

## **TECHNICAL APPENDIX 7.4: ASSESSMENT OF DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES**

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## **1. Technical Appendix 7.4: Assessment of Designated and Protected Landscapes**

### **1.1 Introduction**

- 1.1.1 The following statutory designated landscapes, or landscapes otherwise protected by the planning system were identified in the baseline review (see Technical Appendix 7.2: Landscape and Visual Scoping Appraisal) as potentially experiencing landscape effects as a result of the Proposed Development:

#### **National Context**

- Assynt Coigach National Scenic Area (NSA); and
- Dornoch Firth NSA.

#### **Local Context**

- Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire Special Landscape Area (SLA); and
- Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA.

- 1.1.2 The above areas are illustrated on Figure 7.2.1: Designated and Protected Landscapes, and assessed in the following tables, in accordance with criteria outlined in section 7.4 of the EIA Report.
- 1.1.3 The assessment of Wild Land Areas 34 (Reay – Cassley) and 37 (Fionaven – Ben Hee) is included in Technical Appendices 7.5: Wild Land Area Assessment – Wild Land Area 34: Reay – Cassley and 7.6: Wild Land Area Assessment – Wild Land Area 37: Fionaven – Ben Hee respectively.
- 1.1.4 The assessment of designated and protected landscapes gives consideration to effects on landscape character and identified Special Qualities. Conclusions made during the assessment of Landscape Character Types (LCTs) (see Technical Appendix 7.3: Assessment of Landscape Character Types) are used to feed into this assessment and are cross referenced as necessary. Evaluation of sensitivity to development of the type proposed and magnitude of change has been undertaken for all relevant Special Qualities. Given the status of these Qualities, the value is considered to be universally high. Therefore, the sensitivity rating is based on susceptibility to change only.
- 1.1.5 The assessment of Special Qualities has given cognisance to and is adapted from draft guidance provided by NatureScot:
- Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities (SNH, Working Draft 11, November 2018).
- 1.1.6 The method for assessment of Special Qualities gives consideration to the principles outlined in NatureScot working draft guidance (SNH, 2018), taking account of the relationship with landscape character effects, as described in Technical Appendix 7.3.
- 1.1.7 The final conclusion on the significance of effect for each designated or protected landscape considers the effects on Special Qualities and landscape character.
- 1.1.8 This assessment does not include cumulative landscape effects which are discussed in Technical Appendix 7.6: Cumulative Landscape Assessment Tables.

## 1.2 National Context

**Table 1.2.1: Assynt - Coigach NSA**

Landscape Baseline			
Description	The Proposed Development (nearest turbine) would be located approximately 9.8 km from the south-eastern tip boundary of the NSA. The NSA comprises an expansive area covering 86,540 hectares (ha) of rugged complex moorland, rocky knolls, lochans and peaty hollows, from which distinctive, isolated mountains rise, forming well-recognised silhouettes. These mountains have a rugged appearance and irregular landform and vary in their appearance and geological composition. They often appear larger than they are due to their contrast with the surrounding simple moorland cover. The NSA extends to the western coastline, consisting of a diverse seascape of scattered islands, cliffs and rocky outcrops enclosing sandy bays. Settlement is mainly concentrated around this coastline in small, nucleus settlements and more scattered crofting communities, leaving a remote and largely uninhabited interior with limited accessibility.		
	The Special Qualities of the NSAs are detailed in the publication ‘The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas’ (SNH, 2010). Special Qualities are set out below along with evaluation of their sensitivity to development of the type proposed and anticipated magnitude of change. Given their Special Quality status, the value of all these elements is assumed to be High, so the evaluation of sensitivity is based on susceptibility to change.  The assessment of LCTs has identified the key areas of potential effect within the NSA as relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased influence of infrastructure on perceptions wildness and remoteness:</li><li>• Intrusion of Proposed Development in valued views to and from mountains.</li></ul> However, whilst the focus of the assessment is directed towards these aspects, for robustness, all of the Special Qualities have been considered for potential effects in this assessment.		
Landscape Value	Given its nationally designated status the landscape value of the NSA is considered to be High.		
Assessment of Special Qualities			
Special Quality	Sensitivity	Potential Effects	Magnitude of Change
Spectacular scenery of lone mountains	High	Within the NSA, the lone mountains principally comprise the striking features of the Assynt - Coigach mountains, Quinag, Canisp, Suilven, Cul Mòr, Cul Beag, Stac Pollaidh and Ben More Coigach. There would be theoretical visibility from a few of these peaks with a worst case view illustrated from VP20, Cul Mòr (Figure 7.28.1 – 7.28.4). This would be distant and seen in a context beyond the edges of the NSA where other development is present, considered unlikely to be significant. Given the location of the Proposed Development in relation to the NSA, there would be no intrusion into views towards these mountains from other areas.	Negligible

