Development and Infrastructure Service

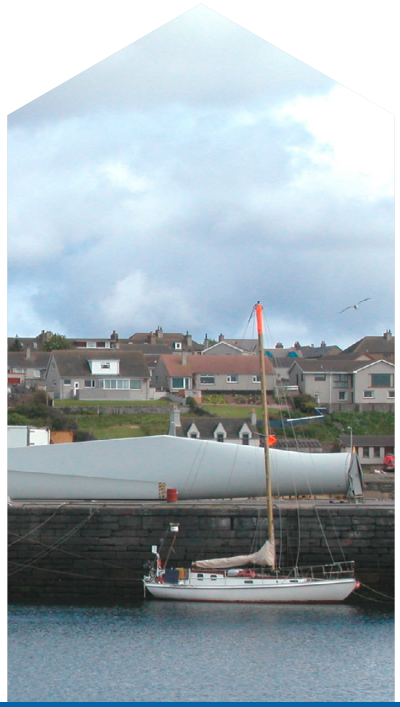
Seirbheis an Leasachaidh agus a' Bhun-structair

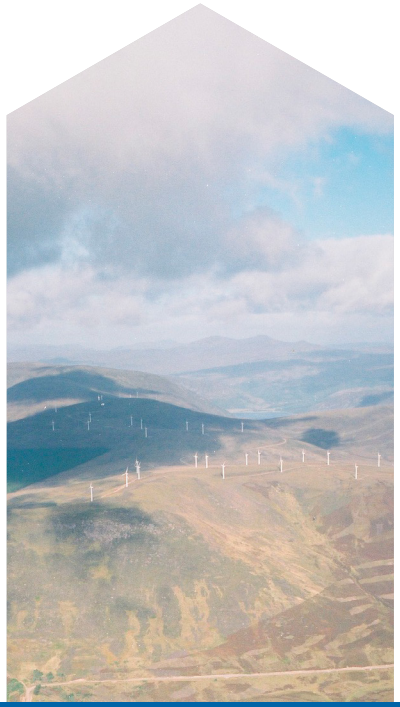
The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance
Stiùireadh Leasachail airson Lùth-Gaoithe Air Tìr

This current suite of adopted Supplementary Guidance documents for Onshore Wind Energy is referred to as the "Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance, November 2016 (with addendum, December 2017)" and comprises:

- **Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance, November 2016**
- **Addendum Supplementary Guidance: 'Part 2b', December 2017**





www.highland.gov.uk/onshorewind

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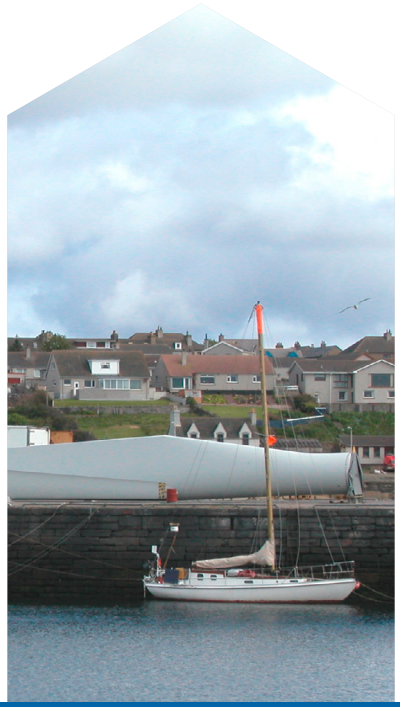
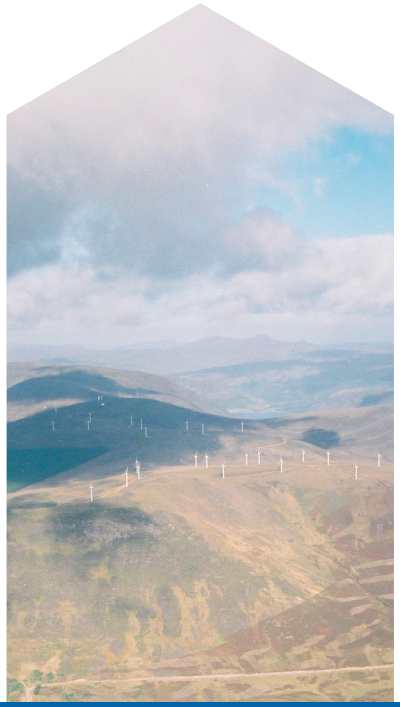
November 2016





