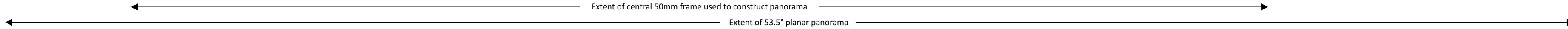




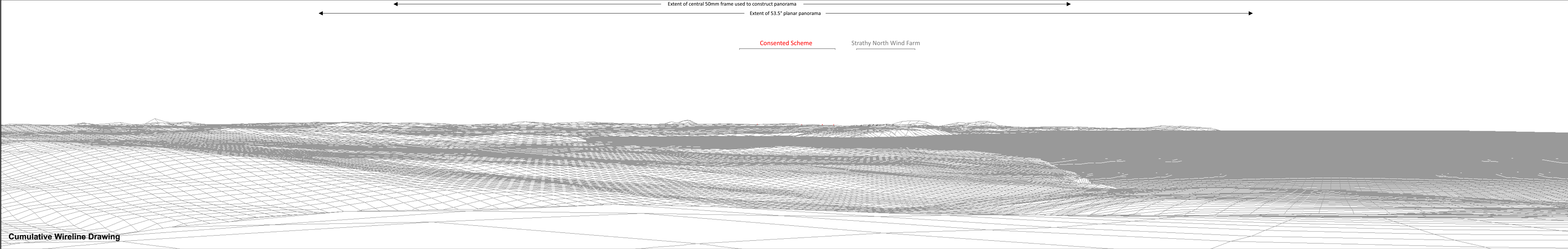
Baseline Photograph

This image provides landscape and visual context only



Consented Scheme

Strathy North Wind Farm



Cumulative Wireline Drawing

Strathy South Wind Farm  
TA Figure 4.8.18 - VP14: Dunnet Head Baseline Photo and Wireline



Consented Scheme



Strathy North Wind Turbine

OS reference:	320519 E 976504 N	Camera:	Canon EOS 6D Mk II	Horizontal field of view:	90° (cylindrical projection)
Ground level:	126.98 m AOD	Lens:	50mm (Canon EF 50mm f/1.4)	Principal distance:	522 mm
Direction of view:	238.61°	Camera height:	1.5m AGL		
Nearest visible turbine:	45.9 km	Date and time:	10/10/2019 12:29		



ANNEX 2: LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT TABLES

1 Introduction

The tables contained in this Annex comprise an assessment of statutory designated landscapes, and Landscape Character Types (LCTs) as identified in the baseline review as potentially experiencing landscape effects as a result of the Consented Scheme (as illustrated in TA Figure 4.8.2: Designated Landscapes with Consented Scheme ZTV and TA Figure 4.8.3: Landscape Character Types with Consented Scheme ZTV (EIAR Volume 4: Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)):

- National Context:
  - National Scenic Areas (NSAs).
- Local Context:
  - Special Landscape Areas (SLAs); and
  - Landscape Character Types (LCTs).

The assessments of Designated Landscapes within the 45 km Wider Study Area and LCTs within the 20 km Detailed Study Area, in the following tables, are in accordance with methodology outlined in Section 4.4 of Chapter 4: Landscape and Visual Amenity (EIAR Volume 2).

With regard to wild land, the Scottish Ministers Determination of Strathly South wind farm Section 36 Application (dated 27th April 2018), stated “*Ministers agree with and adopt the Reporter’s conclusion that the character and qualities of wild land areas would not be adversely affected by the proposed development*”. In addition and most recently, in their scoping response (dated 31 May 2019) SNH confirmed that ‘to date we [SNH] have advised that the Strathly South wind farm [the Consented Scheme] would be unlikely to significantly adversely affect the qualities of the East Halladale Flows Wild Land Area’. As such an assessment of Wild Land Areas (WLAs), as defined by SNH, has been scoped out of the Consented Scheme assessment.

The assessment of designated landscapes gives consideration to effects on landscape character and identified Special Qualities (identified in the NSA and SLAs). Conclusions made during the assessment of Landscape Character Types (LCTs) (see Section 4 of this Annex) are used to feed into this assessment. Evaluation of sensitivity to development of the type proposed and magnitude of change has been undertaken for all relevant Special Qualities.

The assessment of Special Qualities has given cognisance to and is adapted from the following draft guidance documents:

- The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas (SNH Commissioned Report No. 374)<sup>4</sup>; and
- SNH and Cairngorms National Park Authority Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities<sup>5</sup>.

The final conclusion on the significance of effect for each designated landscape considers the effects on Special Qualities and landscape character.

Where LCTs also comprise Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) included in the THC’s Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance, (OWESG)<sup>6</sup>, these are referenced, and this document has been considered in the assessment.

As noted in Section 2 of Technical Appendix 4.8, cumulative landscape effects are not considered as part of the assessment of the Consented Scheme.

<sup>4</sup> Scottish Natural Heritage, (2010), *SNH Commissioned Report 374 – The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas*  
<sup>5</sup> Scottish Natural Heritage and Cairngorms National Park Authority, (2018), *Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities (Working Draft 11)*.  
<sup>6</sup> The Highland Council (November 2016 (with addendum, December 2017)) *Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance*.

2 National Context

Table 4.8.1.1: Kyle of Tongue [NSA]			
Landscape Baseline			
Landscape Designation Description	The Kyle of Tongue NSA, includes Ben Hope and Ben Loyal, two of the most notable mountains in the north of Scotland. They both rise above the lochs and have distinct profiles in the form of a stately succession of granite peaks. Their presence provides a sense of place, forming a boundary between the inhabited coast and generally uninhabited interior.  They are accentuated by the constantly changing character of the Kyle of Tongue, varied patterns of settlements, and the coastal scenery. The Kyle itself shows an array of light and texture due to the tides, pattern of wind and waves, and the reflection of the sun. The area’s rich and varied coastal scenery includes soft landscapes of sand, and mud, and harder landscapes of rock and cliff. Torrisdale Bay is one of the highlights of the area.  The combination of the granite peaks of the bens, indented bays and sandy beaches along the coastline make for a compelling landscape.		
Landscape Value	This landscape is an NSA. The relationship and interplay between the inhabited coast, distinct mountains and wild interior moorland form a valued landscape. While certain infrastructure within the area may present detracting features, these do little to detract from the overall value of the landscape.  Landscape Value is considered to be <b>High</b> .		
Assessment of Landscape Effects on Special Qualities			
Key Quality	Sensitivity	Potential Effects	Magnitude of Change
<div>An ever-present backdrop of mountains</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ben Hope and Ben Loyal stand isolated above the open moorland.</li><li>Each has a distinct profile.</li><li>They have a timeless and lofty presence forming an ever-present backdrop and landmarks over a wide area.</li><li>They provide the whole locality with a sense of place and symbolise the boundary between the populated coast and the</li></ul>	High	The Consented Scheme would be seen from upland areas and hilltops as part of the surrounding landscape context to the east. It is approximately 15 km from Ben Loyal and 25 km from Ben Hope. As such it would appear relatively distant and beyond the boundary of the NSA and therefore unlikely to affect appreciation of the relationship between the hills and the open moorland.	Negligible
	Medium	The Consented Scheme would be seen from upland areas and hilltops as part of the surrounding landscape context to the east. It would appear distant and well beyond the boundary of the NSA and therefore unlikely to affect appreciation of the distinctive profiles.	Negligible
	Medium	The Consented Scheme would be seen from upland areas and hilltops as part of the surrounding landscape context to the east. It would appear relatively distant and beyond the boundary of the NSA and therefore unlikely to affect appreciation of the roll of the hills as a backdrop for the wider area.	Negligible
	High	The Consented Scheme would appear in distant views from upland areas and hilltops as part of the wider landscape context. While the turbines would be set away from the coast, they would be seen in	Low

Table 4.8.1.1: Kyle of Tongue [NSA]			
wild and generally uninhabited interior.		the context of other operational turbines and therefore while perceptible they are considered unlikely to distract from the relationship between the populated coast and the uninhabited interior.	
The Kyle – A link from an inhabited coast to a wild, moorland <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Kyle of Tongue appears as a green, inhabited oasis on the exposed north coast of Scotland.</li><li>It brings the sea and settlement well inland, into the heart of the interior.</li><li>Human presence is centred on or near the coast. In contrast the sweeping moorland and mountain is a wild and remote land of heather, bog, loch, river and burn; of rock, crag and high mountain corrie.</li></ul>	Medium	There would be no intervisibility with the Kyle of Tongue itself.	Negligible
	Medium	There would be no intervisibility with the Kyle of Tongue itself.	Negligible
	High	The Consented Scheme would not directly affect the sweeping moorland and mountain area of the NSA. The Consented Scheme would appear in distant views as part of the wider landscape context. While the turbines would be set away from the coast, they would be seen in the context of other operational turbines and therefore while perceptible they are considered unlikely to distract from the relationship between the coast and the moorland within the NSA.	Low
Scale, from domestic to monumental <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Marked contrast between small domestic scale of crofting and other activities around the coast and the monumental landscape of the mountains to the south and open ocean to the north.</li></ul>	High	The Consented Scheme would appear in distant views from upland areas and hilltops of the wider landscape context beyond the NSA. It would not lead to any direct changes to the landscape and therefore would be unlikely to affect the contrasting scales.	Low
The constantly changing character of the Kyle <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The diversity and variety of light and textures of across the water and the shores provides a dynamic foreground to the surrounding moors and mountains.</li></ul>	Medium	The Consented Scheme would be unlikely to noticeably affect this dynamic sense of change when moving through the landscape but would become one of the features occasionally seen within the diverse backdrop.	Negligible
Rich variety of coastal scenery <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The area exhibits both soft landscapes of sand and mud and harder landscapes of rock and cliffs.</li></ul>	Medium	The Consented Scheme would not directly affect either the soft or hard landscapes of the NSA.	Negligible
Distinct pattern of settlement			

Table 4.8.1.1: Kyle of Tongue [NSA]			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Patterns of modern and historic settlement and land use are often clearly visible. These include crofting townships, shooting lodges and sheep farms and the designed landscape surrounding Tongue House.</li><li>The presence of chambered cairns and brochs illustrates that people have occupied this land for many centuries.</li></ul>	Medium	No changes would occur to any current or historic settlement patterns.	Negligible
	Medium	While some turbines could be visible from some historic features this would be unlikely to hinder the ability to understand or appreciate their role as part of the historic settlement of the area.	Negligible
Assessment of Landscape Effects			
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a highly valued landscape. Distinctive mountain summits, rich coastal scenery and wild characteristics are likely to lead to a notable susceptibility to change with potential for wind turbines to become highly prominent and character defining.  Landscape sensitivity to the type of development proposed is therefore considered to be <b>High</b> .		
Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change to this landscape. The ZTV indicates that intervisibility with the Consented Scheme would be limited to higher elevations of eastward facing ridgelines and summits (see TA Figure 4.8.2 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). Much of the area affected is already intervisible with either the operational Bettyhill or Strathy North wind farm turbines. The ZTV indicates some potential new areas of visibility particularly around Am Meall and Loch a’ Bhualaidh. The increased number of turbines within the landscape may result in a perceptible change.  Taking into account that the majority of the NSA would be unaffected and the Negligible or Low magnitude of change to Special Qualities, the overall magnitude of change for the NSA would be <b>Low</b> during construction and operation.		
Effect Significance	Effects on this NSA would be localised and indirect, resulting from the appearance of the Consented Scheme within the wider context. These would virtually always be seen in the context of existing turbines, and where not, would comprise only a very small part of a very expansive surrounding skyline, and would appear at a distance and of a scale considered very unlikely to be distracting. Although the Consented Scheme would introduce wind turbines as a new feature in parts of the wider visual context of this landscape, this is considered unlikely to influence the Special Qualities or characteristics of the NSA due to the clear visual separation.  The effect significance would therefore be considered to be <b>Negligible</b> (not significant) during construction and operation.		

3 Local Context

Table 4.8.1.2: Farr Bay, Strathy and Portskerra [SLA]			
Landscape Baseline			
Landscape Designation Description	<p>The SLA lies along the north coast of Sutherland from Bettyhill in the west to Melvich in the east. It is recognised for its indented coastline of rocky headlands, sheltered bays, and diverse landscape of moorland and crofts. The changing light conditions and weather combined with the diverse coastline give the area a sense of space and dynamism. Expansive views across the sea to Orkney, and down the coast to Cape Wrath and Dunnet Head can be obtained during good weather conditions.</p> <p>While settlement within the SLA occurs in isolated patches, a pattern of historic and modern development is present. Crofting and farming are confined to the intimate slopes around the sheltered bays, which contrast with both the simple inland landscape and vegetation and the dramatic headlands. The remains of Borge Castle, as well as traditional netting stations, and the Strathy lighthouse are notable features of the area.</p>		
Landscape Value	<p>This SLA offers impressive views of the dynamic interplay between the coastline and the sea. The resulting landscape is an intricate mosaic of calm and tranquil bays and harsh headlands. The accessibility of opportunities to experience the sea’s force and scale in close proximity form a valuable part of the overall landscape.</p> <p>Landscape Value is considered to be <b>High</b>.</p>		
Assessment of Landscape Effects on Special Qualities			
Key Quality	Sensitivity	Potential Effects	Magnitude of Change
<p>Dramatically Intricate Coastline and Forceful Sea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Distinctive stretch of rocky coastline, deeply eroded to form a complex assemblage of headlands, cliffs, promontories, stacks, arches, caves and ravines.</li><li>The coast can be awe-inspiring particularly during extreme weather or heavy oceanic swells. Access allows opportunities to experience the sea’s force and scale at close proximity.</li><li>The sandy bays provide a focussed tranquil setting contrasting to the experience of the harsher cliffs and headlands.</li><li>The lighthouse at Strathy is a popular attraction to visitors.</li><li>Traditional netting stations are still notable around Strathy Point and the</li></ul>	High	The coastline is typically viewed from cliff tops and enclosed sandy beaches or from the sea by passing vessels. Although the Consented Scheme could form a perceptible addition within expansive views inland from parts of the SLA, these would be very limited, and it would be seen in the context of other operational turbines. As such it would be unlikely to affect appreciation of the distinctive geology, topography or open views of the coastline and out to sea.	Negligible
	Low	The Consented Scheme would be unlikely to affect any appreciation of the landscape relating to weather conditions.	Negligible
	High	As there would be very limited visibility of the Consented Scheme from the sandy bays and it is very unlikely to affect the contrasting experience they provide for the harsher cliffs and headlands.	Negligible
	Medium	There would be no intervisibility with the lighthouse at Strathy.	Negligible
	Low	The Consented Scheme would be unlikely to affect appreciation of traditional netting stations. There would be no intervisibility with Portskerra.	Negligible