Rocky topography of great variety	Medium	Within the south-eastern context of the NSA, the Proposed Development would not directly affect any topographical features. It would be intervisible with parts of the Ben More Assynt mountain massif (see VP6, Ben More Assynt (Figures 7.14.1 – 7.14.4) and VP21, Meall an Aonaich (Figures 7.29.1 – 7.29.4)) and surrounding higher slopes and summits and a few of the remote summits beyond. The area surrounding Ben More Assynt marks the eastern extent of the NSA and seen from outwith the NSA in a setting of lower rolling hills and low-lying coastal landscapes which lie to its east where wind turbines are already present. The Proposed Development would bring wind turbine development closer to the NSA and may be perceived to reduce the scale of surrounding peatland areas. However, it is unlikely to noticeably affect the perceived variation between the mountain massif area and other surrounding lower lying landscapes either within or outwith the NSA.	Low
Settlements nestled within a wider landscape of mountain peaks, wild moorlands, and rocky seascapes	Medium	The Proposed Development would not be intervisible with any settlements within the NSA nor appear within the context within which settlements are viewed.	Negligible
Extensive cnocan landscapes	Medium	There would be little intervisibility of the Proposed Development within areas of cnocan landscape, generally limited to a few areas of higher hill-slopes to the north of Ben More Assynt. The Proposed Development would be distant from these areas and small features in the south-eastern context. It is considered unlikely to affect appreciation of the cnocan landscapes which are predominantly towards the west and would not affect the experience of semi-enclosure which is obtained within this landscape.	Negligible
A coastline of endless drama	High	The Proposed Development would not be intervisible with any coastal areas.	Negligible
An intricate multitude of lochs and lochans	Medium	Intervisibility with the Proposed Development would affect some individual small lochs and areas of lochans around Fionn Loch Mòr to the north-west of Ben More Assynt. The Proposed Development may form a distracting feature in the landscape around the closer of these lochs such as Loch Sail an Ruathair and Loch Carn nan Conbhairean but is considered unlikely to affect the appreciation of lochs as a compositional feature of the NSA in general. The extensive multitudes of lochs which dominate the landscape of Assynt to the west would not be affected.	Negligible