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1 Introduction

Ro-ràdh

This Supplementary Guidance (SG) sets out how Highland Council will manage onshore wind energy development proposals in line with Section 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 [1]. Where relevant, key features, aspects or issues related to the topics contained in the Guidance are listed, these lists are informative and not exhaustive, proposals will be assessed by all relevant policies in the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) [2] (HwLDP).

When the Council deals with planning applications for proposed onshore wind energy developments, including as a statutory consultee to Scottish Government on applications over 50MW capacity, it has regard to the Development Plan (comprising Local Development Plans and Supplementary Guidance) and other material considerations. In particular Policies 67 and 68 of HwLDP deal specifically with renewable energy development and that section of the Plan refers to the Supplementary Guidance. The law states unless material considerations indicate otherwise, an application is to be determined in accordance with the development plan. This SG forms part of the development plan for Highland, supplementing key principles that are set out in policies within the HwLDP .

Scottish Planning Policy 2014 (SPP) states that “planning authorities should set out… a spatial framework identifying those areas that are likely to be most appropriate for onshore wind farms…”, and that “development plans should also set out criteria that will be considered in deciding all applications for wind farms of different scales.” These principles underpin the Council’s approach to planning for onshore wind energy.

Guidance set out in this SG applies to all scales of wind energy development, unless otherwise stated. The general guidance is relevant to both vertical and horizontal axis wind turbines.

Where reference is made to a wind energy proposal or development, this includes all associated infrastructure (for example, access tracks, transformers, turbines and their bases etc.) unless otherwise stated. Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide information on all aspects of their proposal as far as possible at application stage, including information on intentions for connection to the grid, in order that the Council has the fullest understanding of the scheme.

The diagram overleaf indicates the main steps in the planning process where there are interactions with the Council and other stakeholders.