Table 4.8.1.2: Farr Bay, Strathy and Portskerra [SLA]			
sheltered harbour at Portskerra is still well-used.			
<p>Moorland and Crofting Mosaic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Rolling landforms trending towards the coast and opening out over bays provide a distinctive contrast of sequential views and experience of the landscape</li><li>There is a rich tapestry of moorland and crofting settlements creating a diverse mix of colour, texture and form.</li></ul>	Medium	There would be very limited theoretical visibility of the Consented Scheme from the SLA. While it would form a perceptible addition to some views inland from parts of the SLA it would not directly affect this landscape and would therefore be unlikely to result in a perceptible change to the contrasting sequential experiences of the landscape.	Negligible
	Medium	Theoretical visibility of the Consented Scheme is limited within the SLA. While it would form a localised perceptible addition to the wider landscape context, it would become one of the features occasionally seen within the diverse pattern of this landscape.	Low
<p>Big Skies and Extensive Views</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The combination of big skies, distinctive coastal light and changing weather conditions create a sense of immense space and dynamism.</li><li>Fine conditions allow impressive and extensive views to Orkney and along the coast to Cape Wrath and Dunnet Head. In contrast poor weather restricts views and highlights the sense of remoteness.</li><li>The Dounreay Power Station features prominently in views from Strathy Point.</li></ul>	Medium	The Consented Scheme would be unlikely to perceptibly affect this dynamic sense of place when moving through the landscape but would become one of the features occasionally seen within the diverse backdrop.	Low
	Low	The Consented Scheme would be unlikely to affect appreciation of the landscape relating to weather conditions.	Negligible
	Low	There would be no intervisibility with Strathy Point.	Negligible
<p>Historical Dimension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The remains of Borge Castle are still visible and are one of the few surviving medieval defended promontory forts on this part of the North Coast.</li></ul>	Medium	There would be no intervisibility with Borge Castle.	Negligible
Assessment of Landscape Effects			
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>This is a highly valued landscape. Development on or near the exposed cliff tops, tall vertical structures or large scale buildings visible along the coast could interrupt the views along the coast and the domestic scale of existing development.</p> <p>Landscape sensitivity to the type of development proposed would therefore be considered to be <b>Medium</b></p>		
Magnitude of Change	<p>There would be no direct change to this landscape. The ZTV indicates that intervisibility of the Consented Scheme would be intermittent and limited to south facing views from the elevated</p>		



Table 4.8.1.2: Farr Bay, Strathly and Portskerra [SLA]	
	<p>dunes along the coast (see TA Figure 4.8.2 (EIAR Volume 4: Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). Views from these areas are already affected by the operational Bettyhill and / or Strathly North wind farm turbines. The increased number of turbines within the landscape could result in a perceptible change.</p> <p>Taking into account that the majority of the SLA would be unaffected and the Negligible or Low magnitude of change to Special Qualities, the overall magnitude of change for the SLA would be considered to be <b>Low</b> during construction and operation.</p>
Effect Significance	<p>Effects on this SLA would be very localised and indirect, resulting from the appearance of the Consented Scheme turbines within the wider context. These would virtually always be seen in the context of existing turbines and therefore not introduce new features into the view. While the increased number of turbines could extend the horizontal spread of visible turbines, this would only be to a small part of a very expansive landscape focused along the coast and out to sea, rather than inland. It is considered unlikely that the Consented Scheme would significantly influence the Special Qualities of this SLA due to the limited intervisibility and focus on coastline.</p> <p>The effect significance is therefore considered to be <b>Minor</b> (not significant) during construction and operation.</p>

Table 4.8.1.3: Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire [SLA]			
Landscape Baseline			
Landscape Designation Description	<p>This SLA is characterised by the contrast created between Ben Klibreck and Ben Armine and the open surrounding moorland. The hills are dominant features in the surrounding landscape. Ben Klibreck is particularly notable for its distinctive western profile. Due to the open surrounds the ridges and summits afford panoramic views in clear conditions.</p> <p>While the overall landscape appears simple, there is a diverse upland habitat that becomes apparent at a more detailed level. Loch Choire and Loch a’ Bhealaich occupy the trough between the mountains and host pockets of native broadleaf woodland on their shores. While remnants of historic settlement are present throughout the glen, modern settlement is limited to the estate lodge and associated tracks.</p> <p>The lack of settlement, open moorland and isolation created by the mountains contribute to the sense of wildness in the area.</p>		
Landscape Value	<p>Ben Klibreck and the surrounding lochs, and hills offer both solitude and isolation. It is recognised by SNH for its sense of wildness and remoteness. While there are non-vehicular access tracks through the area, these do little to distract from the overarching sense of remoteness.</p> <p>Landscape Value is considered to be <b>High</b>.</p>		
Assessment of Landscape Effects on Special Qualities			
Key Quality	Sensitivity	Potential Effects	Magnitude of Change
<p>Distinctive Mountains</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Ben Klibreck mountain range is a popular and relatively easy climb from Altnaharra. The absence of constructed tracks means the area retains a strong sense of wildness.</li></ul>	High	<p>The Consented Scheme would be seen from parts of the Ben Klibreck range. VP9 gives an impression of how it would appear from summits in the area (see TA Figure 4.8.13 *EIAR Volume 4: Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1). From the hilltops it would almost always be seen in the context of the operational Bettyhill and / or Strathy North wind farm turbines. While it would likely appear closer, it would be unlikely to perceptibly affect the recreational accessibility or enjoyment of this area as it</p>	Low

Table 4.8.1.3: Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire [SLA]			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Striking landscape features form the distinctive profile of the Ben Klibreck range contrasting with the large grassy corries sweeping down to Loch Choire and Loch A Bhealaich.</li><li>The steep bounding slopes on the eastern and northern sides of Ben Armine provide a contrast with the relatively flat Flow Country beyond. Ben Armine is one of the most remote hill summits in Scotland.</li></ul>	Low	<p>would represent a small change to only a small part of the wider landscape context.</p> <p>The ZTV shows that there would be potential intervisibility with the Consented Scheme from parts of the mountain range, however this would not affect the immediate experience of these features or their setting when viewed from within the SLA or the surrounding area.</p>	Negligible
	Medium	<p>The Consented Scheme would appear in views from the summit of Ben Armine as a distant feature (over 20 km). It would be seen in the context of the operational Bettyhill and / or Strathly North wind farm turbines. It could increase the perceptibility, extent and scale of turbines within the landscape, however given the distance, scale and separation this would be unlikely to affect its remote feel.</p>	Low
<p>Secluded Glen with Network of Tracks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The glen of Loch a Choire possesses a strong sense of seclusion and wildness although punctuated by the estate lodge. Landscape and visual interest is enhanced by important native woodland remnants.</li><li>The glen also contains through-routes for non-vehicular traffic from Crask to Forsinard and numerous tracks south of the Loch.</li></ul>	High	<p>Theoretical visibility of the Consented Scheme within the glen is largely limited to the upper slopes on the northern side of the Loch with some intervisibility of tips on the southern shores and slopes. Based on the ZTV the turbines would not be perceptible from the native woodland remnants within the glen. The limited visibility of the turbines would be unlikely to affect the remote feel of the glen.</p>	Low
	Medium	<p>This track forms part of Scottish Hill Track 342 – Crask Inn to Badanloch Lodge (see TA Figure 4.8.4 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). The ZTV shows that theoretical visibility along this route is largely limited to areas outwith the SLA. As only a very few turbines tips would be theoretically visible within a limited area, it is unlikely that they would result in a perceptible change.</p>	Negligible
<p>Extensive Views from Peaks and Summits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Exceptional panoramic views from high ridges and summits in clear conditions, extending to the northern coastline and beyond, taking in neighbouring peaks including Ben Hope and Ben Loyal and vast areas of surrounding moorland, the character of which is hard to discern from lower levels.</li></ul>	High	<p>The Consented Scheme would form a feature within views to the north. VP9 gives an impression of how it would appear from summits in the area (see TA Figure 4.8.13 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). From the hilltops it would almost always be seen in the area already affected by the operational Bettyhill and / or Strathly North wind farm turbines. While it would likely appear closer, it would remain a distant and relatively small feature within these wide and expansive views.</p>	Low

Table 4.8.1.3: Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire [SLA]			
Historic Landscape			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>This area contains the isolated remains of a cleared township and a number of shielings are located on the southern shore of Loch Choire.</li><li>The flatter area to the east of Ben Kilbreck represents the southern extent of an extensive prehistoric settlement that is predominantly south of Loch Naver. Accordingly, a number of roundhouses, a burnt mound and a field system are recorded, although the main area of settlement lies outwith the boundary to the north.</li></ul>	High	There would be limited intervisibility with these features. At over 20 km distance, any tips theoretically visible from this area are likely to be barely perceptible.	Negligible
	High	There would be limited intervisibility with these features. At over 20 km distance, any tips theoretically visible from this area are likely to be barely perceptible particularly considering intervening woodland.	Negligible
Assessment of Landscape Effects			
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a highly valued landscape. This area is very sensitive to development that could interrupt the relationship between the open moorland and the isolated mountains. Development or landuse change could impinge on the secluded character and wildness qualities of the central glen.  Landscape sensitivity to the type of development proposed would be therefore considered <b>High</b> .		
Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change to this landscape. The ZTV indicates that intervisibility of the Consented Scheme would be patchy and largely limited to northeast views from higher elevations and hill tops (see TA Figure 4.8.2 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). Many of these views are already affected by the operational Bettyhill and / or Strathly North wind farm turbines. The increased number of turbines within the landscape could result in a perceptible change to the landscape context outwith the SLA.  Taking into account that the majority of the SLA would be unaffected and the Negligible or Low magnitude of change to Special Qualities, it is considered that the overall magnitude of change for the SLA would be <b>Low</b> during construction and operation.		
Effect Significance	Effects on this SLA would be indirect and localised, resulting from the appearance of turbines within the wider context. These would virtually always be seen in the context of existing turbines and therefore not introduce new features into the landscape. While the increased number of turbines would likely extend the horizontal spread of visible turbines, they would appear at a distance and of a scale considered very unlikely to be distracting. It is considered unlikely that the Consented Scheme would significantly influence the Special Qualities of this SLA due to the limited intervisibility, distance and clear visual separation.  The effect significance would therefore be considered <b>Minor</b> (not significant) during construction and operation.		

Table 4.8.1.4: Bens Griam and Loch nan Clar [SLA]			
Landscape Baseline			
Landscape Designation Description	<p>The focus of this sweeping moorland landscape is the trio of distinctive hills, Ben Griam Mòr, Ben Griam Beg and Meall a’ Bhuirich. The moorland includes a collection of large lochs, one of which feeds the River Helmsdale. The overall sense of this landscape is one of remoteness, wildness, and open space. The atmosphere of isolation and remoteness is intensified by the fact that the area is almost completely uninhabited. However, recent upgrades to the road network to facilitate timber transportation, suggest that the area may not be as disconnected as it first appears.</p> <p>The area is characterised by open moorland broken up by montane grassland covered hills with rocky outcrops, areas of scree and watercourses cutting into the slopes. The presence of coniferous plantations juxtaposes the surrounding area and appears alien in this landscape. Larger burns and tributaries traverse the landscape; however, these are not always noticeable due to the largely flat peatland.</p> <p>The remains of prehistoric settlements are scattered across the landscape, including medieval townships and shielings. Archaeological features such as cairns and hut circles are frequently found in the area. Due to the nature of the landscape, current land use is largely limited to forestry and recreational pursuits, such as fishing, deer stalking, and hiking.</p>		
Landscape Value	<p>The Ben Griams and the surrounding lochs, hills and mountains form a landscape with an atmosphere of isolation and remoteness. The presence of coniferous forestry plantations and associated road improvements and frequent forestry vehicles detract from this sense of remoteness. However, these roads also enhance opportunities for the wider public to experience this landscape.</p> <p>Landscape Value is considered to be <b>High</b>.</p>		
Assessment of Landscape Effects on Special Qualities			
Key Quality	Sensitivity	Potential Effects	Magnitude of Change
Accessible Solitude			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ben Griam Mòr, Ben Griam Beg and Meall a’ Bhùirich form a conspicuous cluster of Old Red Sandstone peaks lying within the surrounding landscape of lochs, watercourses and moorland.</li></ul>	High	The Consented Scheme would form a feature within views to the north. VP1 gives an impression of how it would appear from summits in the area (see TA Figure 4.8.5 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). From the hilltops it would almost always be seen in the context of the operational Bettyhill and / or Strathy North wind farm turbines.	Medium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Lochs punctuate the open moorland providing distinctive horizontal references which highlight the surrounding hills and reflect the texture of the moors.</li></ul>	Medium	The ZTV shows that there would be potential intervisibility from parts of the SLA, but that there would be none from the lochs themselves (see TA Figure 4.8.2 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). It would therefore be unlikely to affect the immediate experience of these features or their setting when viewed from within the SLA or the surrounding area.	Negligible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The B871 runs through the area providing travellers with extensive views and a chance to experience a sense of wildness and solitude.</li></ul>	Medium	Visibility of the Consented Scheme from this route is limited. Where visible it would be seen as a few tips over the mountains to the north and this is unlikely to result in a perceptible change to the experience of wildness and solitude along the route.	Negligible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Well maintained access tracks provide access to</li></ul>	Medium	Visibility of the Consented Scheme from access tracks within the SLA is limited. As	Negligible

