Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual

Figures

- Figure 5.13: Cumulative ZTV: Varied Development with Operational - Under Construction Sites and Consented
- Figure 5.14: Cumulative ZTV - Varied Development with all Operational Under Construction, Consented and Application Appeal Sites
- Figure 5.15: Cumulative ZTV - Varied Development with Achany and Rosehall
- Figure 5.16: Cumulative ZTV - Varied Development with Lairg and Lairg 2 Re-Design
- Figure 5.17: Cumulative ZTV - Varied Development with Acheilidh and Garvary
- Figure 5.18: Cumulative ZTV - Varied Development with Balbrlair and Braelangwell
- Figure 5.19: Cumulative ZTV - Varied Development with Beinn Tharsuinn and Beinn Nan Oighrean and Ben Tharsuinn Repower and Western Extension
- Figure 5.20: Cumulative ZTV - Varied Development with Strathrory and Coire Na Cloiche
- Figure 5.21: Cumulative ZTV - Varied Development with Novar (and Extension) and Novar Repowering
- Figure 5.22: Cumulative ZTV - Varied Development with Abhainn Dubh and Celslein
- Figure 5.23: Cumulative ZTV - Varied Development with Creachan
- Figure 5.24: Cumulative ZTV - Varied Development with Inveroykel and Strath Oykel
- Figure 5.25: Cumulative ZTV - Varied Development with Collie Beith and Meall Buidhe
- Figure 5.26: Cumulative ZTV - Varied Development with Corriemillie and Kirkan
- Figure 5.27: Cumulative ZTV - Varied Development with Lochluichart (and Extension) and Lochluichart II Redesign
- Figure 5.28: Cumulative ZTV - Varied Development with Allt An Tuir and Invercassley
- Figure 5.29: Cumulative ZTV - Varied Development with Collie Linne and Sallachy
- Figure 5.30: Cumulative ZTV - Varied Development with Creag Riabhach and Creag Riabhach Extension
- Figure 5.31: Cumulative ZTV - Varied Development with Shinness and Strath Tirry
- Figure 5.32: Cumulative ZTV - Varied Development with Chleansaid and Pollie Hill
- Figure 5.33: Cumulative ZTV - Varied Development with Gordonbush (and Extension) and Kilbraur (and Extension)

Visualisations (NatureScot)

- Figure V3a-1.1: VP 1 A836 above the Crask Inn
- Figure V3a-1.2: VP 1 A836 above the Crask Inn – Baseline Photo and Cumulative Wireline
- Figure V3a-1.3a: VP 1 A836 above the Crask Inn – Proposed Varied Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-1.3b: VP 1 A836 above the Crask Inn – Consented Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-1.4: VP 1 A836 above the Crask Inn – Photomontage
- Figure V3a-2.1: VP 2 A836 bridge by Dalnessie entrance – Location Plan
- Figure V3a-2.2: VP 2 A836 bridge by Dalnessie entrance – Baseline Photo and Cumulative Wireline
- Figure V3a-2.3a: VP 2 A836 bridge by Dalnessie entrance – Proposed Varied Development Wireline

- Figure V3a-2.3b: VP 2 A836 bridge by Dalnessie entrance – Consented Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-2.4: VP 2 A836 bridge by Dalnessie entrance – Photomontage
- Figure V3a-3.1: VP 5 Ben Hee – Location Plan
- Figure V3a-3.2: VP 5 Ben Hee – Baseline Photo and Cumulative Wireline
- Figure V3a-3.3a: VP 5 Ben Hee – Proposed Varied Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-3.3b: VP 5 Ben Hee – Consented Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-3.4: VP 5 Ben Hee – Photomontage
- Figure V3a-4.1: VP 6 Rosehall – Location Plan
- Figure V3a-4.2: VP 6 Rosehall – Baseline Photo and Cumulative Wireline
- Figure V3a-4.3a: VP 6 Rosehall – Proposed Varied Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-4.3b: VP 6 Rosehall – Consented Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-4.4: VP 6 Rosehall – Photomontage
- Figure V3a-4.5 - VP6 Rosehall - Visible Aviation Lighting Photomontage
- Figure V3a-5.1: VP 9 Achnairn caravan and camping site entrance – Location Plan
- Figure V3a-5.2: VP 9 Achnairn caravan and camping site entrance – Baseline Photo and Cumulative Wireline
- Figure V3a-5.3a: VP 9 Achnairn caravan and camping site entrance – Proposed Varied Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-5.3b: VP 9 Achnairn caravan and camping site entrance – Consented Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-5.4: VP 9 Achnairn caravan and camping site entrance – Photomontage
- Figure V3a-5.5 - VP9 Achairn caravan and camping site entrance - VAL Photomontage
- Figure V3a-6.1: VP 10 Ben More Assynt – Location Plan
- Figure V3a-6.2: VP 10 Ben More Assynt – Baseline Photo and Cumulative Wireline
- Figure V3a-6.3a: VP 10 Ben More Assynt – Proposed Varied Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-6.3b: VP 10 Ben More Assynt –Consented Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-6.4: VP 10 Ben More Assynt – Photomontage
- Figure V3a-7.1: VP 11 Glencassley road to south of Castle – Location Plan
- Figure V3a-7.2: VP 11 Glencassley road to south of Castle – Baseline Photo and Cumulative Wireline
- Figure V3a-7.3a: VP 11 Glencassley road to south of Castle – Proposed Varied Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-7.3b: VP 11 Glencassley road to south of Castle – Consented Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-7.4: VP 11 Glencassley road to south of Castle – Photomontage
- Figure V3a-8.1: VP 12 Glencassley road by Langwell Hill – Location Plan
- Figure V3a-8.2: VP 12 Glencassley road by Langwell Hill – Baseline Photo and Cumulative Wireline
- Figure V3a-8.3a: VP 12 Glencassley road by Langwell Hill – Proposed Varied Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-8.3b: VP 12 Glencassley road by Langwell Hill – Consented Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-8.4: VP 12 Glencassley road by Langwell Hill – Photomontage

- Figure V3a-8.5 - VP12 Glencassley road by Langwell Hill - Visible Aviation Lighting Photomontage
- Figure V3a-9.1: VP 13 Ben Klibreck – Location Plan
- Figure V3a-9.2: VP 13 Ben Klibreck – Baseline Photo and Cumulative Wireline
- Figure V3a-9.3a: VP 13 Ben Klibreck – Proposed Varied Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-9.3b: VP 13 Ben Klibreck – Consented Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-9.4: VP 13 Ben Klibreck – Photomontage
- Figure V3a-10.1: VP 14 A838, near West Shinness – Location Plan
- Figure V3a-10.2: VP 14 A838, near West Shinness – Baseline Photo and Cumulative Wireline
- Figure V3a-10.3a: VP 14 A838, near West Shinness – Proposed Varied Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-10.3b: VP 14 A838, near West Shinness – Consented Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-10.4: VP 14 A838, near West Shinness – Photomontage
- Figure V3a-11.1: VP 16 Minor road at Inveroykel forest access – Location Plan
- Figure V3a-11.2: VP 16 Minor road at Inveroykel forest access – Baseline Photo and Cumulative Wireline
- Figure V3a-11.3a: VP 16 Minor road at Inveroykel forest access – Proposed Varied Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-11.3b: VP 16 Minor road at Inveroykel forest access – Consented Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-11.4: VP 16 Minor road at Inveroykel forest access – Photomontage
- Figure V3a-12.1: VP 18 Carn Chuinneag – Location Plan
- Figure V3a-12.2: VP 18 Carn Chuinneag – Baseline Photo and Cumulative Wireline
- Figure V3a-12.3a: VP 18 Carn Chuinneag – Proposed Varied Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-12.3b: VP 18 Carn Chuinneag –Consented Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-12.4: VP 18 Carn Chuinneag – Photomontage
- Figure V3a-13.1: VP 19 Seana Bhràigh – Location Plan
- Figure V3a-13.2: VP 19 Seana Bhràigh – Baseline Photo and Cumulative Wireline
- Figure V3a-13.3a: VP 19 Seana Bhràigh – Proposed Varied Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-13.3b: VP 19 Seana Bhràigh –Consented Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-13.4: VP 19 Seana Bhràigh – Photomontage
- Figure V3a-14.1: VP 20 Cul Mòr – Location Plan
- Figure V3a-14.2: VP 20 Cul Mòr – Baseline Photo and Cumulative Wireline
- Figure V3a-14.3a: VP 20 Cul Mòr – Proposed Varied Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-14.3b: VP 20 Cul Mòr – Consented Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-14.4: VP 20 Cul Mòr – Photomontage
- Figure V3a-15.1: VP 21 Meall an Aonaich – Location Plan
- Figure V3a-15.2: VP 21 Meall an Aonaich – Baseline Photo and Cumulative Wireline
- Figure V3a-15.3a: VP 21 Meall an Aonaich – Proposed Varied Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-15.3b: VP 21 Meall an Aonaich –Consented Development Wireline
- Figure V3a-15.4: VP 21 Meall an Aonaich – Photomontage

Visualisations (The Highland Council)

- Figure V3b-1.1: VP 1 A836 above the Crask Inn – Location Plan
- Figure V3b-1.2: VP 1 A836 above the Crask Inn – Photomontage
- Figure V3b-1.3a: VP 1 A836 above the Crask Inn – Existing View and Terrain Model - Proposed Varied Development
- Figure V3b-1.3b: VP 1 A836 above the Crask Inn – Existing View and Terrain Model - Consented Development
- Figure V3b-1.4: VP 1 A836 above the Crask Inn – Photomontage 50 mm
- Figure V3b-1.5: VP 1 A836 above the Crask Inn - Photomontage 75 mm
- Figure V3b-2.1: VP 2 A826 by Dalnessie Entrance – Location Plan
- Figure V3b-2.2: VP 2 A826 by Dalnessie Entrance – Photomontage
- Figure V3b-2.3a: VP 2 A826 by Dalnessie Entrance – Existing View and Terrain Model: Proposed Varied Development
- Figure V3b-2.3b: VP 2 A826 by Dalnessie Entrance – Existing View and Terrain Model: Consented Development
- Figure V3b-2.4: VP 2 A826 by Dalnessie Entrance – Photomontage 50 mm
- Figure V3b-2.5: VP 2 A826 by Dalnessie Entrance - Photomontage 75 mm
- Figure V3b-3.1: VP 5 Ben Hee – Location Plan
- Figure V3b-3.2: VP 5 Ben Hee – Photomontage
- Figure V3b-3.3a: VP 5 Ben Hee – Existing View and Terrain Model - Proposed Varied Development
- Figure V3b-3.3b: VP 5 Ben Hee – Existing View and Terrain Model - Consented Development
- Figure V3b-3.4: VP 5 Ben Hee – Photomontage 50 mm
- Figure V3b-3.5: VP 5 Ben Hee - Photomontage 75 mm
- Figure V3b-4.1: VP 6 Rosehall – Location Plan
- Figure V3b-4.2: VP 6 Rosehall – Photomontage
- Figure V3b-4.3a: VP 6 Rosehall – Existing View and Terrain Model - Proposed Varied Development
- Figure V3b-4.3b: VP 6 Rosehall – Existing View and Terrain Model - Consented Development
- Figure V3b-4.4: VP 6 Rosehall – Photomontage 50 mm
- Figure V3b-4.5: VP 6 Rosehall - Photomontage 75 mm
- Figure V3b-5.1: VP 9 Achnairn Caravan and Camping Site Entrance – Location Plan
- Figure V3b-5.2: VP 9 Achnairn Caravan and Camping Site Entrance – Photomontage
- Figure V3b-5.3a: VP 9 Achnairn Caravan and Camping Site Entrance – Existing View and Terrain Model: Proposed Varied Development
- Figure V3b-5.3b: VP 9 Achnairn Caravan and Camping Site Entrance – Existing View and Terrain Model - Consented Development
- Figure V3b-5.4: VP 9 Achnairn Caravan and Camping Site Entrance – Photomontage 50 mm
- Figure V3b-5.5: VP 9 Achnairn Caravan and Camping Site Entrance - Photomontage 75 mm

- Figure V3b-6.1: VP 10 Ben More Assynt – Location Plan
- Figure V3b-6.2: VP 10 Ben More Assynt – Photomontage
- Figure V3b-6.3a: VP 10 Ben More Assynt – Existing View and Terrain Model - Proposed Varied Development
- Figure V3b-6.3b: VP 10 Ben More Assynt – Existing View and Terrain Model - Consented Development
- Figure V3b-6.4: VP 10 Ben More Assynt – Photomontage 50 mm
- Figure V3b-6.5: VP 10 Ben More Assynt - Photomontage 75 mm
- Figure V3b-7.1: VP 11 Glencassley Road to South of Castle – Location Plan
- Figure V3b-7.2: VP 11 Glencassley Road to South of Castle – Photomontage
- Figure V3b-7.3a: VP 11 Glencassley Road to South of Castle – Existing View and Terrain Model: Proposed Varied Development
- Figure V3b-7.3b: VP 11 Glencassley Road to South of Castle – Existing View and Terrain Model: Consented Development
- Figure V3b-7.4: VP 11 Glencassley Road to South of Castle – Photomontage 50 mm
- Figure V3b-7.5: VP 11 Glencassley Road to South of Castle - Photomontage 75 mm
- Figure V3b-8.1: VP 12 Glencassley Road by Langwell Hill – Location Plan
- Figure V3b-8.2: VP 12 Glencassley Road by Langwell Hill – Photomontage
- Figure V3b-8.3a: VP 12 Glencassley Road by Langwell Hill – Existing View and Terrain Model - Proposed Varied Development
- Figure V3b-8.3b: VP 12 Glencassley Road by Langwell Hill – Existing View and Terrain Model - Consented Development
- Figure V3b-8.4: VP 12 Glencassley Road by Langwell Hill – Photomontage 50 mm
- Figure V3b-8.5: VP 12 Glencassley Road by Langwell Hill - Photomontage 75 mm
- Figure V3b-9.1: VP 13 Ben Klibreck – Location Plan
- Figure V3b-9.2: VP 13 Ben Klibreck – Photomontage
- Figure V3b-9.3a: VP 13 Ben Klibreck – Existing View and Terrain Model - Proposed Varied Development
- Figure V3b-9.3b: VP 13 Ben Klibreck – Existing View and Terrain Model - Consented Development
- Figure V3b-9.4: VP 13 Ben Klibreck – Photomontage 50 mm
- Figure V3b-9.5: VP 13 Ben Klibreck - Photomontage 75 mm
- Figure V3b-10.1: VP 14 A838, near West Shinness – Location Plan
- Figure V3b-10.2: VP 14 A838, near West Shinness – Photomontage
- Figure V3b-10.3a: VP 14 A838, near West Shinness – Existing View and Terrain Model - Proposed Varied Development
- Figure V3b-10.3b: VP 14 A838, near West Shinness – Existing View and Terrain Model - Consented Development
- Figure V3b-10.4: VP 14 A838, near West Shinness – Photomontage 50 mm
- Figure V3b-10.5: VP 14 A838, near West Shinness - Photomontage 75 mm
- Figure V3b-11.1: VP 16 Minor Road at Inveroykel Forest Access – Location Plan
- Figure V3b-11.2: VP 16 Minor Road at Inveroykel Forest Access – Photomontage
- Figure V3b-11.3a: VP 16 Minor Road at Inveroykel Forest Access – Existing View and Terrain Model - Proposed Varied Development

- Figure V3b-11.3b: VP 16 Minor Road at Inveroykel Forest Access – Existing View and Terrain Model - Consented Development
- Figure V3b-11.4: 16 Minor Road at Inveroykel Forest Access – Photomontage 50 mm
- Figure V3b-11.5: VP 16 Minor Road at Inveroykel Forest Access - Photomontage 75 mm
- Figure V3b-12.1: VP 18 Carn Chuinneag – Location Plan
- Figure V3b-12.2: VP 18 Carn Chuinneag – Photomontage
- Figure V3b-12.3a: VP 18 Carn Chuinneag – Existing View and Terrain Model - Proposed Varied Development
- Figure V3b-12.3b: VP 18 Carn Chuinneag – Existing View and Terrain Model - Consented Development
- Figure V3b-12.4: VP 18 Carn Chuinneag – Photomontage 50 mm
- Figure V3b-12.5: VP 18 Carn Chuinneag - Photomontage 75 mm
- Figure V3b-13.1: VP 19 Seana Braigh – Location Plan
- Figure V3b-13.2: VP 19 Seana Braigh – Photomontage
- Figure V3b-13.3a: VP 19 Seana Braigh – Existing View and Terrain Model - Proposed Varied Development
- Figure V3b-13.3b: VP 19 Seana Braigh – Existing View and Terrain Model - Consented Development
- Figure V3b-13.4: VP 19 Seana Braigh – Photomontage 50 mm
- Figure V3b-13.5: VP 19 Seana Braigh - Photomontage 75 mm
- Figure V3b-14.1: VP 20 Cul Mor – Location Plan
- Figure V3b-14.2: VP 20 Cul Mor – Photomontage
- Figure V3b-14.3a: VP 20 Cul Mor – Existing View and Terrain Model - Proposed Varied Development
- Figure V3b-14.3b: VP 20 Cul Mor – Existing View and Terrain Model - Consented Development
- Figure V3b-14.4: VP 20 Cul Mor – Photomontage 50 mm
- Figure V3b-14.5: VP 20 Cul Mor - Photomontage 75 mm
- Figure V3b-15.1: VP 21 Meall an Aonaich – Location Plan
- Figure V3b-15.2: VP 21 Meall an Aonaich– Photomontage
- Figure V3b-15.3a: VP 21 Meall an Aonaich – Existing View and Terrain Model - Proposed Varied Development
- Figure V3b-15.3b: VP 21 Meall an Aonaich – Existing View and Terrain Model - Consented Development
- Figure V3b-15.4: VP 21 Meall an Aonaich – Photomontage 50 mm
- Figure V3b-15.5: VP 21 Meall an Aonaich - Photomontage 75 mm

Technical Appendices

- Technical Appendix 5.1: Technical Methodology for Visual Representation
- Technical Appendix 5.2: Summary of Scoping Process
- Technical Appendix 5.3: Landscape Character Assessment Tables

- Technical Appendix 5.4: Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire Special Landscape Area Assessment
- Technical Appendix 5.5: WLA 34 Reay – Cassley – Wild Land Assessment
- Technical Appendix 5.5.1 - WLA Assessment Figures 1 – 5
- Technical Appendix 5.5.2 - WLA Assessment Figures 6 - 3 - Cumulative ZTVs
- Technical Appendix 5.5.3 - WLA Assessment Figures 14.1 - 14.7 - Wirelines
- Technical Appendix 5.6: Assynt Coigach National Scenic Area – Special Landscape Qualities Assessment
- Technical Appendix 5.6.1 - Figure 1 – Assynt Coigach NSA - Special Landscape Qualities (SLQ) Assessment Locations
- Technical Appendix 5.6.2 - Figure 2a-b - NSA1 Wirelines_p1-p1
- Technical Appendix 5.6.3 - Figure 2a-b - NSA1 Wirelines_p2-p2
- Technical Appendix 5.6.4 - Figure 3a-b - NSA2 Wirelines
- Technical Appendix 5.6.5 - Figure 4a-b - NSA3 Wirelines
- Technical Appendix 5.6.6 - Figure 5a-b - NSA4 Wirelines
- Technical Appendix 5.7: Existing and Proposed Wind Turbine Developments within 60 km
- Technical Appendix 5.8: Cumulative Landscape Assessment Tables
- Technical Appendix 5.9: Visual Assessment Tables
- Technical Appendix 5.10: Cumulative Visual Assessment Tables
- Technical Appendix 5.11: Landscape and Visual Assessment of Turbine Lighting
- Technical Appendix 5.11.1 - Figure A5.11-1a Visible Aviation Lighting Hub Height ZTV A3
- Technical Appendix 5.11.2 - Figure A5.11-1b Visible Aviation Lighting Hub Height ZTV A1
- Technical Appendix 5.11.3 - Figure A5.11-2 Visible Aviation Lighting Theoretical Intensity ZTV
- Technical Appendix 5.11.4 - Figure A5.11-3 Visible Aviation Lighting Landscape Character Types with Theoretical Intensity ZTV
- Technical Appendix 5.11.5 - Figure A5.11-4 Visible Aviation Lighting Designated and Protected Landscapes with Theoretical Intensity ZTV
- Technical Appendix 5.11.6 - Figure A5.11-5 Visible Aviation Lighting Visual Receptors with Theoretical Intensity ZTV
- Technical Appendix 5.12: Appraisal of The Highland Council's Criteria for the Consideration of Onshore Wind Proposals

5. Landscape and Visual

5.1. Executive Summary

Introduction

5.1.1. This landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken for the Proposed Varied Development to the Consented Achany Extension Wind Farm (the Consented Development) by ASH design + assessment Ltd (ASH), Chartered Landscape Architects, in accordance with best practice guidance including the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3)[1]. This chapter considers the potential for the proposed variation to increase the height of the 18 turbines from 149.9m to tip to 200m to tip as described in **Chapter 2: Design Iteration & Proposed Development** to result in material changes to the effects identified for the Consented Development. The focus of the assessment is on identifying material change, particularly with respect to the receptors for which significant effects have been previously identified.