Contact Us

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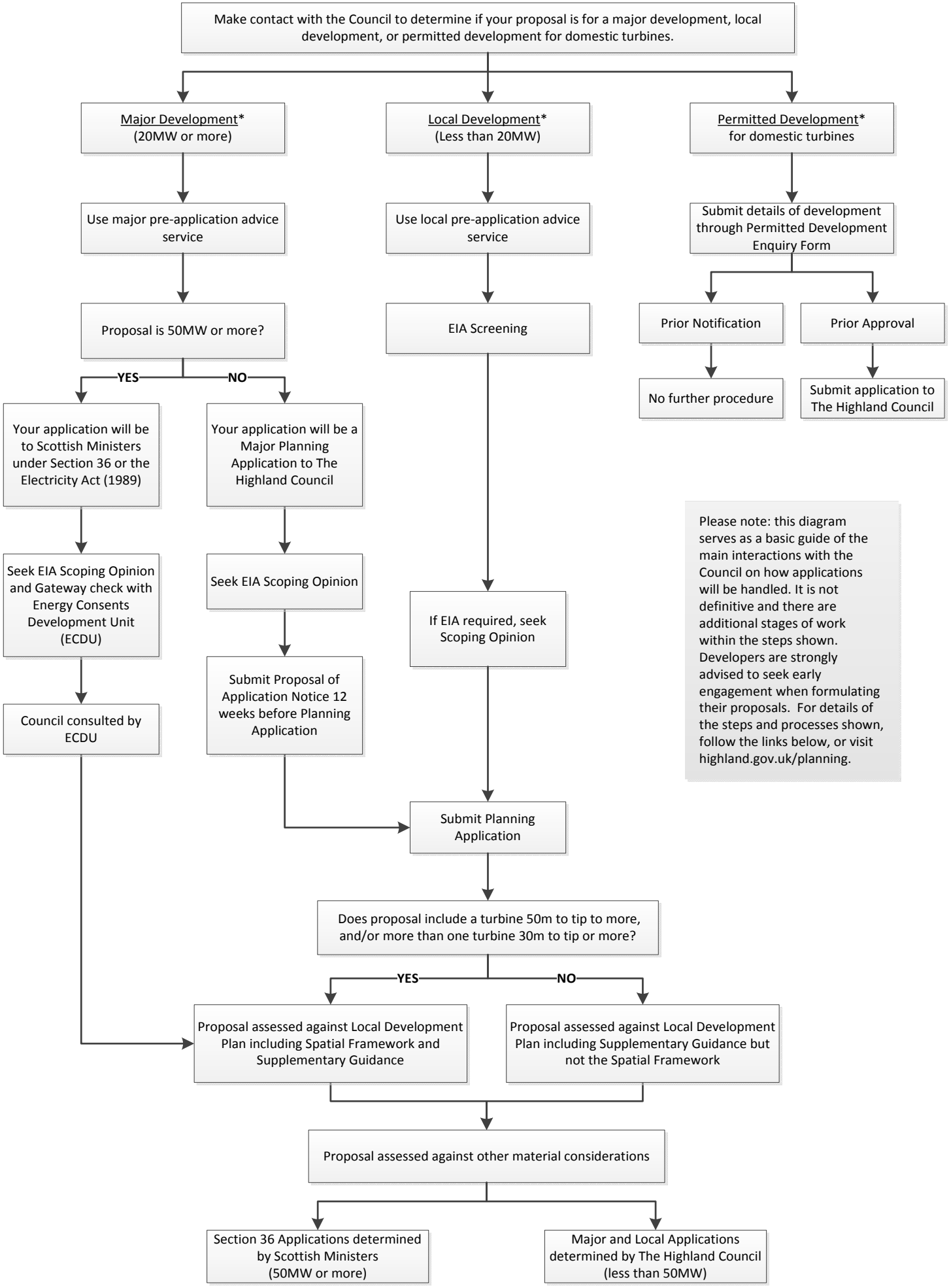
1 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/8/contents
2 http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/199/highland-wide_local_development_plan

The Planning Process for Onshore Wind Energy Applications



* Major Development: http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/180/planning_-_applications_warrants_and_certificates/579/major_developments/2
Local Development: http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/180/planning_-_applications_warrants_and_certificates/219/planning_guidance_and_advice
Permitted Development: http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/3030/guidance_note_for_permitted_development

Pre-application Advice

1.1 The Highland Council offers a pre-application advice service to help applicants submit valid and accurate planning applications. Engaging in pre-application discussion will help avoid delays during the application process.

1.2 By taking advantage of the pre-application advice service applicants with local-scale proposals will receive reliable and up to date advice on key issues from Planning Officers. Applicants with major proposals will receive a pre-application pack outlining the key considerations relevant to their proposal and feedback from Council Officers and other key agencies (e.g. SNH, SEPA etc).

1.3 Applicants are strongly encouraged to use this service as it will help to ensure that the scope of relevant issues related to a proposal are included in any assessments required in support of a planning application. Further advice is available online:

- Pre-application advice for local developments [3]
- Pre-application advice for major developments [4]

Socio-economic benefits of onshore wind development

1.4 The National Planning Framework sets out that planning should facilitate a transition to a low carbon economy and onshore wind energy is fundamental to achieving this. Scottish Government's 2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy in Scotland [5] sets a range of ambitious targets to derive proportions of heat and energy from renewables. These targets are referred to in SPP, which requires Development Plans to ensure that an area's full potential for electricity and heat from renewable sources is achieved.

1.5 The Highland Council is supportive of renewable energy development and their potential for schemes to deliver effective climate change mitigation, subject to careful balancing with the aspects discussed in this Guidance.