Table 4.8.1.4: Bens Griam and Loch nan Clar [SLA]			
remote parts of the SLA interior.		such it is unlikely to noticeably affect the recreational accessibility or enjoyment of these routes as it would represent a change to only a small part of the wider landscape context.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Fishing on remote hill lochs in the SLA is enjoyed for the experience of isolation and tranquillity.</li></ul>	Medium	The would be no intervisibility between the Consented Scheme and the remote hill lochs.	Negligible
Flow Country Views			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The isolated and well-defined hill summits offer a rare vantage point to view the vast extent of the Caithness and Sutherland peatlands punctuated by other lone summits including Ben Alisky, Morven, Scaraben and the Maiden Pap.</li></ul>	High	The Consented Scheme would form a feature within views to the north. VP1 gives an impression of how it would appear from summits in the area (see TA Figure 4.8.5 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). From the summits within the SLA, the Consented Scheme would almost always be seen in the context of the operational Bettyhill and / or Strathly North wind farm turbines. It would, however, appear closer, and could distract from some views, particularly northward.	Medium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The A897, near the north east corner of this SLA, is one of few locations in Caithness and Sutherland to offer views from a public open road over a Flow Country pool system that are typically difficult to see because of the flatness of the peatlands.</li></ul>	High	The ZTV shows that there would be potential intervisibility from this part of the SLA for a short section along the A897 (see TA Figure 4.8.2 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). However, it would be limited to tips over the ridgeline to the northwest. Given the focus of the view and nature of the pool systems, it would be unlikely that the immediate experience and appreciation of these features or their setting would be affected.	Low
Assessment of Landscape Effects			
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a highly valued landscape. This area is very sensitive to development that could interrupt the relationship between the open moorland and the isolated mountains and the sense of scale this creates. Development or landuse change could not only impinge on the perceived wildness and remoteness of the area, it could also alter the existing drainage systems having significant effects on the sensitive peatlands.  Landscape sensitivity to the type of development proposed is therefore considered to be <b>High</b> .		
Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change to this landscape. The ZTV indicates that intervisibility of the Consented Scheme would be limited to northward views from higher elevations and hill tops (see TA Figure 4.8.2 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). Many of these views are already affected by the operational Bettyhill and / or Strathly North wind farm turbines. However, the increased number of turbines located outwith the SLA would likely result in notable change to the wider landscape context viewed from within the SLA.  While the majority of the SLA would be unaffected by the Consented Scheme it would likely result in notable changes in localised areas. Taking this and the Negligible to Medium magnitude of change to Special Qualities, the overall magnitude of change for the SLA would be considered <b>Medium</b> during construction and operation.		
Effect Significance	Effects on this SLA would be indirect and localised, resulting from the appearance of turbines to the north in the surrounding landscape. These would virtually always be seen in the context of existing turbines and therefore not introduce new features into the landscape.		

Table 4.8.1.4: Bens Griam and Loch nan Clar [SLA]	
	They would however likely extend the horizontal spread of turbines and would appear at a closer distance and of a slightly larger scale. While it would have a negligible effect on the majority of the Special Qualities of the SLA, the Consented Scheme could detract from the appreciation of some qualities when seen in close proximity from elevated areas.  The effect significance would therefore be considered <b>Moderate</b> (significant) during construction and operation.

Table 4.8.1.5: The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast [SLA]			
Landscape Baseline			
Landscape Designation Description	<p>The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA is made up of a variety of landscapes, ranging from interior peatland to isolated mountains and a raised coastal shelf. There is a strong feeling of remoteness and wildness within the interior of the landscape largely due to its inaccessibility and the lack access routes. The mountain and moorland peaks of the south western edge of the Flow Country join to create a distinct skyline visible from much of Caithness and offering views across the Flow Country and to the North Sea. The Berriedale and Langwell Glens bound these hills and provide a contrasting human scale experience by offering shelter and enclosure within this vast landscape. Together the woods within these glens make up the largest semi-natural broadleaved woodland in the Caithness.</p> <p>The isolated mountains of this SLA are typified by exposed rock, rocky outcrops, scree and montane vegetation. They rise abruptly from the extensive surrounding peatland which is very difficult to access or cross due to the drainage conditions. When seen from the hills the peatlands appear simple in composition, however closer inspection reveals an intricate network of lochs, pools, surface water, watercourses and tussocky wetland grass and heather.</p> <p>The peatland expanse is broken up in the south-eastern part of the SLA by deeply carved wooded glens which offer shelter and protection to both vegetation and humans. Settlement is limited to these sheltered glens and the coast, leaving the largely undeveloped interior with a strong sense of wildness.</p>		
Landscape Value	<p>The Flow Country and Berriedale SLA is highly valued landscape known for its sense of remoteness and its distinctive skyline which can be seen from much of Caithness. The lack of accessibility within the landscape may reduce opportunities for the landscape to be experienced but they further emphasise the sense of remoteness.</p> <p>Landscape Value is considered to be <b>High</b>.</p>		
Assessment of Landscape Effects on Special Qualities			
Key Quality	Sensitivity	Potential Effects	Magnitude of Change
Distinctive Mountain and Moorland Skyline			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The distinctive combination of expansive peatland and isolated mountains is unique within the UK. The isolated and tall mountains emphasise the simplicity, flatness and low relief of the surrounding Flow Country peatland and vice versa.</li></ul>	High	The ZTV shows that there would be limited potential intervisibility of the Consented Development from the SLA. It would largely be limited to distant views from hill tops and an area of higher elevation in the north-eastern part of the SLA. Given the physical separation it is unlikely that this would affect the immediate experience and appreciation of these features or their setting when viewed from within the SLA or the surrounding area.	Negligible - Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The conspicuous mountain profiles, from striking cones to rolling masses, are visible from most of Caithness and serve as distinctive</li></ul>	High	There would be limited theoretical visibility of the Consented Scheme from the SLA and Caithness. While it would form a perceptible addition to some to the west and northwest it would not directly affect this landscape	Negligible - Low



**Table 4.8.1.5: The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast [SLA]**

<p>landmarks. They are typically seen from a distance and it is difficult to perceive their size or distance due to the simplicity of the intervening peatland.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Morven forms a prominent conical landmark feature which is visible from both the north coast and the Morayshire coast. It stands in strong contrast to its long-backed neighbour Scaraben but is echoed on a smaller scale by the rocky profile of the nearby Maiden Pap. The latter is an especially striking landscape feature and backdrop when viewed from the Braemore area.</li><li>• Ben Alisky is a remote, isolated peak north of the main range of mountains. Whilst not particularly high (349 metres), it forms a distinctive landmark feature for a wide area of Caithness.</li></ul>	High	<p>and would therefore be unlikely to result in a perceptible change to the appreciation of these mountains as distinctive landmarks for the area.</p> <p>The Consented Scheme would form a feature within views to the northwest from Morven. Although VP2 is some distance away (over 10 km from the summits) it gives an impression of how the Consented Scheme would appear from summits in the area (see TA Figure 4.8.6 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). The Consented Scheme would almost always be seen in the context of the operational Bettyhill and / or Strathly North wind farm turbines. While it would likely appear closer, at nearly 30 km away, it would remain a distant and relatively small feature within the wide and expansive views. Given the clear visual separation, it would be unlikely to affect appreciation of the summit as a landmark feature within the surrounding landscape.</p>	Negligible - Low
	High	<p>The Consented Scheme would form a feature within views to the northwest from Ben Alisky. Although VP2 is some distance away (over 10 km from the peak) it gives an impression of how the Consented Scheme would appear from summits in the area (see TA Figure 4.8.6 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). The Consented Scheme would almost always be seen in the context of the operational Bettyhill and / or Strathly North wind farm turbines. While it would likely appear closer, at approximately 25 km away, it would remain a distant and relatively small feature within these wide and expansive views. Given the clear visual separation, it would be unlikely to affect appreciation of the summit as a landmark feature within the surrounding landscape.</p>	Negligible - Low
<p>Exposed Peaks, Vast Openness and Intimate Glens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The mountain summits offer rare opportunity to view a panorama of wide ranging characteristics – extending over the Flow Country peatlands, out to sea and as far south as the Cairngorms in clear conditions.</li></ul>	High	<p>The Consented Scheme would form a feature within views to the northwest from mountain tops within the SLA. Although VP2 is outwith the SLA and located closer to the Consented Scheme it gives an impression of how it would appear from summits in the area (see TA Figure 4.8.6 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). From the hilltops it would almost always be seen in the context of the operational Bettyhill and / or Strathly North wind farm turbines. While it would likely appear closer, it would remain a distant (over 25 km from Ben Alisky and</p>	Negligible - Low

**Table 4.8.1.5: The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast [SLA]**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The vast open sweep of the peatlands with the long, low horizon evokes strong feelings of isolation and wildness. The mountains on its southern edge and the isolated peak of Ben Alisky are welcome orientation features in a landscape otherwise lacking in landmarks.</li><li>• Experience of the open peatlands area is strongly affected by big skies with rapidly changing light and weather conditions.</li><li>• Views from local roads are particularly important along the higher sections of the A9 around Achavanich and Berriedale and from the road into Braemore. Views from the railway line which skirts the area's north western side, from the valley tracks, from the mountain peaks, or even from aircraft all give different perspectives. Views of the Flow Country from elevated viewpoints, including from air, best reveal the distinctive pattern of the pool systems.</li><li>• The deep wooded sections of the Berriedale and Langwell glens provide an intimacy of scale and shelter and are dotted with buildings and other welcoming signs of human habitation.</li><li>• Berriedale, is a dispersed settlement with buildings sandwiched between the Berriedale Water and the steep cliffs of the Berriedale Braes, over which the A9 takes a series of blind bends that are notoriously difficult to manoeuvre.</li><li>• Within the glens, there is a concentration of architecturally and</li></ul>	High	<p>Morven) and relatively small feature within these wide and expansive views.</p> <p>The ZTV shows that there would be limited potential intervisibility from the SLA. Taken in combination with the distance from the Consented Scheme, this would be unlikely to affect the appreciation of the feelings of isolation and wildness experienced from the open peatlands. Likewise, the limited intervisibility would be unlikely to affect the appreciation of Ben Alisky as an orientational feature in the area.</p>	Negligible
	Low	<p>The Consented Scheme would be unlikely to affect any appreciation of the landscape relating to weather conditions.</p>	Negligible
	Medium	<p>Intervisibility of the Consented Scheme from the various transportation corridors through and around the SLA would be very limited. The ZTV shows that it would largely be limited to the railway line to the north of the SLA and the A9 around Achavanich. However, given the orientation of these and their relationship with the proposed development it is very unlikely that this would affect the appreciation of views into the SLA.</p>	Negligible
	High	<p>There would be no intervisibility with the Consented Scheme from the Berriedale or Langwell Glens.</p>	Negligible
	Medium	<p>There would be no intervisibility with the Consented Scheme from Berriedale or the surrounding area.</p>	Negligible
	Medium	<p>There would be no intervisibility with the Consented Scheme along either Berriedale or Langwell Glens the immediate surrounding area.</p>	Negligible



historically important buildings.			
<p>Historic Landscape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognising that the inland waterways were a vital method of transport and communication in prehistory. Monuments are predominantly located along Langwell and Berriedale Waters and their tributaries.</li> </ul>	Medium	There would be no intervisibility with the Consented Scheme along either Berriedale or Langwell Waters and the immediate surrounding area.	Negligible
<b>Assessment of Landscape Effects</b>			
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>This area is very sensitive to development that could compromise views of the distinctive skyline. The introduction of large-scale structure in views could affect the perception of the scale of the mountains and the vast surrounding peatlands. Development could compromise not only the sensitive hydrology of the peatlands but also the sense of remoteness and wildness particularly within the interior.</p> <p>Landscape sensitivity to the type of development proposed is therefore considered to be <b>High</b></p>		
Magnitude of Change	<p>There would be no direct change to this landscape. The ZTV indicates that intervisibility of the Consented Scheme would be patchy and largely limited to the northeastern part of the SLA and views from higher elevations and hill tops (see TA Figure 4.8.2 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). Many of these are already affected by the operational Bettyhill and / or Strathly North wind farm turbines. At its closest point the Consented Scheme is located approximately 18 km from the SLA. The majority of the SLA is over 25 km from the turbines. As such while the increased number of turbines within the landscape could result in a perceptible change to the wider landscape context to the north-west, this change would be seen in the distance and well outwith the SLA.</p> <p>Taking into account that the majority of the SLA would be unaffected and the Negligible or Negligible - Low magnitude of change to Special Qualities, the overall magnitude of change for the SLA would be considered <b>Negligible - Low</b> during construction and operation.</p>		
Effect Significance	<p>Effects on this SLA would be indirect and localised, resulting from the appearance of distant turbines within the wider context. These would largely be seen in the context of existing turbines, particularly from hilltops and therefore not introduce new features into the landscape. While the increased number of turbines would likely extend the horizontal spread of turbines, they would appear at a distance and of a scale considered very unlikely to be distracting. It is considered very unlikely that the Consented Scheme would significantly influence the Special Qualities of this SLA due to the limited intervisibility and clear visual separation.</p> <p>The effect significance would therefore be considered <b>Negligible - Minor</b> (not significant) during construction and operation.</p>		

<b>Landscape Baseline</b>			
<b>Landscape Designation Description</b>	<p>This area covers the most northerly point on mainland Britain, the Dunnet Head peninsula, adjoining Dunnet Bay and settlements of Dunnet and West Dunnet. It is characterised by its prominent Old Red Sandstone headland, striking vertical cliffs and expanse of isolated moorland. The peninsula juts out into the Pentland Firth making the experience one of being more at sea than land. Clear weather affords impressive and extensive views to Orkney, Strathy Point, Cape Wrath and Duncansby Head and inland to the distinctive hills of the Flow Country to the south. The lighthouse is a striking feature within the landscape and a popular tourist stopping point and local landmark. Set amongst the remains of World War II (WWII) defensive structures, a viewpoint with interpretive signage helps visitors to interpret and appreciate the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>The cliffs form an abrupt and sharply defined vertical edge to the coastline when viewed against the open sea. From the cliff tops the sense of exposure can be dramatic and, for some, intimidating. Low vegetation clings to the cliff tops, ledges and eroded faces. Sea birds including puffins frequent these cliff edges and steep coastal grassland. The sounds and activity of the birds adds to the dynamic experience of the landscape and draw bird watchers to the area.</p> <p>Away from the cliff the sweeping moorland is punctuated by lochans, hilltops and the remains of WWII defensive structures. The southern part of the SLA is made up of more settled farmland, and fine sandy beach and dune systems providing a contrasting experience to the exposed headland. Views to the south reveal a pattern of pasture and arable fields that form a distinctive transition between the exposed headland and the settled lowlands to the south.</p>		
<b>Landscape Value</b>	<p>This SLA offers spectacular views both seaward and inland to distant mountain peaks. The dramatic headland and cliffs of the SLA are valued both as a tourist attraction and as an opportunity to bird watch. The opportunity to experience the sea's force and scale at the most northly point on mainland Britain adds to the overall value of the landscape.</p> <p>Landscape Value is considered to be <b>High</b>.</p>		
<b>Assessment of Landscape Effects on Special Qualities</b>			
<b>Key Quality</b>	<b>Sensitivity</b>	<b>Potential Effects</b>	<b>Magnitude of Change</b>
<b>Panoramic Views from Prominent Headland and Striking Cliffs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The prominent headland forms a striking large landmark at the northernmost point of the British mainland. High numbers of visitors travel along the single-track road to the viewpoint and lighthouse which occupies a commanding position and is itself a prominent feature in views from land and sea.</li> <li>Views to the sheer cliffs of distinctive, horizontally layered Old Red Sandstone are enlivened by the changing light and weather conditions, the crashing waves of the Pentland Firth and the presence of many species of nesting sea birds.</li> </ul>	High	There would be very limited theoretical visibility of the Consented Scheme from the SLA and Caithness. While the distant tips may form a perceptible addition to some views to the southwest they would not directly affect this landscape and would be very unlikely to affect the appreciation of the headland or its role as the northernmost point of the British mainland.	Negligible
	Low	The Consented Scheme would be unlikely to affect any appreciation of the landscape relating to weather and sea conditions or presence of sea birds.	Negligible

