

**APPENDIX 5.5: WILD LAND AREA ASSESSMENT – WILD LAND AREA 34:
REAY – CASSLEY**

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1. WILD LAND AREA ASSESSMENT – WILD LAND AREA 34: REAY – CASSLEY

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This report details the assessment of the effects of the Varied Development on the Wild Land Qualities (WLQs) which have been identified for the Reay – Cassley Wild Land Area (WLA 34). The Assessment has been completed by Chartered Landscape Architects from ASH Design + Assessment Ltd.
- 1.1.2 This assessment is separate, but complimentary to the Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) (Chapter 5). Reference is made to other aspects of the LVIA where relevant.
- 1.1.3 This assessment considers the effects of the Varied Development on the identified Wild Land Qualities (WLQs) of WLA 34 during daylight hours when these WLQs are most likely to be experienced. The effects of visible aviation lighting are considered separately within Appendix 5.11 of the EIAR.

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 An assessment of effects on WLA 34 was previously undertaken in 2021 (the 2021 assessment) for the consented Achany Wind Farm Extension (the Consented Development). The conclusions of the 2021 assessment are summarised in Section 1.4 of this Appendix. This assessment considers likely changes to the effects outlined in the 2021 Assessment which would result from the proposed variation to the Consented Development which would change the height of turbines from 149.9m to top, to 200m to tip.
- 1.2.2 Although the Consented Development was slightly different to the development considered in the 2021 assessment (two turbines were removed), the conclusions of the 2021 assessment are also considered applicable to the Consented Development.

Feedback from NatureScot on Wild Land Effects

- 1.2.3 The application for the Consented Development was considered by NatureScot (NS) following submission. An objection was raised due to predicted significant effect to WLA 34. However, this was subsequently lifted following consent being granted by The Highland Council (THC) to the Sallachy Wind Farm within the WLA as it was considered by NatureScot, that this part of the WLA would no longer be classed as wild land if the Sallachy Wind Farm was constructed.

“It is clear that the eastern limb of WLA 34 will be severed at its narrowest point around the hill of Maovally, as a direct result of the Sallachy Wind Farm consent. This area could not be now considered as qualifying as part of the WLA and may be considered lost. The addition of the Achany Extension to this new baseline will compound these effects, further diminishing the strength of Wild Land Quality (WLQ) 4 across much of the remaining areas of the eastern limb. However, as these are areas that are no longer of the highest wilderness and, importantly, no longer contribute to the wider WLA, these effects are not considered to be to the degree that they would sustain an objection from us¹.”

¹ NatureScot (June 2022) Letter to Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit (Ref. CDM166879)

- 1.2.4 At the time of writing, there has been no construction commenced on the Sallachy Wind Farm. It has therefore continued to be considered as a potential cumulative site only (see Section 1.5).

Figures and Visualisations

- 1.2.5 The assessment is supported by 13 figures. Wirelines from the various Wild Land Assessment points identified for the 2021 assessment for the Proposed Varied Development and Consented Development are also included as Appendix 5.5 Figures 14.1 – 14.7.

1.3 Methodology and Structure

- 1.3.1 The methodology for the WLA assessment is detailed in the 2021 assessment (Appendix 7.5 of the 2021 EIA Report). The assessment of effects for the Varied Development has involved the following additional steps:

Review of the baseline

- 1.3.2 A review of developments or other activities which have taken place since 2021 has been undertaken to establish any changes which may affect the baseline level of wildness within the study area. Site survey was also undertaken to evaluate whether any potential changes to the baseline strength of wildness and presence of Wild Land Qualities have taken place.

Assessment of the Varied Development

- 1.3.3 This stage considers the effects of the Varied Development on the presence of wild land attributes within the study area, and how this would change the extent to which the WLQs are experienced. The assessment considers whether any changes would occur to the sensitivity values identified in the 2021 assessment and reviews the predicted Magnitude of Change for the Varied Development in accordance with the criteria set out in the 2021 assessment methodology (see Appendix 7.5 of the 2021 EIA Report).
- 1.3.4 A final judgement of significance of effect is made for each WLA Key Quality, as well as wider changes to the strength of wildness within the WLA as a whole.

