km north of the proposed development and extends to the coast to the north east. It comprises the Deveron and Bogie Straths LCA within approximately 20km of the proposed development.

Sensitivity

7.347 The special landscape qualities that define the Deveron Valley SLA (as defined by AC, 2017; Ref. 7.5) relate to the valley landform, the woodland network, historic estates and towns which also make it a popular visitor and recreational location. Susceptibility to wind farm development would include the potential for effects on views of the valley landform, and how the valley provides a setting for the towns and estates within it. Views out to the wider landscape are not identified as a key characteristic in the Deveron Valley SLA description, but it is acknowledged that views of wind farms affecting the valley landform and setting are a consideration. The susceptibility of the Deveron Valley SLA is therefore considered High-Medium. Due to its designation, the Deveron Valley SLA has a High-Medium value and therefore the sensitivity to wind development is considered High-Medium.

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farm Baseline

7.348 The ZTV on Figure 7.3b illustrates that the theoretical visibility of the proposed development is intermittent across the SLA and largely restricted to the valley sides and hilltops that face towards the development. This ZTV visibility does not take into account the considerable amount of forestry and woodland within this area and the actual visibility is likely to be much less. Viewpoint 7 on the A920 at the south western extents of the Deveron Valley SLA, and one of the closer parts to the proposed development, has been assessed as a **Slight** magnitude of change due to the intervening landform and vegetation around the Site screening much of the view of the proposed turbines. Cairnborrow Wind Farm lies at the edge of the Deveron Valley SLA near the A920 and would be a much more prominent feature than views of the proposed development. The areas with visibility elsewhere within the Deveron Valley SLA would potentially see additional blades and hubs within the context of Clashindarroch Wind Farm. Due to the direction of the views towards the Site from the SLA, the horizontal extent of the proposed development would lie largely in front of Clashindarroch Wind Farm, thus reducing the potential for it to be a noticeable feature in the view.

7.349 Overall, the visibility of the proposed development within the Deveron Valley SLA would be limited

in extent and where visible it would result in limited change to the special qualities. The magnitude of change has been considered to be **Slight**. As the Deveron Valley SLA has a High-Medium sensitivity to wind farm development, the resulting effect would be **Moderate to Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant**.

Bennachie SLA

7.350 The Bennachie SLA lies between 12.6km and 35km south east of the proposed development. It comprises the Grampian Outliers LCA.

Sensitivity

7.351 The special landscape qualities that define the Bennachie SLA (as defined by AC, 2017; Ref. 7.5) relate primarily to the iconic landform of Bennachie. It is a widely recognised hill within Aberdeenshire and has historical, cultural and recreational attributes. The Bennachie SLA description (AC, 2017) states that the farmland to the east provides the setting to Bennachie and panoramic views from the upland areas of this SLA over the Don Valley and surrounding farmland are a key characteristic.

7.352 The susceptibility of the SLA to wind farm development (outwith the SLA) is considered High-Medium due to the prominence and distinctiveness of the Bennachie range but also recognising that within the characteristic extensive panoramic views there are a number of wind farms and turbines which form part of the existing view. Due to its designation, the Bennachie SLA has a High-Medium value and therefore the sensitivity to wind development is considered High-Medium.

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farm Baseline

7.353 The ZTV on Figure 7.3b illustrates that the theoretical visibility of the proposed development is limited to the north east facing slopes within the SLA. This includes at closest, the edge of the Correen Hills at Suie Hill (415m AOD), and further away at approximately 25km, an area in the south of the SLA at Pitfichie Forest including Cairn William (448m AOD) from the A96 at Pitcaple, and the ridgeline of Bennachie including the highest point at Oxen Craig (528m AOD) but excluding Mither Tap (518m AOD). Viewpoint 17 at Oxen Craig illustrates that the proposed development would be partly screened by Tap O' Noth and the Hill O' Noth with hubs and blades visible, and a **Slight** magnitude of change has been assessed. Viewpoint 12 is located at the western edge of the Bennachie SLA and is from a viewpoint which looks towards Tap O' Noth and would represent the closest and most open view of the proposed turbines from the Bennachie SLA in combination with the Clashindarroch and Dorenell Wind Farms. It has been assessed as a **Substantial** magnitude of change.

7.354 There is a limited overall extent of the Bennachie SLA which would have visibility of the proposed development and for the majority of the area where it would be visible, it would be discernible but a minor feature within wide expansive views, within the context of existing wind farms. From a small part of the designation the wind farm in combination with Clashindarroch and Dorenell Wind Farms would have the potential to create a **Significant** effect in the views towards Tap O' Noth. However, views in this direction are not noted as a particular feature or characteristic of the Bennachie SLA.

7.355 Taking the above into account the overall magnitude of change is considered **Slight**. As the Bennachie SLA has a High-Medium sensitivity to wind farm development, the resulting overall

effect would be **Moderate to Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant**.

Upper Don Valley SLA

7.356 The Upper Don Valley SLA lies between approximately 12km and 20km south of the proposed development. It comprises the Grampian Outliers LCA, Lumsden Valley LCA, and Donside LCA.

Sensitivity

7.357 The special landscape qualities that define the Upper Don Valley SLA (as defined by Aberdeenshire Council, 2017; Ref. 7.5) and relevant to wind farm development include the distinctive valley forms, broad open moorland as a backdrop to views along and across the river, including views to the hills within the CNP, and the panoramic views available from the ridges of Balderonoch Hill, Broom Hill and the Socach.

7.358 The susceptibility of the Upper Don Valley SLA to wind farm development (outwith the SLA) is considered High-Medium due to the characteristic views, backdrops and distinct landform but recognising that wind farms also are a feature in these views (such as Kildrummy Wind Farm). Due to its designation, the Upper Don Valley SLA has a High-Medium value and therefore the sensitivity to wind development is considered High-Medium.

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farm Baseline

7.359 The ZTV on Figure 7.3b illustrates that the theoretical visibility of the proposed development is limited to the north facing slopes, largely to the east of the River Don, from the edges of the Correen Hills in the north, including Lord Arthur's Hill (518m AOD) south along a series of hills to Frosty Hill (412m AOD) and Cairn Pressendye (619m AOD). Views towards the proposed development are generally away from the direction of the river valley and the characteristics that define this SLA. Where visible, the proposed development would be mostly seen behind the Clashindarroch Wind Farm, and whilst discernible, would be a largely recessive feature within the expansive views. As such, the magnitude of change is considered to be **Slight**. As the Upper Don Valley SLA has a High-Medium sensitivity to wind farm development, the resulting effect would be **Moderate to Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant.**

Moray AGLV

7.360 The Moray AGLV lies adjacent to the western Site boundary and covers a large area south of it between Aberdeenshire and the CNP. It extends north to include the Spey Valley. It comprises the Open Uplands LCA and a small part of The North Eastern Hills LCA. There are no special qualities defined or reasons for designation given by Moray for this AGLV, but for the purposes of assessment, the key characteristics considered within the published Landscape Character Assessments have been reviewed (SNH, 1998; Ref. 7.26).

Sensitivity

7.361 The open character and settled valleys of the Open Uplands LCA become more remote to the south and west within The North Eastern Hills LCA where the scale of the landscape becomes greater with higher hills and more expansive views. At the western extents of the Moray AGLV the remoteness would be a key characteristic with views towards the Cairngorms massif a defining feature. Taking this into account, and that the large scale of the landscape supports existing wind farms, the

susceptibility of the Moray AGLV to wind farm development is considered High-Medium. Due to its designation, the Moray AGLV has a High-Medium value and therefore the sensitivity to wind development is considered High-Medium.

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farm Baseline

7.362 The ZTV on Figure 7.3b illustrates that the theoretical visibility of the proposed development is limited to the ridgelines of hills in a north east/south west direction within the Blackwater Forest and Glenfiddich Forest areas, as well as smaller areas around Ben Rinnes and Meikle Conval, and also directly adjacent to the Site. There are large areas of commercial forestry within the ZTV and this would reduce the potential visibility considerably. Where visible, the proposed development would be seen in the context of the Clashindarroch Wind Farm and largely screened by the intervening ridgelines. This is illustrated at Viewpoint 13 from Ben Rinnes where a **Slight** magnitude of change has been assessed. It is also noted that the consented Dorenell Wind Farm, operational Hill of Towie I and II, and Edintore Wind Farms are prominent and defining features of the Moray AGLV.

7.363 Given that the Moray AGLV lies directly beside the proposed development, the visibility is remarkably limited and where visible, it would be seen in the context of Clashindarroch Wind Farm therefore not appearing as a new or distinct change from the existing baseline. Further west within the Moray AGLV, the proposed development would become more recessive in the views, particularly in comparison to several closer and more prominent wind farms. The overall magnitude of change is therefore considered to be **Slight**. As the Moray AGLV has a High-Medium sensitivity to wind farm development, the resulting effect would be **Moderate to Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant.**

Ben Rinnes SLA

7.364 As noted in the baseline assessment the local landscape designations in Moray have been reviewed and are in the process of being altered through the local plan process. While the new SLAs currently comprise candidate designations, they have been considered in relation to proposed development.