Table 4.8.1.6: Dunnet Head [SLA]			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Distinctive landform features include ravines such as Red and Chapel Geos, crags and promontories such as The Neback and Easter Head, and by areas of rocky coast where the cliff have slumped and eroded.</li><li>In clear conditions expansive views are obtained, from the cliff tops and from elevated positions, extending across the sea to Orkney, Cape Wrath, Strathly Point, Duncansby Head, and inland to the peaks of Caithness including Morvern, Maiden Pap and Scaraben. These views looking across flat terrain or a low seaward horizon, are so expansive that they can prompt strong emotional responses, including evoking an “edge of world” feeling.</li></ul>	High	While the distant tips of the Consented Scheme would form a perceptible addition to the southwest, it would not directly affect this landscape and would therefore be very unlikely to affect the appreciation of these distinctive landforms for the area.	Negligible
	High	The ZTV shows that potential intervisibility from the SLA would be limited to distant views from southwest facing higher ground. Given the physical separation and lack of visibility it is very unlikely that this would affect the immediate experience and appreciation of surrounding landscape features or their relationship to the SLA.	Negligible
Isolated Moorland and Lochans <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Inland from the sea cliffs the headland consists of an outlying area of moorland with scattered lochans, isolated from the landward moors by a farmed and settled coastal strip that extends across the neck of the peninsula.</li><li>The moorland seems extensive, even though it is actually quite small in extent, as its edges are typically not seen from its interior, and there are a lack of comparable size indicators.</li></ul>	High	While the distant tips of the Consented Scheme may form a perceptible addition to the southwest it would not directly affect this landscape and would therefore be very unlikely to affect the immediate experience or appreciation of these distinctive landforms for the area.	Negligible
	High	The ZTV shows that potential intervisibility from the SLA would be limited to distant views from southwest facing higher ground. It could form a perceptible addition to some views, however given the physical separation it is very unlikely that this would affect the extensive experience or appreciation of the moorland.	Negligible
Contrasting Bay and Cliff Landscape <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The sweeping curve of fine sandy beach and sheltered agricultural landscape at Dunnet Bay seems to form a secluded haven in sharp contrast to the elevated and dramatic headland which projects beyond.</li></ul>	High	There would be very limited intervisibility with these features. At over 40 km distance, any tips that would be theoretically visible from this area would likely to be barely perceptible. It is unlikely that that this limited visibility would affect the appreciation of the bay as a secluded haven contrasting to the dramatic headland.	Negligible

Table 4.8.1.6: Dunnet Head [SLA]	
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Sensitivity	This area is very sensitive to development that could impinge on views towards the headland or the expansive panoramas seen from Dunnet Head. The introduction of large scale structures on or near the headline could compromise the perception of scale and the seemingly extensive character of the interior moorland. These types of structures could also compromise the areas distinctive landmark qualities or disrupt the gentle curve of Dunnet Bay and its sense of seclusion.  Landscape sensitivity to the type of development proposed is therefore considered to be <b>High</b> .
Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change to this landscape. The ZTV indicates that intervisibility of the Consented Scheme would be patchy and largely limited to a few areas of higher ground (see TA Figure 4.8.2 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). Where visible, the turbines would be seen as tips over the distant horizon. VP14 gives an impression of this (see TA Figure 4.8.18 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). Much of the SLA is already affected by the operational turbines in the surrounding lowland agricultural landscape. The increased number of distant turbine tips within the landscape would be unlikely to result in a perceptible change to the landscape context outwith the SLA.  Taking into account the distance from the Consented Scheme, that much of the SLA would be unaffected, and the Negligible magnitude of change to Special Qualities, the overall magnitude of change for the SLA would be considered <b>Negligible</b> during construction and operation.
Effect Significance	Effects on this SLA would be very localised and indirect, resulting from the appearance of very distant turbine tips within the wider context. These would be seen in the context of much nearer and more prominent existing turbines and therefore not introduce new features into the landscape. Where visible the turbine tips would appear at a distance and of a scale considered very unlikely to be result in any discernible reduction in scenic quality or change to the intrinsic character or Special Qualities of the area due to the limited intervisibility and clear visual separation.  The effect significance would therefore be considered <b>Negligible</b> (not significant) during construction and operation.



4 Landscape Character Types Tables

Table 4.8.1.7: Coastal Crofts and Small Farms – Caithness & Sutherland [LCT 144] (OWESG LCA CT1 (Melvich and Dunnet only))	
Landscape Baseline	
Landscape Designation Description	This LCT is made up the narrow settled and farmed fringe around the coast of Caithness and Sutherland. While it is relatively common along the eastern coast, it is more intermittent along the north coast west of Thurso, where it is closely associated with the more fertile land at river mouths and along kyles and sea lochs. Within the Detailed Study Area the LCT comprises small pockets of settlement and sloping pasture, tucked between sheltered sandy beaches and the lower-lying <i>Sweeping moorland and Flows</i> or the rough and craggy <i>Rocky Hills and Moorland</i> . Larger vegetation in this exposed LCT is limited with rough pasture dotted with gorse, rush and heather moorland being dominant. Settlements are largely made up of crofting communities that have strong connections to the sea with small harbours sited in the sheltered coves at the foot of cliffs. Evidence of a long history of settlement is present throughout the LCT in the form of prehistoric and historic sites. Views within this LCT tend to focus on the details within the settled areas and how they contrast to the wider context of hills, sea, sandy beaches, headlands and islands which combined to create the rich scenic character of the surrounding area.
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Narrow, settled and farmed coastal fringe with subtle variations in topography, from long stretches of strongly contained coastal shelves and raised beaches, to smaller pockets at river mouths and squeezed between dunes and areas of <i>Cnocan – Caithness &amp; Sutherland</i>.</li><li>• Pastures and occasional arable fields, most often divided by post and wire fences, with the division of fields marked by crop colour and texture rather than boundaries.</li><li>• Low stone walls enclosing fields on the shelf above the <i>High Cliffs and Sheltered Bays</i> between Dunbeath and Wick.</li><li>• Little woodland within the more exposed east and north Caithness coasts.</li><li>• Small woodlands and clumps of trees present at the outlet of more sheltered straths or along the eastern shores of Kyle of Tongue and Loch Eriboll.</li><li>• Settlement most concentrated where this Landscape Character Type broadens at the mouths of major rivers along the east coast, where larger farms and crofts are concentrated.</li><li>• Small hunkered-down croft houses and outbuildings loosely clustered or sometimes aligned in a linear fashion on the top of terraces or ridges above the coast or a river floodplain.</li><li>• More dispersed settlement pattern on the east coast to the north of Brora.</li><li>• Newer housing most evident to the south of Brora with larger modern houses often infilling spaces between older croft houses and contrasting with the size and form of these original buildings.</li><li>• A number of settlements, often located at bridging points and at the junction with the straths, many with harbours particularly on the east coast of Sutherland and Caithness.</li><li>• Major communications routes on the east coast including the A9, the railway and transmission line aligned along the edge of this landscape.</li><li>• A number of historic sites including churches, castles, mills and cemeteries.</li><li>• Highly visible landscape, seen from major roads and, on the east Sutherland coast, the railway.</li><li>• Complex visual composition of views tending to focus on the detail of houses field patterns and crops, yet with the wider context of backdrop hills and sea adding diversity.</li></ul>
Landscape Value	This LCT offers a small-scale detailed landscape contrasting with the larger remote inland landscapes and open foreboding seascape to the north. The value of parts of the LCT are recognised by their inclusion in the Farr Bay, Strathly and Portskerra SLA and Kyle of

Table 4.8.1.7: Coastal Crofts and Small Farms – Caithness & Sutherland [LCT 144] (OWESG LCA CT1 (Melvich and Dunnet only))	
	Tongue NSA. While these designations do not cover the whole of the LCT and value is considered to vary across it, it is generally considered to be <b>Medium</b> .
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	<p>The principal aspects of this LCT which may be affected by the Consented Scheme comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Highly visible landscape, seen from major roads and, on the east Sutherland coast, the railway.</li><li>• Complex visual composition of views tending to focus on the detail of houses field patterns and crops, yet with the wider context of backdrop hills and sea adding diversity.</li></ul>
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a moderately valued landscape. The smaller sense of scale is susceptible to some degree of change of the type proposed, however being on the edge of more expansive large-scale landscapes may allow for accommodation of indirect change. The presence of operational turbines in the wider landscape also reduces the sensitivity to some degree. Landscape sensitivity to the type of development proposed is therefore considered to be <b>Medium</b> .
Potential Effects	<p>Potential indirect effects which could result to this LCT comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appearance of the Consented Scheme to the south could form a new focus which could affect the appreciation of the small-scale nature of the landscape.</li><li>• Appearance of the Consented Scheme to the south could distract focus away from the complex visual composition of the crofting communities and detailed pattern of the immediate surrounding landscape.</li></ul>
Magnitude of Change	<p>There would be no direct change and very limited indirect change to the majority of the LCT (see TA Figure 4.8.3 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). Indirect change would be largely limited to the area around Strathly which would share intervisibility with the operational Strathly North wind farm. The Consented Scheme would appear at a greater distance to the operational turbines set in a low point to the south along the glen.</p> <p>Taking into account that the majority of the LCT would be unaffected, the overall magnitude of change would be <b>Low</b> during construction and operation.</p>
Effect Significance	<p>Although there would be theoretical indirect effects on parts of the LCT, the presence of the operational Strathly North wind farm would reduce the prominence of the Consented Scheme. Whilst the turbines would form a new feature in views to the south from very limited parts of the LCT, it is not considered that this would result in a noticeable change to its overall character.</p> <p>The effect significance would therefore be considered <b>Minor</b> (and not significant) during construction and operation due to the predicted effects on select southern views from Strathly.</p>

Table 4.8.1.8: Lone Mountains [LCT 138]	
Landscape Baseline	
Landscape Designation Description	The mountains which make up the <i>Lone Mountains</i> LCT lie isolated within expanses of lower-lying open moorland. Their distinctive profiles are visible on the horizon throughout the wider landscape. The mountains are typically located within areas of <i>Sweeping Moorland and Flows</i> and <i>Rocky Hills and Moorland</i> and feature steep and sweeping concave slopes. Some also have complex and narrow radiating ridges and multiple peaks. Their profiles can vary vastly from very steep on one side to gently rising on the other as exhibited by Ben Hope. Within the wider landscape, Ben Griam Mhor and Ben Griam Beg are relatively small, but very isolated standing out amongst the surrounding <i>Sweeping Moorland and Flow</i> in the interior core of Caithness and Sutherland. The isolation of these largely uninhabited mountains and sparse dwarf vegetation allows their full form to be appreciated and makes them prominent landmark features. Their solitary position also offers extensive panoramic views across the surrounding landscape.
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Individual mountains forming landmarks seen widely and at considerable distance across expansive lower-lying <i>Sweeping Moorland and Flows</i> and <i>Cnocan – Caithness &amp; Sutherland</i>.</li><li>Mountains possess a distinctive profile usually comprising steep, sweeping, concave slopes, making them look quite elegant and graceful</li><li>Height of mountains varies, but even the smaller mountains can appear high because of their isolation, steep-sided profiles and when seen in juxtaposition with lower-lying <i>Sweeping Moorland and Flows</i>.</li><li>Peaks generally topped by exposed rock and sparse dwarf vegetation which gradually merges into moorland surrounds.</li><li>Ribbons of broadleaf scrub woodland associated with the many water courses that tumble down steep glens.</li><li>Largely uninhabited, creating a distinct sense of remoteness, although some of its peaks attract significant numbers of hill walkers, especially during the summer months.</li><li>Peaks offer extensive views of the surrounding area including the distinctive water landscapes of the Flows.</li></ul>
Landscape Value	Due to the simplicity of the surrounding landscapes, these impressive <i>Lone Mountains</i> take centre stage, and are valued landmark features in the wider landscape. This is recognised by their inclusion in various landscape designations including NSAs and SLAs. Landscape Value is considered to be <b>High</b> .
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	<p>The principal aspects of this LCT which may be affected by the Consented Scheme comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Individual mountains forming landmarks seen widely and at considerable distance across expansive lower-lying <i>Sweeping Moorland and Flows</i> and <i>Cnocan – Caithness &amp; Sutherland</i>.</li><li>Height of mountains varies, but even the smaller mountains can appear high because of their isolation, steep-sided profiles and when seen in juxtaposition with lower-lying <i>Sweeping Moorland and Flows</i>.</li><li>Largely uninhabited, creating a distinct sense of remoteness, although some of its peaks attract significant numbers of hill walkers, especially during the summer months.</li><li>Peaks offer extensive views of the surrounding area including the distinctive water landscapes of the Flows.</li></ul>
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a highly valued landscape. The distinct forms of these <i>Lone Mountains</i> are susceptible to change of the type proposed. Landscape sensitivity to the type of development proposed is therefore considered to be <b>High</b> .