Comparison of the Consented Development and the Varied Development

- 1.3.5 The conclusions on significance of effect for each WLA and wider changes to strength of wildness are considered against conclusions for the Consented Development and any differences highlighted.

1.4 Summary of 2021 WLA Assessment

Strength of Wildness

- 1.4.1 The 2021 assessment noted that the 2021 Proposed Development would affect WLA34 in two ways: directly due to the introduction of turbines and associated infrastructure within the south-eastern extremity of the WLA; and indirectly, in relation to intervisibility across other parts of the WLA.
- 1.4.2 The 2021 Proposed Development would be located at the southern end of the Eastern Lobster Claw, close to the edge of the WLA. Most areas around the southern part of the site are very influenced by the existing wind turbines of Achany and Rosehall Wind Farms

which lie to the south which have a considerable effect on this part of the WLA by way of introducing modern artefacts and contemporary land use within the setting, and reducing the perceptions of sanctuary and solitude and risk. However, there is an awareness of being on the edge of a more extensive area of wildness to the north and north-west with arresting views towards the mountains from more elevated areas. The 2021 assessment noted that the 2021 Proposed Development would effectively extend this area of existing wind farm influence further to the north by around 7km thereby slightly extending the effects which already occur and reducing the relative proximity of wind farm development within the wider WLA. Consequently, the area of direct influence of wind turbines would be moved into the edge of the WLA, the experience of being on the edge of the greater WLA would be shifted slightly further northwards and wind turbines would become more noticeable to different degrees within some eastern parts of the Western Lobster Claw and south-east Central Core.

- 1.4.3 A *localised* Moderate – Major (significant) effect was identified within 2km of the Proposed Development where direct effects would occur but the baseline strength of wildness was recognised to be less strong due to the effects of the existing Achany Wind Farm and proximity to the edge of the WLA.
- 1.4.4 A *localised* Moderate (significant) effect was identified for areas beyond 2km within relatively discrete parts of the Eastern Lobster Claw up to 5-6km, and the Western Lobster Claw up to 8-10km from the Proposed Development, affecting localised parts of the plateaux above the immediate confines of Glen Cassley. In these areas, the influence of existing contemporary land use is less prevalent and the Proposed Development would reduce the extent to which the physical attributes and perceptual response of wild land would be experienced in the south, south-easterly or easterly context. However, the greater connection to the WLA is experienced in the north and west, where the more extensive landscape of rugged mountains and extensive moorlands is perceived and this connection would be unaffected by the Proposed Development.
- 1.4.5 In other parts of the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw areas, the 2021 Proposed Development would be either not be visible, or would be more distant or peripheral in a setting where the greater sense of wildness is experienced to the north and west and the effect was therefore predicted to be Minor (not significant).
- 1.4.6 A Minor (not significant) effect was also predicted in parts of the Central Core within 15-17km in areas where intervisibility with the Proposed Development would occur. Despite the influence of more rugged terrain in these areas, the character is affected by contemporary land use features such as forestry, or features of the Duchally hydro scheme and the Proposed Development, although noticeable, would not affect the connection to the north and west where the greater experience of wild land is perceived. It was recognised however, that this effect may rise to Minor to Moderate (not significant) very locally in more secluded areas to towards the south of the Central Core.
- 1.4.7 Overall, the assessment concluded that potential significant effects would be localised, affecting only relatively small parts of the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw, and largely in areas which already feel peripheral to the more extensive WLA. With the exception of very limited parts towards the north of the Western Lobster Claw, significant effects would usually occur in areas where the existing strength of wildness is already lower due to the influence of existing artefacts and contemporary land use in the surrounding context.

Wild Land Qualities (WLQs)