7.365 The Ben Rinnies SLA is the key designation that is likely to be affected by the proposed development. Reviewing the extent of the Ben Rinnes SLA it is apparent that this comprises part of the AGLV assessed above. It is also clear that the separation distance between the Ben Rinnes SLA and the proposed development is much greater than is the case for the Moray AGLV; approximately 9.5km compared with 500m. Therefore, the magnitude of change for this SLA is predicted to be no greater than that assessed for the Moray AGLV (**Slight**) and the resulting effect would be no more than **Moderate** to **Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant**.

Cairngorms Wild Land Area

7.366 The Cairngorms WLA lies approximately 31km to the south west of the proposed development, within the CNP and the Cairngorm Mountains NSA. The parts of the Cairngorms WLA within the LVIA study area lie within The North Eastern Hills LCA.

Sensitivity

7.367 Due to the inherent remoteness and wildness of a WLA, susceptibility to wind farm development is High. As the Cairngorms WLA occurs within a nationally designated landscape, it has a High value

which results in a High sensitivity to wind farm development.

Cumulative Effect with Existing and Consented Wind Farm Baseline

7.368 The ZTV on Figure 7.3b illustrates that the theoretical visibility of the proposed development is limited to the summits in four areas: Carn na Farraidh (688m AOD); Geal Charn (821m AOD); Brown Cow Hill (829m AOD); and a series of summits around West Meur Gorm Craig (1023m AOD). From these areas of visibility, the direction of view towards the proposed development is to the north east where the proposed turbines would lie largely behind Clashindarroch Wind Farm. The proposed development would therefore not notably increase the horizontal extent of existing turbines in the view that also includes a number of other wind farms that are closer and more prominent. Additionally, due to the distance of over 30km from the viewpoint, the proposed turbines would be barely discernible behind Clashindarroch Wind Farm.

7.369 The attributes and qualities defined for the Cairngorms WLA (as set out in paragraph 7.134 and Ref. 7.28) would be physically unaffected by the proposed development. The *'strong sense of sanctuary and solitude*' would remain, as the proposed development lies within distant views where existing wind farms are a feature and the landscape is more settled and less remote.

7.370 Taking this into account, it is considered that the magnitude of change on the qualities and characteristics of the Cairngorms WLA would be **Negligible**. As the Cairngorms WLA has a High sensitivity to wind farm development, the resulting effect would be **Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant.**

Aviation Lighting and Landscape Character

7.371 Analysis of the baseline night time context of the LVIA study area has identified that it largely comprises a dark rural landscape. The requirement for aviation lighting on the proposed turbines would contrast with this baseline. The aviation lighting would not comprise a unique element in the night time landscape, as the LVIA study area contains numerous existing sources of artificial light, including settlements, dispersed properties and farms, industrial premises (particularly distilleries) and existing wind turbines. However, the way in which the proposed development lighting would be seen differs from most of these baseline sources of light because the aviation lights would typically be seen as a series of red lights close to, or above the upland skyline, increasing their relative prominence.

7.372 The landscapes where the change associated with the aviation lighting would be greatest are associated with high ground and hills summits, where there is more separation from the existing baseline lights sources. However, these locations are generally unlikely to be visited at night, thereby limiting the influence this would have on the perception of change to the landscape. People are most likely to experience the landscape at night from transport routes and this is likely to have more influence on their perception of the landscape. Reviewing the pattern of predicted visibility shown on Figure 7.6, it is clear that the proposed turbines would be seen intermittently from the A96, A97, A941, A920 as well as the local minor roads around the Site. The main road through the LVIA study area from which the proposed development would be seen is the A96. However, as these roads are mostly at lower elevation with blade visibility rather than hubs, visibility of the aviation lighting would be limited.

7.373 It is considered that there would be a localised and Substantial magnitude of change at isolated parts of the Grampian Outliers LCA unit within which the proposed development would occur,

resulting in a localised **Major-Moderate** and **Significant** effect on landscape character, but that these elevated parts of the landscape are unlikely to be visited at night. The viewpoint assessment also identifies the potential for localised **Major-Moderate** and **Significant** effect on the Northern Rolling Lowland LCA. The viewpoints assessed within the wider LVIA study area (viewpoints 9 and 11) indicated that the magnitude of change reduce to Medium and the level of effect would reduce to **Moderate** and **Not Significant**.

7.374 The Dark Skies Park and associated defined "Star Gazing Locations" on the north east edge of the CNP have been considered as part of this assessment. The positions and/or extent of this area and locations have been included on Figures 7.3a and 7.3b. Figure 7.3b also shows the predicted ZTV. The ZTV shows that there would be very limited visibility of the proposed development from the Dark Skies Park, restricted to small areas, on high ground, at the very edge of this area. There is no predicted visibility of the proposed development from any of the Star Gazing Locations. Therefore it is predicted that, overall, there would be no adverse effects on this area/these locations that are promoted for the enjoyment of the night sky.

Assessment of Visual Effects

7.375 The effects of the proposed development on visual amenity within the LVIA study area are considered in respect of the main visual receptor groups identified, namely:

- residents of settlements, clusters of properties and dispersed properties;
- users of transport routes;
- walkers on long distance recreational routes, core paths and hill walkers; and
- users of other recreational resources.

7.376 Individual and groups of residential properties within 5km of the proposed development are assessed in Technical Appendix 7.3; RVAA. A summary of the findings of the RVAA is provided in the following text paragraphs 7.383 – 7.387 and paragraph 7.390.

7.377 Visual impacts have been assessed through review of the ZTVs (Figures 7.5a, 7.5b, 7.6, and 7.8 to 7.19); and sequential route analysis (Figures 7.21); field survey as well as the assessment of effects at the 20 agreed viewpoints, (Technical Appendix 7.2: Viewpoint Assessment). It should be noted that the viewpoints were selected to be representative of the main landscape and visual receptors in the LVIA study area. As a consequence of the limited extent of the ZTV there are several viewpoints in close proximity and therefore the predicted effects at these locations should not be considered as indicative of the same level of effect across the whole LVIA study area.

7.378 As in respect of effects on landscape character, the assessment of the effects of the proposed development on visual amenity has been assessed on the basis of the addition of the proposed development in the context of the existing or consented wind farms as well as in respect of the proposed wind energy developments included in the cumulative assessment. As the findings in respect of the magnitude of change from the proposed development with the baseline of operational and consented wind farms as well as the proposed wind farms would be the same as the magnitude of change from the proposed development with the operational and consented wind farms, no separate assessment of the effects for this future scenario has been carried out.

7.379 A summary of the findings of the Viewpoint Assessment (see Technical Appendix 7.2) is presented

in Table 7-15.

Table 7-15
Summary of Effects on Visual Amenity as Assessed at Each Viewpoint

No.	Viewpoint	Visual Receptor Type	Receptor Sensitivity	Cumulative Magnitude of Change: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development	Effect on Visual Receptor
1	Minor Road near Tillathrowie	Residents Road Users	High Medium	Substantial	**Major** **Major-Moderate**
1	Minor Road near Tillathrowie (night)	Residents Road Users	High Medium	Substantial (night time magnitude of change)	**Major** **Major-Moderate**
2	Minor road near Backside	Residents	High	No visibility	No effect
3	Haugh of Glass	Residents	High	No visibility	No effect
4	Tap O' Noth	Walkers	High	Substantial	**Major**
5	The Buck	Walkers	High	Moderate	**Major-Moderate**
6	Clashmach Hill	Walkers	High	Moderate	**Major-Moderate**
7	A920 between Huntly and Dufftown	Road Users	Medium	Slight	Moderate-Minor
8	Minor Road, near Corse, south east of A97	Local Residents	High	Slight	Moderate
9	Minor Road off B9117 near Milltown of Rothiemay	Local Residents	High	Slight	Moderate
9	Minor Road off B9117 near Milltown of Rothiemay (night)	Local Residents	High	Moderate (night time magnitude of change)	**Major-Moderate**
10	A96 between Huntly and Keith	Road Users	Medium	Negligible	Minor
11	Battle Hill, Huntly	Walkers/Visitors/ Residents	High	Slight	Moderate
11	Battle Hill, Huntly (night)	Walkers/Visitors/ Residents	High	Negligible (night time magnitude of change)	Moderate-Minor
12	Correen Hills, Old Military Road	Visitors Road Users	High Medium	Substantial	**Major** **Major-Moderate**
12	Correen Hills, Old Military Road (night)	Road Users	Medium	Moderate (night time magnitude of change)	Moderate
13	Ben Rinnes	Walkers	High	Slight	Moderate

No.	Viewpoint	Visual Receptor Type	Receptor Sensitivity	Cumulative Magnitude of Change: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development	Effect on Visual Receptor
14	Knock Hill	Walkers	High	Slight	Moderate
15	Ben Aigan	Walkers	High	Slight	Moderate
16	A96, Leys of Dummuies	Road users	Medium	Negligible	Minor
17	Oxen Craig	Walkers	High	Slight	Moderate
18	Burnside, north of Newmill	Residents	High	Negligible	Moderate-Minor
19	Ladder Hills, Little Geal Charn	Walkers	High	Slight	Moderate
20	Meikle Balloch	Walkers	High	Slight	Moderate

Settlements, Clusters of Properties and Dispersed Properties

7.380 As views from houses are generally static, the same view being obtained on a daily basis, the value attached to these views is considered to be High (Table 7-2: Definitions of Level of Susceptibility of Visual Receptors). Susceptibility to the proposed development in views from residential buildings is judged to be High because residents are considered to be concerned about views from their properties and therefore susceptible to changes in these views. The overall sensitivity of all residential receptors therefore is regarded as High.