Table 4.8.1.8: Lone Mountains [LCT 138]	
Potential Effects	<p>Potential indirect effects which could result to this LCT comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Turbines to the north may become prominent and distract from the north coast and vistas out to sea.</li><li>Appearance of wind turbines to the east may distract from wider views particularly those westward towards the Kyle of Tongue NSA.</li><li>Appearance of turbines may reduce the perceived sense of seclusion and remoteness.</li></ul>
Magnitude of Change	<p>There would be no direct change to this LCT. The ZTV suggests that indirect change would be limited to upper slopes facing the Consented Scheme (see TA Figure 4.8.3 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). At their nearest this would comprise all 39 turbines seen to the north of Ben Griam Beg in the context of the operational Strathly North wind farm. Construction works would also likely be evident from this area as small movements in the wider landscape. Within the wider Detailed Study Area the turbines would form part of the eastern horizon. They would be seen in addition to the operational Bettyhill turbines and / or Strathly North wind farm turbines, extending the horizontal spread of turbines.</p> <p>Taking into account that the majority of the LCT would be unaffected overall magnitude of change for the LCT would be <b>Low-Medium</b> during construction and operation.</p>
Effect Significance	<p>The majority of the <i>Lone Mountains</i> LCT would not be affected by the Consented Scheme. Predicted effects on the LCT within the study area would be limited to north and east facing slopes and summits. For most of these areas, turbines are already a feature of the surrounding landscape. As the Consented Scheme would sit within the same area as the operational Strathly North wind farm, it would not represent a new feature in the landscape. It would however increase the number of turbines present within the neighbouring landscape, and would bring turbines closer to the LCT, an effect that could distract from the appreciation of wider views, particularly to the north coast. Given the limited visibility across the wider LCT landscape effects would generally be <b>Minor</b> (not significant), with localised <b>Moderate</b> (significant) effects during both construction and operation.</p>

Table 4.8.1.9: Rocky Hills and Moorland [LCT 136]	
Landscape Baseline	
Landscape Designation Description	<p>This LCT is located approximately 3 km from the Consented Scheme turbines at is closest point. It is comprised of well-defined hills, generally below 500 m and lower-lying rocky moorland. These are characterised by their irregular form and consistent presence of exposed rock including rags, boulders, areas of scree and occasional sheer rock cliff along the coast. Lochans within the rocky edged cavities contribute to the complexity of the landscape. The LCT provides a distinctive backdrop to the surrounding kyles and sea lochs and foreground to the inland <i>Lone Mountains</i>.</p> <p>The landscape is largely uninhabited, although remnants of prehistoric and historic features such as cairns, dun, brochs and settlement sites indicated that this was not always the case. The intricate landform of dips, straths, glens and knolls further add to the sense of seclusion.</p>
Key Characteristics	<p>The key characteristics of the Rocky Hills and Moorland LCT are noted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Rough landcover with an abundance of scattered rocks, boulders and rock outcrops.</li><li>Many lochans sited within rock-edged cavities contributing to the complexity of the rocky moorland.</li><li>Pockets of broadleaf woodland and scrub accentuating the rough texture of the rocky moorland.</li><li>Particularly distinctive rocky hills lying on the fringes of the Kyle of Tongue and at the head of Loch Eriboll.</li></ul>



Table 4.8.1.9: Rocky Hills and Moorland [LCT 136]	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A number of often prominent rocky hills outcropping along the coast, increasing scenic diversity.</li><li>• Extensive moorland found in the Cape Wrath area with less exposed bedrock and some large areas of more gently undulating peatland.</li><li>• Currently largely uninhabited landscape, although abutting more settled coasts and loch shores.</li><li>• Numerous prehistoric and historic environment features, with concentrations around the straths and coasts.</li><li>• Highly visible from the coast road around northwest Sutherland. Lower-lying rocky moorland is important in providing the foreground to spectacular views over the coast and sea and also inland to the <i>Lone Mountains</i>.</li><li>• Feeling of containment and seclusion, increased by small knolls, dips and narrow valleys.</li></ul>
Landscape Value	This LCT covers a large area with varying landscape values as recognised by its inclusion in parts of the Kyle of Tongue NSA, Farr Bay, Strathly and Portskerra SLA, Eriboll and East Whiten Head SLA. It is a valued backdrop to the kyles and sea lochs and foreground to the <i>Lone Mountains</i> and while value is considered to vary across the LCT it is generally considered to be <b>Medium</b> .
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	<p>The principal aspects of this LCT which may be affected by the Consented Scheme comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A number of often prominent rocky hills outcropping along the coast, increasing scenic diversity.</li><li>• Currently largely uninhabited landscape, although abutting more settled coasts and loch shores.</li><li>• Highly visible from the coast road around northwest Sutherland. Lower-lying rocky moorland is important in providing the foreground to spectacular views over the coast and sea and also inland to the <i>Lone Mountains</i>.</li><li>• Feeling of containment and seclusion, increased by small knolls, dips and narrow valleys.</li></ul>
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a varied landscape with differing degrees of value. The presence of existing wind farms reduces the susceptibility to further wind development in some areas although others where scenic qualities and wild characteristics are more prominent are highly susceptible to development. Landscape sensitivity is consequently varied throughout the LCT. It is considered to be <b>Low</b> where the landscape is characterised by other wind turbines and <b>High</b> where scenic and wild land characteristics predominate.
Potential Effects	<p>Potential indirect effects which may result to this LCT comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appearance of Consented Scheme in the landscape context to the east could distract from the kyles, sea lochs and <i>Lone Mountains</i>;</li><li>• Appearance of Consented Scheme in the landscape context to the east, could reduce perceptions of wildness or remoteness; and</li><li>• Appearance of Consented Scheme in the landscape context to the east could diminish the sense of seclusion.</li></ul>
Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change to this LCT. The ZTV indicates fairly widespread potential intervisibility although this is patchy, likely to affect higher ground with lower areas and hollows unaffected (see TA Figure 4.8.3 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). Within the study area, turbines would be seen at distances of between 3 and 19 km and mostly within areas where either the Bettyhill and/or Strathly North wind farm turbines are already visible. although some lower areas, mostly on the southern edge, would be newly affected. In most cases, Bettyhill turbines are much closer and prominent, directly affecting the characteristics of this LCT within the Detailed Study Area.

Table 4.8.1.9: Rocky Hills and Moorland [LCT 136]	
	The magnitude of change would therefore be considered <b>Low-Medium</b> during construction and operation.
Effect Significance	<p>Predicted effects on this LCT would be indirect relating to an increased presence of wind turbines within the surrounding landscape context. The effect would vary between smaller numbers of turbines, appearing above the horizon and larger numbers of turbines seen as part of a wider expansive vista from elevated areas in combination with operational turbines. The most noticeable intervisibility with the Consented Scheme would occur within the area to the south and southeast of Bettyhill. Although the presence of turbines would vary considerably due to the screening provided by the irregular landscape and rocky outcrops, there would be areas with intervisibility of all 39 turbines. VP6 and VP7 illustrate worst case examples of this (see TA Figures 4.8.10 and 4.8.11 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). The Consented Scheme could draw focus within some views, however, it would be clearly set within a differing landscape area and in the context of existing turbines. It is considered that this would not alter the key characteristics of the LCT as a whole, as it reflects a situation which already exists within the LCT and neighbouring landscapes and large parts of the LCT would remain unaffected by such development.</p> <p>The landscape effect would be anticipated to be <b>Minor - Moderate</b> (not significant) during construction and operation.</p>

Table 4.8.1.10: Rounded Hills – Caithness & Sutherland [LCT 135]	
Landscape Baseline	
Landscape Designation Description	This LCT occurs extensively across Caithness and Sutherland. It is made up of rolling moorland which rises to form broad hills and rounded summits. These hills are predominantly covered with heather moorland, providing a relatively homogenous backdrop to the straths which cut through the LCT. Rough grazing dominates the area’s current land use with small fragments of coniferous forestry and birch and Scots Pine dominated woodlands occurring on lower hill slopes. The interior of these hills is largely uninhabited, while dispersed crofts, farms and occasional estate buildings are located on the lower slopes at the transitions to the <i>Strath – Caithness &amp; Sutherland</i> LCT. Evidence of Peat cutting and abandoned croft buildings and walled fields stand out amidst the heather dominated moorland. Although with archaeological features these indicate past settlement of the area. More modern development is reflected in wind farms which are present in parts of the LCT, particularly the lower hills within the interior.
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rolling hills forming broad, subtly rounded summits but with some more pronounced hills also occurring, these often featuring steeper slopes along the coast or where truncated by deep glens.</li><li>• Hills cut by numerous narrow burns and small lochans lie within dips, corries and on plateau summits.</li><li>• Predominantly dense heather ground cover and moorland grasses, but also some areas of bog.</li><li>• Fragments of broadleaf woodland in inaccessible locations.</li><li>• Scarcely settled with a largely uninhabited interior and widely scattered crofts and farms on lower slopes adjoining straths and farmed landscapes.</li><li>• Narrow glens and lower hill slopes often rich in archaeology with features such as standing stones, brochs and medieval townships.</li><li>• Wind farms located in more accessible and generally lower rolling hills, either close to extensive forestry or the high voltage transmission line aligned broadly parallel to the southeast Sutherland Coast.</li><li>• Convex character of hill slopes limiting distant visibility and views of the hill tops when travelling through the landscape.</li><li>• Views into the interior of the hills very restricted</li></ul>

Table 4.8.1.10: Rounded Hills – Caithness & Sutherland [LCT 135]	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Strong sense of wild character can be experienced within the more remote and little modified parts of this landscape.</li></ul>
Landscape Value	This is an LCT with varying landscape values as recognised by parts of it being included in various SLAs. It is a simple landscape that provides the setting and backdrop for the more dramatic surrounding landscapes. Overall landscape value is considered to be <b>Low - Medium</b> .
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	<p>The principal aspects of this LCT which may be affected by the Consented Scheme comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Wind farms located in more accessible and generally lower rolling hills, either close to extensive forestry or the high voltage transmission line aligned broadly parallel to the southeast Sutherland Coast.</li><li>Convex character of hill slopes limiting distant visibility and views of the hill tops when travelling through the landscape.</li><li>Strong sense of wild character can be experienced within the more remote and little modified parts of this landscape.</li></ul>
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>This landscape is valued for its upland characteristics and setting for nearby LCTs. While the presence of existing with farm development reduces this susceptibility across the wider LCT, their influence is lower within the Detailed Study Area.</p> <p>Landscape sensitivity to the type of development proposed is therefore considered to be <b>Medium</b>.</p>
Potential Effects	<p>Potential indirect effects which may result to this LCT comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Consented Scheme turbines present in the wider landscape could reduce sense of remoteness;</li><li>The Consented Scheme turbines present in the wider landscape could appear within expansive views or erode the contrast between upland and settled areas; and</li><li>The Consented Scheme turbines present in the wider landscape could create new focal points, changing the perceived sense of scale and distance.</li></ul>
Magnitude of Change	<p>There would be no direct change to this LCT. The ZTV indicates scattered, but widespread potential intervisibility (see TA Figure 4.8.3 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). This is likely to affect higher ground and northward facing slopes. For the most part the Consented Scheme turbines would be seen within areas where the Strathly North and / or Bettyhill wind farm turbines are already visible, although there would be some small newly affected areas and the Consented Scheme would appear closer than the existing turbines.</p> <p>The magnitude of change would therefore be considered <b>Medium</b> during construction and operation.</p>
Effect Significance	<p>Predicted indirect effects on this LCT would result from the appearance of the Consented Scheme within the wider landscape context to the north. In most cases these areas are already affected by operational turbines and this would not represent a new addition to the landscape. They would however increase the number of turbines present within this neighbouring landscape, and would bring turbines closer to the LCT, which could distract from the appreciation of wider views. While it could result in a small reduction in scenic quality, it is unlikely to result in changes to the intrinsic landscape character.</p> <p>The effect significance would therefore be <b>Minor - Moderate</b> (not significant) during construction and operation.</p>

Table 4.8.1.11: Strath – Caithness & Sutherland [LCT 142] – Caithness & Sutherland [LCT] (OWESG LCA CT10 Strath Halladale (only))	
Landscape Baseline	
Landscape Designation Description	<p>This LCT is made of the major straths of Caithness and Sutherland. These linear landforms generally contain rivers or lochs along their open floors. They range from fairly straight deeply incised troughs to winding valleys with minor side glens. Many are strongly contained by steep-sided <i>Rounded Hills – Caithness &amp; Sutherland</i>, although within the Detailed Study Area they are more typically boarded by the <i>Sweeping Moorland and Flows</i> or <i>Rocky Hills and Moorland LCTs</i>. All of the straths feature floodplains that are largely under pasture. With varying semi-improved and rough grazing interspersed on the side slopes. Rough pasture, heather moorland and woodlands tend to increase on upper slopes particularly within the less settled and narrow upper straths.</p> <p>The straths accommodate access roads and other communication enabling concentrations of settlements particularly in the lower parts. Settlement within the upper straths is largely limited to estate lodges, or associated with mixed policy woodlands, or loosely clustered crofts. Evidence of historic settlement is present in the straths in the Wider Study Area, and particularly within Strathnaver in the Detailed Study Area. While views are generally focussed along the straths from narrow roads, highly scenic mountain backdrops are often revealed in the upper reaches. Wind farm development is also visible from some of these upper areas.</p>
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Straths range from fairly straight deep incised troughs to more winding valleys with a number of minor side glens.</li><li>River terraces and hummocky lower side slopes a common feature.</li><li>Water is key characteristic with straths accommodating a central river meandering across the floodplain, often traced by clumps of birch and alder.</li><li>Lochs in some straths, where a string of small lochs add to the scenic richness of the lower strath.</li><li>Areas of wetland often present on the strath floors.</li><li>Smooth and fairly large pastures the predominant land cover on the floodplains of the straths, commonly enclosed by wire fences.</li><li>Semi-improved pastures, heather and grass moorland and coniferous plantations covering lower side slopes.</li><li>Increasing extent of moorland and woodland generally further up the straths where the floodplain narrows and settlement is sparser.</li><li>Smaller strip-fields present on often hummockly, lower side slops and associated with croft houses arranged in linear groups raised on terraces above the floodplain and sometimes backed by woodland.</li><li>Some crofts within the <i>Straths</i> more randomly dispersed or staggered on lower hill slopes.</li><li>Occasional small farms located in the broader more fertile parts of the straths. Settlement generally denser within the lower reaches of many straths, especially at bridging points, on the coast and close to major roads.</li><li>Many areas rich in archaeology with cairns, roundhouses, brochs and old field systems usually found on side slopes.</li><li>Abandoned crofts, particularly within the upper straths and in narrow side glens.</li><li>Focus in views from roads provided by a number of estate shooting lodges and clustered, predominantly 19<sup>th</sup> Century, often estate style buildings.</li><li>Narrow roads, commonly aligned along the edge of the floodplain, from which views are strongly channelled by the side slopes.</li><li><i>Rounded Hills</i> often forming prominent edges to the straths with shapely well-defined hills, providing a distinctive skyline and scenic backdrop.</li><li>Highly scenic backdrop of mountains often revealed in some of the upper reaches of these straths.</li></ul>