- 1.4.8 There are four identified WLQs for WLA 34. These have been numbered as follows for the purposes of this report:
- WLQ1 - *A range of large, irregular, rocky mountains with steep, arresting slopes and a variety of lochs and lochans, possessing a strong sense of naturalness, remoteness and sanctuary;*
 - WLQ2 - *An awe-inspiring, broad scale expanse of cnocan in which there is a complex pattern of features at a local level that contribute to the sense of naturalness and sanctuary;*
 - WLQ3 - *A variety of spaces created by irregular landforms in which there is perceived naturalness, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude; and*
 - WLQ4 - *Extensive, elevated peatland slopes whose simplicity and openness contribute to a perception of awe, whilst highlighting the qualities of adjacent mountains.*
- 1.4.9 The 2021 assessment identified that *localised significant* effects would occur to one of the WLQs: WLQ4 (*"Extensive, elevated peatland slopes..."*).
- 1.4.10 This was predicted to occur largely within 2km, and within localised parts of the landscape up to 5 – 6km from the 2021 Proposed Development within the Easter lobster Claw; and within the Western Lobster Claw up to around 8km and locally to 10km. Sensitivity for this WLQ is considered to range from Medium – High in the Eastern Lobster Claw where the connection to the mountain interior is less pronounced and is High in the Western Lobster Claw where the open peatlands are the dominant characteristic of the landform and the relationship to the adjacent mountains is more strongly felt.
- 1.4.11 Effects on this WLQ within other parts of the WLA were considered to be not significant because the 2021 Proposed Development would be relatively small within the broad context, seen towards the existing wind turbines of Achany and Rosehall Wind Farms or experienced within a context where other modern artefacts or contemporary land use such as the Duchally hydro scheme are present.
- 1.4.12 Further effects were identified for two other WLQs:
- WLQ1 (*"A range of large, irregular, rocky mountains"*); and
 - WLQ3 (*"A variety of spaces created by irregular landforms..."*).
- 1.4.13 However, these effects were not considered to be significant because these WLQs are more strongly present, and therefore most sensitive, within the Central Core area, where the 2021 Proposed Development would have a less notable effect on the wild land attributes.
- 1.4.14 No discernible effects were identified for WLQ2 (*"An awe-inspiring, broad scale expanse of cnocan..."*), because this WLQ is mostly expressed within the Northern Arm where there would be no intervisibility with the 2021 Proposed Development.

1.5 Changes to the Baseline

- 1.5.1 Site visits did not identify any notable changes to the baseline since survey work for the 2021 assessment was completed (October 2020). The most notable change within the wider vicinity is the construction and operation of the Creag Riabhach Wind Farm.

Creag Riabhach Wind Farm

- 1.5.2 Within the wider vicinity of the WLA the 22 turbine Creag Riabhach Wind Farm has been constructed since completion of the 2021 assessment, located approximately 10km to the north-east of the Lobster Claw and 14km to the east of the Central Core. The Creag Riabhach wind farm was discussed in the 2021 assessment as a consented development but was not considered as part of the baseline for the assessment. The 2021 assessment considered that if built, the development may slightly reduce the strength of the 'absence of modern artefacts' attribute in some parts of the Eastern Lobster Claw and a few very small parts of the Central Core (see Figure 6) but would lead to little perceptible change in the relative wildness and attribute mapping. This view has been verified by the 2025 site surveys.
- 1.5.3 A ZTV of all operational wind farms within 15 km of the WLA (including Creag Riabhach Wind Farm) is included as Figure 6. A two turbine extension has also been consented for Creag Riabhach Wind Farm, but would not increase the ZTV coverage within the ZTV.

Other Consented Wind Farms

- 1.5.4 Within 15km of the WLA, no other wind farms (or other notable developments) have been constructed or are under construction since completion of the 2021 assessment. However, there are a number of wind farms that have been consented and therefore comprise reasonably foreseeable developments within the future baseline. These include the following:
- Sallachy Wind Farm (9 turbines up to 149.9m to tip, within the WLA at the north of the Eastern Lobster Claw);
 - Strath Tirry Wind Farm (4 turbines up to 135m to tip, 6.2km to the east of the Eastern Lobster Claw);
 - Meall Buidhe Wind Farm (8 turbines up to 149.9m to tip, 7.2km to the south of the Western Lobster Claw);
 - Lairg 2 Wind Farm (10 turbines between 150m and 200m in height 7.9km to the south-east of the Eastern Lobster Claw);
 - Garvary Wind Farm (24 turbines up to 180m to tip, 9.2km to the south-east of the Eastern Lobster Claw); and
 - Chleainsaid Wind Farm (16 turbines between 180m and 200m to tip, 10km to the east of the Eastern Lobster Claw).
- 1.5.5 The Strath Oykel wind farm (12 turbines up to 200m to tip, 4.5km to the south of the Western Lobster Claw) has also been consented but is currently the subject of a judicial review.
- 1.5.6 These developments are shown on Figure 4, and ZTVs are included as Figures 7 – 13.
- 1.5.7 The most notable of the consented sites is Sallachy (see Figure 7) which would directly affect the area of the Eastern Lobster Claw where it transitions to the Central Core and would also indirectly affect parts of the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw and elevated summits and slopes within the Central Core. The presence of this development would noticeably reduce the strength of the wildness and NatureScot have advised that the construction of this wind farm would result in the Eastern Lobster Claw no longer being part of the WLA (see paragraph 1.2.3).