Landscape Effects

5.1.2. The assessment of landscape effects considered the potential effects on Landscape Character Types (LCTs) identified by NatureScot, National Scenic Areas (NSAs), Wild Land Areas (WLAs) and Special Landscape Areas (SLAs). The assessment considered any changes to the landscape baseline since the assessment of the Consented Development.

5.1.3. The majority of effects on landscape character, landscape designations and other protected landscapes resulting from the Proposed Varied Development would not be significant. Significant effects are anticipated to occur within a relatively localised area up to around 10km from the Proposed Varied Development, largely confined to the site itself, areas within Glen Cassley, and across the elevated plateau moorland to the east and west of Glen Cassley, affecting two LCTs: LCT 135: Rounded Hills, Caithness and Sutherland; and LCT 142: Strath – Caithness and Sutherland. The Proposed Varied Development would not lead to a notable increase in effects on landscape character from that identified for the Consented Development.

5.1.4. The assessment found that there would be some localised not significant effects on the eastern periphery of the Assynt – Coigach NSA. It concluded that the effects of the Proposed Varied Development would be broadly similar to the Consented Development and there would be no increased level of significant effects on the NSA. No change is

[1] Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition.

predicted to the level of effect identified for the Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire SLA as a result of the Proposed Varied Development compared to the Consented Development.

5.1.5. The Proposed Varied Development would be located within the southern tip of WLA 34. Reay – Cassley, and significant landscape effects across the plateau areas to the east and west of Glen Cassley would also lead to some significant effects on a localised area within the southern part of the WLA, although a not significant effect was identified for the WLA as whole. This is consistent with the effects identified for the Consented Development.

Visual Effects

5.1.6. Visual receptors considered in the assessment included a selection of the representative viewpoints, residential receptors, and routes considered for the Consented Development. The assessment identified there would be increased effects from 7 of the 15 included viewpoints. The increased effects would be clustered within 10km of the Site. Within approximately 5km, the VPs along Glencassley Road (VP 11 and 12), within Rosehall (VP6) and from near Inveroykel Forest (VP16) would see a noticeable increase to the height of the turbines compared to the Consented Development. They would be seen in relatively close proximity above the eastern glen side. Within 10km the VPs directly overlooking Loch Shin (VP9 and VP14) would also experience a noticeable increase in visibility of the turbines. The taller turbines would extend the horizontal spread of the development which would appear less contained by the surrounding landform. There would also be an increased level of effect from VP20 where the turbines would become more perceptible, although this would not lead to a significant level of effect.

5.1.7. There would be increased effects ratings for 4 receptor groups within 10km of the Site. These include the village of Rosehall and the receptors on the eastern side of Loch Shin with direct views across towards the Site. There would be a noticeable increase in the size of the turbines from these receptors compared to the Consented Development and an increase in the horizontal spread, particularly from properties looking westward over Loch Shin.

5.1.8. While some route receptors may experience slight increases in effects, these would not result in a change to the ratings identified for the Consented Development. Significant effects were identified for 3 routes and localised parts of another route.

Cumulative Effects

5.1.9. Cumulative effects were considered in relation to the presence of other wind farms visible from the same receptors. The cumulative baseline of application and scoping sites reflects the situation as of 18 July 2025.

5.1.10. The CLVIA identified few additional significant effects in relation to the Proposed Varied Development compared to the assessment on the basis of the current baseline, and in some areas effects which would be slightly reduced. Although not directly comparable the cumulative landscape effects identified for the Proposed Varied Development were

broadly consistent with those identified for the Consented Development. While there would be some increased areas of effect these would be largely tempered by the increased influence of the cumulative baseline sites. There would be no significant cumulative effects to any NSAs, SLAs or sites included on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. Increased effects were identified for 3 visual receptors. Of these, one would experience an increased spread of localised significant effects, the other increased effects would be not significant. Overall, cumulative landscape and visual effects would remain relatively localised, with the majority of significant effects occurring within 10km of the Proposed Varied Development. This is consistent with the findings of the CLVIA for the Consented Development.

Summary

5.1.11. Overall, the LVIA has concluded that the Proposed Varied Development would result in a limited number of increased significant effects on landscape character and visual amenity, affecting relatively localised parts of the landscape and visual resource up to 10km, and locally to 12.5km from the site. As with the Consented Development significant effects were identified for a range of residential, recreational and route-based visual receptors in areas to the north-east of Loch Shin, around Rosehall and Glen Cassley and recreational users within a localised part of the upland area to the west of Glen Cassley, and would result in some increased influence of wind turbines on the landscape character within parts of Glen Cassley, the upland plateau areas to either side of it, and a localised part of WLA 34, Reay – Cassley. Outwith these areas, landscape and visual effects would not be significant.

5.2. Introduction

5.2.1. A landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) was previously undertaken for the Consented Achany Extension Wind Farm (the Consented Development) by ASH design + assessment Ltd (ASH), Chartered Landscape Architects, in accordance with best practice guidance including the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3)[2]. This assessed a layout consisting of 20 turbines with a maximum tip height of 149.9 m. After further consultation with The Highland Council (THC) post submission, it was agreed that two turbines (T10 and T20) would be removed from the scheme. An Additional Information Report (AIR) was submitted for the revised 18 turbine layout in April 2022.

5.2.2. This chapter considers the potential for the proposed variation as described in Chapter 2: Design Iteration & Proposed Development to result in material changes to the effects identified for the Consented Development.

5.2.3. The assessment is supported by **Volume 4, Technical Appendices 5.1 – 5.12** and **Figures / Photomontages** included in **Volume 3, Volume 3A, and Volume 3B** of the EIA Report.

5.3. Scope of Assessment

5.3.1. The purpose of this assessment is the identification of potential for material change in landscape and visual effects identified for the Consented Development when compared to the anticipated effects of the Proposed Varied Development.

5.3.2. The LVIA considers all aspects of the Proposed Varied Development during the construction phase and during operation, as described in **Chapter 2**. It considers potential effects on the character of the landscape and also the visual amenity of those present within the landscape. It also considers the potential effects of the Proposed Varied Development on designated and protected landscapes, and to the cumulative landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Varied Development when considered in addition to other existing and proposed wind farm developments. The assessment focuses on landscape and visual receptors where potential for effects to increase to significant levels has been identified.

5.3.3. The assessment has therefore involved the following activities:

- Review of the landscape and visual baseline conditions including recognition of changes to the baseline since the original landscape and visual

[2] Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition.

assessment for the Consented Development was undertaken as part of the **2021 EIAR** and **2022 AIR**;

- Landscape and visual assessment of the Proposed Varied Development focusing on key areas where potential material changes may occur;
- Comparison of landscape and visual effects anticipated for the Proposed Varied Development with those identified for the Consented Development, highlighting any areas where a change in effect may occur; and
- Review of the Proposed Varied Development from the key identified areas, against the current cumulative wind farm baseline, identifying any areas where a difference in effect may occur from that identified for the Consented Development.

5.3.4. In addition to the above, a separate assessment of the visual effects of turbine lighting has been undertaken and is presented in **Technical Appendix 5.11: Landscape and Visual Assessment of Aviation Lighting** and summarised at the end of this Chapter.

5.3.5. This review does not comprise a full LVIA as the above approach is considered to be a proportionate level of assessment to identify any material change resulting from the Proposed Varied Development, which comprises an increase in hub height only and no change to other aspect of the development.

5.3.6. This review cross refers to the findings and associated figures and appendices, included within the **2021 EIAR (Volume 2 Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual Amenity** and the **2022 AIR** (**Volume 1 Main Report, Chapter 3 Landscape and Visual)**.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

5.3.7. As an aid to establishing the scope for the LVIA and facilitating comparison between the Consented and Proposed Varied Developments, a ZTV has been produced for the Proposed Varied Development and is presented in **Figures 5.1 – 5.3**. The ZTV is a computer generated diagram which uses a terrain model to indicate areas from which the Proposed Development would be theoretically visible. The ZTV for the Consented Development has been generated using ESRI ArcGIS software based on a terrain modelled using Ordnance Survey (OS) T5 DTM data. Detailed technical information on the methods for production of ZTVs is included in **Technical Appendix 5.1: Technical Methodologies for Visual Representation**.

Study Area

5.3.8. A study area of 40km was used for the 2021 EIAR (refer **2021 EIAR, Chapter 7 Landscape & Visual Amenity**). This was considered to be the maximum distance within which any significant landscape or visual effects may be experienced for the Consented Development. A smaller study area of 20km (the detailed study area) was defined following initial review and site appraisal for a more targeted and fine-grained assessment.

5.3.9. It is considered that any significant effects for the Proposed Varied Development would still occur within the 40km study area and that the majority of significant effects would be most likely to occur within the detailed 20km study area, as the ZTV which has been run for the Proposed Varied Development indicates a limited increase in the extent of theoretical visibility compared to the Consented Development. Therefore, the same study areas have been used for the Proposed Varied Development to allow for consistent comparison.

Issues Scoped out of the Assessment

5.3.10. Effects arising from the process of decommissioning were scoped out for the Consented Development since they are of a similar nature to those arising during construction, but of a smaller scale and shorter duration. They have therefore been scoped out of the assessment of the Proposed Varied Development.

5.3.11. The assessment of the Proposed Varied Development has focussed on receptors included within the **2021 EIAR** where there was considered to be potential for effects to increase to significant levels. Where individual landscape and visual receptors have been scoped out of detailed assessment, these are referenced as relevant.

5.4. Consultations

5.4.1. A request for a Scoping Opinion for the Proposed Development was submitted to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit (ECU) in May 2025. The Scoping Opinion was issued in August 2025. Issues raised within the Scoping Opinion of relevance to the subjects of landscape and visual amenity are summarised in **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1: Scoping Responses of Relevance to Landscape and Visual Amenity

Consultee	Issue Raised	Action
Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit (ECU) (Scoping Opinion dated 13th August 2025)	Scottish Ministers advise that finalised Viewpoints (VP) and wireframes for the EIAR must be agreed in advance of preparation of any visuals with THC, HES and NatureScot.	VP locations have been determined following review of advice provided through the Scoping process.
	As the maximum blade tip height of turbines exceeds 150m the LVIA must include a robust Nighttime Assessment with agreed viewpoints to consider the effects of aviation lighting and how the chosen lighting mitigates the effects.	An aviation lighting assessment is included in **Technical Appendix 5.11**. Visualisations have been produced from VPs 6, 9 and 12 as agreed with NatureScot through Scoping and are, included in Volume 3a.

Consultee	Issue Raised	Action
The Highland Council (THC) Scoping Report response dated 25 July 2025)	The landscape and visual impacts of the Proposed Development should be assessed separately.	Landscape and visual effects are assessed separately in Section 5.8 and 5.9 of this Chapter.
	Separate volumes of visualisations should be prepared to both THC Standards and NatureScot guidance.	Visualisations produced to the THC 'Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Development' (2016)[3] are included as Volume 3b of this EIA Report. Visualisations produced to the NatureScot (2017) 'Visual Representation of Wind Farms (Version 2.2)[4] are included as Volume 3a of this EIA Report. Technical details of visualisation are included in **Technical Appendix 5.1: Technical Methodologies for Visual Representation**.
	The assessment must include the expected landscape and visual impact of all elements of the development including any on-site BESS, borrow pits, access roads, compounds including substations. All elements of the proposal are to be rendered into photomontages.	All elements of the Proposed Varied Development as outlined in **Chapter 2** have been included in the LVIA, and are shown on photomontages included in **Volume 3a and 3b** where appropriate.
	As far as possible, the viewpoints should correspond with the viewpoints used for the approved scheme and other existing wind energy schemes within the area.	The viewpoints used in this assessment are drawn from those used for the Consented Development. Details of selected viewpoints are included in **Technical Appendix 5.2 – Summary of Scoping Process**.

[3] The Highland Council (2016a). Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments, July 2016.

[4] Scottish Natural Heritage (2017a). Visual Representation of Wind Farms, Guidance, Version 2.2, February 2017.

Consultee	Issue Raised	Action
	The purpose of the selected and agreed viewpoints shall be clearly identified and stated in the supporting information.	The purpose of VPs is detailed in **Technical Appendix 5.2: Summary of Scoping Process.**
	The Study Area will be 45km, given the scale of the turbines. A detailed assessment should be undertaken for the whole Study Area, including for the Cumulative Impact Assessment, which should also include an assessment of sequential effects.	A study area of 40km was agreed with THC for the Consented Development for the landscape, visual and cumulative assessments. As it is considered that any significant effects for the Proposed Varied Development would still occur within the 40km study area, the same study area has been used to allow for consistent comparison as accepted by NatureScot through Scoping.
	The LVIA Chapter of the EIAR should clearly set out the methodology.	The methodology is set out in Section 5.5 of this chapter.
	Given the potential cumulative impact of renewable energy in this area it is expected that the applicant should present images for presentation within the Panoramic Digital Viewer deployed by the Council – see visualisation standards document.	Cumulative wirelines are included within **Volume 3B: Visualisations (The Highland Council)**.
	We expect the Landscape Impact Assessment to refer to the Council's Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance and expect an assessment of the proposal against the criterion set out in the Council's OWESG at pages 19 and 20 to be included within the LVIA chapter of the EIAR.	An appraisal of the 10 criteria set out in the OWESG is presented in **Technical Appendix 5.12: Appraisal of The Highland Council's Criteria for the Consideration of Onshore Wind Proposals**.
	The LVIA should include consideration of the impact of the proposals on the visual	The assessment has considered surrounding settlements and key transport routes. Details of the

Consultee	Issue Raised	Action
	amenity on surrounding settlements and key transport routes in the area, including all core paths and long-distance trails. The assessments should include a sequential assessment of how the development will be experienced in relation to existing and consented wind farms for receptors in motion.	assessment are included in Section 5.9 and **Technical Appendix 5.9: Visual Assessment Tables.**
	We advise that wind energy developments are generally sited within a complex combination of Landscape Character Types. As such, the Landscape Impact Assessment's analysis should not only focus on potential impacts on individual Landscape Character Types and individual Units, but also on the local landscape character composition within which these elements come together to define a particular sense of place.	A summary of potential effects on landscape character overall is included in Section 5.8. Details of the landscape character assessment are included in **Technical Appendix 5.3: Assessment of Landscape Character Types**.
	An assessment of the impacts of the proposal on landscape should assess the impacts on any landscapes designated at a national and local scale. NatureScot's draft guidance on assessing the impacts on Special Landscape Qualities of National Scenic Areas should be followed with NatureScot determining which qualities should be scoped in for detailed assessment once the full list of VPs is finalised. Any assessments of Special Landscape Areas (SLA) must be undertaken using the SLA	The LVIA considers the effects on all nationally and locally designated landscapes as agreed with NatureScot through Scoping and detailed in Section 5.8 and **Technical Appendix 5.4 - 5.6.**

Consultee	Issue Raised	Action
	citations available from the Council's website.	
	As the heights of the proposed turbines are above 150m, aviation lighting is required. THC generally prefers the term 'Hours of Darkness' over 'Night-Time'. Hours of Darkness VPs should be representative of commutes and communities, as well as Wild Land.	An aviation lighting assessment is included in **Technical Appendix 5.11: Landscape and Visual Assessment of Aviation Lighting**. THC's preference for the term Hours of Darkness has been noted. Visualisations have been produced from VPs 6, 9 and 12 as agreed with NatureScot through Scoping and are included in **Volume 3a: Visualisations (Highland Council)**.
	The residential visual amenity impact should be assessed for all properties, settlements, housing groups within 2km of the turbines within the LVIA.	There are no properties which would experience views of the development within 2km of the turbines. A residential visual amenity impact assessment is therefore not required. Potential effects on residential receptor groupings are covered in Section 5.9 and **Technical Appendix 5.9: Visual Assessment Tables**.
NatureScot Scoping Report response dated 14 July 2025)	Viewpoints 18, 19 and 20 should be included in the assessment.	These viewpoints have been included within the visual assessment. Please see **Technical Appendix 5.9: Visual Assessment Tables**, and Section 5.9.
	Viewpoint 12 (Glencassley road by Langwell Hill) should be included in the night-time assessment along with a night-time photomontage from this location, in addition to Viewpoints 6 and 9) as this would be representative of the Reay-Cassley Wild Land Area.	Viewpoint 12 has been included in **Technical Appendix 5.11 – Landscape and Visual Assessment of Turbine Lighting**, and a night-time (hours of darkness) photomontage has been included from this location (See **Figure V3a-8.5**).

Consultee	Issue Raised	Action
	Visual information should contain comparative wirelines to assist with understanding new or intensified effects from the varied development to that of the consented scheme.	Comparative wirelines have been included from the agreed viewpoints, see **Volume 3a – Figure V3a-1.1 – V3a-15.4 and Volume 3b – Figure Figure V3b-1.1 – Figure V3b-15.5**.

5.5. Assessment Methodology

5.5.1. This assessment has been undertaken in accordance with GLVIA3[5]. Detailed LVIA methodology and assessment criteria can be found in the **2021 EIAR, Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual**, Section 7.5.

5.5.2. The respective methodologies for the Wild Land Assessment and the Assessment of National Scenic Areas can be found in **Technical Appendix 5.5** and **Technical Appendix 5.6**. The methodology for the turbine lighting assessment is included in **Technical Appendix 5.11**.

Methodology for Comparison of Landscape and Visual Effects

5.5.3. The comparison of landscape and visual effects identified for the Consented Development and Proposed Varied Development has involved the following considerations:

- Identification and analysis of areas of 'new' visibility / influence which would result from the Proposed Varied Development, through the review of comparative ZTVs (**Figure 5.3**) and comparative wirelines (**Figures V3a-1.3a-b to V3a-15.3a-b and Figure V3b-1.3a-b to Figure V3b-15.3a-b**) from areas of new visibility;
- Identification and analysis of areas of 'notably increased' visibility / influence which would result from the Proposed Varied Development through the review of comparative ZTVs (Figure 5.3) and comparative wirelines (Figures V3a-1.3a-b to V3a-15.3a-b and Figure V3b-1.3a-b to Figure V3b-15.3a-b) alongside baseline photos and findings from the assessments for both development scenarios. This focuses on notable increases to visibility / influence (e.g. more turbines visible, or more tips or hubs visible) rather than just increased visibility;

[5] Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition.

- Identification of new or increased cumulative visibility / influence resulting from the Proposed Varied Development, through the use of cumulative ZTVs (Figures 5.9 to 5.32) and cumulative wirelines (Figures V3a-1.2 to V3a-15.2 and Figure V3b-1.2 to Figure V3b-15.2); and
- Identification of potential for material change in landscape and visual and cumulative landscape and visual assessment conclusions.