Tillathrowie

7.381 A detailed assessment of predicted visibility and related effects for residents of individual and groups of properties within the Tillathrowie area is provided in Technical Appendix 7.3: RVAA. An overview is provided here.

7.382 Tillathrowie is the closest area of settlement to the proposed development with potential visibility. The settlement area extends from the Clashindarroch Forest in the west to the A97 at Bridgend in the east. There are two roads which lie either side of a water course which is a tributary to the River Bogie at Bridgend. Individual and small groups of properties are scattered along the valley and hillsides. The majority of the properties lie between 2.6km and 5km to the north east of the proposed development, although there is one isolated farm (Corrylair) which lies closer at 1.87km.

7.383 The RVAA assessment found that the closest properties to the proposed development within Tillathrowie have restricted visibility of the wind farm due to the intervening landform, not including the additional screening provided by the forestry. The RVAA assessed that there would be only the upper parts of four turbines potentially visible at Corrylair (the closest property) and due to the surrounding landform, vegetation, and orientation of the buildings there would be no visibility of it from the property. The RVAA found that most of the properties in Tillathrowie are orientated towards the watercourse (south/north) and so that views towards the proposed development from properties would be mostly oblique or from side elevation windows, recognising that more direct views may be obtained from garden areas. There are three properties (Glenburn, Easter Tillathrowie and a new property adjacent to Whitestones of Tillathrowie) which do however have potential for open views from the rear or sides of their properties and gardens. A **Substantial** magnitude of change and **Significant** effects were assessed for these in the RVAA but it was not

considered that the proposed development would cause any overbearing or overwhelming effects.

7.384 The ZTV in Figure 7.5a and the RVAA illustrate that the properties at the western end of the northern road (to Tillathrowie) and the middle section of the southern road (to Coynachie) have potential visibility when driving westward. There would be less visibility for properties along the Coynachie road due to forestry and the local landform. Viewpoint 1 is located on the north road and illustrates that the proposed turbines would be seen from behind the foreground forested hills with most of the turbine towers obscured, although hubs and blades would clearly apparent above the nearby skyline. Similarly, the night time assessment work has identified that the aviation lights would form conspicuous elements in relation to the dark baseline context that is experienced at this location. A **Substantial** magnitude of change has been assessed at this viewpoint in relation to day time and night time.

7.385 The blade tips of some Clashindarroch Wind Farm turbines are currently visible from the eastern properties within the Tillathrowie area, but they are not particularly noticeable especially with the current forestry screening. The proposed development would be seen in front of the limited number and extent of Clashindarroch Wind Farm turbines visible from the direction of Tillathrowie. In views to the east from properties towards the east in Tillathrowie, there is potential to see the cumulative wind farm developments in the opposite direction to any views of Clashindarroch Wind Farm and the proposed development, particularly Dummuie, Glens of Foudland and Greenmyres turbines.

7.386 Whilst many of the properties are sheltered from direct views of the proposed development due to boundary vegetation or orientation of the property (Technical Appendix 7.3) the proposed wind turbines would become a feature in views from some parts of the roads when driving west towards the properties and within the wider open curtilages of the settlement. The foreground hills and forestry provide some separation and the horizontal extent of the turbines would be narrow within the overall view. Sequential cumulative views of the existing wind farms to the east with the proposed development and Clashindarroch Wind Farm in the west would be limited to the local roads and some driveways and also would be intermittent due to the undulating landform and roadside vegetation.

7.387 It is considered that the proposed development would have a localised **Substantial** magnitude of change but a **Moderate** magnitude of change on the settlement area as a whole. As residents have a High sensitivity, the resulting overall effect would be **Major-Moderate** and **Significan**t, with localised **Major Significant** effects.

Haugh of Glass

7.388 The Haugh of Glass is an area of settlement that lies approximately 5km to the north west of the proposed development. There is a small village centre based around a school and village hall on the western side of the Deveron River but there are also many individual properties scattered around the surrounding valley.

7.389 The ZTV on Figures 7.5a and 7.6 illustrate that the theoretical visibility of the proposed development is very limited in this area with only potential for visibility of the blades of 1 to 3 turbines between the properties at Haugh of Glass and the A920 to the north. With the abundance of woodland and forestry in this area, actual visibility is likely to be even less. Where visible, the proposed turbine blades would be seen in the same portion of the view as a few of the turbines of Clashindarroch Wind Farm which lies to the south from this area. The ZTVs show that due to the

valley landform most of this residential area is sheltered from views of any other consented or operational wind farm.

7.390 The RVAA (Technical Appendix 7.3) shows that there are four dispersed properties within 5km of the proposed turbines in the Deveron Valley to the south of the Haugh of Glass that would have visibility of the proposed development. However, predicted visibility is very limited in and it is considered that the proposed development would have a negligible magnitude of change on the residents of these properties.

7.391 Given the limited visibility it is considered that the proposed development would have a **Negligible** magnitude of change on the residents within the Haugh of Glass area. As residents have a High sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant**.

Daugh of Invermarkie

7.392 The Daugh of Invermarkie area lies approximately 7km to the north north west of the proposed development. It includes the properties which lie to the north of the A920 and minor road which is between the A920 and B9115.

7.393 The ZTV on Figures 7.5a and 7.6 illustrate that the theoretical visibility of the proposed development is very limited in this area, generally with potential for visibility of blades from up to six proposed turbines. Viewpoint 7 is located on the A920 in the area, and illustrates a view of the blades from six proposed turbines above the skyline. It is considered that this view would be representative of the views obtained from properties in this area where they have an open outlook towards the Site.

7.394 It is therefore considered that the proposed development would have a **Negligible** magnitude of change on the residents within the Daugh of Invermarkie area. As residents have a High sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant**.

Bridgend

7.395 Bridgend is a small village just off the A97, south of Huntly, approximately 7km to the north east of the proposed development. It lies near to the River Bogie and is at the junction with the access roads to Tillathrowie and Coynachie.

7.396 The ZTV on Figures 7.5a and 7.6 illustrate that there would be theoretical visibility of the proposed development across the village. However, from field survey work, it is clear that the layout of the buildings, roadside vegetation, and mature trees shelter the village from open views out towards the Site. There is potential for visibility when on the higher slopes above the main road but the properties are generally orientated away from the Site or have enclosed boundaries.

7.397 It is therefore considered that the proposed development would have a **Negligible** magnitude of change on the residents within Bridgend. As residents have a High sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant**.

Residential Properties Around The Broback

7.398 The Broback area is 7-10km east north east of the proposed development. It includes scattered farms and properties across the rolling farmland to the south of Huntly. There are also small single turbines, Dummuie Wind Farm, and the consented Greenmyres turbine within the area.

7.399 The ZTV on Figures 7.5a and 7.6 illustrate that there would be theoretical visibility of the proposed development across a large proportion of the Broback area. This visibility would be reduced by the number of shelterbelts across the landscape and also around the properties. Where open views towards the Site are seen, the proposed turbines would be visible from behind the foreground hills and would be a noticeable feature although within a relatively narrow horizontal extent of the view. The Dummuie Wind Farm and consented Greenmyres turbine are located to the east of this area and there is potential for some properties within the area to have sequential visibility of both Dummuie Wind Farm and the proposed development.

7.400 It is considered that overall, open visibility of the proposed development from properties within this area would be limited and taking into account the existing wind farm baseline, the magnitude of change is considered **Slight** on the residents within The Broback area. As residents have a High sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Moderate** and **Not Significant.**

Residential Properties to the South East of Rhynie, Correen Hills

7.401 The dispersed properties to the south east of Rhynie lies 7-12km south east of the proposed development. It includes scattered farms and properties across the lower slopes of the Correen Hills and includes the hamlets of Cottown and western edge of Clatt.

7.402 The ZTV on Figures 7.5a and 7.6 illustrate that there would be increasing theoretical visibility of the proposed development from dispersed properties to the south and east of Clatt where blades of 1-3 turbines would be potentially visible, although the ZTV show no visibility from Clatt itself. To the south west towards Lumsden (on the lower slopes of the Corren Hills) up to 14 turbines of the proposed development would be potentially seen. The majority of residents at these properties in this area would potentially have visibility of between one and 12 turbines. Where seen, the proposed turbines would be behind Tap O' Noth, extending from Clashindarroch Wind Farm, and potentially with Dorenell Wind Farm further to the west. The three turbines at Cairnmore and two turbines at Upper Wheedlemont Farm are also prominent in some views from this area. Forestry and shelterbelts are a feature within this area o and would reduce open visibility considerably for many residents.

7.403 It is considered that the potential for open visibility of the proposed development from properties within this area would be overall quite limited. However, the proposed turbines would lie within the same portion of view as Tap O' Noth and therefore where there are views the proposed turbines would be a noticeable feature, also taking into account cumulative effects with Clashindarroch, Dorenell, and Cairnmore Wind Farms. The magnitude of change is therefore considered **Moderate** on the residents within this area. As residents have a High sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Major-Moderate** and **Significant.**

Settlement to the South West of Rhynie, Wheedlemont

7.404 The settlement area to the south west of Rhynie lies 7-9km south west of the proposed development. It includes scattered farms and properties across a very undulating landscape.