- 1.5.8 Elsewhere, the Lairg 2 Wind Farm (see Figure 10) was discussed in the baseline of the 2021 assessment and is considered unlikely to result in very noticeable changes to the WLA baseline due to being in the south-easterly context where existing Wind Farms and other contemporary land use activities are already present. It is considered that Garvary Wind Farm (see Figure 11) which would create a larger cluster in this context with Lairg 2 would have a similar influence. Strath Tirry (see Figure 8) and Chleainsaid (see Figure 12) Wind Farms would further reinforce the impression of development around this east side of the Eastern Lobster Claw, creating a clear limit to the wild land in this direction.
- 1.5.9 Strath Oykel (see Figure 13) and Meall Buidhe (see Figure 9) would have greater influence on the western part of the Eastern Lobster Claw, through Glen Cassley, and the southernmost part of the Western Lobster Claw.
- 1.5.10 Collectively, the consented wind farms would be likely to most impact on the Eastern Lobster Claw and the south of the Western Lobster Claw. As indicated by the Map of Relative Wildness (see A5.5 Figure 1), these areas have a generally Low to Medium strength of wildness but it is likely that this would be further lowered by the presence of these consented developments; particularly Sallachy Wind Farm, but also cumulatively by the other developments which would form more of surrounding developed context around the east and south of the WLA.
- 1.5.11 ZTVs (see A5.5 Figures 6 – 12) also indicate a notable collective influence on parts of the Central Core, particularly around Beinn Leoid, the eastern slopes and summit areas of Beinn More Assynt and Braebag. Whilst these consented developments (with the exception of Sallachy) are generally further from the Central Core, it is likely that they would collectively lead to the strength of baseline wildness being slightly reduced within some of these areas should they all be constructed. Particularly, within areas where the Map of Relative Wildness shows higher levels of wildness, such as the eastern slopes and corries of Beinn More Assynt, Braebag and southern slopes of Beinn Leoid.
- 1.5.12 As these sites are not yet operational, this theoretical baseline has not been used for the revised assessment (which considers the baseline at the time of site work) but is relevant in relation to potential future change. This is discussed further in the cumulative assessment (see Appendix 5.8).
- 1.5.13 It should also be noted that consent for the Braemore Wind Farm which was considered in the 2021 assessment has since lapsed and this development is therefore no longer relevant to the future baseline.

1.6 Assessment of the Varied Development

Changes to Theoretical Visibility

- 1.6.1 The ZTV for the Varied Development (see Figure 5.3 of the main EIA Report) indicates that there would be notable areas of increased intervisibility across the Eastern Lobster Claw where the taller turbines would lead to them appearing above the skyline of some of the shallow corrie areas and hollows which drain towards the east. Elsewhere, there would be very little new areas of theoretical visibility with only very small areas indicated within the Central Core and Western Lobster Claw. However, within some areas, the ZTV indicates that increased numbers of turbines would be perceived.

Wild Land Sensitivity

- 1.6.2 Changes to the baseline strength of wildness and presence of WLQs are not considered sufficient to lead to any changes to sensitivity from that described in the 2021 assessment.