Site Appraisal

5.5.4. Site visits were undertaken by Chartered Landscape Professionals in June, July and August 2025, to record any changes within the baseline landscape context. Information gathered during desk studies was verified on-site and further information gathered where appropriate. The site visits fed into the comparative appraisal of visual receptors, landscape designations, protected areas and LCTs.

Assumptions and Limitations

5.5.5. This assessment has been subject to the following assumptions and limitations:

- The Proposed Varied Development comprises an increase in turbine tip height of 200m (including associated increase in hub height) as outlined in **Chapter 2**. It is assumed that the locations of the Proposed Varied Development turbines would be the same as the Consented Development;
- The effects of turbine lighting are considered in a separate assessment which is appended to this report as **Technical Appendix 5.11**. The results of this separate assessment are summarised and given consideration in the conclusions of this chapter;
- This assessment is considered a proportional approach to assessing the proposed variation and sufficient to identify any material changes between the effects of the Consented and Proposed Varied Developments;
- For clarity, the cumulative landscape and visual assessment (CLVIA) has been based on an updated cumulative baseline scenario including all operational and consented wind energy sites and those which are the subject of current applications and appeal procedures or with an active request for a scoping opinion, up to and including 18 July 2025; and
- The assessment is based on original assessments undertaken for the 2021 EIAR and 2022 AIR and data collected at that time, updated by additional site survey and desk study in 2025. Therefore, the viewpoints and landscape areas considered are based on those included in the 2021 EIAR and 2022 AIR.

5.6. Consented Development EIAR Baseline

Pre-consent Landscape and Visual Baseline

5.6.1. For a detailed description of the pre-consent baseline, please refer to the **2021 EIAR, Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual**, Section 7.6 and the **2022 AIR, Chapter 3**.

Post-consent Changes to the Landscape and Visual Baseline

5.6.2. Changes to the baseline of the study area relate mostly to the construction of Creag Riabhach Wind Farm within the northern part of the study area. It is located along the boundary of LCT 234: Sweeping Moorland and Flows and LCT 235: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland. This has increased the presence of wind development within this part of the study area, and reduced some of the remote characteristics of surrounding landscapes by introducing new, large man-made elements. The impact of this change on the landscape character of these LCTs is discussed in more detail within Appendix 5.3: Assessment of Landscape Character Types.

5.6.3. Other changes to the baseline of the study area include changes to vegetation cover. These changes are generally relatively localised and are discussed in the visual assessment where relevant to the receptors being assessed (**See Appendix 5.9: Visual Assessment Tables).**

Updated Cumulative Baseline

5.6.4. The cumulative baseline scenario comprises 52 operational, consented / under construction and proposed (application / appeal / scoping) wind developments, within 60km of the Proposed Varied Development, as illustrated on **Figure 5.9** and detailed in **Appendix 5.7 – Existing and Proposed Wind Turbine Developments** within 60km. This represents the baseline situation as of 18 July 2025.

5.6.5. An initial appraisal of these sites in relation to the Proposed Varied Development suggested that the potential for significant cumulative effects would be most likely to occur in relation to the Proposed Varied Development seen in combination with sites within approximately 40km. Therefore, the assessment has focused on sites within or partly within this area. The sites selected for inclusion are detailed in shown on **Figure 5.10** and listed in **Appendix 5.7**.

5.6.6. The cumulative assessment assesses effects resulting from the potential addition of the Proposed Varied Development to two baseline scenarios:

- Where all operational and consented sites included in the assessment would be in place and operational; and
- Where relevant (and a different cumulative effect is anticipated) where all operational, consented, application/appeal and scoping sites included in the assessment would be in place and operational.

5.7. Summary of Effects Predicted & Mitigation Measures suggested for the Consented Development

Consented Development Assessment of Effects on Landscape Character Types

5.7.1. This section provides a summary of the effects identified for the Consented Development on LCTs, in accordance with the effects criteria outlined in the **2021 EIAR, Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual**, Section 7.5. The detailed assessment of these effects is included in **2021 EIAR Technical Appendix 7.3: Assessment of Landscape Character Types and Areas**.

5.7.2. The assessment of LCTs within the 2021 LVIA considered seven separate LCTs. Of these, most were identified as likely to have effects which would be not significant. Significant effects were identified for two LCTs: LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland; and LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland (localised to the Glen Cassley sub-area). These effects would be localised to parts of the landscape within up to 10km from the Site.

5.7.3. Within LCT 235: Rounded Hills – Caithness and Sutherland, a very localised Major (significant) effect was identified within the immediate confines of the Consented Development at its northern end within Coire Buidhe. A localised **Moderate** (significant) effect was found more widely within the surrounding context up to 8km from the Site, and in very localised areas up to 10km to the west of Glen Cassley. Beyond these areas the effect would range from **Minor** (not significant) to **Minor – Moderate** (not significant) and **Negligible** in areas where there would be little or no intervisibility.

5.7.4. Within LCT 142: Strath – Caithness & Sutherland, a localised **Moderate** (significant) effect was identified in a small area of Glen Cassley between Badintagairt and Glenmuick, where the Consented Development was anticipated to appear noticeable on the south-east skyline. Whilst individual views in the lower parts of the glen may lead to significant visual effects being present, this was not anticipated to lead a significant landscape effect as the presence of the Consented Development was not considered to notably alter the existing key characteristics of the landscape. Therefore, elsewhere in Glen Cassley, the effect on landscape character was considered to be **Minor** (not significant).

5.7.5. Localised **Minor – Moderate** (not significant) effects were found within LCT 134: Sweeping Moorland and Flows within the western sub-area of this LCT which covers a small area of plateau to the east of Ben More Assynt. Localised **Minor – Moderate** (not significant) effects were also found within some parts of LCT 135: Rounded Hills – Caithness and Sutherland beyond around 8 - 10km, near the transition between these two LCTs. A localised **Minor – Moderate** effect was also identified within nearby parts of LCT 139: Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland, at its most south-easterly point around Meall an Aonaich.

5.7.6. **Minor** (not significant) effects were anticipated for:

- LCT 134: Sweeping Moorland and Flows within the eastern sub-area, lying to the north-east of Loch Shin;
- LCT 138: Lone Mountains and LCT 145: Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting (Lairg sub-area) where the Consented Development would form a more distant, less noticeable feature of the surrounding landscapes, usually within a context where wind turbines already form a feature;
- Parts of LCT 139: Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland and LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland lying to the north and north-west in areas beyond 8-10km and up to around 15km at the head of Glen Cassley and around Ben More Assynt; and
- Within LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland, in the lower part of Glen Cassley, the transitional area between Glen Cassley, Strath Oykel and Kyle of Sutherland, and Strath Tirry.

5.7.7. It was considered that all effects within all remaining LCTs or parts of LCTs would be **Negligible**, as it was considered that any potential intervisibility with the Consented Development would lead to no perceptible change to landscape characteristics or scenic quality.

Consented Development Assessment of Effects on Designated and Protected Landscapes

5.7.8. This section provides a summary of the effects identified for the Consented Development on designated and protected landscapes during the construction and operational phases, in accordance with the effects criteria outlined in the **2021 EIAR, Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual**, Section 7.5. The detailed assessment of effects for each designated landscape is provided in **2021 EIAR Technical Appendix 7.4: Assessment of Designated and Protected Landscapes**. The detailed assessment of WLA 34 (Reay – Cassley) is provided in **2021 EIAR Technical Appendix 7.5: WLA 34 Reay – Cassley – Wild Land Assessment**.

Assynt – Coigach National Scenic Area (NSA)

5.7.9. Intervisibility with the Consented Development was found to be extremely localised, affecting a relatively small area of elevated ground and summits, mostly around Ben More Assynt and Braebeg on the eastern edge of the NSA, and locally and more distantly on the more southerly of the Assynt mountains and Ben More Coigach. Within the areas of the Assynt and Coigach mountains theoretically affected, the Consented Development would appear very small within the easterly context, similar to other existing turbines and likely to have an inappreciable effect on the experience of the landscape which is more influenced by the mountains and coastal landscapes to north, south and west.

5.7.10. From the Ben More Assynt area, the Consented Development would appear in the south-easterly context, affecting the expansive easterly views from these areas, although this part of the surrounding context already features wind turbines and forestry areas and comprises a wider setting of a more developed and managed landscape. However, the

reduced distance to wind turbines in the surrounding landscape, would lead to a reduction in the perceived scale of surrounding undeveloped peatlands outwith the NSA. This was considered to lead to limited, localised changes to the Special Qualities: *"Rocky topography of great variety," "A landscape of vast open space and exposure" and "Significant tracts of wild land."* However given the localised nature of these changes, the effect on Special Qualities was considered to be not significant, and overall a **Minor** (not significant) effect was predicted for the Assynt – Coigach NSA.

Wild Land Area (WLA 34): Reay – Cassley

5.7.11. A **Moderate - Major** (significant) effect was identified within a very localised area within the immediate Site and up to around 2km from the Consented Development. A **Moderate** (significant) effect to the strength of wildness was anticipated to extend to around 5-6km from the Consented Development on the east side of Glen Cassley, and up to 8-10km from the Consented Development on the west of Glen Cassley. This would be limited to localised parts of the plateau above the immediate confines of Glen Cassley where the influence of existing contemporary land use is less prevalent. Within the more mountainous core at the head of Glen Cassley, up to a distance of around 15-17km, a **Minor** (not significant) effect on the strength of wildness was anticipated as the Consented Development would normally be seen within a context of existing contemporary land use and human influenced landscapes, having no effect on the context to the north and west where the greater sense of wildness is experienced. Effects in all other areas were identified as **Negligible**.

5.7.12. A potential localised significant effect was anticipated to the WLA Key Quality of "*Extensive, elevated peatland slopes whose simplicity and openness contribute to a perception of awe, whilst highlighting the qualities of adjacent mountains*," mostly limited to within around 2km of the Consented Development, and within some small areas on the upper plateau up to 5-6km to the east of Glen Cassley and 8-10km on the western side.

Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire SLA

5.7.13. A **Minor** effect was identified for the Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire SLA due to localised intervisibility with the Consented Development, anticipated to lead to perceptible but not significant effect on views from summit areas of Ben Klibreck.

Consented Development Visual Assessment

5.7.14. The assessment of potential visual effects considered views from visual receptors at 21 representative Viewpoints (VPs), in residential areas within 20km of the Consented Development, and on transport and recreational routes. Some significant visual effects were identified to views from six Viewpoints (VPs), five Residential Receptor Locations (RRLs) and four Routes (Rs). These were mainly focused around Achnairn and Shinness on the north-east side of Loch Shin, near the confluence of Glen Cassley with Strath Oykel and Kyle of Sutherland and in and around Glen Cassley to the west and north-west of the Consented Development. Effects for visual receptors which have been

scoped into this assessment are summarised below. For visual receptors which have been scoped out of the assessment please see **2021 EIAR Chapter 7 and Technical Appendix 7.9 and 2022 AIR Chapter 3** for details of the assessment of the Consented Development.

Viewpoints

5.7.15. Effects to viewpoints identified within the 2021 assessment are summarised in **Table 5.2**.

Table 5.2: Summary of effects identified to viewpoints within 2021 EIAR

Viewpoint (VP)	Name	Effect identified
VP1	A836 above the Crask Inn	Minor (not significant)
VP2	A836 bridge by Dalnessie entrance	Minor – Moderate (not significant)
VP5	Ben Hee	Minor (not significant)
VP6	Rosehall	Moderate (significant)
VP9	Achnairn caravan and camping site entrance	Moderate (significant)
VP10	Ben More Assynt	Minor – Moderate (not significant)
VP11	Glencassley road to south of Castle	Moderate (significant)
VP12	Glencassley road by Langwell Hill	Moderate (Significant)
VP13	Ben Klibreck	Minor – Moderate (not significant)
VP14	A838 near West Shinness	Moderate (significant)
VP16	Minor road at Inveroykel forest access	Minor – Moderate (not significant)
VP18	Carn Chuinneag	Minor (not significant)
VP19	Seana Bhràigh	Minor (not significant)

Viewpoint (VP)	Name	Effect identified
VP20	Cul Mòr	Negligible (not significant)
VP21	Meall an Aonaich	Moderate (significant)

Residential Receptor Locations

5.7.16. Effects to Residential Receptor Locations (RRLs) scoped into the assessment of the Proposed Varied Development are summarised in **Table 5.3**.

Table 5.3: Summary of effects identified for the Consented Development to Residential Receptor Locations scoped into this assessment

Residential Receptor Location (RRL)	Name	Effect identified
RRL4	Dalmichy	Minor – Moderate (not significant)
RRL6	Achfrish	Minor (not significant)
RRL7	Achnairn (upper)	Moderate (significant)
RRL8	Achnairn (lower)	Moderate (significant)
RRL9	Shinness Lodge and West Shinness	Moderate (significant)
RRL28	Ochtow and Inveroykel Lodge	Moderate (significant)
RRL29	Rosehall village	Moderate (significant)

Routes

5.7.17. Effects to routes scoped into the assessment of the Proposed Varied Development are summarised in **Table 5.4**.

Table 5.4: Summary of effects identified for the Consented Development to routes scoped into this assessment

Route (R)	Name	Effect identified
R4	A838 Dalchork to Corrykinloch	Moderate (significant)

Route (R)	Name	Effect identified
R8	C1136 Ardgay – Culrain – Doune – Brae Road	Minor (not significant)
R9	U2117 Cassley Bridge – Duchally Road	Moderate (significant)
R12	SU21.03: Allt an Tuir Burn Walk	Moderate (significant)
R17	Scottish Hill Track 332	Locally Moderate (significant) for 3km between Loch Sail an Ruathair and Loch Carn nan Conbhairean

Consented Development Cumulative Landscape and Visual Assessment

5.7.18. The CLVIA included in the **2021 EIAR** assessment, considered the addition of **2021 EIAR** Layout to the two cumulative baseline scenarios: operational and consented sites only; and with the addition of application and scoping sites. An initial appraisal of these sites in relation to the **2021 EIAR** Layout suggested that the potential for significant cumulative effects would be most likely to occur in relation to the **2021 EIAR** Layout seen in combination with sites within around 40km. Therefore, the assessment focused on sites within or partly within this area.

5.7.19. The **2022 AIR** concluded that there would be no changes to cumulative effects reported in the **2021 EIAR**. As the Consented Development would continue to have a similar presence within the view from all VPs, it was not considered that there would be any change to how this would be perceived within the cumulative baseline.

Consented Development Cumulative Landscape Assessment

5.7.20. Under both cumulative baseline scenarios, localised significant cumulative landscape effects were identified for two of the LCTs: LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland; and LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland (localised to the Glen Cassley sub-area). These effects would occur across an area, broadly consistent with that identified for the Consented alone. This was largely due to the presence of the operational Rosehall and Achany Wind Farms, located to the south-east of the Site, which would limit the degree of additional effect in the southerly and easterly landscape.

5.7.21. A localised, **Moderate** (Significant effect) was anticipated for WLA 34: Reay – Cassley to one of the four WLA Key Qualities, within localised areas to the east of Glen Cassley and across a few areas of the high plateau to the west of Glen Cassley. The cumulative landscape assessment identified no significant cumulative effects to any other statutory or locally designated landscapes, including the Assynt – Coigach NSA and WLA 37. Fionaven – Ben Hee.

Consented Development Cumulative Visual Assessment

5.7.22. A summary of the significant cumulative effects of the Consented Development on individual visual receptors is outlined in **Table 5.5**.

Table 5.5: Summary of Significant Cumulative Visual Effects Identified for the Consented Development

Receptor Type	Receptor	Effect Identified
Viewpoints (VPs):	VP6 – Rosehall	Moderate (significant)
	VP9 – Achnairn caravan and camping site entrance ,	Moderate (significant)
	VP11 – Glencassley road to south of Castle	Moderate (significant)
	VP12 - Glencassley road by Langwell Hill	Moderate (significant)
	VP14 – A838 near West Shinness	Moderate (significant)
	VP21 – Meall an Aonaich	Moderate (significant)
Residential Receptor Locations (RRLs)	RRL7 – Achnairn (upper)	Moderate (significant)
	RRL8 - Achnairn (lower)	Moderate (significant)
	RRL9 – Shinness Lodge and West Shinness	Moderate (significant)
	RRL28 - Ochtow and Inveroykel Lodge	Moderate (significant)
	RRL29 – Rosehall village	Moderate (significant)
Routes (Rs)	Route R4 – A838 Dalchork to Corrykinloch;	Moderate (significant)
	Route R9 - U2117 Cassley Bridge – Duchally Road	Moderate (significant)
	Route R12 – SU21.03: Allt an Tuir Burn Walk; and	Moderate (significant)
	Route R17 – Scottish Hill Track 332.	Locally Moderate (significant), overall Minor (not significant)

Mitigation

5.7.23. Mitigation for landscape and visual effect for the Consented Development was undertaken through an iterative design process from which the preferred layout evolved. The Proposed Varied Development turbines have remained in the same positions as the Consented Development turbines as this is still considered to be the optimal layout based on the iterative design process. For details regarding the iterative design process and mitigation measures please see detail in the **2021 EIAR: Chapter 7** (section 7.13), **Chapter 2: Site Selection and Design Evolution** and **Technical Appendix 2.1: Design Statement**.

5.8. Revised Assessment of Landscape Effects for the Proposed Varied Development

5.8.1. This section provides a discussion of the potential changes to the effects identified for the included landscape receptors as a result of the Proposed Varied Development from those identified for the Consented Development.

Areas of New and Notably Increased Visibility

5.8.2. The comparative ZTV of the Consented and Proposed Varied Developments (see **Figure 5.3**) indicates that the largest areas of new visibility (areas where only the Proposed Varied Development is visible) would be concentrated to the north and east of the Site on the plateau and along the upper slopes above Loch Shin, particularly on the southern slopes of Cnoc a' Bhaid Bhàin, around Allt Car Beag and Cnoc a' Choire Leacach, as well as from the loch itself. Within these areas visibility would generally consist of smaller numbers of tips and blades visible behind local landform which previously would have screened visibility of the Consented Development. There would also be some areas of new visibility from lower slopes.

5.8.3. There would be some new visibility from some of the slopes and hill summits to the south and south-west of Strath Oykel, around Meallan Odhar, Leabaidh Fhèidh and Cairn Meall a' Chaorainn, although the Proposed Varied Development would be experienced in relatively distant views from these areas.

5.8.4. There would also be some areas of new visibility to the south-east of the Proposed Varied Development within lower Glen Cassley, and at the transition between Glen Cassley, Strath Oykel and the Kyle of Sutherland, and on west-facing slopes above Lairg. However, many of these areas are within woodland or forestry which would limit visibility.

5.8.5. In addition to areas of new visibility, some areas would experience an increase in visibility, with larger numbers of taller turbines visible than for the Consented Development.

Proposed Varied Development Assessment of Effects on Landscape Character Types

5.8.6. This section provides a summary of the effects identified for the Proposed Varied Development on LCTs during the construction and operational phases, in accordance with the effects criteria outlined in the **2021 EIAR, Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual**, Section 7.5. The detailed assessment of effects for each LCT or designated landscape is provided in this EIAR as **Technical Appendix 5.3: Assessment of Landscape Character Types**.

5.8.7. The assessment of the Proposed Varied Development has considered four separate LCTs:

- LCT 134: Sweeping Moorland and Flows;

- LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland;
- LCT 139: Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland; and
- LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland.

5.8.8. Significant effects were identified for two of these LCTs: LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland; and LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland (localised to the Glen Cassley sub-area). Significant effects were previously identified within these areas in the 2021 EIAR and the 2022 AIR. While there would be some increased effects within LCT 134: Sweeping Moorland and Flows and LCT 139: Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland, the effect on these LCTs would continue to be not significant. Effects for the Proposed Varied Development would generally be similar to those of the Consented Development, although the level of effect would increase in some areas as a result of the taller height of the turbines, which would generally make them appear more prominent, and closer in some views, and may in some cases result in higher numbers of hubs or turbine tips appearing in views. However, they would generally continue to be experienced in a context where other wind turbines are already present.