A landscape of vast open space and exposure	Medium	The Proposed Development would be seen within the eastern context of the NSA within extensive open views which are obtained from the mountainous areas of Ben More Assynt (see VP6, Ben More Assynt (Figures 7.14.1 – 7.14.4), and to a lesser extent, Breabag and Ben Leòid. From the Ben Mor Assynt area, it would interact with existing turbines to increase the focus of wind turbines within the view somewhat. From the Meall an Aonaich summit further south (see VP21, Meall an Aonaich (Figures 7.29.1 – 7.29.4)), it would form a more noticeable feature in easterly views. However, whilst this may lead to isolated significant visual effects in this very localised area (see Technical Appendix 7.9: Visual Assessment Tables), it is not considered to lead to a significant effect on the appreciation of this Special Quality, as the sense of open space and exposure would remain, and the Special Quality would remain unaffected across the vast majority of the NSA.	Low
Significant tracts of wild land	High	The WLA assessment for WLA 34 Reay – Cassley (see Technical Appendix 7.5: Wild Land Area Assessment – Wild Land Area 34: Reay – Cassley) has identified that significant and non-significant effects would be anticipated as a result of the Proposed Development. Effects on landscapes within the NSA are anticipated to be Minor (not significant) as the Proposed Development would appear in the south-easterly context which already shows a lower degree of wildness, as opposed to the northerly and westerly context. This could locally increase slightly within more secluded areas towards the very south-east of the NSA. These effects would be very localised within areas which are mostly already influenced by existing development. Sense of wildness in areas to the west of Ben More Assynt which show a higher degree of baseline wildness, and other areas more widely across the WLA would not be affected.	Low
Unexpected and extensive tracts of native woodland	High	The Proposed Development would have no noticeable effects on areas of native woodland within the NSA.	Negligible
A still, quiet landscape under a constantly changing sky	High	Seen within the south-eastern context from a very few, localised areas around Ben More Assynt, the proposed turbines would usually be seen with a context of existing turbines, though would bring wind farm development closer. This would add additional movement and focus within the easterly context of this relatively small area but would affect only the context outwith the NSA. This is considered unlikely to comprise sufficient movement to lead to any perceptible change in this Special Quality within the NSA.	Negligible

Assessment of Landscape Effects	
<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	This is a highly valued landscape and its remote and undeveloped character is considered highly susceptible to change of the type proposed. Landscape sensitivity is therefore considered to be <b>High</b> .
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	<p>The Proposed Development would be intervisible with summits and facing slopes on the easternmost edge of the NSA. This would include the summits and easterly facing slopes of Ben More Assynt (see VP10, Ben More Assynt (Figures 7.18.1 – 7.18.4)), Conival, Meall an Aonaich (see VP21, Meall an Aonaich (Figures 7.29.1 – 7.29.4)), Breabag and surrounding smaller hills between a distance of around 9.8 km and up to 17 km. Most of these areas would be intervisible with up to 20 turbines but there would be no intervisibility with turbines from northerly and westerly facing slopes, most of the remote corries and lochs and the valleys between the mountains. The Proposed Development would appear in the south-easterly context from these areas, often within a context of existing wind turbines at Achany and Rosehall but would appear closer. From the most south-westerly part of the NSA, around Meall an Aonaich, it would form a more noticeable feature within this context and would form a new focal point within views beyond this area.</p> <p>Beyond 17km and up to around 22km there would be intervisibility with facing slopes and summit areas of hills surrounding Ben Leòid. The Proposed Development would be seen in the south-easterly context from these areas, to the forefront of existing Achany and Rosehall turbines.</p> <p>More distantly, the Proposed Development would be intervisible with a few isolated summits including Cul Mòr, Cul Beag and Ben More Coigach, and to a lesser extend Suilven and Canisp. At distances of over 25km, the Proposed Development would appear very distant from these areas and would be seen within a part of the eastern context where other turbines are already present. Figures 7.28.1 – 7.28.4 (VP20, Cul Mòr) shows a worst case scenario view from these summits. Only a couple of turbines would be intervisible with the summits of Canisp and Suilven.</p>
<b>Effect Significance</b>	<p>The Proposed Development would lead to indirect effects experienced from very small parts of the NSA, typically affecting elevated areas and summits, mostly around Ben More Assynt and Braebeg but also locally and more distantly on the more southerly of the Assynt mountains and Ben More Coigach.</p> <p>From the Ben More Assynt Area, the Proposed Development would appear in the south-easterly context, away from the NSA. This would affect expansive views from these areas, but in a part of the view where existing features such as wind turbines, forest areas and a wider setting of the more developed and managed easterly landscape, provide context. From isolated summit areas towards the south of this area (such as VP21, Meall an Aonaich (see Figures 7.29.1 – 7.29.4) and Technical Appendix 7.9: Visual Assessment Tables), this is anticipated to lead to significant visual effects due to the proximity of the Proposed Development in the view. However, this effect would recede with distance (anticipated to be not significant from VP10, Ben More Assynt (see Figures 7.18.1 – 7.18.4 and Technical Appendix 7.9: Visual Assessment Tables)) and is not considered to lead to an associated significant effect to the NSA because the expansive vista to north, west and south-west across the NSA would be unaffected. More distantly within the NSA the appearance of the Proposed Development in the eastern context from the Assynt and Coigach mountains would affect a small part of the eastern context where a slightly lower sensitivity landscape of extensive commercial forest plantation can be seen, as opposed to the mountains and coastal landscapes in other directions, and would appear very small and similar to other existing turbines within this setting.</p> <p>The appearance of the Proposed Development in the south-easterly context to the Ben More Assynt area would result in a reduction in the distance to the wind turbines in the surrounding landscape, thereby reducing the perceived scale of surrounding undeveloped peatlands outwith the NSA. This is anticipated to lead to limited, localised changes to the Special Qualities: <i>“Rocky topography of great variety,” “A landscape of vast open space and exposure”</i> and <i>“Significant tracts of wild land”</i>. However, given the</p>