Magnitude of Change

Strength of Wildness (Changes to Physical Attributes and Perceptual Responses)

- 1.6.3 Within the Eastern Lobster Claw, the direct effects of the taller turbines would lead to more expansive areas being closely defined by wind turbines with a notable effect on the physical attributes of '*Absence of Modern Artefacts*' and '*Evidence of Contemporary Land Use*'. As there would be no changes to the access tracks or borrow pits there would be no change to the physical '*Remoteness and Inaccessibility*' or '*Rugged or Challenging Terrain*' compared to the Consented Development. However, the presence of the taller turbines perceived across a larger area of the Eastern Lobster Claw would lead to a greater understanding of the proximity of development which would lead to some change to the perceptual responses of solitude, physical challenge and risk.
- 1.6.4 The highest degree of change would continue to occur within and around the Proposed Varied Development site itself, with typically Low or Medium change experienced towards the southern part of the site close to the existing Achany and Rosehall turbines, but higher level of change between Medium and High being experienced towards northern parts of the site where the existing turbines are not experienced. It is likely that the area of greater change would be experienced across a slightly wider area than the Consented Development, reflecting the increased ZTV coverage and higher, more prominent turbines with hubs and blades being more noticeable above the skyline of the more concealed hollows where previously only tips would be present. This may also affect the perceived extent of the WLA in this area, although generally, this greater extent is already perceived as being more to the north and west.
- 1.6.5 The baseline strength of wildness is typically Low or Medium across the Eastern Lobster Claw due to an awareness of proximity to other land use which is either visible in the surrounding context or recently perceived when moving through the landscape. The lower baseline strength means that the magnitude of change that would be experienced would be less pronounced.
- 1.6.6 Across the Western Lobster Claw, the Proposed Varied Development would affect similar areas, but the turbines would be taller and more prominent. There would therefore be a less notable change to the physical attributes '*Absence of Modern Artefacts*' and '*Evidence of Contemporary Land Use*' because the Consented Development would already reduce the strength of these attributes in the areas affected. However, the taller turbines would be likely to appear closer to this area which would potentially reduce the perceived extent of the WLA in the eastern context and may slightly further reduce the strength of responses such as '*Arresting and Inspiring Qualities*' and '*Sense of Sanctuary and Solitude*'. The combined magnitude of change for perceptual responses is predicted to rise to Medium more generally across the Western Lobster Claw in areas of theoretical visibility, with a Medium – High magnitude for '*Arresting and Inspiring Qualities*' predicted in more southerly parts of the plateau where the Proposed Varied Development would appear very prominent and close to the east.

- 1.6.7 Within the Central Core, the taller turbines of the Proposed Varied Development would lead to these being perceived slightly more within some of the lower hollows and carries as part of the wider context. However, there would be a similar appearance of turbines within this context from more elevated areas where other surrounding land use is already evident and therefore the attributes '*Absence of Modern Artefacts*' and '*Evidence of Contemporary Land Use*' would not be much increased. Most of the areas affected within the Central Core already have influence from modern artefacts and land use, including more distant wind turbines and forest areas, and features of the Duchally Hydro Scheme in upper Glen Cassley. However, from all areas of intervisibility within this area, the taller and more prominent turbines would appear closer than the Consented Development turbines, as they would appear tall on the south-eastern ridge, where the Consented Development appeared more contained and set within the landform. This is expected to slightly further diminish the perceived extent of the peatlands in the south-easterly context leading to a slightly greater change to the experience of arresting qualities and some limited change to the sense of solitude. However, these attributes would still be strongly present, evoked by the mountain context and sense of elevation. The magnitude of change is therefore predicted to remain broadly similar to that within the 2021 assessment, with a Medium magnitude of change to '*Arresting or Inspiring Qualities*', and Low magnitude of change to '*Sense of sanctuary and solitude*' within south-eastern parts of the Central Core leading up to the summits of Ben More Assynt and Braebag. Magnitude of change would be generally Low on the higher summits and within more distant areas where arresting qualities would continue to be strongly evoked by the surrounding mountains and views in other directions.

Wild Land Qualities

- 1.6.8 The assessment focusses on WLQs1, 3 and 4. WLQ2 (*An awe-inspiring, broad scale expanse of cnocan...*) has been excluded from the assessment, because no effects were identified in the 2021 assessment.

WLQ1 - A range of large, irregular, rocky mountains with steep, arresting slopes and a variety of lochs and lochans, possessing a strong sense of naturalness, remoteness and sanctuary.