Effects likely to be significant

5.8.9. Within LCT 135, there would be no increase in the effect rating and the extent of the area within which significant effects would be experienced would be broadly similar. However, the area within which significant effects would be **Major** (significant) rather than **Moderate** (significant) is predicted to be slightly larger, increasing from around 2km for the Consented Development, to localised areas up to 3km away. Effects would continue to be most notable within and around the Site itself, where direct effects would be similar to those of the Consented Development.

5.8.10. Indirect effects would be experienced across a similar area to the Consented Development, although the height and increased prominence of the turbines would lead to a slight increase in the influence of wind turbines, particularly across the slopes west of Glen Cassley. The taller turbine towers with hubs and blades higher above the landform may appear to diminish the topographical scale and distance a bit more. The difference would be less noticeable within parts of the LCT to the south where the landscape is more strongly influenced by existing turbines. Within some areas at greater distance the taller turbines would be more likely to appear above intervening landform and may become more of a focus in some views. However, at the distances involved, it is unlikely that this would alter the key characteristics of the LCT in these areas.

5.8.11. Within LCT 142, there would be an increase in effect from locally **Moderate** (significant) to locally **Moderate – Major** (significant), within parts of the upper Glen Cassley, from roughly 1km south of Badintagairt to Glenmuick. The taller turbines would appear more noticeable from upper parts of the glen, likely to further diminish the perceived scale of the hills enclosing the eastern side of the glen, and would form a notable new characteristic within the upper glen. This would also result in a slightly larger area from around 1km south of Badintagairt to Glenmuick (previously reported as between Badintagairt and Glenmuick) being significantly affected. Elsewhere, although the Proposed Varied Development is predicted to appear slightly more prominent, this is not

predicted to be sufficient to lead to higher levels of effect. Within other parts of Glen Cassley it would not affect the sense of enclosure on the west side of the glen, or the connection to the interior, mountainous areas as the strength of these qualities is felt more towards the west and north.

Effects likely to be not significant

5.8.12. Within LCT 134, there would be an increase in effect within the eastern sub-area from **Minor** (not significant) to **Minor – Moderate** (not significant). However, this would not lead to any new significant effects. Although no change in effect is predicted to the western sub-area, where the effect would continue to be **Minor – Moderate** (not significant), the turbines of the Proposed Varied Development would typically appear more prominent than those of the Consented Development in the southern context due to their taller stature. Within the western sub-area and open, southerly parts of the eastern sub-area to the north-east of Loch Shin, the closer proximity of wind turbines is likely to increase the sense of wind farm development, and reduce the sense of remoteness, which is stronger in the western sub-area. However, this would be similar to the effect of the Consented Development. In the eastern sub-area, the presence of Creag Riabhach Wind Farm means that wind turbines are already a notable characteristic of the LCT. The Proposed Varied Development would be more distant and less prominent in these areas though its presence above the southern ridge line may slightly reduce the perceived scale of the LCT.

5.8.13. Within LCT 139, the level of effect would slightly increase with the localised **Minor – Moderate** (not significant) effect within the Ben More Assynt sub-area experienced more widely within the detailed study area. The **Negligible** effect identified for the Freevater – Glencalvie sub-area is predicted to rise to **Minor** (not significant). This would not lead to any new significant effects, and the effect on this LCT would remain not significant.

5.8.14. Within the Ben More Assynt sub-area of LCT 139 the Proposed Varied Development turbines would appear larger than those of the Consented Development. The differing geometry of taller towers with proportionately shorter blades compared to the existing Achany and Rosehall turbines would lead to them appearing noticeably closer and having a greater presence in the nearby landscape context. This is predicted to have a greater influence on areas slightly further into the centre of the LCT such as the summit areas of Braebag and Conival, where the turbines would be seen in the context of the mountainous LCT. They would also appear closer to the outer summit areas such as Ben More Assynt and Meall an Aonaich where they would be seen within the wider and more expansive context beyond the LCT. Although existing features including wind turbines already have some influence on parts of this landscape, the sense of turbines being taller and closer to the LCT is likely to lead to some effect on the sense of wildness.

5.8.15. Within the Freevater-Glencalvie sub-area of LCT 139 the Proposed Varied Development would form a feature within some elevated views and would be somewhat more influential than the Consented Development due to its larger scale which would be more apparent in relation to existing turbines. However, this would affect a relatively small area already influenced by existing nearby swathes of forest plantation and existing wind turbines.

Proposed Varied Development Assessment of Effects on Designated and Protected Landscapes

5.8.16. This section provides a summary of the effects identified for the Proposed Varied Development on designated and protected landscapes during the construction and operational phases, in accordance with the effects criteria outlined in the **2021 EIAR, Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual**, Section 7.5. The detailed assessment of effects for each designated or protected landscape is provided in **Technical Appendix 5.4: Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire Special Landscape Area Assessment** and **Appendix 5.6: Assynt Coigach National Scenic Area – Special Landscape Qualities Assessment**. The detailed assessment of WLA 34 (Reay – Cassley) is provided in **Appendix 5.5: WLA 34 Reay – Cassley – Wild Land Assessment**.

Assynt – Coigach NSA

5.8.17. An assessment of effects on the Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) for the Assynt Coigach NSA following latest guidance from NatureScot[6] was undertaken and is included as **Technical Appendix 5.6: Special Landscape Qualities Assessment**. The assessment concentrated on three SLQs which were identified as experiencing potential effects in the 2021 LVIA:

- Rocky topography of great variety;
- A landscape of vast open space and exposure; and
- Significant tracts of wild land.

5.8.18. **No significant effects** are predicted for any of these SLQs as a result of the Proposed Varied Development.

5.8.19. The assessment determined that the Proposed Varied Development would result in limited **Minor** (not significant) effects to the experience and availability of the SLQs: '*Rocky topography of great variety*'; and '*A landscape of vast open space and exposure*'.

5.8.20. A slightly more noticeable effect is predicted on the SLQ '*Significant tracts of wild land*,' but this is not predicted to be significant. The Proposed Varied Development would appear to bring large scale development closer to the NSA and would reduce the perceived scale of peatland areas which lie outwith the NSA but provide a setting to the east and south-east. This is described further under effects on the WLA 34: Reay – Cassley below. However, the significant effects to the WLA are predicted to occur generally outwith the NSA and the effect on this SLQ within the NSA is therefore predicted to be **Minor – Moderate** (not significant).

[6] NatureScot (2025). Special Landscape Qualities – Guidance on assessing effects. Available at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/special-landscape-qualities-guidance-assessing-effects#special-landscape-qualities-slqs Accessed: August 2025

5.8.21. There would be some significant visual effects within the NSA periphery (see discussion of VP21: Meall an Aonaich and Route 17: Scottish Hill Track 332 below). However, it is not considered that these isolated visual effects would contribute to a significant effect on the landscape qualities of wild land within the NSA due to the very localised nature of the effects. Qualities of wildness would continue to be experienced within the 20km detailed study area, and the NSA as a whole, particularly in relation to landscapes across the NSA itself to north and west where existing baseline wild land qualities are more notable.

WLA 34: Reay – Cassley

5.8.22. A review of the findings of the 2021 Wild Land Assessment for WLA 34 (the 2021 WLA assessment) was undertaken for the Proposed Varied Development (see **Appendix 5.5: WLA 34 Reay – Cassley – Wild Land Assessment**). This included a site visit and desk study to update the wild land baseline and a revised assessment of the effects of the taller turbines on the strength of wildness within the WLA and the Wild Land Qualities (WLQs). The revised assessment has considered the same breakdown of areas as the 2021 WLA assessment, namely the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw (extending to cover the plateau ridges to east and west of Glen Cassley); the Central Core (covering the mountainous areas focussed around Ben More Assynt); and the Northern Arm (comprising areas of extensive cnocan to the north of Ben More Assynt) (**see Appendix 5.5, A5.5 Figures 1 & 2** Map of Relative Wildness (WLA 34)).

5.8.23. The 2021 WLA assessment identified localised significant effects for one of the four identified WLQs for WLA 34:

- WLQ4 – "*Extensive, elevated peatland slopes whose simplicity and openness contribute to a perception of awe, whilst highlighting the qualities of adjacent mountains*."

5.8.24. These effects were predicted to occur within the Eastern Lobster Claw up to around 5-6km from the Site, and within the Western Lobster Claw up to around 8km and locally to 10km from the Site.

5.8.25. The revised assessment has concluded that the taller turbines of the Proposed Varied Development are expected to increase the area of significant effect to within 10 – 12km, affecting localised parts of the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw and the south-eastern Central Core. This slightly increased effect would occur in two different ways:

5.8.26. A localised **Moderate - Major** (significant) effect is predicted within 3km and locally to 5-6km of the Proposed Varied Development turbines where the area would be perceived to be directly influenced by turbines. Within this area the physical attributes and perceptual responses of wild land would be less likely to be experienced and the WLQ would be less likely to be noticeably present. This is the same level of effect as was identified for the Consented Development in the 2021 assessment, but would cover a slightly greater area, increasing from around 2km from turbines.

5.8.27. A localised **Moderate** (significant) effect is predicted within northern areas of the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw and south-eastern Central Core where the taller turbines would appear to reduce the extent of the peatland landscape when seen to the south and south-east. A **Moderate** (significant) effect was also identified in the 2021 WLA assessment across parts of the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw for the same reasons but this was limited to areas within around 8km and locally up to 10km. The taller turbines of the Proposed Varied Development would appear noticeably closer to these areas than those of the Consented Development, and this would lead to this level of effect being experienced within a greater area.

5.8.28. No significant effects are predicted for any of the other WLQs which are more strongly present within the Central Core and Northern Arm. The effects on these WLQs would remain broadly similar to those identified in the 2021 WLA assessment and they would continue to be well expressed within the WLA.

Effects on the WLA as a Whole

5.8.29. The area within which significant effects to WLQ4 are predicted comprises a notable proportion of the open peatland slopes where this WLQ is experienced. The contribution of WLQ4 to the WLA as a whole is therefore predicted to be slightly reduced. However, this WLQ would continue to be strongly expressed in other areas of the Lobster Claw not affected by the Proposed Varied Development. To the north and west of the Proposed Varied Development, there would continue to be a visual connection to the greater extent of wild land to the north-west and the peatland areas would therefore retain their role as a setting and contrast to the mountainous core of the WLA.

5.8.30. Within the closer confines of the Proposed Varied Development where the higher degrees of effects are predicted, the attributes and perceptual responses of wild land would be less likely to be experienced and the WLQs would be less noticeably present. It is reasonable to assume that the WLA would be perceived as reduced in extent in this area, at the south of the Eastern Lobster Claw. However, this comprises a peripheral part of the WLA and one that already has lower strength of wildness than the majority of the WLA. It should also be noted that this comprises part of the area which has already been identified by NatureScot as no longer forming part of the WLA if the consented Sallachy Wind Farm is constructed.[7]

5.8.31. Although a significant effect is predicted beyond the area where the higher levels of effects would be experienced, the physical attributes and perceptual responses which contribute to the WLQ would continue to be experienced and the WLQ would still remain present, particularly in relation to the connection with adjacent mountain areas.

[7] NatureScot (June 2022) Letter to Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit (Ref. CDM166879)

5.8.32. The effects on the majority of the Central Core and Northern Arm, where mapping indicates the greatest strength of wildness to be present (see **Appendix 5.5, A5.5 Figures 3.1-3.2** Wild Land Attribute Mapping (WLA 34))), would not be significant. The areas of highest wildness would be generally unaffected by the Proposed Varied Development and WLQ1, 2 and 3 would continue to be well expressed in these areas with very limited effects.

5.8.33. Therefore, despite a small reduction to the perceived extent of the WLA at its south-eastern point, the WLA would remain a cohesive whole. As all the WLQs would remain present, the slightly reduced extent in an area where the strength of wildness is already less pronounced is not considered to be significant in relation to the WLA as a whole. The effect on the WLA as whole would therefore continue to be **not significant**.

Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire SLA

5.8.34. No change is predicted to the level of effect on the Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire SLA. The addition of the Proposed Varied Development within the south-westerly context, where it would be intervisible with the summit area and parts of the facing slopes of Ben Klibreck, would continue to indirectly affect very localised areas of the SLA. This is likely to lead to some perceptible effects on the appreciation of the Special Qualities of *'Distinctive mountains'* and *'Extensive views from peaks and summits'*, as illustrated on **Figures V3a-9.1 – V3a-9.4** (VP13, Ben Klibreck). However, due to the distance to the Proposed Varied Development as well as the introduction of Creag Riabhach Wind Farm into the close westerly landscape context, it is considered that the larger turbines would not result in any perceptible increase in effect on the sense of remoteness experienced from these localised areas. The overall effect on the SLA would remain **Minor** (not significant) during construction and operation.

5.9. Revised Assessment of Visual Effects for the Proposed Varied Development

5.9.1. This section discusses the findings of the detailed visual assessment undertaken for the Proposed Varied Development. It describes and evaluates the potential change in existing views obtained from residential properties, places of work, routes, popular destinations and strategic vantage points, and the extent to which these would affect residents, visitors and users of the landscape.

5.9.2. Visual amenity relates to the way in which people visually experience their surroundings. The significance of effects will vary, depending on the nature and degree of change experienced and the perceived value and composition of the existing view. For the purposes of this assessment, significant effects are those considered to be Moderate or greater. Individual receptor references relate to those indicated on **Figure 5.8** and/or described in **Technical Appendix 5.9**. Appendix 5.9 provides further detailed information on each receptor and the nature of the predicted effects.

Effects Likely to Increase from the Levels Identified for the Consented Development

5.9.3. Of the fifteen representative VPs, seven residential groupings, and four routes were selected for inclusion within the visual assessment, the majority have been identified as likely to experience similar effects to those identified for the Consented Development with no change to the effect rating. Receptors identified as likely to experience an increased visual effect are discussed below.

Viewpoints

VP6: Rosehall

5.9.4. This VP is representative of views obtained by residents and visitors of Rosehall village and travellers passing through on the A837. The VP has relatively contained views of buildings interspersed with trees and woodland with a backdrop of forest-clad hill slopes with open summits. The existing turbines of Rosehall Wind Farm are prominent in the view to north-east, appearing on the hill summit.

5.9.5. Due to the increased height of the Proposed Varied Development turbines, greater numbers of hubs and tips would be visible on the skyline compared to the Consented Development, also leading to an increased appearance of stacking between some northernmost turbines. The Proposed Varied Development turbines would appear more prominent and would result in a noticeable change to the view from the baseline. The Proposed Varied Development turbines would appear larger in scale compared to existing Rosehall and Achany turbines to the east. Within oblique, northerly views up Glen Cassley, more distant turbines would become more perceptible compared to the Consented Development, though they may be partially filtered or screened by trees in the foreground.

5.9.6. This is predicted to increase the level of effect for VP6 from **Moderate** (significant) for the Consented Development to **Moderate – Major** (significant) for the Proposed Varied Development.

VP9: Achnairn caravan and camping site entrance

5.9.7. This VP is representative of views obtained by residents and visitors (including campers), to this small settlement area and campsite. The VP has elevated views to south-east, down Loch Shin and Achany Glen and south-west across Loch Shin, partially reduced by trees and roadside vegetation. The existing turbines of Achany wind farm are present as blades and hubs on the skyline to the south-west and those of Lairg wind farm are present to the south-east.

5.9.8. The Proposed Varied Development would increase the horizontal extent of the south-westerly view occupied by turbines in comparison with the Consented Development as more blade tips would become visible on the skyline due to the increased turbine height.

This would bring the turbines closer towards the existing Achany turbines. The increased height of the turbines would also lead to these being less contained by the surrounding landform. The increased number of hubs visible above the skyline would also result in stacking being more noticeable. This is predicted to lead to turbines becoming a more noticeable and detracting feature within this locally valued view.

5.9.9. The level of effect for VP9 is predicted to increase from **Moderate** (significant) for the Consented Development to **Moderate – Major** (significant) for the Proposed Varied Development.

VP12: Glencassley road by Langwell Hill

5.9.10. This VP is representative of views obtained by travellers and recreational users of the rural road through Glen Cassley. It has low vantage views, framed by the low valley sides to north and south, up and down the open glen floor. Occasional mid-ground trees, stands of coniferous trees and native woodland on glen slopes interrupt the linear views down the glen. Ben More Assynt forms a particular focus when looking up the glen to the north-west.

5.9.11. Due to the increased height of the Proposed Varied Development turbines, more blade tips and hubs would appear above the more distant skyline of the glen-side, extending the visibility of the Proposed Varied Development further down the glen and partially affecting the open views down the glen. The closer turbines would appear taller and more prominent than the Consented Development turbines and would draw more focus within this part of the view as they would be less contained by the surrounding hills. The increased number of visible turbines would also lead to some increased overlapping between turbines. Overall, the Proposed Varied Development would become a more noticeable feature during both the construction and operational phases.

5.9.12. The effect of VP12 is therefore predicted to increase from **Moderate** (significant) for the Consented Development to **Moderate – Major** (significant) for the Proposed Varied Development.

VP14: A838 near West Shinness

5.9.13. This VP is representative of views obtained by residents and visitors to nearby properties and road users on the A838. It provides slightly elevated views across Loch Shin to the heather-clad ridge line on far side, with forest and woodland on lower slopes. Panoramic views south-east down Loch Shin and west towards Ben More Assynt, slightly filtered by roadside trees are more representative of those perceived by road users. The existing wind turbines of Achany wind farm appear as blades above the skyline to the south-south-west.

5.9.14. The increase in turbine height would result in the Proposed Varied Development appearing more prominent, due to a greater number of hubs and blade tips being visible above the skyline. It would also slightly extend the horizontal spread of the turbines. The Proposed Varied Development would be less contained by the surrounding hills, due to

the turbines sitting higher on the skyline, with some new tips appearing above the hill to the north-west.

5.9.15. The level of effect for VP14 is therefore predicted to increase from **Moderate** (significant) for the Consented Development to **Moderate – Major** (significant) for the Proposed Varied Development.

VP16: Minor road at Inveroykel forest access

5.9.16. This VP is representative of views obtained by travellers on this rural road and from nearby rural properties at Ochtow and Inveroykel. The most open view is to the north although this comprises a passing, side view for travellers. This northerly view is across the valley floor towards the lower reaches of the River Cassley with a backdrop of forest and heather-clad hills. The existing Rosehall and Achany turbines are prominent on the skyline of the enclosing hills in the north-north-east to easterly view.

5.9.17. The increased height of the Proposed Varied Development turbines would result in the turbines appearing taller on the skyline compared to the Consented Development and taller than the existing Achany and Rosehall turbines to the east which may lead to the Proposed Varied Development appearing closer. Although the horizontal spread of turbines within the view would not increase, the Proposed Varied Development would become a more noticeable feature in the view.

5.9.18. This is predicted to lead to the effect for VP16 increasing from **Minor – Moderate** (not significant) for the Consented Development to **Moderate** (significant) for the Proposed Varied Development.

VP20: Cul Mòr

5.9.19. This VP is representative of views obtained by hillwalkers and more general visibility from isolated peaks to the west of the Proposed Development in the Assynt – Coigach NSA. It offers elevated, extensive 360° views across the surrounding landscape. Views are particularly focused to north and west featuring the other Assynt mountains and west coast, and south to the mountains of Coigaich and Torridon. Easterly views are extensive featuring Elphin and Lochs Veyatie, Urigill, Borrain and Cam Loch in the foreground with surrounding forest. The existing Rosehall and Achany wind farms are distant and barely perceptible to east.

5.9.20. The Proposed Varied Development would appear slightly larger than the Consented Development, with some turbine tips appearing above the skyline. The Proposed Varied Development would lead to a more perceptible change in the view in comparison to Consented Development.

5.9.21. This is predicted to lead to the effect for VP20 increasing from **Negligible** (not significant) for the Consented Development to **Minor** (not significant) for the Proposed Varied Development.