	<p>very localised nature of these changes, and the fact that the landscape context to north and west of this area, which shows the greater strength of characteristics such as wildness would be unaffected, this is not considered to lead to a significant effect on any of these Special Qualities.</p> <p>The effect on the NSA is therefore considered to be <b>Minor</b> (not significant) during construction and operation and the integrity of the NSA would not be affected.</p>
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**Table 1.2.2: Dornoch Firth NSA**

Landscape Baseline			
Description	The Proposed Development (nearest turbine) would be located approximately 20.3km to the north-west of the western end of the Dornoch Firth NSA. This comprises a narrow sinuous firth which is surrounded by a surprising variety of landscapes and is unique as an undeveloped firth on the east coast of Scotland. It is enclosed by abrupt, rounded granite hills of heather and scree, and is characterised by changing tidal, estuarine seascapes of bays, sands, flats and promontories. This is backed by a coastal landscape of arable fields, pasturelands and diverse woodlands of oak wood, mixed and coniferous plantation, coastal scrub and policy plantings around Skibo Castle. This gentle, lowland landscape provides a framework for low density settlement of farms and houses and roads and railway lines along the shores of the firth allow an experience of changing snapshot views of the farmland and firth when moving through the landscape.		
	The Special Qualities (SNH, 2010) of the NSA are set out below along with evaluation of their sensitivity to development of the type proposed and anticipated magnitude of change. Given their Special Quality status, the value of all these elements is assumed to be High, so the evaluation of sensitivity is based on susceptibility to change.		
Landscape Value	The assessment of LCTs has identified the key areas of potential effect within the NSA as relating to:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Influence of additional wind turbines within the surrounding landscape affecting the contrast between the coastal landscapes and upland backdrop;</li><li>• Influence of additional wind turbines affecting the setting of coastal landscapes; and</li><li>• Potential effects on the setting of the Loch Migdale area.</li></ul>		
However, whilst the focus of the assessment is directed towards these aspects, for robustness, all of the Special Qualities have been considered for potential effects in this assessment.			
Given its nationally designated status the landscape value of the NSA is considered to be High.			
Assessment of Special Qualities			
Special Quality	Sensitivity	Potential Effects	Magnitude of Change
The contrast between the enclosed west and the expansive east	Medium	The Proposed Development would be present in the north-westerly context, seen from the western end of the firth, to the rear of existing turbines at Achany and Rosehall. It is considered unlikely to affect the sense of enclosure to the west, or contrast to the open seascape of the east as, being to the rear of the other wind farms, it would not visibly increase the surrounding influence of wind turbines.	Negligible