- 1.6.9 The 2021 assessment (2021 EIAR, Appendix 7.5, Table 4.2.1) identified a Low magnitude of change for this WLQ in the most south-easterly fringe of the Central Core and localised areas transitioning into the Western Lobster Claw relating to changes to the perceptual response '*Arresting or Inspiring Qualities*' where the scale of the wider moorland setting to the mountains would be slightly diminished by the closer appearance of the 2021 Proposed Development.
- 1.6.10 The large scale of the Proposed Varied Development is predicted to lead to the surrounding peatland areas being perceived to be further reduced in scale, but this is not predicted to lead to a very notable change to the presence of the perceptual response '*Arresting or Inspiring Qualities*' which would still be well expressed in relation to surrounding mountains. As the mountainous environment is the greatest focus of this WLQ, magnitude of change is predicted to continue to be Low and *localised* to the same areas of the south-east Central Core and Western Lobster Claw.

WLQ3 - A variety of spaces created by irregular landforms in which there is perceived naturalness, as well as a strong sense of sanctuary and solitude

- 1.6.11 The 2021 assessment (2021 EIAR, Appendix 7.5, Table 4.2.3) identified a Medium magnitude of change for this WLQ in very localised shallow corries and depressions of the Eastern Lobster Claw up to around 5km from the 2021 Proposed Development turbines where the new appearance of wind turbines would locally reduce the sense of solitude and may affect the variety of experience between enclosure and exposure. However, no changes were predicted within the Central Core where this WLQ is most strongly expressed.
- 1.6.12 The Proposed Varied Development turbines would lead to increased intervisibility across the Eastern Lobster Claw with further influence of the taller turbine within the more contained corries and depressions likely to diminish the perceived scale of the landform to some extent. Changes to this WLQ within the Eastern Lobster Claw would therefore be similar but would be experienced across a slightly wider area. However, as the WLQ is less noticeably present across the Eastern Lobster Claw, which has a less distinctive variety of topography, this is not predicted to lead to an increased magnitude of change.
- 1.6.13 Taller turbines would also lead to these being visible to a slightly greater extent around the south of the Central Core, potentially intruding slightly further into some more enclosed parts of the landscape around Braebag and Meall an Aonaich, leading to a slightly diminished sense of distance and scale. However, this is not expected to further alter the spatial relationship of enclosure and exposure within the landform as the Varied Development would still generally be only perceived within the more open and exposed areas and the ruggedness, perceived naturalness and sense of solitude of the mountainous landscape would not be affected.
- 1.6.14 The magnitude of change would continue to be Medium within the Eastern Lobster Claw, but would increase from Negligible to Low, within southerly parts of the Central Core.
- 1.6.15 There would be no change within the Western Lobster Claw where variety of terrain is less noticeable.

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

- 1.6.16 The 2021 assessment (2021 EIAR, Appendix 7.5, Table 4.2.4) identified a Medium magnitude of change for this WLQ within localised parts of the Eastern Lobster Claw within 5 – 6km and across the upper, eastern part of the Western Lobster Claw. A Low magnitude of change was identified within the south-eastern Central Core and more northerly parts of the Eastern Lobster Claw. These changes would occur due to direct effects on peatland areas where the 2021 Proposed Development would be located and where the perceived extent of the peatland landscape would be seen to be reduced. The magnitude was not considered to be High within the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw because localised depressions and hollows with the greatest change to the strength of wildness are less reflective of the WLQ with limited extent and visual connection to the mountains, whereas the more open areas are typically already influenced by other features and contemporary land use which limits their perceived extent.
- 1.6.17 The taller turbines of the Proposed Varied Development are expected to further reduce the perceived extent of the peatland areas when experienced from the northern Western Lobster Claw and south-east Central Core, as well as locally from more northerly parts of

the Eastern Lobster Claw. This would be a noticeable change to the presence of this WLQ in the local context and is predicted to raise the magnitude of change locally within these areas to Medium.

- 1.6.18 Closer to the Proposed Varied Development, the taller height of turbines would also have some influence on the sense of scale and the sense of the landscape being more directly affected and changed by the wind farm would be likely to extend over a wider area. However, this is not predicted to alter the Magnitude of Change rating within 5-6km from the Proposed Varied Development because the changes to the wild land attributes and perceptual responses would be similar within this area. Magnitude of change within this area would therefore continue to be Medium, although this level of change would occur more widely than for the Consented Development.
- 1.6.19 Other than within relatively small areas at the south-east of the Eastern Lobster Claw and within the site itself, the Proposed Varied Development would not intrude on the connection between the peatland and mountains and the experience of open peatlands would continue to be well expressed across most of the Lobster Claw area.