7.405 The ZTV on Figures 7.5a and 7.6 illustrate that the theoretical visibility of the proposed development within this area is intermittent due to the landform, but the main area of visibility would be around Wheedlemont Hill and Quarry Hill where there are two existing turbines (Upper Wheedlemont Farm) which are a prominent feature. From field survey work, the actual visibility towards the Site is limited due to the roadside vegetation and small but frequent stands of

woodland. In addition, where views are open, they are generally directed towards Tap O' Noth from which the proposed development lies separately to the west when viewed from the area to the south west of Rhynie.

7.406 It is considered that open visibility of the proposed development from properties within this area would be overall quite limited and any views of it would be separate to the focus of Tap O' Noth and would be seen in context with the operational Clashindarroch Wind Farm. Taking this into account, the magnitude of change is considered **Slight** on the residents within this area. As residents have a High sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Moderate** and **Not Significant.**

Settlement Between Glens of Foudland and the A97

7.407 The settlement area between Glens of Foudland and the A97 lies between 12 and 20km to the north east of the proposed development. It is a large area of the Northern Rolling Lowland LCA and has a pattern of scattered farms and houses and small hamlets.

7.408 The ZTV on Figures 7.5a and 7.6 illustrate that there is expansive theoretical visibility of the proposed development within this area. However, the majority of properties tend to be tucked in to small valleys or on hillsides which limits distant views. Viewpoint 8, near the hamlet of Corse, illustrates that there are opportunities for expansive open views where the proposed development would be seen on the horizon within a cluster of turbines of the operational Clashindarroch and Dorenell Wind Farms. Wind farms at Dummuie and Glens of Foudland lie within and close to this area and are already a feature of views.

7.409 It is considered that open visibility of the proposed development from properties within the Glens of Foudland area would be relatively limited but where open views are available to the south west, the proposed development would be seen in the context of existing and consented wind farms and would not be a fundamental change to the views. Taking this into account, the magnitude of change is considered overall **Slight** on the residents within this area. As residents have a High sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Moderate** and **Not Significant.**

Milltown of Rothiemay

7.410 The village of Milltown of Rothiemay sits directly to the north of the River Deveron, 18km to the north east of the proposed development.

7.411 The ZTVs, Figures 7.5a and 7.6, illustrate that there is theoretical visibility across the village and its surrounds to the north and north east. In reality, the layout of the houses and abundance of mature trees along the riverside and roads precludes any visibility of the proposed development from the village itself. Viewpoint 9 is located on a minor road to the north east of the village and is representative of views for residents that live in individual houses or farms within the surrounding area of the village. The wirelines show that the proposed development would lie in front of Clashindarroch Wind Farm across a narrow horizontal extent of the distant skyline. It would be a noticeable feature, also taking into account the number of other wind farms and turbines within the area. This viewpoint was also selected to consider potential night time effects associated with aviation lighting. This identified that the lights would contrast with the largely dark context at this viewpoint, adding a new and relatively prominent element to the view.

7.412 Taking the above into account, it is considered that the day time magnitude of change is at most Slight on the residents within this area. As residents have a High sensitivity, the resulting effect

would generally be **Moderate** and **Not Significant**. However, the analysis of night time effects has identified potential for a **Moderate** magnitude of change and **Major-Moderate** and **Significant Effect** in relation to aviation lighting.

Transport Routes

7.413 The value of views from road or rail routes through the LVIA study area is considered to be High for identified tourist routes and routes providing access to specific recreational areas or facilities and to be Medium for all other routes. However, as described in the baseline there are no defined tourist routes within the LVIA study area that have potential visibility of the proposed development.

7.414 Those travelling by road or rail gain transient views and are therefore considered to have Medium susceptibility to change associated with wind farm development (Table 7-2: Definitions of Level of Susceptibility of Visual Receptors).

7.415 The overall sensitivity of road and rail users on the routes assessed within the LVIA study area is therefore considered to be Medium. The assessment of potential effects for road users has been carried out for the following main routes in the LVIA study area (Figure 7.4a) which are predicted to have visibility of the proposed development:

- A96;
- A97;
- A920;
- A941;
- B9002;
- B9016;
- B9022; and
- local roads within 10km.

A96

7.416 The A96 is the main road route through the LVIA study area, connecting Aberdeen to Inverness via Inverurie, Huntly, Keith and Elgin which all lie within the LVIA study area. At closest, it is approximately 9km to the north east of the Site, as shown on Figure 7.4a. Based on analysis of the cumulative ZTVs (Figures 7.8-7.20) a Route Analysis Chart has been produced for the A96 (see Figure 7.21).

7.417 The identification of potential visibility of wind farms including the proposed development on the route analysis chart shown on Figure 7.21 does not imply that there would be significant effects for road users, but identifies that theoretical visibility of the proposed development is predicted whether seen on its own or cumulatively with other wind farms which are included in the assessment. It should also be noted that roadside hedgerows, trees or walls are not modelled into the analysis charts and therefore the visibility is likely to be much less than illustrated.

7.418 The route analysis chart (Figure 7.21b) identifies that 14.42% of the A96 within the LVIA study area would have theoretical visibility of the proposed development. This equates to a total of 13.37km. The chart shows that the predicted visibility of the proposed development would be intermittent,

within nine separate stretches, mostly between the Glens of Foudland to the south east and near Keith to the north west, approximately 20km from the proposed development.

7.419 The route analysis chart and field survey work shows that there is potentially visibility of multiple wind farms from the majority of the A96 within the LVIA study area except for a 5km stretch at the Spey Valley, north of Fochabers. The sequential cumulative effects of the proposed development with the other wind farms predicted to be visible would vary according to the direction of travel. Figure 7.21a shows theoretical maximum visibility as determined by the ZTVs and direction of travel has not been considered.

7.420 Travelling towards the Site from near Kintore there are many single turbines potentially visible in relatively close proximity to the A96, along with the prominent Glens of Foudland and Hill of Tillymorgan Wind Farms. Approximately 10km from Kintore, near Pitcaple, there is potentially a 1km stretch of route where the proposed development is predicted to be visible before potentially a short stretch of visibility of Clashindarroch and Dorenell Wind Farms. However, roadside trees and buildings would reduce any distant views in the direction of the Site from this stretch.

7.421 Beyond Pitcaple, there is potentially visibility of the proposed development along short stretches between Glens of Foudland and Huntly. The chart shows that there is potential visibility of several wind farms along this stretch including Clashindarroch, Dummuie, Cairnborrow, Hill of Towie I&II, Edintore, Aultmore, and Dorenell. Viewpoint 16 illustrates the view from this area at approximately 12km from the proposed development which shows that one blade of the proposed development would be visible and a **Negligible** magnitude of change has been assessed. Apart from Dummuie Wind Farm which lies adjacent to the A96, the other wind farms are not particularly apparent in this stretch until north of the Site and Huntly.

7.422 Travelling south from Elgin, towards the Site, there is no potential visibility of the proposed development until south of Fochabers. The groups of existing/consented and proposed wind farms in the north west part of the LVIA study area, are intermittently seen to the south west of the A96 from Elgin. These wind farms include the operational and consented Rothes and Rothes Extension, Meikle Hill, Kellas, Paul's Hill and Berry Burn Wind Farms, together with the proposed Clash Gour, Pauls Hill II and Rothes III sites. Between Fochabers to Keith the longest potential stretch of predicted visibility of the proposed development would occur for approximately 6km, at a distance of 19km-25km from the proposed development. Taking into consideration the ZTV on Figures 7.5a and 7.6, this stretch of predicted visibility would typically be of the blades of up to nine of the proposed turbines. The road is quite open along this stretch and views of existing Clashindarroch turbines, and the consented Aultmore turbines, are a feature in views. The proposed development would be distant and unlikely to be particularly noticeable within the open views available.

7.423 Closer to Huntly and the Site, at Coachford, near the junction with the B9115 at a distance of 12km from the north, the chart and ZTVs show a short stretch of blade visibility of up to nine turbines of the proposed development. This is illustrated by Viewpoint 10 where a **Negligible** magnitude of change has been assessed.

7.424 The route analysis chart on Figure 7.21b shows that the predicted visibility of the proposed development is mostly consistent with the theoretical visibility of Clashindarroch Wind Farm. However, it is known from field survey work that the actual visibility of Clashindarroch Wind Farm is much less in reality than in theory and it is not a prominent feature from any part of the A96.

7.425 The route analysis chart shows that Dorenell Wind Farm also has a similar pattern of visibility to the

proposed development, except potentially more predicted visibility to the north and south of the A96 within the LVIA study area, albeit for short stretches.

7.426 Overall the theoretical visibility of the proposed development from the A96 is very limited and as the viewpoint assessment has concluded, in reality this would be further reduced by roadside vegetation, intervening forestry and buildings. It would not considerably contribute to additional sequential cumulative effects on the A96 road users.