Inhabited surrounds within a wilder backdrop of hills and moors	High	From some lower lying areas around the western end of the firth, the Proposed Development would be theoretically visible but would be barely discernible behind existing turbines at Achany and Rosehall Wind Farms. From higher elevation and moorland areas, to the north (see VP15, B9176 Struie Viewpoint (Figures 7.23.1 – 7.23.4)) and south of the firth and around Loch Migdale, greater numbers of turbines may be perceptible, but would still be seen beyond existing turbines. It is considered that this would lead to no noticeable change to the backdrop of hills and moors.	Negligible
A wide diversity of woodland cover	Medium	The Proposed Development would not lead to any changes in woodland cover.	Negligible
A rich variety of alluvial lands, dunes and links	Medium	The Proposed Development would be theoretically visible from a few areas of coastal flats around Easter and Western Fearn. However, it would be barely perceptible to the rear of existing turbines viewed up the valley and would not lead to any perceptible changes to these landscapes.	Negligible
The ever-changing firth	Medium	Whilst the Proposed Development would be theoretically intervisible within the backdrop to the firth in areas around its western end, its very limited visibility to the rear of existing turbines is unlikely to lead to any discernible change.	Negligible
The tranquillity of an undeveloped coastline	High	The Proposed Development would theoretically introduce additional development to the setting of the firth but the position to the rear of existing wind turbines is considered to lead to an unnoticeable increase.	Negligible
Migdale, a microcosm of the wider Dornoch Firth	High	The Proposed Development would be theoretically intervisible with some areas around Loch Migdale but not with its immediate shores. However, from these areas it would be seen to the rear of and within the context of the existing Achany and Rosehall wind turbines and would frequently be hidden by intervening woodland. No perceptible degree of effect is therefore anticipated for this area.	Negligible
<b>Assessment of Landscape Effects</b>			
<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	This is a highly valued landscape. Its small scale landscape patterns are highly susceptible to large scale change of the type proposed. Existing wind farm development is already apparent within the context affecting some areas which reduces sensitivity locally to indirect change. Nevertheless, landscape sensitivity is considered to be <b>High</b> .		
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	The Proposed Development would be theoretically intervisible with parts of the western end of the NSA with up to 10 turbines theoretically visible from low lying coastal areas, and up to 20 turbines affecting some of the surrounding hills. However, it would always be seen to the rear of existing turbines at Achany and Rosehall Wind Farms. From lower areas around the firth, this would be likely to comprise a barely distinguishable number of additional tips within this context. From some higher surrounding hills, a few additional turbines or blades may be perceptible in the context. However, given the existing context of turbines in this area, this is not likely to lead to any distinguishable change in landscape character.		



	<p>Within the detailed study area this NSA falls within LCT 145 (Farmed and Forested Slopes with Crofting). The landscape character assessment identified a Negligible magnitude of change for this part of the LCT (see Technical Appendix 7.3: Assessment of Landscape Character Types). A Negligible magnitude of change is also anticipated for all Special Qualities.</p> <p>Overall, considering the potential change to Special Qualities and landscape character within the NSA, magnitude of change is considered to be Negligible during construction and operation.</p>
<b>Effect Significance</b>	<p>The Proposed Development would theoretically indirectly affect some areas within the western part of this NSA. However, all potential intervisibility would be seen within the context of existing wind turbines, as shown in Figures 7.23.1 – 7.23.4 (VP15, B9176 Struie Viewpoint) and is considered likely to lead to an indiscernible level of change to landscape characteristics and Special Qualities of the NSA.</p> <p>The effect of the Proposed Development on the Dornoch Firth NSA is therefore considered to be <b>Negligible</b> and the integrity of the NSA would not be affected.</p>