Mitigation Measures

- 1.6.20 The mitigation measures for the 2021 Proposed Development relate chiefly to the design and location of the Proposed Varied Development. These details are the same as those described in the 2021 assessment. The use of a taller turbine will require aviation lighting with potential to affect the WLA. The assessment of lighting on the WLA and proposed mitigation measures for lighting are discussed in the Aviation Lighting Assessment (Appendix 5.11 of this EIAR Report).

Significance of Effects

- 1.6.21 The Proposed Varied Development would affect WLA 34 in two ways: directly due to the introduction of turbines and associated infrastructure within the south-eastern extremity of the WLA; and indirectly, in relation to intervisibility across other parts of the WLA.
- 1.6.22 The direct effects of the Proposed Varied Development are predicted to be relatively similar to those outlined in the 2021 assessment. Due to the taller height of the turbines, there is likely to be a slight increase in the area perceived to be directly influenced by turbines, including some corries and depressions not previously affected. In this area, the magnitude of change of Medium within the Eastern Lobster Claw, combined with a High sensitivity is predicted to lead to a *localised Moderate - Major* (significant) effect on WLQ4 (*Extensive, elevated peatland slopes...*), and on the wider strength of wildness in this area. This effect is predicted within 3km and locally up to 5-6km of the Proposed Varied Development turbines within the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw but grading down towards **Moderate** (significant) when moving further north where other surrounding landscapes become more influential on the experience.
- 1.6.23 The effect is not predicted to be significant for other WLQs within this area. WLQ1 (*A range of large, irregular rocky mountains...*) is not strongly present within this area leading to a Low sensitivity with no notable effects. A Medium Magnitude of Change is predicted for WLQ3 (*A variety of spaces created by irregular landforms...*) and sensitivity is also Medium within some localised hollows. However, these areas are considered to be too localised for the effect to be deemed significant for this WLQ which is more focussed within the Central Core.

- 1.6.24 Beyond the immediate area around the site, indirect effects would result where the Proposed Varied Development would appear to draw contemporary land use and modern artefacts closer into the south-eastern and southern context, similar to the Consented Development. Other development and land use, including the existing Achany and Rosehall Wind Farms, is already present in this setting and appears to delineate this edge of the WLA. However, the taller turbines of the Proposed Varied Development would appear closer, which would further reduce the perceived extent of the WLA in this context. The effect would generally affect WLQ4 as it would lead to the peatland landscape appearing to be reduced in extent with a greater presence of development within this landscape type. However, this would in turn also affect WLQ1 as the wild land setting around the mountain areas would also appear smaller.
- 1.6.25 This greater prominence and closer context of wind turbines would lead to a Medium magnitude of change on WLQ4 across northern areas of the Western Lobster Claw where sensitivity is considered to be High, and the south-east Central Core where the sensitivity is considered to be Medium – High. This would lead to a *localised Moderate Adverse* (significant) effect on WLQ4 and strength of wildness generally, affecting a localised area of the WLA including northern parts of the Eastern and Western Lobster Claw, into the south-east of the Central Core, within around 10-12km. The effect would transition gradually to a non-significant level. The physical attributes and perceptual responses which contribute to this WLQ would still be experienced and the WLQ would remain present, but it would be reduced in its strength and in its contribution to the overall WLA.
- 1.6.26 The effect on WLQ1 in this area is not predicted to be significant because magnitude of change would continue to be Low. The mountain landscape experienced to the north, west and north-west would continue to strongly influence perceptions of wild land and WLQ1 would continue to be well expressed.
- 1.6.27 Although magnitude of change for WLQ3 would slightly increase within the south-east Central Core to Low, this WLQ would continue to be well expressed and the effect would not be significant.