Table 4.8.1.11: Strath – Caithness & Sutherland [LCT 142] – Caithness & Sutherland [LCT] (OWESG LCA CT10 Strath Halladale (only))	
Landscape Value	This LCT offers a small-scale landscape contrasting with the larger surrounding <i>Sweeping Moorland and Flows</i> and <i>Rocky Hills and Moorland LCTs</i> . The landscape is valued as a place of shelter and fertile land that supports settlement withing the large exposed landscapes of the north coast. Landscape Value is considered to be <b>Medium</b> .
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	<p>The principal aspects of this LCT which may be affected by the Consented Scheme comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus in views from roads provided by a number of estate shooting lodges and clustered, predominantly 19th Century, often estate style buildings.</li><li>• Largely narrow roads, (apart from those recently widened for access of timber vehicles) commonly aligned along the edge of the floodplain, from which views are strongly channelled by the side slopes.</li><li>• Rounded Hills often forming prominent edges to the straths with shapely well-defined hills, providing a distinctive skyline and scenic backdrop.</li><li>• Highly scenic backdrop of mountains often revealed in some of the upper reaches of these straths.</li></ul>
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a moderately valued landscape. The smaller sense of scale and enclosure is susceptible to some degree of change of the type proposed. However, the presence of operational turbines in the wider landscape visible from the upper slopes of the straths reduces the sensitivity to some degree. Landscape sensitivity to the type of development proposed would be considered to be <b>Medium</b> .
Potential Effects	<p>Potential indirect effects which may result to this LCT comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appearance of the Consented Scheme could form a new focus which could affect the appreciation of the enclosed nature of the landscape.</li><li>• Appearance of the Consented Scheme could distract focus away from the smaller scale visual composition of the straths and the contrast they provide to the surrounding open landscape.</li></ul>
Magnitude of Change	<p>There would be no direct change and very limited indirect change to the majority of the LCT. Indirect change would be focused on the upper east facing slopes of Strathnaver and a small part of the upper west facing slopes of Strath Halladale (see TA Figure 4.8.3 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). Most of these areas already share intervisibility with the operational Strathly North and / or Bettyhill wind farms. However, the increased number of turbines within the neighbouring landscape and proximity would likely result in perceptible localised changes to the wider landscape context.</p> <p>Taking into account that the majority of the LCT would be unaffected overall magnitude of change for the would be considered to be <b>Low</b> during construction and operation.</p>
Effect Significance	<p>Although there would be theoretical indirect effects on parts of the LCT, the presence of the operational Strathly North and / or Bettyhill wind farms would reduce the prominence of the Consented Scheme. Whilst the turbines would form a new feature in views to the east or west from localised parts of Strathnaver or Strath Halladale respectively, it is not considered that this would result in a very noticeable change to their overall character.</p> <p>The effect significance would therefore be considered <b>Minor</b> (not significant) during construction and operation due to the predicted effects on select southern views from Strathly.</p>

Table 4.8.1.12: Sweeping Moorland and Flows – Caithness & Sutherland [LCT 134] (OWESG LCA CT4 Central Caithness (part))	
Landscape Baseline	
Landscape Designation Description	<p>This LCT covers the Consented Scheme site and occurs extensively across Caithness and eastern Sutherland, forming a flat, gently undulating and generally smooth landscape. It forms the setting to the Lone Mountains, the distinctive form and prominence of these mountains being accentuated by the simple, open and expansive nature of the low-lying moorland which surrounds them.</p> <p>The area supports blanket bog and a diverse range of wet heath, grassland and mire. Occasional hills stand out, despite their limited height amid the extensive areas of low-lying moorland. Meandering rivers, in shallow valleys create focal features in the sweeping moorlands, while the flows are characterised by intricate networks of water courses, dubh lochans and pool systems, with wet, spongy vegetation.</p> <p>The simple ground-hugging vegetation of the area accentuate the smoothness of the landform and largely uninterrupted skylines. Areas of peat cutting and haggings are conspicuous amongst the heather and grass dominated moorland and mosses. Coniferous forestry has a strong presence in some areas, interrupting the continuity of the moorland. Removal of coniferous forestry restoration of underlying blank bog is being undertaken in some areas.</p> <p>Although the area is sparsely settled, it covers a large area and dispersed crofts, farms and estate buildings are present along the edges of the LCT or near straths. These often coincide with green pockets of improved grazing which stand out against the surrounding moorland. Evidence of historic settlement is present throughout the LCT, largely concentrated on the more favourable fertile ground.</p> <p>There are numerous transportation and infrastructure corridors running through this LCT including the Inverness / Thurso Railway, A9, A836, A897 and various transmission lines. Wind farms are also a relatively common feature within the wider LCT.</p>
Key Characteristics	<p>The key characteristics of the Sweeping Moorland and Flows – Caithness &amp; Sutherland LCT are noted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gently sloping or undulating landform which lies generally below 350 metres.</li><li>• Occasional isolated hills of limited height form local landmark features.</li><li>• Lochs and mature, meandering rivers.</li><li>• Very distinct flora, dominated by sphagnum mosses, produced by the wetness and infertility of the flows.</li><li>• Areas of peat cuttings and haggings.</li><li>• Pockets of improved grazing, mainly within the outer fringes of sweeping moorland.</li><li>• Coniferous forest forming a dominant characteristic within some parts of this landscape character type. Ribbons of broadleaf woodland occasionally run along the water courses and loch edges.</li><li>• Very sparsely settled with dispersed crofts, farms and estate buildings largely found on the outer edges of this landscape or near a strath.</li><li>• Vehicular tracks within part of the landscape.</li><li>• Wind farms, tracks within parts of the landscape.</li><li>• Wind farms, transmission lines, the A9 and a network of minor roads are key features within the more modified outer fringes within Caithness.</li><li>• Long, low and largely uninterrupted skylines offering extensive views across this landscape and result in a feeling of huge space.</li><li>• Consistent views to the distant <i>Lone Mountains</i> and <i>Rugged Mountain Massif – Caithness and Sutherland</i>.</li><li>• Great sense of exposure on areas of flat peatland on upland plateau.</li><li>• A strong sense of remoteness is associated within the largely uninhabited inaccessible core flows and moorlands of this landscape.</li></ul>

Table 4.8.1.12: Sweeping Moorland and Flows – Caithness & Sutherland [LCT 134] (OWESG LCA CT4 Central Caithness (part))	
Landscape Value	<p>This LCT covers a large area with varying landscape values as recognised by parts of it being included in various SLAs and WLAs. It is a simple, open and expansive nature of the low-lying moorland and flows that accentuates the distinctive form and prominence of the <i>Lone Mountains</i> and adds to the areas overall sense of remoteness and inaccessibility.</p> <p>Overall Landscape Value is considered to be <b>Low - Medium</b>.</p>
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	<p>The principal aspects of this LCT which may be affected by the Consented Scheme comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Occasional isolated hills of limited height form local landmark features.</li><li>Very distinct flora, dominated by sphagnum mosses, produced by the wetness and infertility of the flows.</li><li>Coniferous forest forming a dominant characteristic within some parts of this landscape character type.</li><li>Wind farms, tracks within parts of the landscape.</li><li>Wind farms, transmission lines, the A9 and a network of minor roads are key features within the more modified outer fringes within Caithness.</li><li>Long, low and largely uninterrupted skylines offering extensive views across this landscape and result in a feeling of huge space.</li><li>Consistent views to the distant <i>Lone Mountains</i> and <i>Rugged Mountain Massif – Caithness and Sutherland</i>.</li><li>Great sense of exposure on areas of flat peatland on upland plateau.</li><li>A strong sense of remoteness is associated within the largely uninhabited inaccessible core flows and moorlands of this landscape.</li></ul>
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>This is a varied landscape with differing degrees of value. The presence of existing wind farms particularly within the immediate study area reduces the susceptibility to further wind development. Other areas where scenic qualities and wild characteristics are more prominent would be more susceptible to development. Landscape sensitivity is consequently varied throughout the LCT. It is considered to be <b>Low</b> where the landscape is characterised by other wind turbines and <b>Medium</b> where scenic and wild land characteristics are stronger.</p>
Potential Effects	<p>Potential direct effects which may result to this LCT comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Construction of wind turbines, other infrastructure and access tracks within the LCT could reduce perceptions of isolation and remoteness.</li><li>New access tracks could lead to loss of heather moorland, with potential for construction disturbance to lead to changes in habitat types and uniformity of ground cover.</li><li>Removal of coniferous forestry could alter the character of the LCT within the immediate surrounding area.</li><li>Construction works, wind turbines and other infrastructure within the LCT could introduce new focal points which may break the uniformity of the open moorland and reduce perceived scale and distance.</li><li>Wind turbines, access tracks and other infrastructure within the LCT could distract from expansive views and interrupt skylines.</li></ul>
Magnitude of Change	<p>The Consented Scheme would be located entirely within this LCT including turbines, new access tracks, hardstandings, Switching Station, met masts and temporary infrastructure and borrow pits during construction (see TA Figure 4.8.3 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)). The ZTV indicates that indirect change would be widespread within around 5 km of the Consented Scheme. Beyond this higher ground and facing slopes are more likely to be affected than hollows and glen floors. Much of this area, particularly within 5 km is already affected by the existing Strathly North and Bettyhill</p>

Table 4.8.1.12: Sweeping Moorland and Flows – Caithness & Sutherland [LCT 134] (OWESG LCA CT4 Central Caithness (part))	
	<p>wind farms. However, beyond this, particularly to the south and east the Consented Scheme would appear closer and in some cases would result new indirect effects on the LCT within the study area.</p> <p>The magnitude of change would therefore be considered to be <b>Medium-High</b> during construction and operation.</p>
Effect Significance	<p>The Consented Scheme would be within and would directly affect this LCT. However, the turbines would be located in an area already indirectly affected by the operational Strathly North wind farm and in some cases the operational Bettyhill wind farm. In addition, this part of the LCT is also currently used for commercial forestry. Combined, these reduce the sensitivity of these areas to further development. Nevertheless, new turbines and tracks would increase the developed footprint of the immediate area and result in it becoming more strongly characterised by wind turbines. Within the wider LCT, the Consented Scheme would usually be seen in association with existing wind turbines, however it will likely increase the visual presence of turbines by occupying a greater part of the horizon. This could increase perception of the development within the surrounding landscape with some potential to diminish the perceived sense of isolation and remoteness. Where not seen in the context of existing turbines, the theoretical visibility would be largely limited to tips and blades seen over intervening landform. During construction, the increased activity and noise would potentially reduce some of the sense of isolation and remoteness within the immediate area.</p> <p>The landscape effect across the wider LCT would be <b>Moderate</b> during construction and operation. During construction this would largely be due to direct effects relating to increased activity levels in the area. During operation the Consented Scheme would form a close new feature which could distract from the key characteristics of the LCT within the immediate area.</p>



ANNEX 3: VISUAL ASSESSMENT TABLES

1 Introduction

This Annex provides detailed assessment of changes to the view obtained from representative viewpoints (VPs) (Table 4.8.2.1), route receptors (Table 4.8.2.2) and settlement receptors (Table 4.8.2.3) identified as having the potential to gain views of the Consented Scheme. Detailed information on the rationale for those locations included in the visual assessment of the Proposed Varied Development and therefore this visual assessment of the Consented Scheme, is included in Technical Appendix 4.2: Landscape and Visual Scoping Appraisal.

VPs are shown on TA Figure 4.8.1 and settlements and routes are shown on TA Figure 4.8.4 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1).

The assessments of visual receptors, in the following tables, are in accordance with methodology outlined in Section 4.4 of Chapter 4: Landscape and Visual Amenity (EIAR Volume 2).

Cumulative visual effects are not considered as part of the assessment of the Consented Scheme as outlined above.