### 1.3 Local Context

**Table 1.3.1: Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire SLA**

Landscape Baseline			
<b>Description</b>	This SLA is located approximately 17.2km to the north-east of the Proposed Development. It covers a relatively small area of 53,000ha which includes the mountains of Ben Klibreck and Ben Armine and the linear lochs, Loch Choire and Loch a' Bhlealaibh, which are set in a deep valley between them. Ben Klibreck is one of a number of prominent lone mountains and mountain groups which rise dramatically from an open moorland in central Sutherland and is notable for its distinctive western profile. This is a large scale, open and exposed landscape with wide panoramic views. By contrast, Loch Choire is notable for its remote seclusion and enclosure. The lochs are fringed by areas of improved pasture and scattered mature trees, and the steep surrounding slopes are clothed with remnants of native broad-leaved woodland. A few blocks of coniferous forest plantation appear more incongruous. There is limited human influence within the SLA and therefore a prevailing sense of wildness.  Special Qualities of the SLAs are detailed in the document 'Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas' (Horner + MacLennan and Wood, Mike 2011). Special Qualities are set out below along with evaluation of their sensitivity to development of the type proposed and anticipated magnitude of change. Given their Special Quality status, the value of all these elements is assumed to be High, so the evaluation of sensitivity is based on susceptibility to change.		
<b>Landscape Value</b>	The recognised status of the SLA as a designated landscape as well as its remote qualities (it also forms part of WLA 35 (Ben Klibreck – Armine Forest) and the striking mountain silhouette of Ben Klibreck as a focus for views is considered to give this SLA a High landscape value.		
Assessment of Special Qualities			
Special Quality	Sensitivity	Potential Effects	Magnitude of Change
Distinctive mountains including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The prominent mountain ridge of Ben Klibreck; and</li></ul>	High	The Proposed Development would be intervisible with the summit area and parts of the facing slopes of Ben Klibreck, forming a distant feature to the south-west, but bringing the influence of wind turbines slightly closer to the mountain. This has potential to slightly reduce a sense of remoteness or wildness within low lying landscapes surrounding the mountain, although the Proposed Development would still appear far away and existing turbines are already a more distant feature of this view. There are few locations where the Proposed Development would intrude into the setting of Ben Klibreck as a lone mountain, and therefore it is not considered that the role as a landmark and focal point would be noticeably affected.	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The less dramatic Ben Armine, one of the most remote mountains in Scotland.</li></ul>	High	The Proposed Development would be intervisible with the summit and facing slopes of Ben Armine, but at a distance of over 25km would be a small and distant feature within part of the context where distant wind turbines already form a feature of the landscape.	Negligible

Secluded glen with network of tracks	High	The Proposed Development would not be intervisible with the Loch Choire glen.	Negligible
Extensive views from peaks and summits	High	The Proposed Development would form a distant but perceptible feature in the south-westerly view from the summits of the mountains (see VP13, Ben Klibreck (Figures 7.21.1 – 7.21.4). As described in the visual assessment (see Technical Appendix 7.9: Visual Assessment Tables), this is not anticipated to lead to a significant visual effect.	Low
Historic landscape	Medium	It is not anticipated that there would be any perceptible effect from the Proposed Development to the settings of historic features.	Negligible
<b>Assessment of Landscape Effects</b>			
<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	This is a valued landscape with wide reaching views and remote qualities which are susceptible to change of the type proposed. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be <b>High</b> .		
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	The Proposed Development would appear as a distant feature within the south-westerly landscape context from relatively small areas covering mountain summits and higher south-westerly facing slopes (see VP13, Ben Klibreck (Figures 7.21.1 – 7.21.4). This is a part of the landscape context where other distant turbines of Achany and Rosehall Wind Farms are already present. The Proposed Development would slightly extend the existing grouping of turbines further to the north within this context and would appear to bring turbines slightly closer to some parts of the SLA, mostly limited to parts south-westerly parts of Ben Klibreck. This may lead to a small and localised increase in the perceived appearance of wind turbine development on these small parts of the SLA and is recognised by a Low magnitude of change to the Special Qualities of ‘ <i>Distinctive mountains</i> ’ (Ben Klibreck) and ‘ <i>Extensive views from peaks and summits</i> ’. Magnitude of change is therefore considered to be Low during construction and operation.		
<b>Effect Significance</b>	Only very localised areas of the SLA would be potentially indirectly affected by the addition of the Proposed Development to the surrounding context. The increased extent of wind farm development within the south-westerly context would lead to a perceptible but not significant effect on views from summit areas of Ben Klibreck as illustrated on Figures 7.21.1 – 7.21.4 (VP13, Ben Klibreck) and may lead to a marginal effect on the sense of remoteness experienced from these localised areas by bringing wind turbines slightly closer within the very extensive context. This is anticipated to lead to localised perceptible, but not significant effects to the Special qualities ‘ <i>Distinctive mountains</i> ’ and ‘ <i>Extensive views from peaks and summits</i> ’. The overall effect on the SLA is anticipated to be <b>Minor</b> (not significant) during construction and operation.		