Effects on the WLA as a Whole

- 1.6.28 The assessment of WLQs has established that *localised* significant effects are predicted to one of the four WLQs: WLQ4 – “*Extensive, elevated peatland slopes whose simplicity and openness contribute to a perception of awe, whilst highlighting the qualities of adjacent mountains.*” This effect is expected to be Moderate – Major (significant) within 3km and locally up to 5-6km of the Proposed Varied Development turbines, reducing to Moderate (significant) within localised areas up to 10-12km from the Proposed Varied Development turbines. The area where significant effects are predicted comprises a notable proportion of the open peatland slopes where WLQ4 is experienced. However, the WLQ would continue to be strongly expressed in other areas of the Lobster Claw, not affected by the Proposed Varied Development. Beyond the area where the higher levels of effects would be experienced, the physical attributes and perceptual responses which contribute to the WLQ would continue to be experienced and the WLQ would still remain present, particularly in relation to the connection with adjacent mountain areas. However, it would be reduced in its strength which would slightly reduce its contribution to the WLA as a whole.
- 1.6.29 Within the closer confines of the Proposed Varied Development where the higher degrees of effects are predicted, the attributes and perceptual responses of wild land

would be less likely to be experienced and the WLQs would be less noticeably present. It is reasonable to assume that the WLA would be perceived as reduced in extent in this area, at the south of the Eastern Lobster Claw. However, this comprises a peripheral part of the WLA and one that already has lower strength of wildness than the majority of the WLA. It should also be noted that this comprises part of the area which has already been identified by NatureScot as no longer forming part of the WLA if the consented Sallachy Wind Farm is constructed¹.

- 1.6.30 The effects on the majority of the Central Core and Northern Arm, where mapping indicates the greatest strength of wildness to be present, would not be significant. The areas of highest wildness would be generally unaffected by the Proposed Varied Development and WLQsS1, 2 and 3 would continue to be well expressed in these areas. The contribution of WLQ4 is predicted to be slightly reduced but it would also continue to be present and well expressed in many areas. Despite a small reduction to the perceived extent of the WLA at its south-eastern point, the WLA would remain as a cohesive whole, and this slightly reduced extent in an area where the strength of wildness is already less pronounced is not considered to be significant in relation to the WLA as a whole.

1.7 Comparison of the Consented Development and the Proposed Varied Development

- 1.7.1 The Proposed Varied Development is predicted to lead to localised significant effects for one WLQ:
- WLQ4 – “Extensive, elevated peatland slopes whose simplicity and openness contribute to a perception of awe, whilst highlighting the qualities of adjacent mountains.”
- 1.7.2 This conclusion is similar to that within the 2021 assessment. However, the Proposed Varied Development would lead to a slight increase in the extent of the WLA within which significant effects are expected to occur.
- 1.7.3 The 2021 assessment identified localised significant effects for this WLQ within the Eastern Lobster Claw up to around 5-6km from turbines, and within the Western Lobster Claw up to around 8km and locally to 10km. The taller turbines of the Proposed Varied Development are expected to increase this area of significant effect to 10-12km within parts of the Eastern and Western Lobster Claws and Central Core.
- 1.7.4 When viewing the WLA as a whole, it is considered that the greatest degree of effect, where the physical attributes and perceptual responses of wild land would be less likely to be experienced, would extend somewhat from around 2km from the Consented Development to 3km from the Proposed Varied Development and locally up 5-6km. However, although slightly more extensive, this would affect the same peripheral part of the WLA at its south-eastern tip where the baseline strength of wildness is already less pronounced. The remainder of the WLA would remain a cohesive whole with the areas of highest wildness unaffected by the Proposed Varied Development. The effect on the WLA as whole would therefore continue to be not significant.
- 1.7.5 The differences in significant effects on the WLA are summarised in **Table 1.1** below:

Table 1.1: Summary of Differences between the 2021 WLA Assessment and the Assessment of the Proposed Varied Development

Effect	2021 WLA Assessment	Varied Development Assessment
Moderate – Major (significant) effect on WLQ4	Localised within 2km of the Proposed Development	Localised within 3km of the Varied Development and locally up to 5-6km
Moderate (significant) effect on WLQ4	Localised within relatively discrete parts of the Eastern Lobster Claw up to 5-6km, and the Western Lobster Claw up to 8-10km from the Proposed Development, affecting localised parts of the plateaux above the immediate confines of Glen Cassley.	Localised within northern parts of the Eastern Lobster Claw, western parts of the Western Lobster Claw, into the south-east of the Central Core, within around 10-12km.
WLA as a whole	Not significant	Not significant