7.427 Taking this into account, it is considered that the overall magnitude of cumulative change on users of the A96 would be **Negligible**. As road users have a Medium sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Minor** and **Not Significant.**

A97

7.428 The A97 lies to the east of the Site, 4km at closest and connects Banff to Ballater. The ZTV on Figures 7.5a and 7.6 illustrate that there is very limited theoretical visibility of the proposed development from the road.

7.429 When travelling towards the north, the first area of potential visibility is between Lumsden and Rhynie, approximately 9km from the proposed development. This section has open views towards Tap O' Noth and the proposed development would be seen to the south of it from the road. Tap O' Noth and Hill O' Noth obscure visibility from Rhynie to Bridgend. At Bridgend, the local landform and vegetation would obscure views towards the Site.

7.430 Travelling south from Banff, there is potential stretch of visibility from the slopes of Black Law to the north of Aberchirder, 25km from the proposed development. The road in this section is very open, and views of the proposed development from here would be distant and across layers of rolling hills and would be unlikely to be discernible. The next sections of theoretical visibility lie between the junction with the B9001 and Huntly, between 10 and 20km from the proposed development. The road is almost directly aligned to the direction of the proposed development which would allow views toward the Site. In these instances, the proposed development would be seen beyond a series of hills and within a relatively narrow horizontal extent of the view.

7.431 Overall the closest views of the development would be observed when driving north towards Rhynie within an approximately 1km stretch at distances of over approximately 7km. Elsewhere the visibility is distant and the intervening landscape limits the prominence of the development within the view. Taking this into account, it is considered that the magnitude of change on users of the A97 would be **Slight**. As road users have a Medium sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant**.

A920

7.432 The A920 lies between Huntly and Dufftown, to the north of the Site and where the access to the proposed turbines would be located.

7.433 The ZTV on Figures 7.5a and 7.6 illustrate that there is only a short stretch (approximately 2km) of theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines from the A920 in the Daugh of Invermarkie area. This is represented by Viewpoint 7 and shows that only the blades of up to five turbines and two blade tips would be theoretically visible from this stretch of the road. The view would be at right angles to the road and unlikely to be easily noticeable. The access to the Site would be located off this

road adjacent to an existing Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) substation. It would potentially increase the extent of infrastructure visible from a short section of the A920, but within an area where pylons and overhead lines already are locally prominent features. The access route rises from the A920 road level which combined with mounding around the existing SSE substation reduces direct visibility toward it. Taking these factors into account, it is considered that the magnitude of change on users of the A920 would be **Negligible**. As road users have a Medium sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Minor** and **Not Significant.**

A941

7.434 The A941 lies to the south and west of the Site from Rhynie to Dufftown via the Cabrach, approximately 5km at closest to the proposed development.

7.435 The ZTV on Figures 7.5a and 7.6 illustrate that there are only two sections of the road with theoretical visibility of the proposed development. The main stretch is for approximately 2km between Elrick and Moss of Essie at a distance of approximately 8km to the south of the Site. Visibility here would be the blades from up to 14 proposed turbines, primarily blades, largely seen behind Clashindarroch Wind Farm. However, as much of this section of route is adjacent to forestry, there are currently limited opportunities of views towards the Site. The other section of predicted visibility is between Inverharroch and Bridgend to the west of the Site where there would be potentially visibility of blades of up to three turbines. Given the limited extent of the proposed development potentially visible and as it would be at right angles to the road, views of it would be unlikely to be discernible.

7.436 Taking into account that only two stretches of the route have theoretical visibility and in reality the proposed development would be largely indiscernible, it is considered that the magnitude of change on users of the A941 is **Negligible**. As road users have a Medium sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Minor** and **Not Significant.**

B9002

7.437 The B9002 lies in the Cabrach area between the A97 and A941 south of Rhynie and north of The Buck.

7.438 The ZTV on Figures 7.5a and 7.6 illustrate that there is theoretical visibility of the proposed development on the stretch of the road south of Elrick. There are open views from the road and the proposed development would be seen behind Clashindarroch Wind Farm. The ZTVs show that there would be potential visibility of up to 14 turbines. In addition, the forestry on the intervening hillsides may obscure some of proposed development. While the proposed development would be noticeable, it would not introduce new elements to the view and it is considered that the magnitude of change on users of the B9002 would be **Slight**. As road users have a Medium sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant.**

B9016

7.439 The B9016 lies approximately 20-30km to the north of the proposed development between the A98 in the north and the A96 to the north west of Keith. The ZTVs show that only the blades of 4 to 6 turbines would be visible.

7.440 The ZTV on Figures 7.5a and 7.6 illustrate that there is theoretical visibility of the proposed

development from approximately 5km of this road before the junction with the A96. The proposed development would be directly ahead of the view when travelling south along the B9016. Wirelines from the nearby Viewpoint 18 illustrate that it is unlikely to be particularly discernible in the view due to distance, intervening hills and also the visibility of much closer turbines and wind farms. It is therefore considered that the magnitude of change on users of the B9016 would be **Negligible**. As road users have a Medium sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Minor** and **Not Significant**.

B9022 (Portsoy to Huntly)

7.441 The B9022 lies between Portsoy on the north coast to Huntly, approximately 10km at its closest point to the proposed development.

7.442 The ZTV on Figures 7.5a and 7.6 illustrate that there is theoretical visibility of the proposed development from an approximate 7km stretch between Milltown of Rothiemay and Gordonstown at between 18-25km from the proposed development, with the number of turbines visible increasing the further north along this stretch of road.

7.443 Travelling south from Portsoy, the proposed development would be potentially seen in the direction of travel, from approximately 25km away. Roadside vegetation and buildings would prevent open visibility, but the distant hills can be seen and theoretically the proposed turbines would also be visible. Viewpoint 9 is located nearby and offers a similar orientation and elevation of view (c.140m AOD). This illustrates that the top of towers, hubs and blades of the proposed development would be seen in front of Clashindarroch Wind Farm and partially obscured by the intervening rolling hills.

7.444 As only a short stretch of the overall road has potential visibility of the proposed development and where visible it would be a minor addition to distant views, it is considered that the magnitude of change on users of the B9022 would be **Slight**. As road users have a Medium sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant**.

Local Roads within 10km

7.445 The majority of the roads within 10km of the proposed development are sheltered in straths and glens and have no visibility of the proposed development. The exceptions are the Tillathrowie and Coynachie roads to the north east of the Site, and also the minor road near Wheedlemont, to the south of the Site.

7.446 The ZTV on Figure 7.5a illustrates that the western end of the road to Tillathrowie, and the middle section of the Coynachie road have theoretical visibility of the proposed development, both within approximately 5km of the proposed development. Viewpoint 1 is located on the Tillathrowie Road and illustrates the potential view of the proposed turbines. The top of the towers, hubs and blades would be visible above the skyline behind the foreground hills. The proposed turbines would be framed by the landform and would be directly in view when travelling west on the road. The Coynachie road is more sheltered from views due to roadside vegetation and orientation but where visible the proposed development would be a prominent feature. In both roads, visibility is only for approximately a quarter of the length of the road and only when travelling west.

7.447 Dummuie Wind Farm is potentially visible when travelling east on both roads but actual visibility is more limited than the cumulative ZTV illustrates due to roadside vegetation, forestry and buildings. The perception of being surrounded by wind farms is limited due to the narrow horizontal extent

of both the proposed development and Dummuie Wind Farm. Also, although in relatively close proximity, the local landform provides a degree of separation so that the proposed turbines and Dummuie turbines do not dominate the views.

7.448 It is therefore concluded that the magnitude of change on users of the Tillathrowie and Coynachie roads is considered locally **Substantial**, but overall Moderate. As road users have a Medium sensitivity, the resulting effect would be localised **Major-Moderate** and **Significan**t, but overall **Moderate** and **Not Significant.**

7.449 The ZTV on Figure 7.5a illustrates that there is a small area of visibility on the bend of the road which lies between Rhynie and the B9002. Only a short section has potential visibility due to the presence of shelterbelts surrounding the nearby properties and also small stands of forestry. The part of the road with open visibility is on the north east side of Cnoc Cailliche at a distance of approximately 6.5km. Views north to Tap O' Noth and views to the west where the proposed development would be potentially visible are available from this part of the road. The proposed development would be seen extending from Clashindarroch Wind Farm above the forestry and would increase the presence of turbines across a considerable horizontal extent of the available view. The proposed turbines would lie separately to Tap O' Noth, but would be seen in the same portion of the view.

7.450 The two Upper Wheedlemont turbines lie directly to the west of this road to the south of Cnoc Cailliche, so would not be seen in the same view as the proposed development but sequentially when travelling north. Cairnmore Wind Farm is potentially visible in views to the south east, the opposite direction to the proposed development and is unlikely to be easily seen when travelling north along this road.

7.451 Taking into account the that the majority of this road has no visibility of the proposed development but that where it does, it would be a prominent feature within the same area of view as Tap O' Noth, and also the potential sequential effects with Upper Wheedlemont and Cairnmore Wind Farms, the magnitude of change on users of this road is considered locally **Substantial**, but overall **Moderate**. As road users have a Medium sensitivity, the resulting effect would be localised **Major-Moderate** and **Significant**, but overall **Moderate** and **Not Significant**.