Residential Receptor Locations

RRL6: Achfrish

5.9.22. This RRL includes residents and visitors of a small group of properties (including some holiday pods) in a slightly elevated position to the north-east of Loch Shin. The main orientation of the properties is south-east towards Lairg and down Achany Glen. There are some secondary views to the south-west across the loch but these are often obscured by garden vegetation. The existing Achany and Lairg turbines feature in south-easterly and south-westerly views on the skyline.

5.9.23. Due to the increased height of the Proposed Varied Development turbines, they would be less contained by the surrounding topography. More blade tips would be visible to the south, extending towards the existing Achany and Rosehall turbines, and extending the part of the view occupied by wind development. However, views of the turbines would still largely be oblique, and the additional tips visible further south are likely to be barely perceptible. The Proposed Varied Development would result in a more noticeable change than the Consented Development. However, views would still often be screened or filtered by vegetation or outbuildings.

5.9.24. The effect for RRL6 is predicted to increase from **Minor – Moderate** (not significant) for the Consented Development to **Moderate** (significant) for the Proposed Varied Development.

RRL7: Achnairn (upper)

5.9.25. This RRL is representative of residents and visitors of a small group of properties, and a campsite in an elevated position to the north-east of Loch Shin. The grouping generally has elevated views to south-east and south-west. However, these are partially reduced by trees, vegetation and out-buildings for some properties. The existing Achany turbines are present as blades and hubs on the skyline to the south-west, oblique within main views.

5.9.26. Due to the increased height, the Proposed Varied Development turbines would lead to the horizontal spread of turbines being extended and less contained by the surrounding topography. More blade tips would be visible to the south, towards the existing Achany and Rosehall turbines, extending the part of the view occupied by wind development. This more southerly extent would affect a broader portion of the main view across Loch Shin than for the Consented Development. However, it would still be within an oblique section of the open or filtered views. The Proposed Varied Development would result in a more noticeable change to the existing view compared to the Consented Development.

5.9.27. The effect for RRL7 is therefore predicted to increase from **Moderate** (significant) for the Consented Development to **Moderate – Major** (significant) for the Proposed Varied Development.

RRL9: Shinness Lodge and West Shinness

5.9.28. This RRL includes residents and visitors to a group of properties, in an elevated position to the north-west of Loch Shin and at a lower elevation alongside A838 road. The predominant orientation of views is to south-west, elevated across Loch Shin and to the hills on the opposite side. Ben More Assynt forms a focus in views to the west-north-west. The existing Achany turbines are present obliquely in the view to the south-south-west, as blades on the skyline.

5.9.29. Due to the increased turbine height, a greater number of turbine blades and hubs would be visible on the skyline in main views. The taller turbines would be less contained by the surrounding hills, making them more noticeable in the view.

5.9.30. The effect for RRL9 is therefore predicted to increase from **Moderate** (significant) for the Consented Development to **Moderate – Major** (significant) for the Proposed Varied Development.

RRL29: Rosehall Village

5.9.31. This RRL is representative of residents and visitors to the village of Rosehall, set at the confluence of Glen Cassley and Glen Oykel. The properties have varying views, some of which are enclosed by surrounding woodland and buildings. The main orientations of views are south or south-east, across and down Glen Oykel / Kyle of Sutherland and north or north-east across the River Cassley. The existing Rosehall Wind Farm turbines are present on the hill-top to the north-east but are not always visible due to trees and woodland.

5.9.32. The taller turbines of the Proposed Varied Development would result in a greater number of visible hubs and blades on the skyline compared to the Consented Development. As a result, the Proposed Varied Development would appear more noticeable and may also affect areas where turbines were previously filtered or screened.

5.9.33. The effect for RRL29 is predicted to increase from **Moderate** (significant) for the Consented Development to **Moderate – Major** (significant) for the Proposed Varied Development.

Routes

5.9.34. No increase to the level of effect was predicted for any of the routes included in the assessment.

Effects Likely to Remain at the Levels Identified for the Consented Development

5.9.35. The visual assessment has largely focussed on receptors which were anticipated to experience significant effects as a result of the Consented Development. A number of additional receptors which were considered to be particularly susceptible to the

increased height or which were requested by statutory consultees were also included. For the majority of these receptors it is recognised that the Proposed Varied Development would make a noticeable or fairly noticeable, addition to the view compared to the current undeveloped situation. However, when considered in the context of the Consented Development the increased height of the turbines is not predicted to lead to a change to the level of effect previously identified for the remaining VPs and receptor locations not discussed above. In these cases, the scale of the increased height of the turbines, may be perceptible, but would not result in the development crossing the threshold into another rating.

Summary of Effects on Visual Amenity

5.9.36. Predicted effects to visual receptors are summarised in **Table 5.6**. For the purposes of this assessment, effects with a Moderate rating or greater are considered to be significant and are marked in bold in the table below. Receptors that are anticipated to experience an increased effect from that identified for the Consented Development are highlighted in grey.

Table 5.6: Anticipated Effects to Visual Receptors as a Result of the Proposed Varied Development

Receptor	Effect Identified for Consented Development	Effect Identified For Proposed Varied Development
Viewpoints		
VP1 – A836 above the Crask Inn	Minor (not significant)	Minor (not significant)
VP2 – A836 bridge by Dalnessie entrance	Minor – Moderate (not significant)	Minor – Moderate (not significant)
VP5 – Ben Hee	Minor (not significant)	Minor (not significant)
VP6 – Rosehall	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate – Major (significant)**
VP9 – Achnairn caravan and camping site entrance	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate – Major (significant)**
VP10 – Ben More Assynt	Minor – Moderate (not significant)	Minor – Moderate (not significant)
VP11 – Glencassley road to south of Castle	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate – Major (significant)**
VP12 - Glencassley road by Langwell Hill	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate – Major (significant)**

Receptor	Effect Identified for Consented Development	Effect Identified For Proposed Varied Development
VP13 – Ben Klibreck	Minor – Moderate (not significant)	Minor – Moderate (not significant)
VP14 – A838 near West Shinness	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate – Major (significant)**
VP16 – Minor road at Inveroykel forest access	Minor – Moderate (not significant)	**Moderate (significant)**
VP18 – Carn Chuinneag	Minor (not significant)	Minor (not significant)
VP19 – Seana Bhràigh	Minor (not significant)	Minor (not significant)
VP20 – Cul Mòr	Negligible (not significant)	Minor (not significant)
VP21 – Meall an Aonaich	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate (significant)**
Residential Receptors		
RRL4 – Dalmichy	Minor – Moderate (not significant)	Minor – Moderate (not significant)
RRL6 – Achfrish	Minor – Moderate (not significant)	**Moderate (significant)**
RRL7 – Achnairn (upper)	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate – Major (significant)**
RRL8 – Achnairn (lower)	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate (significant)**
RRL9 – Shinness Lodge and West Shinness	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate – Major (significant)**
RRL28 – Ochtow and Inveroykel Lodge	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate (significant)**
RRL29 – Rosehall village	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate – Major (significant)**
Routes		
R4 – A838 Dalchork to Corrykinloch	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate (significant)**

Receptor	Effect Identified for Consented Development	Effect Identified For Proposed Varied Development
R9 – U2117 Cassley Bridge – Duchally Road	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate (significant)**
R12 – SU21.03: Allt an Tuir Burn Walk	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate (significant)**
R17 – Scottish Hill Track 332	Minor Overall Locally **Moderate (significant)** for 3km between Loch Sail an Ruathair and Loch Carn nan Conbhairean	Minor Overall Locally **Moderate (significant)** between Loch Sail an Ruathair and approximately 1km to the north of Loch Carn nan Conbhairean

5.10. Proposed Varied Development Assessment of Cumulative Effects on Landscape Character Types

5.10.1. Cumulative landscape effects may result where a number of wind energy developments combine, increasing the prevalence of wind turbines within a landscape to an extent where they may become a defining characteristic. The likely significance of these effects relates to the number of wind developments affecting the landscape, their scale, the inter-relationship between their respective visual envelopes and the sensitivity and capacity of the particular landscape to accommodate this type of development.

5.10.2. The methodology for the cumulative landscape assessment is based on that described in NatureScot guidance: Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy proposed development (SNH, 2012). For a detailed description of the methodology please see the **2021 EIAR, Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual Amenity**, Section 7.8.

Cumulative Baseline Scenario

5.10.3. The cumulative baseline scenario comprises 54 operational, consented / under construction and proposed (application / appeal / scoping) wind developments, within 60km of the Proposed Varied Development, as illustrated on **Figure 5.9: Cumulative Sites Within 60km** and detailed in **Technical Appendix 5.7: Existing and Proposed Wind Energy Developments within 60km**. This represents the baseline situation as of 18 July 2025.

5.10.4. An initial appraisal of these sites in relation to the Proposed Varied Development suggested that the potential for significant cumulative effects would be most likely to occur in relation to the Proposed Varied Development seen in combination with sites within around 40km. Therefore, the assessment has focused on sites within or partly

within this area. The sites selected for inclusion are detailed in **Appendix 5.7** and shown on **Figure 5.10: Cumulative Sites Included in the Assessment**.

Analysis of the Cumulative ZTV

5.10.5. Cumulative ZTVs showing the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Varied Development and those of the cumulative baseline wind developments have been produced to identify areas of combined and sequential visibility (see **Figures 5.11 – 5.33**). These demonstrate that the cumulative baseline scenario is one of relatively widespread visibility of wind turbines within central, southern and eastern parts of the wider study area, but that theoretical intervisibility with wind turbines is relatively sparse across western parts of the study area, particularly when only operational sites are considered.

5.10.6. When consented sites are added to this, intervisibility with wind turbines would increase slightly within some central and eastern areas. Greater influence of wind farm development within the eastern part of the study area is mainly attributable to Garvary and Lairg 2 and Chleansaid Wind Farms, while increased intervisibility within the northern and central areas is attributable to Sallachy and Strath Tirry, with Meall Buide also being influential within the central area.

5.10.7. The addition of application / appeal and scoping sites would extend visibility further to the west and add a further concentration of intervisibility through central and south-eastern areas with fewer areas in these parts of the study area that are not affected by some degree of wind farm development. The combination of application / appeal and scoping sites including Allt an Tuir, Coille Beith, Strath Oykel, Invercassley and Inveroykel would contribute to intervisibility within the western and central parts of the study area, while Beinn Tharsuinn Repower and Western Extension, Novar Repowering, Ceislein and Creachan would increase intervisibility to the south and south-east.

5.10.8. The cumulative baseline sites can be largely grouped into six distinct clusters as follows:

- Lairg grouping: Operational sites, Achany, Rosehall and Lairg, the consented Lairg 2 Redesign and Garvary, as well as the Acheilidh and Balblair application sites all located on hills surrounding the village of Lairg and nearby Achany Glen. All these sites tend to have intervisibility focussed within the central part of the wider study area and mainly within the detailed study area though some hills to the east and isolated summits to the north and west are also shown to be intervisible to some degree;
- Strath Brora Grouping: The operational sites of Gordonbush (plus extension) and Kilbraur (plus extension), along with the Pollie Hill scoping site. The ZTV indicates that intervisibility with these sites would be principally focussed within the eastern half of the wider study area with some of the higher ridges towards the central parts of the study area also obtaining more distant theoretical intervisibility;
- Beinn Tharsuinn Grouping: Comprising the operational sites of Beinn Tharsuinn, Beinn nan Oighrean, Coire na Cloiche and Novar (plus extension) and the Beinn Tharsuinn Repower and Extension, Novar Repowering,

Ceislein and Creachan scoping sites, the Abhainn Dubh application site and the consented Strathrory. These sites show intervisibility mostly focussed around the south-east of the wider study area, covering the flats around the Cromarty Firth and high ground and hills to the north and to some extent, the west. However, distant intervisibility is also shown to extend through Achany Glen and Lairg to an area to the east of Loch Shin;

- Lochluichart Cluster: A distinct cluster of turbines including the operational sites of Lochluichart (plus extension) and Corriemoillie with the consented Lochluichart Extension 2 Redesign and Kirkan. Intervisibility of these sites is very much focussed on the southern fringe of the wider study area with very limited combined intervisibility shown with the Proposed Varied Development;
- Northern Site: The operational Creag Riabhach and consented Creag Riabhach Extension, and the consented Strath Tirry, Chleansiad and Sallachy, as well as the Coille Linne and Shinness application sites create a disparate grouping to the north of the Proposed Varied Development. These sites show a more variable and changing picture of intervisibility focussed across the landscapes to the north and south of Loch Shin with some intervisibility through the western hills; and
- Strath Oykel Cluster: A cluster of turbines including the consented Meall Buidhe, the application sites of Allt an Tuir, Strath Oykel and Coille Beith, and the scoping sites of Invercassley, Inveroykel and Braelangwell, on the hills surrounding Strath Oykel. These sites show extensive intervisibility within the detailed study area, on the hills surrounding Strath Oykel and Glen Cassley, and to the north of Loch Shin, with some intervisibility with summits and ridges to the west, east and north, and around Dornoch Firth.

5.10.9. The detailed cumulative assessment of LCTs and protected and designated landscapes is presented in **Technical Appendix 5.8: Cumulative Landscape Assessment Tables**. The following section provides a summary of the results and key issues highlighted by the assessment.

Effects Likely to be Significant

5.10.10. Potential localised significant effects were identified for two of the LCTs: LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland; and LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland (localised to the Glen Cassley sub-area). These effects would occur across an area, broadly consistent with that identified for the Proposed Varied Development alone.

<u>LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland</u>

5.10.11. The Proposed Varied Development would be located within this LCT and would therefore lead to an increase in wind farm development within the LCT. However, the majority of areas potentially affected would already be influenced by the operational and consented turbines of Achany, Rosehall and Sallachy, the Lairg / Garvary cluster sites to the east and Meall Buidhe to the south which would lead to wind turbines being intervisible to

some extent across almost all parts of the LCT. Cumulative sensitivity to change is considered to be High in areas where wild land characteristics predominate and locally around Lairg and Strath Oykel where the baseline scenario of consented, application and scoping sites would lead to a notable focus of development.

5.10.12. The Proposed Varied Development would have both direct and indirect effects on the LCT. It would lead to an increase in wind turbine development within the LCT, drawing development further north into the interior of the rounded hills between Glen Cassley and Loch Shin. The majority of areas potentially affected would be already influenced by the operational and consented turbines of Achany, Rosehall and Sallachy, the Lairg / Garvary cluster sites to the east and Meall Buidhe to the south which would lead to wind turbines being intervisible to some extent across almost all parts of the LCT. However, there would be an increased direct influence of wind turbines within and around the Site, and the increased presence of wind turbines at closer proximity would be noticeable across areas to the west and north-west around Glen Cassley in combination with Sallachy which may affect qualities of remoteness.

5.10.13. The addition of Application / Scoping sites would further increase the baseline influence of wind farm development across this LCT, particularly Coille Linne and Shinness which would increase the influence of Sallachy on the northern parts of this LCT above Loch Shin. Allt an Tuir and Invercassley would strongly influence areas around Glen Cassley in addition to the collection of sites to the south of Strath Oykel. This would result in a situation where turbines were already a common feature associated with this LCT. The Proposed Varied Development would lead to a more direct presence of wind turbines within the local area around the site and would further contribute to wind turbines as a characteristic of this LCT. It would slightly reduce the extent of undeveloped peatland hills which provides a setting to the mountainous area of Ben More Assynt and may locally reduce a sense of remoteness but in the context of all the cumulative baseline sites, it would not add to the characteristic of wind turbines as a feature of the landscape, because this LCT would already be strongly defined by wind turbines.

5.10.14. Magnitude of change is anticipated to be Medium within the area surrounding the Proposed Development to the north and west, up to 6-8km, and Low with the addition of application and scoping sites. The resultant cumulative effect is anticipated to be locally **Moderate** (significant) to the east and west of Glencassley, up to 6-8km considering Operational and Consented sites, and **Minor** (not significant) considering all cumulative baseline sites.

LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland (Glen Cassley sub-area)

5.10.15. The baseline cumulative sites would have considerable influence on the setting of the straths, with turbines frequently seen sited on the surrounding and enclosing hills, resulting in wind farm development being a notable characteristic of the enclosing hills in most areas. Cumulative sensitivity to change is considered to be Medium for the operational and consented baseline, and High considering all cumulative baseline sites.

5.10.16. In Glen Cassley, the Proposed Varied Development turbines would appear on the eastern glen side of a section from roughly 1km south of Badintagairt to Glenmuick and a small area south of Glencassley Castle and would generally influence western glen-side areas. Whilst there is some limited influence of Rosehall and would also be some influence from the consented site of Meall Buidhe the effect of the Proposed Development would be more immediate on the glen areas and would affect areas not already influenced by wind farm development. This would lead to increased sequential effect from wind turbines when moving through the glen although, because of the relatively limited effect from other sites on Glen Cassley, cumulative effects would be experienced more sequentially when moving from Glen Oykel / Kyle of Sutherland, into Glen Cassley.

5.10.17. With the inclusion of scoping / application sites, Invercassley and Allt an Tuir would become very influential within Glencassley, particularly from the lower parts of the glen, on the western glen-side. Braelangwell and Inveroykel would also become a noticeable feature on the southern skyline particularly from the lower parts of the glen. The addition of the Proposed Varied Development would not add a new characteristic in this scenario but would lead to an increased surrounding effect as it would introduce turbines at similar prominence on the eastern side of the glen, increasing the impression of wind turbines as a prominent feature when travelling through the glen.

5.10.18. Magnitude of change is anticipated to be Medium for the Glen Cassley sub-area. The resultant cumulative effect would be **Minor** (not significant) overall, and locally **Moderate** (significant) for Glen Cassley. This level of effect is anticipated to be consistent for both cumulative baseline scenarios (operational and consented sites only, and all cumulative baseline sites).

Effects Likely to be Not Significant

5.10.19. A **Minor – Moderate** (not significant) cumulative landscape effect was identified within LCT 134: Sweeping Moorland and Flows within the western sub-area for both baseline scenarios. Within this area, the Proposed Varied Development would appear in combination with Achany and Rosehall, but would be noticeably closer, thereby having greater influence on the character of this area. Sallachy would also be seen at closer proximity in the eastern context from some areas although the Proposed Varied Development would still appear to draw wind turbines slightly closer in the southern context, increasing the influence of turbines as feature in the surrounding context. However, it would only affect part of the LCT and would be seen in a context where wind turbines already form a feature of the landscape.

5.10.20. Within the eastern sub-area, a **Minor** (not significant) effect was identified for the baseline scenario considering operational and consented sites. The addition of the Proposed Varied Development would lead to a perceptible increase in turbines within the context of this northern area, but would not lead to a noticeable increase in turbines as a characteristic of the landscape. With the addition of application and scoping sites to the cumulative baseline, this would reduce to **Negligible**, as the Proposed Varied Development would be experienced as part of a large cluster of sites to the south including Invercassley, Strath Oykel and Braelangwell. Under this scenario, the addition

of the Proposed Varied Development is unlikely to increase the influence of wind turbines on this sub-area.

5.10.21. A **Minor** (not significant) cumulative effect was also identified for LCT 139: Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland for all baseline scenarios, as it is considered that while the Proposed Varied Development would appear to bring wind turbines closer to this LCT and contribute to a reduced perception of distance between the mountains and the developed landscape, it would not lead to turbines being perceived as a new feature within the context where wind turbines are widely influential within the landscape context to the east and south.

5.10.22. **Minor** (not significant) effects were identified within LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland to the Strath Oykel and Kyle of Sutherland and Strath Tirry sub-areas. From Strath Tirry, the Proposed Varied Development may contribute to a greater influence of turbines affecting the wider context of the LCT and a partial surrounding, particularly if application and scoping sites were also constructed. However, in this scenario, wind turbines would already be a strong characteristic of this LCT, particularly as a result of the Shinness wind farm to the west.