**Table 1.26: Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA**

Landscape Baseline			
Description	<p>This SLA located around 15.1km south of the Proposed Development, comprises an extensive area of mountains and moorland on both sides of the main Garve-Ullapool road along the Dirrie More between Loch Glascarnoch and the head of Loch Broom, extending north to cover Beinn Dearg and the peaks of Freevater, upper Strath Vaich, Diebidale, Glencalvie and Amat. It is characterised by a complex sequence of hill ranges where combinations of rugged terrain, high tops, lonely glens and upland lochans, coupled with difficult access and lack of habitation over an extensive area, give a strong sense of remoteness and solitude. There is variation across the SLA with the peaks and ridges in the southwest of the area tend to be better defined and tightly grouped. Those in the north and east feature more extensive areas of gentle slopes and high plateau summits. Forest plantations and native woodlands are present in the lower sections of glens and straths around the edge of the SLA but the dominant characteristic over most of the area is open, heather and grassland slopes interspersed with areas of scree, boulders and rocky outcrops. The area is predominantly uninhabited but Hydroelectric infrastructure is present in some areas, reducing the sense of remoteness and wildness locally.</p> <p>Special Qualities of the SLA (Horner + MacLennan and Wood, Mike 2011) are set out below along with evaluation of their sensitivity to development of the type proposed and anticipated magnitude of change. Given their Special Quality status, the value of all these elements is assumed to be High, so the evaluation of sensitivity is based on susceptibility to change.</p>		
Landscape Value	<p>This SLA is recognised for its regional importance, and valued for wild and remote qualities, falling, within the wider study area, mostly within WLA 29 (Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis). It is therefore considered to be of <b>High</b> landscape value.</p>		
Assessment of Effects on Special Qualities			
Special Quality	Sensitivity	Potential Effects	Magnitude of Change
Rugged Mountains and Lonely Glens and Spectacular Panoramic Views including:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Complex pattern of interconnected, remote mountains, penetrated by long glens with a sense of wildness and physical challenge;</li></ul>	High	<p>There would be very little intervisibility with mountain areas around the northern edge of the SLA at a distance of between around 15 and 25km and some more distant remote peaks in the interior. This limited intervisibility would be largely confined to the tops, where the Proposed Development may be perceived in the northern and north-eastern context where forest plantation and the existing wind turbines of Achany and Rosehall are already present. It would form a perceptible feature in views (see VP19, Seana Bhràigh (Figures 7.27.1 – 7.27.4), seen to extend wind farm development further to the west though would not bring turbines closer to the SLA. This may lead to a very small and localised reduction in sense of remoteness within these relatively small areas but is not anticipated to lead to a reduced sense of wildness due to the existing influence of wind turbines and forestry within this part of the context. The remaining part of the context experienced from these areas, looking south and west across the SLA and WLA 27 and therefore presenting a greater degree of</p>	Locally Low, Negligible overall.