Recreational Routes

7.452 Recreational routes which have been identified within the LVIA study area and are considered in the assessment are described in paragraphs 7.454 – 7.466 and illustrated on Figures 7.4a and b.

7.453 People walking on recreational routes are considered to be of High susceptibility to change associated with wind farm development (Table 7-2 Definitions of Level of Susceptibility of Visual Receptors). The value of the views experienced by people walking on recreational routes is also considered High recognising the identification of a route specifically for recreational purposes. Thus, the sensitivity of people towards wind farm development on recreational routes is High.

The Gordon Way

7.454 The Gordon Way is an 18.5km route which lies on the old peat extraction routes across Bennachie to Suie, approximately 14km to the south east of the Site at its closest point. The route is shown on Figure 7.4a. The eastern part of the route within Bennachie Forest lies on the south side of the summits and as such would have no visibility of the proposed development. As the route reaches

the edge of the open summits, there would potentially be some visibility of the proposed development between Black Hill (430m AOD) and Hermit Seat (478m AOD), approximately 22km from the Site. Viewpoint 17 at Oxen Craig which lies close to the route but is considerably higher, illustrates that the proposed development would be a minor addition within the wide expansive views available which include a baseline of wind farms and turbines.

7.455 From the western summits of Bennachie, the Gordon Way descends to a valley where the B992 road runs north south. The Gordon Way then ascends the side of Brindy Hill (244m AOD) and continues directly north west, south of Satter Hill (363m AOD) and to the summit of the Knock Saul (412m AOD) and then further west to Suie Hill (415m AOD). There is no predicted visibility of the proposed development from this section of the route until Knock Saul and Suie Hill. Both hills have open moorland summits but are surrounded by commercial forestry and so visibility of the proposed development is largely limited to the summits, although it is acknowledged that areas of felling may allow additional visibility. Viewpoint 12 lies at the OS viewpoint which is north of the end of the western end of the Gordon Way. A **Substantial** magnitude of change has been assessed from this viewpoint as it presents a framed view towards Tap O' Noth where the proposed development in combination with Clashindarroch and Dorenell Wind Farms would extend the presence of turbines across the full view. Views from Suie Hill and Knock Saul would be more open and panoramic such that the proposed development with Clashindarroch and Dorenell would be noticeable to the west but within a wider, open context.

7.456 Considering the Gordon Way as a whole, the visibility of the proposed development would be limited to essentially three short sections as opposed to long stretches of the route. The proposed development would be most visible at Suie Hill where it would be approximately 15km to the north west. Views here would be panoramic and the proposed development would be a notable feature in combination with Clashindarroch and Dorenell Wind Farms to the north west. The proposed development would become less discernible in areas of visibility elsewhere along the route to the east, due to distance and particularly as the Tap O' Noth and Hill O' Noth would obscure most of the turbines. Overall, it is considered that the magnitude of change on walkers on the Gordon Way would be **Slight**. As walkers have a High sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Moderate** and **Not Significant**.

Core Paths – Tap O' Noth, 5km south east

7.457 The core path to the summit of Tap O' Noth has potential visibility of the proposed development from the top two thirds of the route. The direction of the route gives the most opportunity for continuous visibility when descending from the summit. Viewpoint 4 is located on the summit and a **Substantial** magnitude of change and **Major** and **Significant Effect** has been assessed due to the proximity of the turbines extending from Clashindarroch Wind Farm, in combination with the Dorenell Wind Farm, increasing the horizontal extent of turbines visible to the west. This is representative of the majority of the view seen along this route. It is therefore considered that the magnitude of change on walkers on this route would be **Substantial.** As walkers have a High sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Major** and **Significant**.

Core Paths – East of Gartly, 7km east

7.458 This core path starts on the Old Military Road east from Gartly and after approximately 1km from Gartly, turns to the south east to ascend gradually up the Hill of Corskie through the commercial forestry, currently with limited views out to the wider landscape. The ZTV illustrates potential visibility on the hillsides where, if the forestry is felled, the proposed development would

potentially be seen, particularly walking west on the Hill of Corskie towards Gartly where it would be seen in the direction of travel. However, the landform on this part of the route would potentially partially obscure views of the proposed development. There would also be opportunities for open views from parts of the path on the western side of Corskie Hill where the proposed development would potentially be seen in combination with Clashindarroch Wind Farm, Dorenell Wind Farm and other wind farms within the wider landscape. Visibility of the proposed development on the path overall is intermittent and only on the hillside sections where landform would partially obscure views. It is therefore considered that the magnitude of change on walkers on this route is **Slight**. As walkers have a High sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Moderate** and **Not Significant**.

Core Paths – East of Rhynie, 8km south east

7.459 The short core path to the south east of Rhynie follows local roads and tracks alongside the Water of Bogie and up the lower slopes of Cairn More. The three turbines at Cairnmore are in close proximity, and views towards Tap O' Noth can be seen to the west. The ZTV illustrates that potential visibility of the proposed development would be from the southern end of the route. It is likely that this would comprise hubs and blades extending from the base of Tap O' Noth within this direction of view. The Cairnmore turbines would be in view to the south and would be a notable feature but for only the upper parts of this route and would not impact upon the riverside walk. Given the limited visibility but within views towards Tap O' Noth, it is considered that the magnitude of change on walkers on this route is **Slight**. As walkers have a High sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Moderate** and **Not Significant**.

Paths to south west of Cabrach, 6km south west

7.460 There are several paths within the Cabrach area. Those within the ZTV include routes up to The Buck and its adjacent hills to the east and west. As illustrated by Viewpoint 5 at the Buck, the proposed development would be partly behind Clashindarroch Wind Farm and below the skyline, appearing relatively contained in comparison to the Dorenell Wind Farm to the west. It would be a notable feature but not a fundamental change to the view. From paths further to the south west, more of the proposed development would lie behind Clashindarroch Wind Farm and it would become less noticeable. The paths in this area are largely in open moorland and allow expansive views across the landscape encompassing a large number of wind farms. Overall it is therefore considered that the magnitude of change on walkers of routes in this area would be **Slight**. As walkers have a High sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Moderate** and **Not Significant.**

Paths west of A941, near Bridgend, 6km west

7.461 The paths to the west of the A941 cross the eastern ends of the Glenfiddich Forest and Blackwater Forest. There would be potential visibility of the proposed development on paths which lie on the higher and east facing slopes of hills including Scaut Hill (607m AOD), Meikle Firbriggs (539m AOD) and Carn Chrom (503m AOD). The ZTV in Figure 7.5a illustrates that the number of turbines visible would vary in this area, with up to 14 turbines potentially seen. In these views the proposed development would lie partly behind Clashindarroch Wind Farm, appearing relatively contained within the view. There is also a considerable area of commercial forestry that the paths go through which would further screen views, although it is acknowledged that any future felling would open up some views. Dorenell Wind Farm lies in this area of paths and would be the dominating feature when walking here, with the proposed development recessive in views to the east. It is therefore considered that the magnitude of change on walkers of routes in this area would be **Slight**. As walkers have a High sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Moderate** and **Not Significant.**

Paths Between Haugh of Glass and Dufftown

7.462 There are some short paths and tracks which lie on the hillsides on the north west side of the Deveron Valley, above the Haugh of Glass and south of the A920, within 10km of the proposed development. This includes tracks to the Hill of Mackalea (467m AOD) and The Scalp (487m AOD). Panoramic views would be available from these summits which would include within 10km the Dorenell Wind Farm to the south, Hill of Towie I and II Wind Farms to the north, Cairnborrow to the north east, and at a similar distance Clashindarroch Wind Farm to the south east. The ZTV in Figure 7.6 shows that only the proposed blades would be visible, and that would vary from the blades of 1 to 11 of the proposed turbines (Figure 7.5b) depending on the elevation of the path. The turbine blades would appear above the ridgeline on the eastern side of the Deveron Valley. The movement of the blades would be noticeable from the paths at this distance, slightly extending the presence of wind turbines north from Clashindarroch Wind Farm which is more fully visible towards the south.

7.463 Wind farms already surround this area, and the limited extent of the proposed development potentially visible from the paths would result in a minor addition appearing as a visual extension to Clashindarroch Wind Farm. Taking this into account, it is considered that the magnitude of change on walkers of routes in this area would be overall **Slight**. As walkers have a High sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Moderate** and **Not Significant.**

Paths Within and Adjacent to the Site

7.464 Clashindarroch Forest which the proposed development lies within contains numerous tracks which are publicly accessible and used for walking, running, skiing and horse riding. These extend into the landscape surrounding the Site and include paths to Brown Hill (485m AOD) and Evron Hill in the north, Tap O' Noth (563m AOD) to the south east, Mount of Haddoch (521m AOD) to the south and Black Hill (505m AOD) to the south west. At such close proximity to the proposed development, it would unavoidably result in a **Substantial** magnitude change for users of the paths although it would not be a fundamental change given the presence of Clashindarroch Wind Farm. It is intended that the tracks would remain accessible when the proposed development is operational. The character of the routes would obviously change with the presence of large turbines beside or near the tracks and also the necessary forestry felling would open up views from the paths. However, as a commercial forestry, the change to the felling areas would be considered a natural part of the future management of the Site.