5.10.23. For the majority of Strath Oykel and Kyle of Sutherland the Proposed Varied Development would be seen to the rear of or, subsidiary to the operational Achany and Rosehall Wind Farms. The addition of application and scoping sites which would increase the influence of wind turbines in this area would further reduce the cumulative effect of the Proposed Varied Development. From a small area around the confluence of Strath Oykel and Kyle of Sutherland with Glen Cassley the Proposed Varied Development would lead to increased numbers of turbines being visible, as it would appear as a separate cluster from the cumulative baseline turbines, and may be seen to draw wind development further into the interior landscape to the north but this would be relatively localised in an area where turbines would already be very noticeable.

5.11. Proposed Varied Development Assessment of Cumulative Effects on Designated and Protected Landscapes

5.11.1. Three designated or protected landscapes were identified for inclusion in the cumulative assessment (see Technical Appendix 5.2: Summary of Scoping Process). Cumulative effects to these areas are discussed in the following paragraphs with an emphasis on potential significant effects.

Assynt – Coigach NSA

5.11.2. For the NSA as a whole, the cumulative effect is anticipated to be **Minor** (not significant) for both baseline scenarios. The Proposed Varied Development would appear to bring wind turbines closer, although Sallachy would appear at similar distance to the east. This would potentially affect wild characteristics as, combined with Sallachy, it may contribute to a reduced perception of distance between the mountains and the developed landscape. However, it would not lead to turbines being perceived as a new feature within the context where operational and consented sites would already be influential.

With the addition of all application and scoping sites, the additional influence of the Proposed Varied Development would be less notable. Although it would add further to the appearance of wind farm development at closer proximity and would contribute to this effect, its addition would be unlikely to increase the level of effect or reduce the perception of remoteness to a greater degree than would already occur with the baseline sites.

5.11.3. A localised **Minor – Moderate** (not significant) effect is anticipated to the NSA for the SLQ "significant tracts of wild land" considering only operational and consented sites. The Proposed Varied Development would add some localised areas of additional intervisibility of wind turbines to this baseline scenario, and would appear somewhat closer in the south-easterly context than other developments, although at similar in distance to Sallachy to the east. This would slightly reduce the perceived extent of undeveloped peatland areas which provide the setting on this side of the NSA, reducing the sense of remoteness from this type of large scale development, although wild characteristics would remain generally present to a similar degree. The addition of the application and scoping sites would further limit the sense of remoteness more widely around the eastern and south-eastern sides of the NSA. The Proposed Varied Development would contribute to this effect but would be less noticeable in this context where large numbers of turbines at similar proximity would already be present.

5.11.4. A **Minor** (not significant) effect is anticipated for all included SLQs with the addition of application and scoping sites.

WLA 34. Reay – Cassley

5.11.5. The Proposed Varied Development would be located in the south-eastern tip of the WLA and would directly affect this area, as well as indirectly affecting a wider area to the east and west of Glen Cassley, approaching the lower south-easterly facing slopes of the mountain core. Considering the operational and consented cumulative baseline scenario, Sallachy Wind Farm in particular would reduce baseline strength of wildness in some of the areas to the east and west of Glen Cassley, as it would directly affect the eastern part of this area and have indirect effects on east facing slopes of the mountains. Review of the cumulative ZTV for the Proposed Varied Development with Sallachy (Figure 5.29) shows that to the east of Glen Cassley, intervisibility of the two sites is quite distinct, whilst to the west of Glen Cassley, both sites would be intervisible from similar areas. This suggests that the Proposed Varied Development would be less influential on the physical attributes 'Lack of Construction or Other Artefacts' and 'Evidence of Contemporary Land Use' to the west of Glen Cassley, but may increase the area where these attributes would be reduced to the east of Glen Cassley. The position of Sallachy within the WLA may also increase the sense of detachment between the plateaux area to the east of Glen Cassley and the mountain areas around Ben More Assynt and Beinn Leòid where the greater core of the WLA is perceived. This would lead to a less notable contribution of the area, where the Proposed Varied Development would be located to the WLA as a whole.

5.11.6. The Proposed Varied Development would usually be seen within the established context of operational and consented sites including Achany, Rosehall and those in the Lairg /

Garvary cluster, but would directly affect part of the WLA and from other areas would appear noticeably closer than these sites leading to a more immediate influence of wind turbines in the south-east of the WLA. On the higher slopes and summits around Ben More Assynt, the Proposed Varied Development would appear further away within the south-eastern context, though closer than the cluster of operational and consented sites. When combined with Sallachy, this would have the effect of further reducing the perceived extent of the surrounding peatland context, with the effect being most notable across the plateau area to the west of Glen Cassley, and south-east and east facing slopes around the most southerly part of the mountain area. However, when moving further north, the effect on strength of wildness would diminish as the Sallachy Wind Farm would be more noticeable in the baseline.

5.11.7. With the inclusion of all cumulative baseline sites, the strength of baseline wild land attributes would be further reduced across southern and eastern parts of the WLA, particularly in relation to Allt and Tuir (application) and Invercassley (scoping) which would be located within the WLA to the west of Glen Cassley, but also in relation to the extensive grouping of sites to the south of Strath Oykel and those to the east of Loch Shin. This would create a partial encircling of the WLA to the south and east and would mean that in the majority of areas, the strength of wildness would be less influenced by the Proposed Varied Development, as wind development would already be an established feature of the context. The area directly affected by the Proposed Varied Development and those areas where the greatest degree of indirect effect would occur would be more noticeably influenced by sites such as Allt an Tuir and Invercassley and would less strongly exhibit the attributes of wild land. The effects of the Proposed Varied Development on the strength of wildness within these parts of the WLA would therefore be much less notable. Nevertheless, it would still contribute to an effect whereby the areas of open peatland which provide the context to the more mountainous core would be perceived as reduced in extent, particularly when viewed from the south-easterly edges of the mountain core.

5.11.8. A **Moderate** (significant) effect is anticipated across the plateau ridge to the east of Glen Cassley and locally across a few high plateau areas to the west of Glen Cassley, up to 10-12km where Sallachy would be less noticeable affecting WLQ4: “Extensive, elevated peatland slopes whose simplicity and openness contribute to a perception of awe, whilst highlighting the qualities of adjacent mountains”), for a cumulative baseline scenario including operational and consented sites. A **Minor** (not significant) effect is anticipated across mountain core areas around Ben More Assynt, Meall an Aonaich, Breabag and Ben Leòid affecting the WLQ1: “A range of large, irregular, rocky mountains with steep, arresting slopes and a variety of lochs and lochans, possessing a strong sense of naturalness, remoteness and sanctuary”. Considering a scenario including all cumulative baseline sites, the effect is considered to be **Minor** (not significant) for both WLQ1 and WLQ4.

5.11.9. The vast majority of the WLA would remain unaffected by any wind farm sites. For both cumulative baseline scenarios, the direct effect of the Proposed Varied Development would result in a small part of the southern tip of the WLA where some of the physical and perceptual attributes of wild land may be less likely to be experienced. However, this part of the WLA would already be somewhat detached from the main body, due to the

presence of Sallachy, and the significance of this in the context of the WLA as a whole would therefore be less notable. When considering operational and consented schemes only, the effect on the WLA as a whole would be similar to that for the Proposed Varied Development in isolation. Although significant effects predicted to WLQ4 would affect a relatively large proportion of the area within which this WLQ is experienced, beyond the close confines of the Site all of the physical attributes and perceptual qualities which contribute to this WLQ would remain present, due to the continued association with the main body of the WLA to the north and west. However, it would be reduced in its strength which would slightly reduce its contribution to the WLA as a whole.

5.11.10. For a cumulative baseline scenario considering the addition of application and scoping sites, the greater level of effect on this WLQ would generally have already occurred in relation to the other sites and the additional contribution of the Proposed Varied Development would be relatively small by comparison. In itself, it would not lead to a significant cumulative effect. Whilst WLQ4 would be likely to be reduced in strength and presence, this would be substantially caused by the other baseline sites and the contribution of the Proposed Varied Development to this effect would be small.

5.11.11. The additional effects of the Proposed Varied Development under both cumulative baseline scenarios is therefore not predicted to lead to a significant effect on the WLA as a whole.

Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire SLA

5.11.12. A **Minor** (not significant) effect is anticipated to the SLA considering operational and consented sites only, as the Proposed Varied Development would be located in the south-western context but intervisibility would be limited to relatively small areas on facing slopes and summits of the mountains. It would almost always be seen within a context of other consented or operational sites being slightly closer than the Achany – Rosehall cluster which lies closest to it but further than other sites such as Chleansaid. It would form part of an established southern context where clusters of wind turbines are seen at spaced intervals and would be unlikely to noticeably change this scenario. A greater effect would experienced from the Sallachy and Creag Riabhach Wind Farms in the western context.

5.11.13. With the addition of application and scoping sites to the baseline, the effect is anticipated to be **Negligible**, as the Proposed Varied Development would become part of a much more consistent larger cluster stretching across the southern and south-western context. Under this scenario it would form a barely perceptible change to the context where turbines would be a common characteristic within the wider landscape to the south, south-west and south-east of the SLA.

5.11.14. The effects described above may result in a small degree of change to the Special Quality “Extensive views from peaks and summits,” under the scenario of operational and consented sites only. However, within this scenario, clusters of wind turbines would already be a strongly established feature of these extensive views and the Proposed Varied Development would not add a new characteristic to this scenario. With the

inclusion of application and scoping sites, it would form a barely noticeable change to these views and for both scenarios, these extensive views would remain present and a notable feature of the SLA.

5.12. Proposed Varied Development Assessment of Cumulative Effects on Visual Receptors

5.12.1. The cumulative baseline scenario is described in **Technical Appendix 5.7: Existing and Proposed Wind Energy Developments within 60km** and section 5.10 of the cumulative landscape assessment. The cumulative assessment assesses effects resulting from the potential addition of the Proposed Varied Development to two baseline scenarios:

- Where all operational and consented sites included in the assessment would be in place and operational; and
- Where relevant (and a different cumulative effect is anticipated) where all operational, consented, application/appeal and scoping sites included in the assessment would be in place and operational.

5.12.2. The cumulative visual assessment has considered VP and route receptor locations where potential for cumulative effects has been identified.

Viewpoints

5.12.3. Fifteen VPs within the wider study area have been identified for inclusion in the cumulative visual assessment as detailed in **Technical Appendix 5.10: Cumulative Visual Assessment Tables**. These have been selected through analysis of the cumulative ZTVs (see paragraph 5.10.5) and review of the outcome of the visual assessment of the Proposed Varied Development. The assessment has been limited to those VPs where the cumulative ZTV indicates that the Proposed Varied Development would have combined visibility with another cumulative baseline site. The cumulative visual assessment excludes those VPs where a Negligible effect was.

5.12.4. The following VPs have been included:

- VP1: A836 above the Crask Inn (see Figure V3a – 1.2); Minor
- VP2: A836 bridge by Dalnessie entrance (see Figure V3a – 2.2); Minor
- VP5: Ben Hee (see Figure V3a – 3.2); Minor
- VP6: Rosehall (see Figure V3a – 4.2); **Moderate**
- VP9: Achnairn caravan and camping site entrance (see Figure V3a – 5.2); **Moderate**
- VP10: Ben More Assynt (see Figure V3a – 6.2); Minor-Mod and Minor
- VP11: Glencassley road to south of Castle (see Figure V3a – 7.2); **Moderate**
- VP12: Glencassley road by Langwell Hill (see Figure V3a – 8.2); Minor-Mod
- VP13: Ben Klibreck (see Figure V3a – 9.2); Minor
- VP14: A838 near West Shinness (see Figure V3a – 10.2); **Moderate**

- VP16: Minor road at Inveroykel forest access (see Figure V3a – 11.2); **Moderate**
- VP18: Carn Chuinneag (see Figure V3a – 12.2); Minor
- VP19: Seana Bhràigh (see Figure V3a – 13.2); Minor
- VP20: Cul Mòr (see Figure V3a – 14.2); and Minor
- VP21: Meall an Aonaich (see Figure V3a – 15.2). Moderate reducing to Minor

Routes

5.12.5. Four routes within the wider study area where there is potential for views of the Proposed Varied Development and at least one other wind development have been identified and assessed for sequential cumulative effects. As for VPs, only those routes identified as having a minor effect or greater in the main visual assessment have been included in the cumulative assessment for the Proposed Varied Development.

5.12.6. The following routes have been included:

- R4: A838 Dalchork to Corrykinloch;
- R9: U2117 Cassley Bridge – Duchally Road;
- R12: SU21.03: Allt an Tuir Burn Walk; and
- R17: Scottish Hill Track 332.

5.12.7. The detailed cumulative assessment of VPs and routes is presented in **Technical Appendix 5.10: Cumulative Visual Assessment Tables**. The following section provides a summary of the results and key issues highlighted by the assessment, focussing on potential significant effects.

Proposed Varied Development Cumulative Visual Effects Evaluation

Effects Likely to be Significant

5.12.8. When considered in relation to the cumulative baseline scenario, the addition of the Proposed Varied Development is anticipated to result in a significant cumulative visual effect to six of the fifteen VPs and three of the four of the routes included in the assessment for one or both cumulative baseline scenarios as follows:

- VP6 – Rosehall;
- VP9 – Achnairn caravan and camping site entrance;
- VP11 – Glencassley road to south of Castle;
- VP14 – A838 near West Shinness;
- VP16 – Minor road at Inveroykel forest access; and
- VP21 – Meall an Aonaich.
- Route R4 – A838 Dalchork to Corrykinloch;
- Route R12 – SU21.03: Allt an Tuir Burn Walk; and
- Route R17 – Scottish Hill Track 332.

VP6 – Rosehall

5.12.9. Under both cumulative baseline scenarios, the operational turbines of Rosehall Wind Farm are very noticeable in the view to the north-east, appearing on the hill summit with tips and blades of Achany Wind Farm to their rear, largely concealed by forest. Meall Buidhe Wind Farm would also be seen in views to the south. When application and scoping sites are taken into consideration, Strath Oykel and Inveroykel would appear prominently in views to the south although mature trees may screen some of the turbines. Coille Beith would be located in a dip between the hills to the west, although it would likely be screened by an intervening farm building. Allt an Tuir and Invercassley would sit prominently on the western hills overlooking Glen Cassley. Cumulative sensitivity is considered to be Medium.

5.12.10. The turbines of the Proposed Varied Development would appear on the skyline, slightly oblique to the main focus of the view as blades and hubs with more northern parts of the Proposed Varied Development appearing further oblique to the main view up Glen Cassley to the north, though filtered or screened by trees. While the turbine positions remain unchanged, the increased height of the Proposed Varied Development turbines would result in them appearing similar in scale to the Allt an Tuir and Inveroykel turbines but larger than the Rosehall turbines. When seen in combination with Allt an Tuir and Inveroykel, the Proposed Varied Development would increase the sense of Glen Cassley being overlooked by wind turbines although this would be a view in which turbines are already present. The magnitude of change is anticipated to be Medium and the cumulative effect would be **Moderate** (significant) for both baseline scenarios.

VP9 – Achnairn caravan and camping site entrance

5.12.11. Existing views represented by this VP are south-east, down Loch Shin and Achany Glen and south-west across Loch Shin, partially reduced by trees and roadside vegetation. The operational and consented baseline would involve Achany Wind Farm present as blades and hubs on the skyline to the south-west, in the framed view down Loch Shin to the south with other distant sites beyond. Garvary, Lairg and Lairg 2 Redesign would from a cluster to the south-east. Strath Tirry and Chleansaid would be to the north-east and Sallachy to the north-west, although some of these sites would usually be screened or filtered by buildings and woodland when moving around the VP. The addition of application and scoping sites would lead to increased presence of baseline sites with Acheildih and Balblair combining with the Lairg sites to form a larger cluster and Invercassley, Inveroykel and Braelangwell increasing the spread of turbines in views westward. Some tips of Shinness may be seen to the north of viewpoint, however, they are likely to be screened by the foreground residential property and vegetation. The large number of cumulative sites is considered to give a cumulative sensitivity of Low – Medium.

5.12.12. The Proposed Varied Development would be seen to the west-south-west, generally slightly oblique within the main orientation of the view with blades and hubs of turbines appearing in a low point on the skyline between two hills with a few additional tips extending the spread to the south-east. The turbines would extend the field of view occupied by wind turbines and would lead to a greater effect on the main, south-west

aspect of the view and considering the full range of cumulative sites, particularly the large cluster located to the south-east, increasing the sense of encirclement. The cumulative magnitude of change is anticipated to be Medium and the cumulative effect would be **Moderate** for both baseline scenarios.

VP11 – Glencassley road to south of Castle

5.12.13. Views from this VP are from low vantage views, framed along Glen Cassley by the valley sides to north and south, but filtered / screened by riverside trees to the north. The operational and consented cumulative baseline scenario would feature only a few tips and one turbine of the Rosehall Wind Farm above the glen-side to the south-east. When application and scoping sites are considered Allt an Tuir and Invercassley would appear prominent and close on the western side of Glen Cassley, stretching development to north-west direction. Inveroykel and Braelangwell would sit to the south beyond Rosehall framed by the glen. The cumulative sensitivity is considered to be Medium, as existing turbines are visible and the proposed area of change is a less important part of the view.

5.12.14. The Proposed Varied Development would appear above the easterly glen-side. It would appear larger than the operational Rosehall turbines and would therefore increase the prominence of turbines as a feature in this part of the view. They would appear similar to the Invercassley and Allt an Tuir turbines on the western side of the glen. The Proposed Varied Development would increase sense of enclosure around the glen however, it would not detract from the main, funnelled views down the glen which would feature Inveroykel and Braelangwell. The increased prominence of wind turbines is anticipated to lead to Medium – High cumulative magnitude of change and a **Moderate** (significant) cumulative effect for both baseline scenarios.

VP14 – A838 near West Shinness

5.12.15. This VP, representative of residents and road users has a main orientation across Loch Shin and more panoramic views up and down Loch Shin, more representative of road users. The operational and consented baseline scenario would lead to existing wind turbines of Achany Wind Farm appearing as blades above the skyline to the south-south-west with Garvary, Lairg and Lairg 2 redesign, theoretically visible in west-south-westerly views, although predominantly filtered or hidden by trees from the VP. The addition of application and scoping sites would result in Balblair and Acheilidh increasing the size of the Lairg cluster, leading to it appearing more visible in the south-westerly view along Loch Shin. Sallachy would appear in the north-western view looking up Loch Shin. Although this is filtered by trees from the VP it would be become more visible if moving slightly from the VP position. Coille Linne would be prominently visible to the north-west looking along the road. Shinnes would sit prominently in close proximity immediately to the north of the VP. Cumulative sensitivity is considered to be Medium – High.

5.12.16. The Proposed Varied Development would appear in the south-westerly view across Loch Shin above the skyline, on a low point between hills. It would appear more visible than Achany turbines which are smaller and seen only as blades from this location and the Invercassley turbines which are only seen as tips. It would provide some connection

within the view between the Lairg and Garvary Cluster and the Sallachy cluster and would be a noticeable increase in turbines in the central part of the view when considering both baseline scenarios, despite Invercassley's presence. The influence of the Proposed Varied Development would be somewhat reduced by the prominence of Coille Linne and Shinness, however, its appearance across the loch would contribute to the sense of encirclement by turbines. This is anticipated to lead to a Medium magnitude of change and a **Moderate** (significant) cumulative effect for both baseline scenarios.

VP16 – Minor road at Inveroykel forest access

5.12.17. This VP is largely representative of views obtained by travellers on the road. Whilst most open view is to the north, this represents a passing view for travellers. The northerly view across the valley floor features the lower reaches of the River Cassley with a backdrop of forest and heather-clad hills. The existing Rosehall and Achany turbines are prominent on the skyline of the enclosing hills in the north-north-east to easterly view. If application and scoping sites are added, Allt An Tuir and Invercassley would be seen sitting against the skyline to the northwest. Balblair would also be clearly visible against the skyline in views to the east and a few turbines and tip of Garvary may perceptibly increase this cluster in the view. Although Meall Buidhe, Inveroykel Coille Beith, Braelangwell and Strath Oykel would also be theoretically visible from this location, dense commercial forest plantation to the south of the VP would obscure any view towards it. The prominence of existing wind turbines within this view is considered to lead to a Low – Medium sensitivity.