2     **Receptors at Viewpoints**



Table 4.8.2.1: Receptors at Viewpoints									
Name/ Location/ Type/ Context	Nature of Main View obtained from the Receptor	Distance to nearest visible turbine (approx.)	Visual Sensitivity	Nature of Change	No. of turbines theoretically visible	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operation	Construction	Operation
<b>VP1: Ben Griam Beg</b> 283185, 941167 (Refer to TA Figure 4.8.5 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)) <i>This VP is located on Ben Griam Beg to the south of the site. It is representative of elevated nearby and middle distance views obtained from this direction.</i>	This viewpoint has 360° panoramic views across the landscape. Ben Griam Mòr is prominent in views to the southeast while views to the north extend to the North Sea with the operational Strathy North wind farm appearing in the midground, with the operational Bettyhill wind farm appearing in the midground too. To the south and west the skyline is defined by distinctive mountain ranges.  The surrounding lower lying moorland is broken up by lochs and lochans, and large patches of commercial forestry. Small tracks and roads are also visible at lower elevations.	8.6 km	High	The Consented Scheme would be prominently seen in views obtained from the viewpoint to the north. The on-site substation would be visible as a distant element set within the turbines.	Hubs: 39 Blades: 39	High	High	Major	Major
<b>VP2: Cnoc Riabhach</b> 292003, 937695 (Refer to TA Figure 4.8.6 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)) <i>This is an elevated hilltop from the north western edge of WLA36: Causeymire – Knockfin Flows, to the southeast of the site. It is representative of elevated views obtained from this part of the WLA.</i>	Main view obtained from the viewpoint is to the west and southwest. There are extensive views in these directions towards Ben Griam Beg, Ben Griam Mòr, and Meall a’Bhuirich. While other views are somewhat constrained by the gently undulating moorland of the top of Cnoc Riabhach there are views of distant mountains to the south east. The radio mast at Meall a’Bhealaich is visible to the northwest. The overall landscape is a simple one broken up by small lochans and patches of forestry can be seen where the glen floors are visible	16.5 km	Medium	The Consented Scheme would be visible to the northwest. Parts of the towers of the northernmost turbines would be partially screened by the intervening landform. The turbines would be seen in the context of the existing radio mast.	Hubs: 33 Blades: 39	Low / Medium	Low / Medium	Minor	Minor
<b>VP3: Loch nan Clach Geala</b> 295343, 957116 (Refer to TA Figure 4.8.7 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)) <i>Representative of views obtained from high ground to the north east of the Consented Scheme in a relatively remote area of open moorland. This VP is found in WLA39: East Halladale Flows and is representative of views obtained from this part of the WLA.</i>	Views from this VP are largely restricted by the surrounding rolling moorland. Somewhat more open views are available towards the west where the Ben Hope/Ben Loyal range can be seen in the distance. The operational Strathy North wind farm can be seen in the midground in this direction, as well as Bettyhill wind farm in the distance. The top of Ben Griam Beg can also be seen over the intervening ridgeline to the southwest. Post and wire fences are visible on the ridge against the skyline to the east.	14.8 km	Medium	The Consented Scheme would be visible in views to the west and would be seen in the context of the operational Strathy North wind farm turbines. Some of the Consented Scheme turbines would be seen against the skyline while others would be backclothed by the distant mountains.	Hubs: 39 Blades: 39	Low / Medium	Low / Medium	Minor / Moderate	Minor / Moderate
<b>VP4: East of Melvich</b> 291737, 964451 (Refer to TA Figure 4.8.8 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)) <i>The VP is from the A836 to the northeast of the site. It is representative of middle to longer distance views obtained from this section of the route and the transition from Caithness to Sutherland .</i>	VP offers views from the A836 over the surrounding area with a number of power lines crossing the views. The operational Strathy North wind farm is visible over the horizon line.  Main views are channelled along the road eastward and westward, with rolling hills in distance. Views to the north and south of the road are somewhat restricted due to the road’s position within the rolling moorland landscape. Overhead lines cross the view to the south.	15.7 km	Low	The Consented Scheme would be visible over the ridge to southwest in the middle distance, oblique to the direction of travel and away from the focus of views to the sea. The Consented Scheme towers would be largely screened but the hubs of a small number would be visible. The turbines would be seen in the context of the foreground overhead line.	Hubs: 10 Blades: 39	Low	Low	Minor	Minor
<b>VP5: Strathy</b> 284158, 965040 (Refer to TA Figure 4.8.9 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)) <i>This VP is representative of worst case scenario views obtained from Strathy and the surrounding area including the A836 (NC500), nearby dwellings and the surrounding hills and glens.</i>	Main view is along the A836 towards the east and west. Distant views eastward and westward are restricted by the rolling hills. There are open views to the south over low lying grassland before the ground sloping up towards the hills. Strathy North wind farm is visible over the ridgeline. Residential properties along Strathy Road West form a linear feature to the south defining the edge of foreground field system. Trees are largely associated with houses with a few scattered trees punctuating the fields.	12.5 km	Medium	The Consented Scheme turbine blades and some hubs would be seen to the south over the ridgeline. They would be seen in the context of the operational Strathy North wind farm which would be in the foreground.	Hubs: 4 Blades: 36	Negligible / Low	Negligible / Low	Negligible / Minor	Negligible / Minor

Table 4.8.2.1: Receptors at Viewpoints									
<b>VP6: Bettyhill Viewpoint</b> 274862, 961925 (Refer to TA Figure 4.8.10 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)) <i>This VP is located at the marked Bettyhill viewpoint and car park on the A836 (N500) to the south of Kirtomy. It is representative of views obtained from sections of this road where the Consented Scheme would be visible to the northwest of the site.</i>	The main view is directed towards the southeast and Loch Meadie. Ben Hope and Ben Loyal are visible in distant views to the west beyond the operational Bettyhill wind farm. Rocky moorland and rolling hills restrict views in other directions.	9.1 km	Medium	The majority of the Consented Scheme turbines would be screened by intervening topography. A few blades would be visible to the southeast over the ridge and against the skyline and two turbines including hubs and towers would be clearly visible. However, these would be seen in the context of the existing operational Bettyhill wind farm located to the west, in close proximity to the VP.	Hubs: 3 Blades: 14	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Moderate
<b>VP7: A836 west of the B871</b> 269437, 957272 (Refer to TA Figure 4.8.11 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)) <i>This VP is found on the A836 (NC500) to the northwest of the Consented Scheme. It is representative of middle distance views obtained from this stretch of the A-road and potential worst case scenario views as travellers descend into Strathnaver from the west.</i>	The main views are along the A836 towards the east and west. Views to the north and south are restricted by rolling moorland covered in low level vegetation. While longer distance views are largely restricted by the intervening topography, some rolling hills can be seen in the distance, particularly to the south and east.	9.6 km	Medium	The Consented Scheme would be visible in the distance to the southeast over the ridgeline against the sky.	Hubs: 33 Blades: 36	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Moderate
<b>VP8: Sgor Chaonasaid</b> 257961, 949822 (Refer to TA Figure 4.8.12 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)) <i>This VP is found on a summit within the Kyle of Tongue NSA. It is representative of elevated views obtained from the NSA and from the eastern side of WLA 38: Ben Hope – Ben Loyal.</i>	This elevated viewpoint provides 360° panoramic views across the dramatic mountainous landscape of the National Scenic Area. Several bodies of water are prominent in views from the summit including Loch Loyal, Loch Craggie, Loch an Dherue the Kyle of Tongue and the North Sea. The settlement at Tongue is visible to the north and a number of small roads can be made out in the distance. A number of operational wind turbines are also visible in the distance including Bettyhill wind farm and Strathy North wind farm.	19.4 km	Medium	The Consented Scheme would be visible in views to the east. It would be seen in the distance as part of the wider landscape in the context of other existing wind farms.	Hubs: 39 Blades: 39	Low	Low	Minor	Minor
<b>VP9: Creag na h-Iolaire</b> 267353, 928879 (Refer to TA Figure 4.8.13 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)) <i>This VP is found on an elevated point in WLA35: Ben Kilbreck – Armine Forest to the southwest of the Consented Scheme. It is representative of elevated views obtained from this part of the WLA.</i>	This VP provides panoramic views across the surrounding landscape to the northeast through northwest. These views towards the North Sea take in the area from Dunnet Head to the Kyle of Tongue and the lower lying areas between. Commercial forestry, including large felled areas and lochs are prominent in the fore – middle ground of these views. A number of wind farms including Strathy North, Bettyhill and Baillie are also visible in the distance. Views southward are more restricted by the rolling moorland of the summit. However, there are glimpses of distant hills, some with operational wind turbines over the intervening topography in the foreground.	22.7 km	Medium	The Consented Scheme would be visible in distant views to the north. It would be seen in the context of Strathy North wind farm but, would appear closer. The Consented Scheme would be seen as a small part within a much larger landscape. Many of the turbine blades would be seen against the landscape, rather than skylined.	Hubs: 36 Blades: 39	Low	Low	Minor	Minor
<b>VP10: Beinn Ratha</b> 294954, 960923 (Refer to TA Figure 4.8.14 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)) <i>This VP is found near the cairn on Beinn Ratha to the east of the Consented Scheme in the northern part of WLA39: East Halladale Flows. It is representative of elevated views obtained from WLA 39.</i>	This VP provides 360° panoramic views across the surrounding landscape. It provides open views out to the North Sea and views towards the Ben Hope / Ben Loyal range to the west. The settlement of Melvich is visible to the northwest with Strathy Point visible beyond. Overhead lines and steel lattice towers are visible in the midground in views to the north west and west. Dounreay Power Station is visible to the northeast. A number of windfarms are also visible within the view including Strathy North to the west and Ballie to the east and Hill of Forss to the northeast. Views to the south take in the rolling moorland with distant hills visible beyond.	16.0 km	Medium	The Consented Scheme would be visible in views to the west. It would be seen in the context of a number of operational wind farms within the 360° view as well as steel lattice towers and the Dounreay Power Station. The Consented Scheme would be seen backclothed against the distant hills.	Hubs: 39 Blades: 39	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor



Table 4.8.2.1: Receptors at Viewpoints									
<b>VP11: Forsinard</b> 288982, 942360 (Refer to TA Figure 4.8.15 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)) <i>Viewpoint near Forsinard Flows NNR at the junction of the A897 and Far North Line on the edge of the Bens Griam and Loch nan Clar SLA. It is representative of the views obtained by visitor and road/rail users to the southeast of the site.</i>	The main view is to the south along the A897 across a low lying landscape to the hills in the distance. Ben Griam Beg, Ben Griam Mòr and Meall a’ Bhùirich are prominent against the skyline to the southwest. Towards the southeast, there is an area of commercial forestry accessed by a track. Towards the west the RSPB Flows Lookout is visible standing within the peatland pools of the blanket bog landscape. To the north trees form a shelterbelt around the Forsinard railway station and the small collection of buildings (including the B&B) that neighbour it.	11.0 km	Low	The Consented Scheme turbines would be visible to the northwest over the ridgeline. They would be seen as tips against the skyline.	Hubs: 0 Blades: 6	Low	Low	Negligible / Minor	Negligible / Minor
<b>VP12: Moine House</b> 251844, 960034 (Refer to TA Figure 4.8.16 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)) <i>This VP is found on the path next to Moine House off of the A838. It is representative of views obtained from Moine House and more distant roadside views from the west.</i>	The main view is over the foreground moorland towards the Ben Hope and Ben Loyal ranges. Small lochan punctuate the moorland in the foreground. There are also glimpses of the Kyle of Tongue and further out to sea to the northeast. Moine House is prominent in the foreground to the north. Low post and wire fences enclose the ground around the house. The Bettyhill wind farm turbines and radio tower are both visible to the east.	27.3 km	Medium	Only a few blade tips of the Consented Scheme would be theoretically visible over the ridgeline to the east. These would be very unlikely to draw the viewers’ attention and would be seen in the context of the operational Bettyhill turbines and the radio tower on Ben Tongue which appear against the skyline.	Hubs: 0 Blades: 5	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
<b>VP13 – A836 near Middleton</b> 305958, 969490 (Refer to TA Figure 4.8.17 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)) <i>This VP is found on the A836 between Forss and Thurso. It is representative of views obtained by those travelling along this part of the route.</i>	The main views are along the A836 towards the east and west. There are expansive views to the north towards the sea, whereas views to the south are restricted by rolling fields. Orkney is visible to the northeast on clear days.	29.9 km	Low	The tip of two turbine blade of the Consented Scheme would be theoretically visible over the fields to the southwest. It is likely that grasses and other intervening vegetation would screen views.	Hubs: 0 Blades: 2	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
<b>VP14 – Dunnet Head</b> 320519, 976504 (Refer to TA Figure 4.8.18 (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 4.8, Annex 1)) <i>This VP is found on the elevated lookout area at Dunnet Head. It is representative of worst-case scenario views obtained from this popular tourist stopping point and the SLA.</i>	This VP provides 360°panoramic views across the surrounding landscape and northwards out towards the sea and Orkney. Various lochs are visible to the south with the settlement of Dunnet visible beyond. While there are long ranging views inland, the strong presence of the ocean draws viewer’s attention out to sea.	45.9 km	Medium	Only the tips of four turbine blades of the Consented Scheme would be theoretically visible to the southwest. However, given the distance it is highly unlikely that these would be discernible particularly as they would appear beyond intervening operational wind farms.	Hubs: 0 Blades: 6	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

3 Receptors on Routes

Table 4.8.2.2: Receptors on Routes								
Name/ Location/ Type/Context	Nature of Main View obtained from the Receptor	Visual Sensitivity	Nature of Change	No. of turbines theoretically visible	Magnitude		Effect	
					Construction	Operation	Construction	Operation
A836 - Between Tongue and the eastern edge of Detailed Study Area) (NC500/ Cycle Route 1) <i>This winding and undulating route is approximately 55 km and crosses the northern part of the Detailed Study Area between Tongue and the edge of the Detailed Study Area at Reay. It includes a small section of the A838 on its most western edge.</i>	This route has occasional panoramic views to the North Sea and over dramatic bays. Views around Tongue focus on the Kyle of Tongue and the NSA. From Tongue to Bettyhill they are generally over simple landscapes with dramatic hills in the distance, particularly in views westward. As the route descends into and travels through Strathnaver views are restricted by mature vegetation. Between Bettyhill and Melvich, views southward are channelled by smaller glens, or restricted by topography. The part of route passes through a number of settlements, including Bettyhill, Strathy and Melvich and provides access to many smaller settlements along the coast. The Bettyhill wind farm is prominent in the stretch of the route to the east of Bettyhill. Strathy North wind farm is also present in some southward views, particularly in the area around Strathy. From Melvich to the edge of the Detailed Study Area, views are focused by surrounding landform along the route as it transitions between Caithness and Sutherland. Where there are open views to the north, the sea is the focus.	Low / Medium	Turbine visibility would be theoretically intermittent with the nearest visible turbine appearing at a distance of approximately 8.5 km. Actual visibility would range from distant structures visible against the skyline from elevated parts of the route, to tips and blades seen in views to the south from central parts of the route where the topography drops at glens. From the central and eastern parts of the route, they would largely be seen beyond Strathy North wind farm. From the most western portion they would be seen in the context of the existing Bettyhill turbines, but at a greater distance.	0 - 39	Negligible (Localised Low)	Negligible (Localised Low)	Negligible (Localised Minor)	Negligible (Localised Minor)
A836 from Tongue south to the edge Detailed Study Area <i>This 18 km single track stretch of the A836 travels generally north south across open and remote moorland running parallel to Loch Loyal for much of its length.</i>	Loch Loyal is a prominent feature in views particularly along the middle portion of the route when it runs alongside the loch. Rounded hills form a barrier to views to the west. and mark the transition to the Ben Hope / Ben Loyal wild land area beyond.	Medium	Visibility of the Consented Scheme along this route is limited and focused in two areas, to the north and south of Loch Loyal. The nearest visible turbine would be seen at a distance of over 17.3 km. Tips would be seen in the distance against the skyline to the east from the northern part of the route. The operational Bettyhill and Strathy North turbines would often also be visible in this area. From the southern ZTV patch, views would be across the loch with few other manmade features in the view.	0 - 39	Negligible (Localised Low)	Negligible (Localised Low)	Negligible (Localised Minor)	Negligible (Localised Minor)
A897 <i>This 35 km route runs north - south from the A836 east of Melvich south to the edge of the Detailed Study Area near Kinbrace. It passes through Strath Halladale and Forsinard.</i>	The main views along this north / south A-road are westward over Strath Halladale towards scattered residential properties. The route runs parallel to the railway line for part of its length, although trains are infrequent features in the landscape. Westward views from the southern portion are focused on Ben Griams. Views within the central portion to northeast and west are over commercial forestry. The 275 kV Dounreay steel lattice towers feature in eastward views along the northern part of the route where Connagill substation is also a prominent feature.	Low / Medium	Turbines would be largely imperceptible along the majority of the route. Some tips and blades would be visible over the intervening ridge from Forsinard to Loch An Ruathail (approximately 8.8 km away to the southeast).	0 - 39	Negligible (Localised Low)	Negligible (Localised Low)	Negligible (Localised Minor)	Negligible (Localised Minor)
B871 (north) <i>This 15 km north – south route travels through Strathnaver from the A836 to the B873.</i>	Views directed largely towards the north and south, depending on the direction of travel. Views towards the East and West are constrained by topography, mature vegetation on strath floor. Scattered houses and farmsteads line the route.	Low	While there would be some intermittent theoretical visibility along small parts of the route, the majority of turbines are screened by intervening landform. Where visible they would be seen at a distance of over 6.4 km as a largely imperceptible tips over the ridge to the east. It is likely that intervening vegetation would screen these views.	0 - 6	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
B871 (south) <i>This generally east – west 25 km stretch of the route runs south of the Bens Griam connecting the B873 with the A897 at Kinbrace.</i>	Open views over undulating moorland, hills visible in the distance, occasional views of lochs. Ben Griam Beg and Ben Griam Mòr and Meall a’ Bhuirich are prominent to the North, particularly as the route passes through the SLA.	Medium	No view.	0	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible



<b>Table 4.8.2.2: Receptors on Routes</b>								
Name/ Location/ Type/Context	Nature of Main View obtained from the Receptor	Visual Sensitivity	Nature of Change	No. of turbines theoretically visible	Magnitude		Effect	
					Construction	Operation	Construction	Operation
B873 <i>This 13 km route travels in a northeast / southwest direction from the B871 through the southern part of Strathnaver and along Loch Naver to the edge of the Detailed Study Area.</i>	Views are largely contained by the slopes of the strath and mature coniferous forestry. Commercial forestry operations are a common part of the view. Along Loch Naver, views open out more and more distant hills can be seen.	Low	No view.	0	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
Far North Line <i>This 27 km stretch of the rail route passes through the south eastern part of the Detailed Study Area between Altnabreac and Kinbrace. It passes through Forsinard as it changes direction from east / west to north / south.</i>	The views from the railway line change from a north / south to east / west focus and vice versa depending on the direction of travel at Forsinard. Regardless of the direction though, views are largely over moorland and commercial forestry. Along the southern part of the route views to the west are onto the Bens Griam and Loch nan Clar SLA, where the hills are a prominent and defining feature. Around the station itself views are contained by mature vegetation and landform as the train travels through cuttings.	Low	The Consented Scheme turbines would be theoretically visible from approximately two thirds of the route at a distance of approximately 10.5 km at their nearest. As the train travels east / west, views of the turbines would be largely imperceptible due to the north / south orientation of windows along this stretch. The turbines would be perpendicular or very oblique to the views from the windows. As the train travels north / south, some turbine blades may be seen out of the westward looking windows over the ridgeline. Due to the direction of travel these would likely only be seen when the train is travelling northward.	0 - 39	Negligible / Low	Negligible / Low	Negligible	Negligible
Scottish Hill Track 344: Strath Halladale (Trantlebeg) to Strathy <i>This 39 km route connects Strath Halladale with Strathy. It passes through areas of commercial forestry, felled areas, open moorland and near the operational Strathy North wind farm.</i>	This route passes through a very changeable landscape. Large parts of the surrounding coniferous forestry have been felled opening up views to the surrounding ‘Flow Country’ moorland and bog as part of nature conservation efforts. Ben Griam dominates views from the southern portion of the route. Strathy North wind farm is prominent in views along much of the route, particularly the northern section that passes very close to it.	Medium	While turbines are already a feature along this route, the Consented Scheme turbines will be very prominent along the middle part of this route as it passes directly through the site. This will be even more so during construction particularly as traffic travels to and from site.	0 - 6	High	Medium / High	Major	Moderate
Scottish Hill Track 342 – Crask Inn to Badanloch Lodge <i>A small (approximately 12 km) part of this walking route runs from Badanloch Lodge to Loch Choire in the south western part of the Detailed Study Area.</i>	This part of this walking route crosses moorland. Views are open and take in the many lochs, lochans and Ben Armine to the south.	Medium	No view.	0	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
Scottish Hill Track 343 Halkirk to Forsinain or Braemore <i>This 16 km route is part of a larger walking route across the Flow Country. This particular section between Altnabrec and Forsinain weaves its way through a series of forestry plantations many of which have seen recent felling.</i>	This particular section between Altnabrec and Forsinain weaves its way through a series of forestry plantations many of which have seen recent felling. Wider views of the surrounding landscape are generally more limited Sletill Hill and Ben Griam Beg in the distance add visual diversity.	Medium	While the ZTV shows larges areas of potential visibility along this route, it is likely that intervening mature forestry will screen many of these views. Where visible the turbine would be seen at a distance of over 10.3 km over the western horizon.	0 - 39	Low	Low	Minor	Minor
Core Path SU04.02 – Torrisdale – Invernaver, Coast Route <i>This 4 km coastal path crossing the dunes of Torrisdale bay skirting around Druim Chuibhe connecting Invernaver and Torrisdale</i>	Views from this coastal path are focused out to sea. Views inland (southward) are restricted by the bluffs.	Medium	The ZTV shows very limited intermittent theoretical visibility along this path. Where visible the turbines would be seen, at a distance of at least 10.4 km, as a few tips over the ridgeline to the southeast.	0 - 19	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

Table 4.8.2.2: Receptors on Routes								
Name/ Location/ Type/Context	Nature of Main View obtained from the Receptor	Visual Sensitivity	Nature of Change	No. of turbines theoretically visible	Magnitude		Effect	
					Construction	Operation	Construction	Operation
Core Path SU04.04 – Clachan Burn (Bettyhill to Bettyhill Community Turbines Loop) <i>This nearly 6 km core path connects Bettyhill, the community turbines and the A836 near the turn off for Crask and Farr.</i>	Bettyhill wind farm turbines are prominent in views along this route as it provides access to the turbines. Other views are over rolling rough grazing and moorland. Rocky outcrops punctuate the landscape. Loch Mor features in views as the western part of the route passes close to it.	Medium	The ZTV shows theoretical visibility along much of this core path. Where visible the turbines would appear over the ridgeline to the southeast at a distance of at least 8.3 km. Visibility would range from a few blades and tips to a larger number of turbines from higher elevations.	0 - 23	Low	Low	Minor	Minor
Core Path SU04.05 – Kirtomy – Cnoc Mor circuit <i>This 3.5km route follows tracks leading up to radio mast across moorland from Kirtomy and the A836.</i>	The mast on Cnoc Mor is prominent along the route particularly on the approach from the A836. On the approach from Kitomy the sea, farms and coast draw viewers attention to the north and west. From the highest point of the route at the mast there are panoramic views both out to sea and inland. The Ben Hope / Ben Loyal range is prominent to the southwest as are other more distant hills to the south. A small OHL connecting to the mast is a regular feature in views along the route.	Medium	The ZTV shows theoretical visibility along the eastern stretch of this route as it ascends Cnoc Mor to the mast. Where visible they would be seen from a distance of at least 9.9 km, from the part of the route to the south in the context of the existing OHL and the Bettyhill and Strathy North wind farm turbines.	0 - 15	Low	Low	Minor	Minor
Core Path SU24.05 – Ben Tongue Circuit <i>This 4 km route leads up to Ben Tongue to the east of Tongue from the A836.</i>	This core path offers panoramic views of the surrounding landscape. While the mast is one of the more prominent features at the top, the focus of the view westward is over the Kyle of Tongue and the coastline.	Medium	The Consented Scheme would be seen in the distance (at least 17.8 km away) to the southeast. The blades and hubs would be seen against the skyline in the context of the much wider view including operational Bettyhill and Strathy North wind farm turbines.	0 - 10	Low	Low	Minor	Minor

#### 4 Receptors at Settlements

Table 4.8.2.3: Receptors at Settlements									
Name/ Location/ Type/Context	Nature of Main View obtained from the Receptor	Distance to nearest visible turbine (approx.)	Visual Sensitivity	Nature of Change	No. of turbines theoretically visible	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operation	Construction	Operation
Strathy (north of the A836 and east of the River Strathy)	Orientation of dwellings, other buildings and views is mixed, although most have clear views across the lower lying fields at the base of the strath to the other parts of Strathy. Strathy North wind farm is clearly visible in views to the south. View northward to the sea are limited due to variations in the landform.	12.9 km	Medium	The Consented Scheme turbines would largely be seen as blades and hubs over the ridgeline to the south beyond the existing Strathy North wind farm.	0 - 19	Low	Low	Minor	Minor
Strathy (south of the A836 and east of the River Strathy)	Collection of dwellings and farms south of the A836 with views largely oriented to the east and west over fields and moorland beyond. Smaller watercourses leading to the River Strathy are lined by low rise vegetation and scrub. Distant views are largely contained within the strath by the surrounding landform. Strathy North wind farm can be seen in views to the south. OHL can also be seen crossing the landscape from east to west.	12.0 km	Medium	The Consented Scheme turbines would largely be seen as tips over the ridgeline to the south. At higher elevation blades and hubs would also be visible. They would be seen in the context of the existing Strathy North wind farm which would be in the foreground.	0 - 23	Low	Low	Minor	Minor
Strathy (west of the River Strathy)	Collection of one to two story dwelling, village hall and inn with mixed orientation, main views are northward over either the A836 or local access road towards the sea. Other views are largely of rolling rough grazing with moorland beyond.	12.3 km	Low	The Consented Scheme turbines would be largely screened from view by intervening landform. From higher elevations tips could be visible but they would be largely imperceptible within the wider view and in the context of Strathy North wind farm.	0 - 2	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
Strathy Point	Dwellings of mixed orientation, main views towards the east over the water.	15.5 km	Low / Medium	Elevated houses may have oblique views towards the Consented Scheme. The turbines would be seen in the context of and largely indistinguishable from the operational Strathy North wind farm.	0 - 28	Low	Low	Negligible / Minor	Negligible / Minor
Baligill	A loose grouping of farmsteads with views across gently rolling fields and moorland. The sea provides the contrast to the surrounding landscape and draws viewers' attention northward.	13.9 km	Medium	Seen over intervening landform as blades and hubs, beyond the existing Strathy North wind farm turbines.	0 - 39	Low	Low	Negligible / Minor	Negligible / Minor
Brawl	Grouping of farmsteads with views to North Sea and fields towards moorland to the east and south. Views to the west are restricted by rising landform.	13.0 km	Low	Intermittent turbine visibility along minor road leading to and from settlement. The ZTV shows some theoretical visibility, however actual visibility would most likely be constrained to the very tips of turbine blades in the distance towards the southwest.	0 - 39	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
Lednagullin	Farmsteads of mixed orientation, largely overlooking Armadale Bay. Bus stop, post box and telephone box are all located at the turn off from the A836. Views are drawn to the sea to the north. Views in other directions are over fields and moorland. Distant views are largely constrained by mid-distance landform.	11.3 km	Low	Consented Scheme turbine tips and some blades would be seen to the south over the ridgeline of mid-distance landform. They would be seen in the context of the OHL running along the southern side of the A836.	0 - 39	Low	Low	Negligible / Minor	Negligible / Minor



**Table 4.8.2.3: Receptors at Settlements**

Name/ Location/ Type/Context	Nature of Main View obtained from the Receptor	Distance to nearest visible turbine (approx.)	Visual Sensitivity	Nature of Change	No. of turbines theoretically visible	Magnitude		Effect	
						Construction	Operation	Construction	Operation
Crask / Farr	Collection of farmsteads with northward views overlooking fields towards Farr Bay. Views westward are over a rolling rough grazing landscape with Ben Hope and Ben Loyal in the distance. Views eastward restricted by topography.	10.7 km	Low / Medium	Consented Scheme turbine blades hubs and some towers would be visible over ridgeline towards the southeast. The hubs and towers of the majority of the turbines would be screened by intervening landform.	0 - 32	Low	Low	Minor	Minor
Modsary / Skerray	Dispersed farmsteads with mixed orientation. Views are largely over rough grazing, moorland and rocky outcrops. While distant views are largely contained by surrounding topography, Ben Hope and Ben Loyal are intermittently visible to the southwest and the sea is intermittently visible to the north.	15.9 km	Low	The Consented Scheme turbine visibility would be very limited. Actual visibility of distant tips to the southeast would likely be further limited by intervening low lying vegetation.	0 - 39	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
Skelpick	Linear collection of farms and homes set on the eastern slopes of Strathnaver. Views are largely contained within the strath and focused to the north and south along the access road. Overhead lines connect to the individual dwellings. Mature trees around some of the properties act as a wind break and provide an element of screening.	6.5 km	Medium	A few turbine tips and blades of the Consented Scheme would be visible over the ridgeline to the southeast.	0 - 10	Negligible / Low	Negligible / Low	Negligible / Minor	Negligible / Minor
Forsinard	Collection of buildings focused around train station. Main views towards the East and West are contained by mature forest and topography. Mature shelterbelts further restrict views.	11.0 km	Low	Views of the Consented Scheme turbine tips from within the grouping would be largely screened by mature coniferous trees. Towards the edge of the cluster there could be views of tips over intervening landform. However, these would likely be partially filtered by intervening vegetation.	24 - 39	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