7.465 It is considered that the magnitude of change on walkers of routes in this area would be unavoidably High. As walkers have a High sensitivity, the resulting effect would be **Major** and **Significant.**

Hill Walking

7.466 Paragraph 7.166 lists the Corbetts and Grahams which lie within the LVIA study area and within the ZTV. Viewpoints at The Buck (VP5), Ben Rinnes (VP13), and Little Geal Charn (VP19) provide a representation of the visibility from the closer summits. The views from all the summits are expansive and generally encompass 360 degrees. The proposed development when seen from Ben Rinnes and Little Geal Charn (VP 13 and VP19 respectively) was considered to have a slight magnitude of change on account of its narrow horizontal extent largely behind Clashindarroch Wind Farm and the intervening rolling landform which breaks up the views. The majority of the Corbetts and Grahams lie to the south west of the proposed development. In this direction, the proposed development would always lie partially if not fully behind Clashindarroch Wind Farm. This would

reduce the potential for the proposed development to be a noticeable change and it would sit recessively within the views. Whilst a higher magnitude of change was considered for views from The Buck (VP15) given its close proximity to the Site, the other Corbetts and Grahams lie generally beyond 15km where it is considered that the magnitude of change on walkers would vary between **Slight** and **Negligible**. As walkers have a High sensitivity, the resulting effect would vary between **Moderate** and **Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant**.

Aviation Lighting and Visual Receptors

7.467 Aviation lighting has been assessed in relation to visual receptors. This has involved night time fieldwork and the consideration of four specific viewpoints, including the night time viewpoint photography and the preparation of night time photomontages. The intensity of the lights would vary developing on the meteorological conditions, with 2000 candela lighting operating in poor visibility and 200 candela lighting operating in good visibility. It is also understood that the intensity of the lights will vary with viewing angle, with this reducing the lower an observer is relative to the lights. In undertaking this work certain worst case assumptions have been applied in relation to the intensity of the lights and photomontages have been prepared for each viewpoint show both 2000 candela lights and 200 candela lights. The Civil Aviation Authority guidance required lights to be operational when the illuminance reaching a vertical surface falls below 500 LUX.

7.468 Visual receptors most likely to experience the change associated with the aviation lighting are people travelling through the landscape at night. People would also experience the changes arising from the aviation lighting from residential properties, although this is more likely to be limited as people would typically be inside their properties at night. The other receptor locations considered in respect of aviation lighting comprise the Dark Skies Park and Star Gazing Locations on the edge of the CNP. These have been considered in the landscape effects section at paragraph 7.374, with this analysis identifying very limited visibility of the proposed development and no adverse effects, similar would be the case in relation to potential visual effects.

7.469 The baseline night time context and potential effects caused by the aviation lighting has been assessed at four of the representative viewpoints (Viewpoints 1, 9, 11, and 12) included in the assessment and as set out in detail in Appendix 7.2 Viewpoint Assessment. These locations were selected through a review of all the daytime viewpoints and as agreed through consultation, to identify places where people were likely to experience night time views with predicted visibility of the proposed development turbine hubs. The findings of this work and the broader night time fieldwork are described in paragraphs 7.470 – 7.475.

7.470 At the four viewpoints the potential Major to Moderate-Minor effects have been identified as a result of the aviation lighting. At viewpoint 1 (Tillathrowie) a **Major** and **Major-Moderate**, and **Significant** effect on visual amenity was identified in relation to residents and road users respectively. At viewpoint 9 (near Milltown od Rothiemay) a **Major-Moderate** and **Significant** effect was identified in relation to residents. In the case of both viewpoints 1 and 9 the magnitude of change was influenced by the dark baseline context and the contrast associated with the introduction of new light sources above the horizon. At viewpoint 11, on the edge of Huntly a **Moderate-Minor** and **Not Significant** effect was identified, with a key contributory factor in this being the prominence of existing lights in the baseline context, reducing the magnitude of change. At viewpoint 12, a **Moderate** and **Not Significant** effect was assessed. The key receptors likely to experience the change are road users and the intervening distance to the Site, together with dispersed existing lighting the rural landscape, would reduce the magnitude of change, compared with the daytime view from the same location.

7.471 The remaining 16 viewpoints have been reviewed in relation to the night time fieldwork that has been undertaken. Viewpoints 2, 3, 7, 10, 16 and 18 are all roadside locations and therefore the night time views at these locations are experienced by people travelling through the landscape. However, the wirelines for all these viewpoints show that there would be no visibility of the turbine hubs/nacelles and therefore the aviation lights would not be visible.

7.472 Viewpoint 8 is the only other viewpoint representative of road users and nearby residents where the turbines hubs/nacelles would be seen. The context of this viewpoint was visited at night but it was not specifically included in the viewpoint assessment due to the broad similarities with viewpoint 9. Viewpoint 9 was selected as it is closer to a residential property and considered to be more directly representative of residential receptor views seen. Based on the analysis of viewpoint 9, is it likely that there would be a **Slight** magnitude of change and **Moderate**, and **Not Significant** effect on road users at this location, but a major-moderate and significant effect on residents that experience open views towards the Site in the vicinity of viewpoint 8.

7.473 Viewpoints 4, 5, 6, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19 and 20 all represent walkers on hill tops in the LVIA study area. Turbine hubs/nacelles are predicted to be visible from all these viewpoints, partly due to their elevation. The fieldwork undertaken identifies that there are limited baseline sources of light in the vicinity of the proposed development. There may be artificial lights visible in certain directions e.g. the view towards Huntly from viewpoint 6 on Clashmach Hill, but overall the aviation lights on the turbines would be seen in a generally dark context. However, it is likely that very few people are likely to experience the view from these locations at night. There may be occasions where people choose to visit such viewpoints, but it is more likely that people wanting to experience the landscape at night would be drawn to more remote locations. Observations of aviation lights on existing turbines, both in the context of this LVIA study area (wind turbines at Upper Wheedlemont Farm and Myreton Crossroads) and other examples around the UK, suggests that these do not become apparent until after sunset. Accordingly, people are unlikely to see the lights until after dark rather than at sunrise or sunset. The night time viewpoint assessment undertaken suggests that a **Substantial** or **Moderate** magnitude of change and **Major** or **Major-Moderate**, and **Significant Effects** may occur for walkers (High sensitivity) on summits with open views towards the Site within 20km. **Significant Effects** are unlikely to occur beyond this distance, as the visibility pattern becomes more fragmented and intervening features such as landform and vegetation would reduce potential visibility.

7.474 Based on the above and analysis of the ZTV the aviation lighting of the proposed turbines potentially would be seen from residential properties and transport routes with open hub height views towards the proposed development. However, as seen from the ZTV on Figure 7.6, such views are limited and a considerable proportion of theoretical visibility is associated with the turbine blades alone. There would be locations where the turbine hubs, and therefore the aviation lights, would be seen but these would be limited in extent across the LVIA study area.

7.475 The potential for cumulative effects with aviation lights has been considered. However, operational turbines with aviation lights are few in number e.g. Upper Wheedlemont Farm and Myreton Crossroads. It is understood that proposed wind farms in the north west part of the LVIA study area, e.g. Clash Gour, would require aviation lights due to the height of the turbines. However, the cumulative assessment has identified limited effects with these sites due to their spatial relationship with Clashindarroch II Wind Farm and the analysis of ZTVs.

SUMMARY OF PREDICTED EFFECTS

7.476 The effects of the proposed development upon the landscape character, designated landscapes and visual receptors within a 40km study area have been assessed.

7.477 As a consequence of the limited extent of the ZTV, the assessment has demonstrated that there would be few significant effects from the proposed development, especially given the size of the proposed turbines. These would be largely limited to intermittent areas within 5km north east, south east and south of the Site and from isolated summits within approximately 10km, as well as an area to the south east within 14km.

7.478 It is clear from the assessment, taking into account field survey work and the viewpoint visualisations, that the theoretical visibility shown on the ZTVs is very much a worst case as the abundance of forestry, shelterbelts and also the settlement pattern within the LVIA study area, would reduce the predicted visibility more than shown on the ZTVs. This is particularly noticeable to the north east of the Site where the farmland includes many shelterbelts, small woodlands and roadside trees. The difficulty in finding good representative viewpoints with clear views of the proposed development during the assessment also demonstrated the limited extent of actual visibility.

7.479 The key landscape and visual effects assessed from the proposed development relate to Tap O' Noth; views from it and views towards it. This was a main consideration in the design process undertaken in developing the layout for the proposed development. The objective was to achieve a layout which provided some separation from Tap O' Noth so that whilst the wind farm would unavoidably be a prominent feature in proximity to Tap O' Noth, it would not be perceived to reduce the height or distinctive character of this summit. It is considered that this has been achieved as far as possible whilst still retaining a viable wind farm on the Site.

7.480 The design of the proposed development also took into consideration the backdrop of the Deveron Valley ridgeline in the views towards Tap O' Noth. As assessed in the LVIA, the turbines of the proposed development remain largely below the ridgeline and the horizontal extent of the scheme limits any perceived competition of scale between the turbines and the landscape.