5.12.18. The Proposed Varied Development would appear on the skyline to the west of the existing Achany and Rosehall turbines, but separated. The Proposed Varied Development turbines would appear perceptibly larger due their size proximity. Although, they would appear more distant than the Allt An Tuir or Invercasssley turbines which would sit above the nearby ridge they would bridge the gap between these two clusters. Unless the commercial forestry to the south is felled, it is unlikely to be seen in combination or succession with the large cluster of turbines located in close proximity in this direction. Although cumulative baseline turbines are already very noticeable within the view, the Proposed Varied Development would increase the area of the view occupied by turbines leading to little available open view from this location where turbines would not form a focus. Therefore, the magnitude of change is anticipated to be Medium and the effect would be **Moderate** (significant) for both baseline scenarios.

VP21 – Meall an Aonaich

5.12.19. From this elevated VP, operational and consented baseline sites would form turbine clusters in the mid-ground and distance to the south-east (Achany, Rosehall, Braemore Lairg, Lairg 2 Redesign and Garvary Wind Farms) and north-east (Creag Riabhach and Sallachy Wind Farms) with other more distant sites beyond them. The additional application and scoping sites would consolidate these clusters and create a consistent spread of turbine clusters in the middle distance leading to wind turbines forming a highly noticeable feature of the north-easterly to south-easterly view. Coille Linne would form a line of turbines fairly close in the north-easterly view appearing as an extension of Sallachy and drawing the Creag Riabhach cluster closer to the VP. Chleansaid and

Strath Tirry would combine with Shinness to create a more consistent spread of turbine clusters in the middle distance between the established groupings. Acheilidh and Balblair would extend the grouping of Garvary, Achany and Rosehall. To the south the application and scoping sites would create increase the prominence and proximity of turbines to the VP. Invercassley. Allt An Tuir, Strath Oykel Inveroykel and Coille Beith in particular would bring turbines closer to the VP appearing in combination with Meall Buidhe. The cumulative sensitivity is therefore considered to be Low – Medium.

5.12.20. The Proposed Varied Development would appear to the forefront of the Rosehall, Achany, Garvary and Lairg cluster of operational and consented sites forming part of this cluster. Whilst this is an area where wind turbines would form an established feature of the view, the Proposed Varied Development would appear larger and somewhat closer than these sites. Sallachy would also appear closer to the VP and the additional application and scoping sites would lead to a greater presence of wind turbines characterising the north-easterly to southerly views. Therefore, with a baseline scenario featuring operational and consented sites only, it would appear to bring wind farm development closer towards the foreground of the view in this direction. This would lead to a Medium magnitude of change and a **Moderate** (significant) cumulative effect for a scenario featuring operational and consented sites only.

5.12.21. With the addition of application and scoping sites, the Proposed Varied Development would appear to form a part of the larger cluster. The additional application and scoping sites would lead to a greater presence of wind turbines characterising the north-easterly to southerly view. Therefore, whilst it would form a perceptible addition to this baseline, the effect of the Proposed Varied Development would be reduced. Magnitude of change is anticipated to be Low with this baseline scenario and the cumulative effect would be **Minor** (not significant).

Route R4 – A838 Dalchork to Corrykinloch

5.12.22. Views from this route are predominantly across, up or down Loch Shin, depending on the direction of travel, sometimes restricted by roadside trees or woodland. Turbines and blades of operational Achany wind turbines are seen over the ridge to the south and south-west, and Lairg and Lairg 2 Redesign and Garvary would be seen on the skyline when travelling south-eastwards along the route between Fiag Bridge and Dalchork. The additional application site of Acheilidh would extend the Lairg and Lairg Extension cluster leading to large numbers of turbines seen down Loch Shin when travelling south-east. Sallachy would be seen on the skyline to the north-west and west when travelling northward. It would be particularly noticeable to the west of Fiag Bridge and towards the Overscaig Hotel looking across Loch Shin. Coille Linne would be visible along this stretch as well, located on the north side of the route opposite Sallachy. Shinness would be visible in close proximity when travelling in both directions, particularly to the north of West Shinness. Inveroykel and Invercassley would be visible from the elevated section of the road looking across Loch Shin for approximately 2–4 km. Trees along the route would filter some views on occasion.

5.12.23. The Proposed Varied Development would be theoretically visible between Dalchork and Fiag Bridge and Carrachan (approximately 20km) and would appear on the skyline on

the opposite side of Loch Shin. When travelling north-west, this would be likely to affect views roughly between Dalchork and Shinness (around 7km) and when travelling south-east, would affect views between around Carrachan and Shinness (around 14km). There would be no visibility beyond Carrachan. The Proposed Varied Development would be seen in a context of the cumulative baseline turbines and, would not be visible from any part of the route where cumulative turbines were not already visible. However, whilst these sites would create a precedent for the appearance of wind turbines in the view when travelling along full length of the route, the Proposed Varied Development would contribute to a sequential experience of wind turbines which would frequently be seen when travelling this route and would increase the perceived presence of wind turbines surrounding the route, particularly through the central part between Achnairn and West Shinness for around 6km. This is anticipated to be a Medium magnitude of change, leading to a **Moderate** (significant) visual effect for both cumulative baseline scenarios.

Route R12 – SU21.03: Allt an Tuir Burn Walk

5.12.24. Comprising a recreational foot path to the west of Rosehall village across a field and through felled forest plantation, views from this route are across the River Cassley and elevated across and up Glen Cassley. Where there are open views to north-east and east, a few turbines of Rosehall Wind Farm appear at relatively close proximity on the skyline. Allt an Tuir and Invercassley would now appear in north-western views across the entire or a substantial portion of the route, introducing a more prominent turbine presence in that to the north-west. The application site of Meall Buidhe would also be visible on the skyline in open views southward. Inveroykel would extend the spread of turbines from Meall Buidhe eastward and would be seen in views to the south-eastern. Strath Oykel and Inveroykel would further increase turbine visibility in southerly views, bringing turbines closer to the route. The sensitivity to addition change is considered to be Medium.

5.12.25. The Proposed Varied Development would be present in views from this route on the skyline from the lower and more elevated parts of the path and also to the north from the most northerly elevated section. Trees would screen some or all of the turbines from some parts of the route, but where visible the turbines would form a separate cluster in the view, would appear very noticeable, and although similar to the cumulative baseline turbines, they would increase the occupied area in the view. This is anticipated to lead to a Medium magnitude of change and a **Moderate** (significant) cumulative effect for both baseline scenarios.

Route R17 – Scottish Hill Track 332

5.12.26. Users of this 30km route obtain open and variable views of surrounding hills, mountains and moorland. From a short section between Loch na Sròine Luime and Loch Sail an Ruathair (passing below Ben More Assynt and Meall an Aonaich respectively), there would be views of the operational wind farm sites of Achany, Rosehall and Garvary to the south-east with other more distant sites around Beinn Tharsuinn and Kilbraur also perceptible. Sallachy would appear as much closer blades and occasionally turbines to the forefront of these sites. Chleansaid would appear as a separate cluster in a similar part of the view and from similar areas as Creag Riabhach. The application and scoping

baseline sites to the south-east including Invercassley, Allt An Tuir, Coille Beith, Strath Oykel and Inveroykel would add to the turbines visible, increasing the length of path affected. Sensitivity for this route is considered to be Medium – High, given the valued nature of the views obtained and relatively localised baseline visibility of wind turbines.

5.12.27. The Proposed Varied Development would be visible in south-easterly views as the route crosses the lower slopes of Ben More Assynt and Meall an Aonaich. There would be no theoretical visibility of the route where no other turbines would be seen and would almost always be seen in the context of existing Achany and Rosehall turbines and the application and scoping sites on the western glen-side of Glen Cassley. It would appear at a similar scale and distance to the Invercassley and Allt An Tuir turbines. Moving further north, the appearance of the Proposed Varied Development would reduce within the expansive surrounding view, whilst Sallachy, Shinness and Coille Linne would become more visible. Without these more northern sites, the effect of the Proposed Varied Development would be experienced more when travelling south, with the sense of travelling closer towards it. If Sallachy were already operational, this effect would be less because Sallachy would already create a precedent for closer wind turbines in the view. However, the Proposed Varied Development would combine with Sallachy (and Shinness and Coille Linne) and contribute to combined, successive and sequential effects to the view from this part of the route featuring turbines at closer proximity. Nevertheless, the effect overall would be on a small part of this very long route and one where turbines would already form feature of the view.

5.12.28. A locally Medium magnitude of change through this section is anticipated to lead to a *localised* **Moderate** (significant) effect for around 7km of the route between Loch na Sròine Luime and Loch Sail an Ruathair. However, given the localised nature of this effect, the magnitude of change on users of the route as a whole would be Low, and the cumulative effect would be **Minor** (not significant).

Effects Likely to be Not Significant

5.12.29. A **Minor – Moderate** (not significant) cumulative effect is anticipated to the view from VP10 – Ben More Assynt, when considering the addition of the Proposed Varied Development to the operational and consented baseline scenario. In this view, the Proposed Varied Development would be seen in the south-easterly context to the forefront of established turbine groupings featuring Garvary, Balblair, Acheilidh, Lairg II Re-Design cluster, Achany and Rosehall, increasing the perceived spread of wind turbines in the south-easterly view and brining them visually closer. With the addition of application and scoping sites the cumulative effect is anticipated to reduce to **Minor** (not significant) as the Proposed Varied Development would appear similar in scale and distance to Allt an Tuir, Inveroykel, Strath Oykel, Invercassley and Coille Beith. Sallachy and Coille Linne would also appear in closer proximity but further to the north. Wind turbines would form a very established feature of the baseline context in this direction and the addition of application and scoping sites, would form a precedent for wind turbines at closer proximity.

5.12.30. A **Minor-Moderate** (not significant) cumulative visual effect is anticipated for VP12: Glencassley road by Langwell Hill. This would represent an increase from the Negligible

(not significant) effect identified for the Consented Development due to the lack of cumulative sites visible from this VP at the time. The Proposed Varied Development turbines would appear against the skyline on the eastern glen-side, with a few tips appearing above the skyline beyond midground hills. The turbines would extend the arc of turbine visibility which currently stretches from the western side of the glen with Allt an Tuir and Invercassley to the southern end of the glen with Inveroykel and Braelangwelll around to the eastern glen-side. However, they would not interrupt views up the glen towards Ben More Assynt.

5.12.31. A **Minor-Moderate** (not significant) cumulative visual effect is anticipated for R9 – U2117 Cassley Bridge – Duchally Road. The Proposed Varied Development would be seen where other cumulative developments would be prominent, although a greater sense of cumulative effect may be noticeable on very short sections at the southern end of the route, this would be a very small contribution to the experienced of this route as a whole. This would represent an increase from the **Minor** (not significant) effect identified for the Consented Development as a result of the increased cumulative baseline around Glen Cassley.

5.12.32. A **Minor** (not significant) cumulative effect is anticipated to occur under both baseline scenarios to views obtained from VP1 – A836 above the Crask Inn, VP2 – A836 bridge by Dalnessie entrance, VP5 – Ben Hee, VP13 – Ben Klibreck, VP18 – Carn Chuinneag and VP19 – Seana Bhràigh and VP20 – Cul Mòr. These VPs represent locations where the Proposed Varied Development would form a distant addition to the cumulative baseline featuring extensive numbers of turbines, such as from VP1, or the mountain summits of VP5, VP13, VP18 VP19 and VP20, or a more peripheral addition where other cumulative baseline sites would be more noticeable, particularly when seen from the east such as at VP2 where other wind farms would be closer within the view. In these views, the addition of the Proposed Varied Development is anticipated to lead to a perceptible increase in turbines within the view, but is not predicted to lead to turbines becoming a more prominent feature than they already would be under the baseline scenario.

Summary of Cumulative Visual Effects

5.12.33. **Table 5.7** provides a summary of predicted cumulative visual effects on those VPs and Routes included in the CLVIA of the Proposed Varied Development compared to the effects identified for the Consented Development. The effects identified for the Consented Development are provided for information and reference only and are not directly comparable to those identified for the Proposed Varied Development. The Consented Development was assessed against the cumulative baseline as it stood at the time of that assessment. It has not been reassessed against the current baseline.

Table 5.7: Anticipated Cumulative Effects to Visual Receptors as a Result of the Proposed Varied Development

Receptor	Effect Identified for Consented Development	Effect Identified for Proposed Varied Development
Viewpoints		
VP1 – A836 above the Crask Inn	Minor (not significant)	Minor (not significant)
VP2 – A836 bridge by Dalnessie entrance	Minor (not significant)	Minor (not significant)
VP5 – Ben Hee	Minor (not significant)	Minor (not significant)
VP6 – Rosehall	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate (significant)**
VP9 – Achnairn caravan and camping site entrance	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate (significant)**
VP10 – Ben More Assynt	Minor – Moderate (not significant) reducing to Minor (not significant)	Minor – Moderate (not significant) reducing to Minor (not significant)
VP11 – Glencassley road to south of Castle	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate (significant)**
VP12 - Glencassley road by Langwell Hill	Negligible (not significant)	Minor – Moderate (not significant)
VP13 – Ben Klibreck	Minor (not significant)	Minor (not significant)
VP14 – A838 near West Shinness	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate (significant)**
VP16 – Minor road at Inveroykel forest access	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate (significant)**
VP18 – Carn Chuinneag	Minor (not significant)	Minor (not significant)

Receptor	Effect Identified for Consented Development	Effect Identified for Proposed Varied Development
VP19 – Seana Bhràigh	Minor (not significant)	Minor (not significant)
VP20 – Cul Mòr	Not assessed	Minor (not significant)
VP21 – Meall an Aonaich	**Moderate (significant) reducing to Minor (not significant)**	**Moderate (significant) reducing to Minor (not significant)**
Routes		
R4 – A838 Dalchork to Corrykinloch	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate (significant)**
R9 – U2117 Cassley Bridge – Duchally Road	Minor (significant)	Minor – Moderate (not significant)
R12 – SU21.03: Allt an Tuir Burn Walk	**Moderate (significant)**	**Moderate (significant)**
R17 – Scottish Hill Track 332	Minor (not significant) Overall *Locally* **Moderate** (significant) for 3km between Loch Sail an Ruathair and Loch Carn nan Conbhairean for a baseline scenario of operational and consented sites only. *Locally* **Moderate** (significant) for 7km of the route between Loch na Sròine Luime and Loch Sail an Ruathair for a baseline scenario including application and scoping sites, due to sequentially experienced effects with Sallachy.	Minor (not significant) Overall *Locally* **Moderate** (significant) for 7km of the route between Loch na Sròine Luime and Loch Sail an Ruathair for a baseline scenarios considering the operational and consented sites only, and the addition of application and scoping sites.

5.13. Proposed Varied Development Assessment of Effects of Turbine Lighting

5.13.1. The separate assessment of turbine lighting appended in **Technical Appendix 5.11** reports that the effects of the strategic lighting proposal outlined in in **Chapter 14: Aviation and Radar,** and **Technical Appendix 14.2: Aviation Lighting Assessment**, would result in significant localised effects to three LCTs and WLA 34, and significant visual effects for receptors at five viewpoints, five residential receptor locations and following three routes. This is largely due to the absence of existing artificial light within the study area leading to receptors which are therefore generally more sensitive to this type of change. It was therefore concluded that when taking turbine lighting into consideration, the inclusion of lights on seven cardinal turbines would result in significant effects during low light conditions and the hours of darkness.

5.13.2. Mitigation measures to reduce the potential effects of turbine lighting are included within the strategic lighting proposal and were therefore considered within the assessment. They are the subject of ongoing discussions with statutory consultees and include consideration of the following:

- Automatic dimming: Sensor controlled lighting that allows for a reduction in brightness, from 2000 cd to 200 cd, in conditions of good meteorological visibility.
- Vertical directional intensity mitigation: The use of aviation warning lights designed to reduce the brightness of lights when viewed from certain elevations above and below the horizontal plane of the nacelle.
- Reduced lighting scheme: A project-specific agreement from the CAA that only cardinal or specific turbines, rather than all, can be fitted with visible lighting.

5.14. Revised Mitigation Measures for the Proposed Varied Development

5.14.1. The design of the Proposed Varied Development has gone through numerous iterations since this site was first explored for development as a wind farm. The final proposed siting and design of turbines and associated tracks and other infrastructure resulted from constraints exercises which included consideration of potential impacts of the development from an LVIA perspective and became part of the embedded mitigation. It was also influenced by national and local guidance and consultations with both NatureScot and THC. For details regarding the iterative design process and embedded mitigation measures please see detail in the **2021 EIAR**: **Chapter 7** (section 7.13), **Chapter 2: Site Selection** and **Technical Appendix 2.1: Design Evolution and the Design Statement**.

5.14.2. Landscape and visual mitigation measures relating to the construction and successful reinstatement of disturbed ground associated with the Proposed Varied Development would be manged through good practice and construction management (see **2021 EIAR Technical Appendix 3.1, Outline CEMP**).

5.14.3. Landscape and visual mitigation measures relating to the operation of the Proposed Varied Development have been incorporated into the design of the scheme as described the **Chapter 2: Design Iteration and Proposed Development**.

5.15. Comparison of Effects of the Proposed Varied Development with the Effects of the Consented Development

5.15.1. Section 5.6 provides a summary of effects of the Consented Scheme and concludes that while the Consented Scheme would result in some significant effects, these would be focused within a limited area, with the majority occurring within 10km of the Consented Development. The following section and **Tables 5.8 and 5.9** summarise a comparison of the effects identified for the included receptors for the Consented Scheme and the Proposed Varied Development. It is important to note that this excludes effects related to turbine lighting, which are considered separately in **Technical Appendix 5.11**. Detailed assessments of the potential effects on receptors from the Proposed Varied Development can be found in **Technical Appendices 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.8, 5.9 and 5.10**. A comparative ZTV of the Proposed Varied Development and the Consented Scheme is provided in **Figure 5.3**.

5.15.2. Although the Proposed Varied Development turbines would be up to 50m taller than those of the Consented Development, the majority of the identified receptors in the study area would experience very similar effects from the 2 schemes. Increased visual effects would be experienced by 7 Viewpoints and 4 Residential receptors. The landscape assessment has found that while there would be localised increases in effect within all LCTs, significant effects would be limited to LCTs where significant effects were previously identified. While the extent of significant effects within WLA 34 would increase, the overall effect on the WLA as a whole is considered to remain not significant, and there would not be an increase in effect within other designated and protected landscapes. Individually these are considered to represent material changes to the effects experienced by these receptors. However, when viewed in the context of the overall scheme they represent a small change to the overall effects.