		wildness, would not be affected. There would be no noticeable intervisibility with any glen areas.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Fannichs mountain group;</li> </ul>	High	This area is outwith the wider study area and there is unlikely to be any perceptible intervisibility.	Negligible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Freevater mountain group – Seana Bhraigh, Carn Bàn and An Socach;</li> </ul>	High	There would be limited intervisibility from the summits of some of these peaks as demonstrated by VP19, Seana Bhraigh (see Figures 7.27.1 – 7.27.4). This would affect a small part of the context where existing wind turbines and forest are already present and is considered unlikely to affect the appreciation and experience of this mountain group within the wider context of the SLA and WLA 27 and the north-westerly mountains of the NSA.	Negligible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The view northwest through the Dirrie More across the waters of Loch Droma to An Teallach;</li> </ul>	High	The Proposed Development would not affect this view.	Negligible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The view down Strath More from the A832;</li> </ul>	High	The Proposed Development would not affect this view.	Negligible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remains of cleared townships in Glencalvie; and</li> </ul>	Medium	There would be no intervisibility with Glen Calvie.	Negligible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solitude and isolation of quiet, uninhabited glens, and remote coires which extend towards the core of the mountain heartland.</li> </ul>	High	There would be no notable intervisibility with any of the uninhabited glens within the SLA, with intervisibility largely confined to the tops. No discernible change to this Special Quality is therefore anticipated.	Negligible
Impressive Natural Features including:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corrieshalloch Gorge; and</li> </ul>	High	There would be no intervisibility with Corrieshalloch Gorge.	Negligible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alladale Pinewood and Amat Forest Caledonian Pinewoods.</li> </ul>	Medium	There would be no change to the woodland cover within the SLA.	Negligible
<b>Assessment of Landscape Effects</b>			
<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	This is a valued landscape as recognised by its designated status and presence within a Wild Land Area. The mountainous landscape, valued views and remote and wild qualities are considered very susceptible to change. Landscape sensitivity to change of the type proposed is considered to be <b>High</b> .		
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	The ZTV indicates that the vast majority of this SLA would obtain no intervisibility of the Proposed Development. Intervisibility would be limited to some localised hill and mountain summit areas along the northern edge of the SLA and a few summits within the Seana Bhraigh area, appearing in the north or north-easterly context. This would form a perceptible feature within elevated views from these limited areas as illustrated by Figures		

	<p>7.26.1 – 7.26.4 (VP18, Carn Chuinneag) and Figures 7.27.1 – 7.27.4 (VP19, Seana Bhràigh). However, this constitutes a very small part of the surrounding context which is already affected by the wind turbines of Achany and Rosehall which appear at similar distance. Therefore, although there may be a perceptible increase in the numbers of turbines present and some very small and localised change to the sense of remoteness and panoramic views identified as a contributory element of the Special Quality '<i>Rugged Mountains and Lonely Glens and Spectacular Panoramic Views</i>', this is anticipated to lead to an inappreciable change to landscape characteristics or Special Qualities when considering the SLA as a whole. The wider setting to these mountains associated with the SLA extending to the south, and the remote context of WLA 27 to the west, would experience no change.</p> <p>Magnitude of change to landscape characteristics and Special Qualities is therefore considered to be <b>Negligible</b> during construction and operation.</p>
<b>Effect Significance</b>	<p>The Proposed Development would not directly affect this SLA. Indirect effect would be limited to the presence of the Proposed Development within the northern or north-easterly context where it would be perceptible in some views. This is anticipated to lead to visual effects, as described in Technical Appendix 7.7: Visual Assessment Tables (Viewpoints 18 and 19). However, when considering the characteristics of the landscape, these areas are virtually all already affected by the existing turbines of Achany and Rosehall wind farms in the same part of the surrounding context, reducing sensitivity in this area. In addition, this part of the context is heavily characterised by coniferous forest plantation which further reduces its contribution to the wild and mountainous characteristics which comprise the valued aspects and contribute to the Special Qualities of the SLA. These characteristics are more prevalent to south and west of the areas affected, looking across the core part of the SLA and also WLA 27 and, more expansively, the Assynt and Coigach mountains of the Assynt – Coigach NSA to the west. In addition, the vast majority of this SLA, including all the remote glens and the majority of mountain areas, would be unaffected by the Proposed Development. As such, no significant effects are anticipated to any of the Special Qualities of the SLA.</p> <p>The effect of the Proposed Development on the Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie SLA is therefore considered to be <b>Negligible</b> and the integrity of the designation is not anticipated to be at risk.</p>