Landscape Character

7.481 The Site is particularly enclosed as illustrated on Figure 7.1 which shows the ridgeline of high ground to the west and south, combined with the generally undulating landform of the Grampian Outliers LCA. In addition, the close presence of Clashindarroch Wind Farm, which is larger in turbine number, and the comparatively lower ground level of the proposed turbines, means that the proposed development would not result in a fundamental change to the immediate landscape character. No significant effects were assessed on the landscape character areas beyond the immediate character area of the Grampian Outliers LCA unit in which the proposed development would be located.

Landscape Designations

7.482 No significant effects were assessed on any local or national landscape designation within the LVIA study area. Effects upon the special qualities of the CNP and also the Cairngorms WLA were not assessed as significant due to the limited predicted visibility, and orientation of the views towards the Site, in which the proposed development would mostly be seen behind Clashindarroch Wind

Farm. This reduces the additional horizontal extent of turbines visible, and combined with distance from these designations, the proposed development would be a minor to very minor addition to the views.

Visual Amenity

7.483 The visual receptors that would experience the greatest magnitude of change from the proposed wind turbines are those using the Clashindarroch Forest for recreational purposes, walkers using the immediately adjacent hillsides and nearby residents, for whom the proposed development would become a defining feature, extending the presence of turbines from Clashindarroch Wind Farm to the north east.

7.484 Significant visual effects upon local residents would occur in relation to a few houses to the north east of the Site at Tillathrowie where the turbines would be beyond 2km at its closest point and within a relatively narrow horizontal extent of the available views. In addition, significant effects are also predicted for the residents of dispersed properties and farms on the lower slopes of the Coreen Hills to the south east of Rhynie at between approximately 7-12km from the proposed development. There would be limited visibility from any of the larger settlements e.g. Huntly, Keith, Dufftown, Charlestown of Aberlour and Alford within the LVIA study area.

7.485 Visibility from the main roads within the LVIA study area would be limited due to the landform and no significant effects were assessed for main road users. Localised significant effects upon road users of the minor roads providing access to Tillathrowie and Coynachie due to the proximity of the proposed development, and a short stretch of a local road south west of Rhynie, were assessed on the basis of framed views of the proposed turbines and Tap O' Noth.

7.486 The viewpoint analysis and ZTV showed that open clear views of the proposed development would mostly occur from specific viewpoints on the elevated ground and summits of the distinctive outcrops within the LVIA study area, such as Tap O' Noth, The Buck, Clashmach Hill, The Knock, Bennachie, Ben Rinnes and Ben Aigan. The views available from these summits are panoramic and expansive showing a contrast from the settled, agricultural and wind farm landscape to the north east, to the remote and upland landscape to the south west. The location of the proposed development largely retains these characteristics of the views and due to its layout and position next to Clashindarroch Wind Farm, it would be a relatively limited addition to the proportion of the view affected by wind turbines.

Aviation Lighting

7.487 The height of the proposed turbines means aviation lighting is required in accordance with the policy set out by the Civil Aviation Authority. These lights would contrast with the generally dark rural context of the Site. They would not introduce a new or unique feature into the night time context, as there are several existing sources of artificial light in the LVIA study area, including settlements, dispersed properties and farms, industrial premises (particularly distilleries) and existing wind turbines. However, the way in which the lights would be seen differs from most of these baseline sources of light. The aviation lights would typically be seen as a series of red lights towards or above the horizon and increasing their relative prominence.

7.488 The assessment has identified significant adverse effects in relation to lighting on landscape character and visual amenity for the limited parts of the LVIA study area, within approximately

20km, from where the lighting would be visible. However, this should be considered in the context of there being few viewpoint locations suitable for the assessment of the aviation lighting of the proposed development. This is partly because such viewpoints need to have visibility of the turbine hubs, not just the blades and also the general need to select viewpoints from which the proposed development is typically likely to be seen, i.e. residential locations and roads. The ZTV in Figure 7.6 clearly demonstrates the relatively limited visibility of the turbine hubs from the more settled parts of the LVIA study area. This, in turn, would limit the extent of the effects resulting from the proposed aviation lighting.

Cumulative

7.489 Cumulative effects with other wind farms within the LVIA study area have been considered throughout the assessment and take into account the numerous large, medium and small wind farms and single turbines that are a key characteristic of the wider area within which the proposed development would be located. In addition to this extensive baseline of operational and consented wind farms, the proposed development would represent a minor addition due to its limited ZTV and position directly adjacent to Clashindarroch Wind Farm. Except for some areas within the immediate surroundings, the proposed development would not create any new areas of wind farm visibility within the LVIA study area.

7.490 The main potential for cumulative effects therefore relates to the proposed development in addition to Clashindarroch Wind Farm, and Dorenell Wind Farm which lies approximately 10km to the west south west of the Site. The main combined effects of the proposed development with Clashindarroch and Dorenell Wind Farms relate to areas where they are potentially seen as one large wind farm or within the same portion of the view, which would be from a very limited number of locations within the LVIA study area, but particularly from the edge of the Correen Hills, south east of the Site.

7.491 Proposed wind farms are largely grouped in the north west part of the LVIA study area. These include Clash Gour, Pauls Hill II and Rothes III. These sites would essentially combine with the operational and consented wind farms in this part of the LVIA study area to form very large groups of turbines. However, these proposed additions to the existing wind farms in this area would be sufficiently separated from the proposed development by a combination of distance, direction and landform to avoid significant effects being identified in this assessment. The other proposed development within the LVIA study area is the Meikleton of Ardonald single turbine. This is located close to, and would essentially be seen grouped with the Cairnborrow Wind Farm. This limits the potential cumulative change in relation the baseline context and therefore the potential cumulative interaction, and effects, in combination with the proposed development.

7.492 The limited ZTV of the proposed development limits the potential for any significant sequential cumulative effects from any of the main roads or footpaths within the LVIA study area.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

7.493 On balance, the significant effects of the proposed development are considered to be relatively limited for a wind farm of its size and scale. Aside from the unavoidable substantial changes within the Site and its immediate surrounds, the main significant effects relate to the relationship of the proposed development with Tap O' Noth which lies 5km to the south east of the Site. The majority of landscape and visual receptors within the LVIA study area would not have any effects from the

proposed development and where effects were assessed, these would not be significant.

7.494 As shown in Table 7-15, of the 20 viewpoints assessed, significant cumulative effects on visual amenity were assessed for five locations, four of which are specific viewpoints i.e. hill summits or identified viewpoints, and one which was representative of a local residential area. It should be noted that specific viewpoints do not necessarily represent the wider area. Significant cumulative effects on landscape character were assessed for three of these locations. A RVAA has also been undertaken for a 5km radius around the Site (based on the outmost turbines). The RVAA did not identify any effects that would be considered overbearing or overwhelming. Table 7-15 also shows there are only significant cumulative effects on one landscape character area, two residential areas, three local roads, and local recreational routes within 5km of the Site. There would be no significant cumulative effects on the nationally designated CNP and related NSA and WLAs, as well as no significant cumulative effects on any local landscape designations.

7.495 Table 7-16 summarises the significant effects of the proposed development.

Table 7-16
Summary of Significant Effects

Receptor	Approx. Distance and Direction from Site	Receptor Sensitivity	Cumulative Magnitude of Change: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development	Effect on Receptor
VIEWPOINTS (Visual Amenity)				
VP1 Minor Road near Tillathrowie	3.85km, NE	High (local residents) Medium (road users)	Substantial	**Major** **Major-Moderate**
VP4 Tap O' Noth	5.16km, SE	High (walkers)	Substantial	**Major**
VP5 The Buck	8.80km, S	High (walkers)	Moderate	**Major-Moderate**
VP6 Clashmach Hill	7.32km, NE	High (walkers)	Moderate	**Major-Moderate**
VP12 Correen Hills, Old Military Road	13.75km, SE	High (visitors) Medium (road users)	Substantial	**Major** **Major-Moderate**
VIEWPOINTS (Landscape Character)				
VP1 Minor Road near Tillathrowie (Northern Rolling Lowlands LCA)	3.85km, NE	Medium	Substantial	**Major-Moderate**
VP4 Tap O' Noth (Grampian Outliers LCA)	5.16km, SE	High-Medium	Substantial	**Major to Major-Moderate**
VP12 Correen Hills, Old Military Road (Grampian Outliers LCA)	13.75km, SE	Medium	Substantial	**Major-Moderate**

Receptor	Approx. Distance and Direction from Site	Receptor Sensitivity	Cumulative Magnitude of Change: Existing + Consented + Proposed Development	Effect on Receptor
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS				
Grampian Outliers LCA (VP4, VP12)	0km	High-Medium	Substantial	**Major to Major-Moderate**
SETTLEMENTS				
Tillathrowie (localised)	2km, NE	High	Localised Substantial	**Localised Major-Moderate**
Settlement south east of Rhynie	7-12km, SE	High	Medium	**Major-Moderate**
LOCAL ROADS				
Local roads to Tillathrowie and Coynachie	2.5-4km, ENE	Medium	Localised Substantial	**Localised Major-Moderate**
Local road south west of Rhynie (localised)	6.5km, SE	Medium	Localised Substantial	**Localised Major-Moderate**
RECREATIONAL ROUTES				
Paths within and adjacent to the Site	0km	High	High	**Major**
Path to Tap O' Noth	5km, SE	High	High	**Major**

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