Table 5.8: Summary Comparison of Landscape Effects of the Consented Development Compared to the Proposed Varied Development

LCT	Effects identified in the Assessment for the Consented Scheme (2021 EIAR and 2022 AIR)	Effects identified in the Assessment for the Proposed Varied Development	Conclusion / explanation of the difference between the Effects identified for the Consented Development and Proposed Varied Development
LCT 134: Sweeping Moorland and Flows	**Minor to Moderate** (not significant) for the western sub-area, Minor (not significant) for the eastern sub-area.	**Minor to Moderate** (not significant) for both eastern and western sub areas.	No change predicted to the level of effect within the western sub-area. The Proposed Varied Development would slightly increase the landscape effect on the eastern sub-area of this LCT. However, the localised change within this sub-area from **Minor** (not significant) to **Minor - Moderate** (not significant) would not lead to any new significant effects.
LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland	**Locally Major** (significant) within the immediate confines of the Site at its northern end. **Moderate** (significant) within the surrounding context up to around 8km, ranging from **Minor to Minor – Moderate** beyond these areas and **Negligible** in areas with little or no intervisibility.	**Locally Major** (significant) within the immediate confines of the Site, predicted to cover a slightly greater area of 2-2.5km and locally up to 3km. **Moderate** within surrounding context up to around 8-10km, ranging from **Minor to Minor – Moderate** beyond these areas with potential for locally increased effects in some locations and **Negligible** in areas with little or no intervisibility.	No increase in effect ratings for this LCT, and the extent of the area within which significant effects would be experienced would be broadly similar. However, the area within which significant effects would be **Major** rather than **Moderate** is predicted to increase from around 2km for the Consented Development, to localised areas up to 3km away.
LCT 139: Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland	**Minor** (not significant) within around 15km of the Consented Development around Ben More Assynt, **localised Minor to Moderate** (not significant) at the closest point around Meall an Aonaich. **Negligible** elsewhere within the Ben Assynt sub-area. **Negligible**	**Minor-Moderate** (not significant) within the Ben More Assynt sub-area. **Minor** (not significant) within the Freevater – Glencalvie sub-area.	The level of effect would be slightly increased, with the localised **Minor – Moderate** (not significant) effect within the Ben More Assynt sub-area experienced more widely within the 20km detailed study area, and the Negligible effect on the Freevater – Glencalvie sub-area predicted to

LCT	Effects identified in the Assessment for the Consented Scheme (2021 EIAR and 2022 AIR)	Effects identified in the Assessment for the Proposed Varied Development	Conclusion / explanation of the difference between the Effects identified for the Consented Development and Proposed Varied Development
	within the Freevater – Glencalvie sub-area.		rise to **Minor** (not significant). However, the overall effect on this LCT would remain not significant.
LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland	**Locally Moderate** (significant) within an area of Glen Cassley between Badintagairt and Glenmuick, **Minor** (not significant) within remaining parts of Glen Cassley and the transitional area between Glen Cassley, Strath Oykel and Kyle of Sutherland as well as in Strath Tirry. The effect in all other areas was assessed as **Negligible**.	**Locally Moderate – Major** (significant) within parts of upper Glen Cassley, from roughly 1km south of Badintagairt to Glenmuick. **Minor** (not significant) within remaining parts of Glen Cassley and the transitional area between Glen Cassley, Strath Oykel and Kyle of Sutherland as well as in Strath Tirry. The effect in all other areas was assessed as **Negligible**.	There would be an increased significant effect within the upper part of Glen Cassley from a localised **Moderate** (significant) effect to a localised **Moderate – Major** (significant) effect, also resulting in a slightly larger area being significantly affected. Elsewhere the change to landscape character is not predicted to be sufficient to lead to higher levels of effect.
Assynt – Coigach NSA	**Not significant** effects on *rocky topography of great variety* SLQ **Not significant** effects on a *landscape of vast open space and exposure* SLQ **Not significant** effects on *significant tracts of wild land* SLQ **Not significant** effects on the NSA as a whole	**Minor** (not significant) effects on *rocky topography of great variety* SLQ **Minor** (not significant) effects on a *landscape of vast open space and exposure* SLQ **Minor – Moderate** (not significant) effects on *significant tracts of wild land* SLQ **Not significant** effects on the NSA as a whole	The SLQ assessment has concluded that there would be some localised visual effects within the eastern periphery of the NSA, but no significant effects are predicted to any of the SLQs or the NSA as a whole. This reflects the conclusions of the 2021 assessment. The effect on one SLQ: 'Significant tracts of wild land' is predicted to be slightly greater than expected for the Consented Development but this is still not considered to be significant within the context of the NSA. It is therefore concluded that the effects of the Proposed Varied Development would be broadly similar to the Consented Development and there would be no increased level of significant effects on the NSA.

LCT	Effects identified in the Assessment for the Consented Scheme (2021 EIAR and 2022 AIR)	Effects identified in the Assessment for the Proposed Varied Development	Conclusion / explanation of the difference between the Effects identified for the Consented Development and Proposed Varied Development
Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire SLA	**Minor** (not significant) effect to the SLA overall during construction and operation, with localised perceptible, but not significant effects to the Special Qualities 'Distinctive mountains' and 'Extensive views from peaks and summits'.	**Minor** (not significant) during construction and operation, with localised perceptible, but not significant effects to the Special Qualities 'Distinctive mountains' and 'Extensive views from peaks and summits'	No change is predicted to the level of effect on the Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire SLA.
WLA 34	**Moderate – Major** (significant) effect on WLQ4, localised within 2km of the Proposed Development. **Moderate** (significant) effect on WLQ4, localised within relatively discrete parts of the Eastern Lobster Claw up to 5 – 6km, and the Western Lobster Claw up to 8 – 10km from the Consented Development, affecting localised parts of the plateau above the immediate confines of Glen Cassley. **Not significant** for WLA as a whole.	**Moderate – Major** (significant) effect on WLQ4, localised within 3km of the Proposed Varied Development and locally up to 5 – 6km. **Moderate** (significant) effect on WLQ4, localised within northern parts of the Eastern Lobster Claw and Western Lobster Claw, into the south-east of the Central Core, within around 10 – 12km. **Not significant** for WLA as a whole.	The area of significant effect to WLQ4 would increase to 10 – 12km, affecting localised parts of the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw and south-eastern Central Core. No significant effects are predicted for any of the other WLQs which are more strongly present within the Central Core and Northern Arm.

Table 5.9: Summary Comparison of Visual Effects of the Consented Development Compared to the Proposed Varied Development

Visual Receptor	Effects identified in 2021 Assessment	Effects identified in the Assessment for the Proposed Varied Development	Conclusion / explanation of the difference between the Effects identified in the 2021 Assessment Proposed Varied Development
Viewpoints	**Negligible** (not significant) effects for 1 Viewpoint **Minor** (not significant) effects for 4 Viewpoints **Minor** – **Moderate** (not significant) effects for 4 Viewpoints **Moderate** (significant) effects for 6 Viewpoints **Moderate** – **Major** (significant) effects for 0 Viewpoints	**Negligible** (not significant) effects for 0 Viewpoint **Minor** (not significant) effects for 5 Viewpoints **Minor** – **Moderate** (not significant) effects for 3 Viewpoints **Moderate** (significant) effects for 2 Viewpoints **Moderate** – **Major** (significant) effects for 5 Viewpoints	There would be increased effects from 7 of the included viewpoints. The increased effects would be clustered within 10km of the Site. Within approximately 5km, the VPs along Glencassley Road (VP 11 and 12), within Rosehall (VP6) and from near Inveroykel Forest (VP16) would see a noticeable increase to the height of the turbines compared to the Consented Development. They would be seen in relatively close proximity above the eastern glen side. Within 10km the VPs directly overlooking Loch Shin (VP9 and VP14) would also experience a noticeable increase in visibility of the turbines. The taller turbines would extend the horizontal spread of the development which would appear less contained by the surrounding landform. There would also be an increased level of effect from VP20 where the turbines would become more perceptible, although this would not lead to a significant level of effect.
Residential Receptors	**Minor** – **Moderate** (not significant) effects for 2 Residential Receptors **Moderate** (significant) effects for 5 Residential Receptors	**Minor** – **Moderate** (not significant) effects for 1 Residential Receptors **Moderate** (significant) effects for 3 Residential Receptors **Moderate** – **Major** (significant) effects for 3 Residential Receptors	There would be increased effects ratings for 4 receptor groups within 10km of the Site. These include the village of Rosehall and the receptors on the eastern side of Loch Shin with direct views across towards the Site. There would be a noticeable increase in the size of the turbines from these receptors compared to the Consented Development

Visual Receptor	Effects identified in 2021 Assessment	Effects identified in the Assessment for the Proposed Varied Development	Conclusion / explanation of the difference between the Effects identified in the 2021 Assessment Proposed Varied Development
	Moderate – **Major** (significant) effects for 0 Residential Receptors		and an increase in the horizontal spread, particularly from the cluster overlooking Loch Shin.
Route Receptors	**Minor** (not significant) effects for 1 Route **Minor** Overall (not significant) with **Locally Moderate** (significant) effects for 1 Route **Moderate** (significant) effects for 3 Routes	**Minor** (not significant) effects for 1 Route **Minor** Overall (not significant) with **Locally Moderate** (significant) effects for 1 Route **Moderate** (significant) effects for 3 Routes	While some route receptors may experience slight increases in effects, these would not result in a change to the ratings identified for the Consented Development.

Table 5.10 Summary Comparison of Cumulative Landscape Effects of the Consented Development Compared to the Proposed Varied Development

Visual Receptor	Effects identified in 2021 Assessment	Effects identified in the Assessment for the Proposed Varied Development	Conclusion / explanation of the difference between the Effects identified in the 2021 Assessment Proposed Varied Development
LCT 134: Sweeping Moorland and Flows	**Minor – Moderate** (not significant) cumulative landscape effect was identified within the western sub-area with operational and consented sites only. This would reduce to **Minor** (not significant) cumulative effect with the addition all cumulative	**Minor – Moderate** (not significant) cumulative landscape effect was identified within the western sub-area for both baseline scenarios. Within the eastern sub-area, a **Minor** (not significant) cumulative effect was identified for the baseline	Although not directly comparable, the predicted cumulative effects are broadly consistent. No new significant effects are anticipated.

Visual Receptor	Effects identified in 2021 Assessment	Effects identified in the Assessment for the Proposed Varied Development	Conclusion / explanation of the difference between the Effects identified in the 2021 Assessment Proposed Varied Development
	baseline sites. Within the eastern sub-area, a **Minor** (not significant) cumulative effect was identified for the baseline scenario considering operational and consented sites.	scenario considering operational and consented sites.	
LCT 135: Rounded Hills - Caithness & Sutherland	Locally **Moderate** (significant) cumulative effect to the east and west **of** Glencassley, up to 10km considering operational and consented sites only and up to 6-8km considering all cumulative baseline sites. **Minor** (not significant) overall.	Locally **Moderate** (significant) cumulative effect to the east and west **of** Glencassley, up to 6-8km considering operational and consented sites, and **Minor** (not significant) cumulative effect considering all cumulative baseline sites.	Although not directly comparable, the predicted cumulative effects are broadly consistent. No new significant effects are anticipated.
LCT 139: Rugged Mountain Massif - Caithness & Sutherland	**Minor** (not significant) cumulative effect considering operational and consented sites only. This would reduce to **Negligible** (not significant) when all cumulative baseline sites are considered.	**Minor** (not significant) cumulative effect both cumulative baseline scenarios (operational and consented sites only, and all cumulative baseline sites).	Although not directly comparable, the predicted cumulative effects are broadly consistent. No new significant effects are anticipated.
LCT 142: Strath - Caithness & Sutherland	**Minor** (not significant) cumulative effect overall, and locally **Moderate** (significant) for the	**Minor** (not significant) cumulative effect overall, and locally **Moderate** (significant) for the Glen Cassley	Although not directly comparable, the predicted cumulative effects are broadly consistent. No new significant effects are anticipated.

Visual Receptor	Effects identified in 2021 Assessment	Effects identified in the Assessment for the Proposed Varied Development	Conclusion / explanation of the difference between the Effects identified in the 2021 Assessment Proposed Varied Development
	Glen Cassley sub-area. This level of effect is anticipated to be consistent for both cumulative baseline scenarios (operational and consented sites only, and all cumulative baseline sites).	sub-area. This level of effect is anticipated to be consistent for both cumulative baseline scenarios (operational and consented sites only, and all cumulative baseline sites).	
Assynt – Coigach NSA	A **Minor** (not significant) cumulative effect is anticipated for the baseline scenario featuring operational and consented sites only. With the addition of application and scoping sites the cumulative effect is anticipated to be **Negligible** (not significant). **Not significant** effects on the NSA as a whole	**Minor** (not significant) cumulative effect for both baseline scenarios for the NSA as a whole. A localised **Minor – Moderate** (not significant) cumulative effect for the SLQ "significant tracts of wild land" considering only operational and consented sites. A **Minor** (not significant) cumulative effect is anticipated for all included SLQs with the addition of application and scoping sites.	Although not directly comparable, the predicted cumulative effects are broadly consistent. No new significant effects are anticipated. A localised Minor – Moderate (not significant) cumulative effect was identified for one SLQ, however this is consistent with the findings of the 2021 LVIA.
Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire SLA	A **Minor** (not significant) cumulative effect is anticipated to the SLA considering operational and consented sites only. A **Negligible** (not significant) cumulative effect is anticipated	A **Minor** (not significant) cumulative effect is anticipated to the SLA considering operational and consented sites only. A **Negligible** (not significant) cumulative effect is anticipated with the addition of	Although not directly comparable, the predicted cumulative effects are broadly consistent. No new significant effects are anticipated.

Visual Receptor	Effects identified in 2021 Assessment	Effects identified in the Assessment for the Proposed Varied Development	Conclusion / explanation of the difference between the Effects identified in the 2021 Assessment Proposed Varied Development
	with the addition of application and scoping sites to the baseline.	application and scoping sites to the baseline.	
WLA 34	**Moderate** (significant) effect to the east of Glen Cassley within localised areas up to 5-6km and locally across a few areas of the high plateau to the west of Glen Cassley up to 8km and very occasionally to 10km when operational and consented sites only are considered. When application and scoping sites are added to the baseline, the **Moderate** (significant) effect is anticipated to extend slightly to localised areas up to 7-8km to east of Glen Cassley, but reducing to the west of Glen Cassley. A **Minor** (not significant) effect when considering operational and consented baseline only across mountain summit areas around Ben More Assynt, Meall an Aonaich Breabag and Beinn Leòid. With the addition of all	A **Moderate** (significant) cumulative effect is anticipated across the plateau ridge to the east of Glen Cassley and locally across a few high plateau areas to the west of Glen Cassley, up to 10-12km A **Minor** (not significant) cumulative effect is anticipated across mountain core areas around Ben More Assynt, Meall an Aonaich, Breabag and Ben Leòid affecting the WLQ1: “A range of large, irregular, rocky mountains with steep, arresting slopes and a variety of lochs and lochans, possessing a strong sense of naturalness, remoteness and sanctuary”. Considering a scenario including all cumulative baseline sites, a **Minor** (not significant) cumulative effect is anticipated for both WLQ1 and WLQ4.	Although not directly comparable, the predicted cumulative effects are broadly consistent. No new significant effects are anticipated. The localised area experiencing **Moderate** (significant) effects is anticipated to reduce.

Visual Receptor	Effects identified in 2021 Assessment	Effects identified in the Assessment for the Proposed Varied Development	Conclusion / explanation of the difference between the Effects identified in the 2021 Assessment Proposed Varied Development
	application and scoping sites, this effect would be similar, but reduced in areas around Beinn Leòid due to the closer proximity of Sallachy to these areas. The effect on all other areas, comprising the vast majority of the extensive WLA would be **Negligible**. **Not significant** for WLA as a whole.	The additional effects of the Proposed Varied Development under both cumulative baseline scenarios is therefore anticipated to be **not significant** for WLA as a whole.	

Table 5.11 Summary Comparison of Cumulative Visual Effects of the Consented Development Compared to the Proposed Varied Development

Visual Receptor	Effects identified in 2021 Assessment	Effects identified in the Assessment for the Proposed Varied Development	Conclusion / explanation of the difference between the Effects identified in the 2021 Assessment Proposed Varied Development
Viewpoints	**Negligible / Not Assessed** (not significant) effects for 2 Viewpoint **Minor** (not significant) effects for 6 Viewpoints	**Negligible** (not significant) effects for 0 Viewpoint **Minor** (not significant) effects for 7 Viewpoints **Minor** – **Moderate** (not significant) effects for 2 Viewpoints	Although not directly comparable, increased cumulative effects are anticipated from two of the included viewpoints VP12 - Glencassley road by Langwell Hill and VP20 – Cul Mòr (not previously assessed. The turbines would become more perceptible / noticeable from both of these VPs, this

	Minor – **Moderate** (not significant) effects for 1 Viewpoints **Moderate** (significant) reducing to **Minor** (not significant) effects for 1 Viewpoints **Moderate** (significant) effects for 5 Viewpoints **Moderate** – **Major** (significant) effects for 0 Viewpoints	**Moderate** (significant) reducing to **Minor** (not significant) effects for 1 Viewpoints **Moderate** (significant) effects for 5 Viewpoints **Moderate** – **Major** (significant) effects for 0 Viewpoints	is not anticipated to lead to a significant level of effect.
Route Receptors	**Minor** (not significant) effects for 1 Route **Minor** Overall (not significant) with **Locally Moderate** (significant) effects for 1 Route **Moderate** (significant) effects for 2 Routes	**Minor** (not significant) effects for 0 Route **Minor – Moderate** (not significant) effects for 1 Route **Minor** Overall (not significant) with **Locally Moderate** (significant) effects for 1 Route **Moderate** (significant) effects for 2 Routes	Although not directly comparable, increased cumulative effects are anticipated from two routes.

5.16. Conclusion

5.16.1. Overall, the LVIA has concluded that the Proposed Varied Development would result in a limited number of increased significant effects on landscape character and visual amenity, affecting relatively localised parts of the landscape and visual resource up to 10km, and locally to 12.5km from the site. As with the Consented Development significant effects were identified for a range of residential, recreational and route-based visual receptors in areas to the north-east of Loch Shin, around Rosehall and Glen Cassley and recreational users within a localised part of the upland area to the west of Glen Cassley, and would result in some increased influence of wind turbines on the landscape character within parts of Glen Cassley, the upland plateau areas to either side of it, and a localised part of WLA 34, Reay – Cassley. Outwith these areas, landscape and visual effects would not be significant. There would be no significant effects to the Assynt – Coigach NSA or Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire SLA as a whole.

5.16.2. Although there would be some slight increases in anticipated effects, the findings of assessment of the Proposed Varied Development are broadly consistent with the findings assessment of the Consented Development.

5.16.3. The separate assessment of turbine lighting appended in Appendix 5.11 reports that the effects of lighting seven turbines, would be significant from three LCTs, WLA 34, five viewpoints, five residential receptor locations and three routes. This is largely due to the absence of artificial light within the study area and receptors which would therefore generally be more sensitive to this type of change. It was therefore concluded that the inclusion of lighting on the seven turbines included in the strategic lighting scheme would result in significant effects during low light conditions and the hours of darkness. However, the Applicant proposes to engage with aviation stakeholders to agree a lighting solutions which may result in a reduced visual effect.

5.17. References

Horner + Maclennan (2011): Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas. The Highland Council.

Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition.

NatureScot (2020 revised 2023). Assessing impacts on Wild Land Areas – technical guidance. Available at: Assessing impacts on Wild Land Areas - technical guidance | NatureScot. Accessed August 2025

NatureScot (2021). Guidance – Assessing the cumulative landscape and visual impact of onshore energy developments. Available at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/guidance-assessing-cumulative-landscape-and-visual-impact-onshore-wind-energy-developments. Accessed: August 2025

NatureScot (2024). Guidance on Aviation Lighting Impact Assessment. Available at: Guidance on Aviation Lighting Impact Assessment | NatureScot. Accessed August 2025

NatureScot (2025). Special Landscape Qualities – Guidance on assessing effects. Available at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/special-landscape-qualities-guidance-assessing-effects#special-landscape-qualities-slqs. Accessed: August 2025

Scottish Natural Heritage (2019). SNH National Landscape Character Assessment. Available at: https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-character-assessment/scottish-landscape-character-types-map-and-descriptions. Accessed: August 2025

Scottish Natural Heritage (2010). The special qualities of the National Scenic Areas. Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No. 374. (iBids and Project no 648)

Scottish Natural Heritage (2017a). Visual Representation of Wind Farms, Guidance, Version 2.2, February 2017.

The Highland Council (2016a). Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments, July 2016.

Wind turbine locations in planning applications in The Highland Council area. Available at: https://map-highland.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/fdad9392071a477087c9e0cb4184b5d4_0/explore. Accessed: October 2025.