1.6 As well as having potential to address climate change issues, onshore wind energy may also deliver social and economic benefits to communities. This is particularly important in a Highland context where around 44% of the Council area is identified by Highlands and Islands Enterprise as Fragile Areas (2015). Where development can offer means socio-economic benefits, there may be potential to help address Fragile Areas, which are characterised by population decline, under representation of young people, lack of economic opportunities, below average incomes, and problems related to infrastructure and geographic location (Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Review of Fragile Areas and Employment Action Areas in the Highlands and Islands [6], 2015).

1.7 It is essential that in bringing forward proposals, applicants consider all opportunities for how their scheme could benefit local communities and demonstrate how it has potential to deliver social and economic benefits. A key aspect of this will be engaging with local communities to better understand local needs and issues.

1.8 The HwLDP sets out the Council's positive stance towards renewable energy developments and sets out a range of policy considerations. The advice that follows provides a fuller interpretation of HwLDP policies as they relate to onshore wind energy development. The Council will balance these considerations with wider strategic environmental and economic objectives, including sustainable economic growth in Highland, and our contribution to renewable energy targets and tackling climate change.

3 https://self.highland.gov.uk/service/Pre_application_advice_for_local_developments
4 http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/180/planning_-_applications_warrants_and_certificates/579/major_developments/2
5 http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/08/04110353
6 http://www.hie.co.uk/common/handlers/download-document.ashx?id=25176545-481d-4be7-a747-0d0e34062df3

2 Highland Spatial Framework

Frèam Spàsail na Gàidhealtachd airson Leasachadh Lùth-gaoithe Air-cladaich

2.1 The following section sets out the spatial framework for onshore wind energy development that applies to all onshore wind energy development proposals that meet one of the following:

- Individual turbines with a height of 50 metres and above to blade tip;
- More than one turbine with a height of 30 metres and above to blade tip.

2.2 For those developments that the spatial framework applies to, proposals should always take account of it.

2.3 SPP sets out the requirements for safeguarding areas in the three groupings of the spatial framework, these are described below:

- Group 1: Areas where windfarms will not be acceptable;
- Group 2: Areas of significant protection;
- Group 3: Areas with potential for wind farm development.

2.4 There are areas in Highland identified in the Local Development Plan as having a designated settlement edge where the primary land use may not be residential. Such areas may therefore be of lower sensitivity and this should be factored into any assessments and will be taken into account in the decision-making process.

2.5 You can view the Spatial Framework in the maps below. GIS data of the mapping is available, subject to signing a user agreement, by contacting the Council. Applicants should satisfy themselves that they have included all of the most up to date constraints on their site and that these are accounted for in the assessment of any potential impacts.

2.6 Table 1 from SPP (2014) that sets out the detail of the Spatial Framework Groupings is shown below:

Table 1: Spatial Frameworks

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Group 1: Areas where wind farms will not be acceptable:

National Parks and National Scenic Areas.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Group 2: Areas of significant protection:

Recognising the need for significant protection, in these areas wind farms may be appropriate in some circumstances. Further consideration will be required to demonstrate that any significant effects on the qualities of these areas can be substantially overcome by siting, design or other mitigation.</td></tr>
<tr><td>National and international designations:

• World Heritage Sites;
• Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites;
• Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
• National Nature Reserves;
• Sites identified in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes;
• Sites identified in the Inventory of Historic Battlefields.</td><td>Other nationally important mapped environmental interests:

• areas of wild land as shown on the 2014 SNH map of wild land areas;
• carbon rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat.</td><td>Community separation for consideration of visual impact:

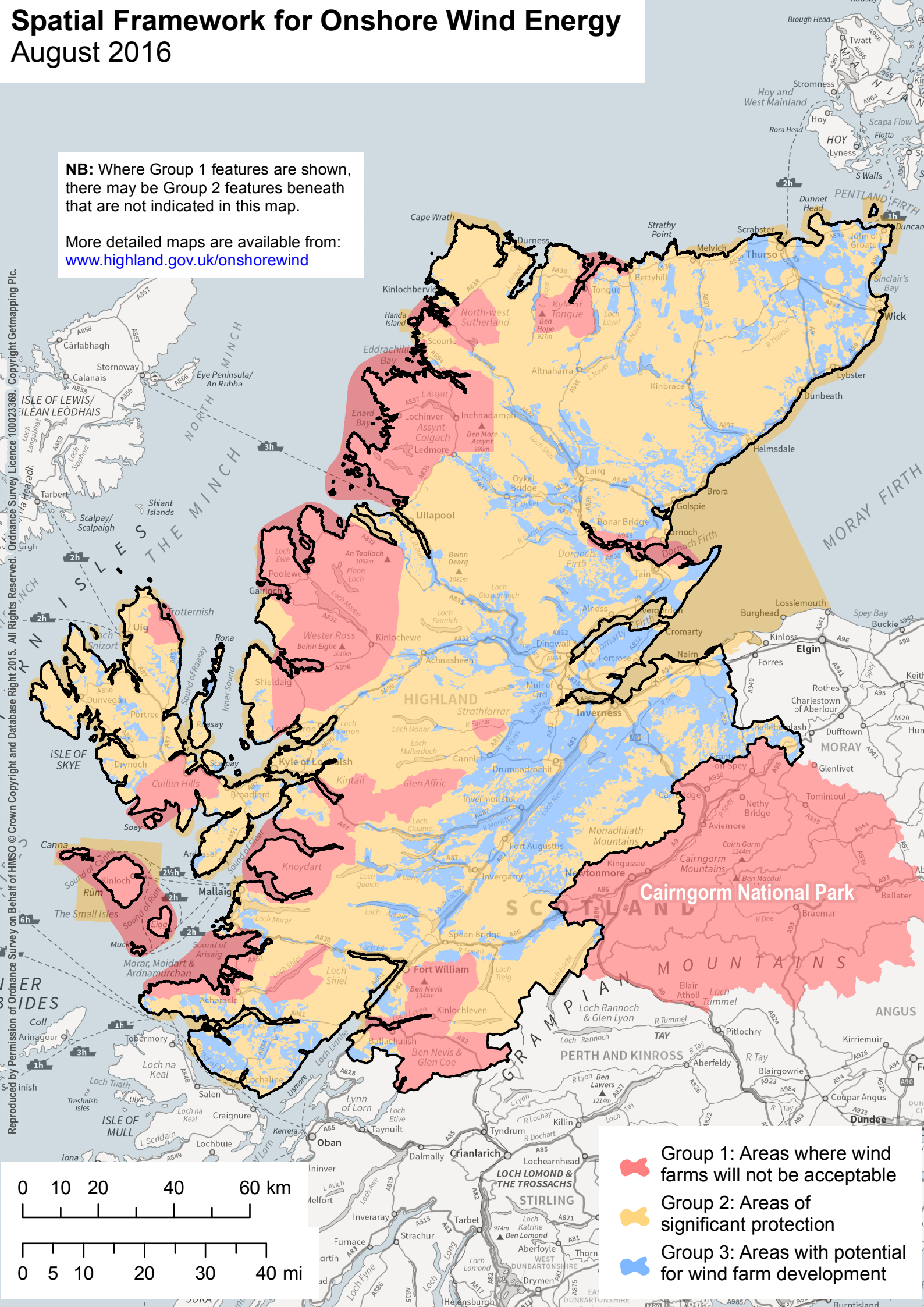
• an area not exceeding 2km around cities, towns and villages identified on the local development plan with an identified settlement envelope or edge. The extent of the area will be determined by the planning authority based on landform and other features which restrict views out from the settlement.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Group 3: Areas with potential for wind farm development:

Beyond groups 1 and 2, wind farms are likely to be acceptable, subject to detailed consideration against identified policy criteria.</td></tr>
</table>

Spatial Framework for Onshore Wind Energy
August 2016

NB: Where Group 1 features are shown, there may be Group 2 features beneath that are not indicated in this map.

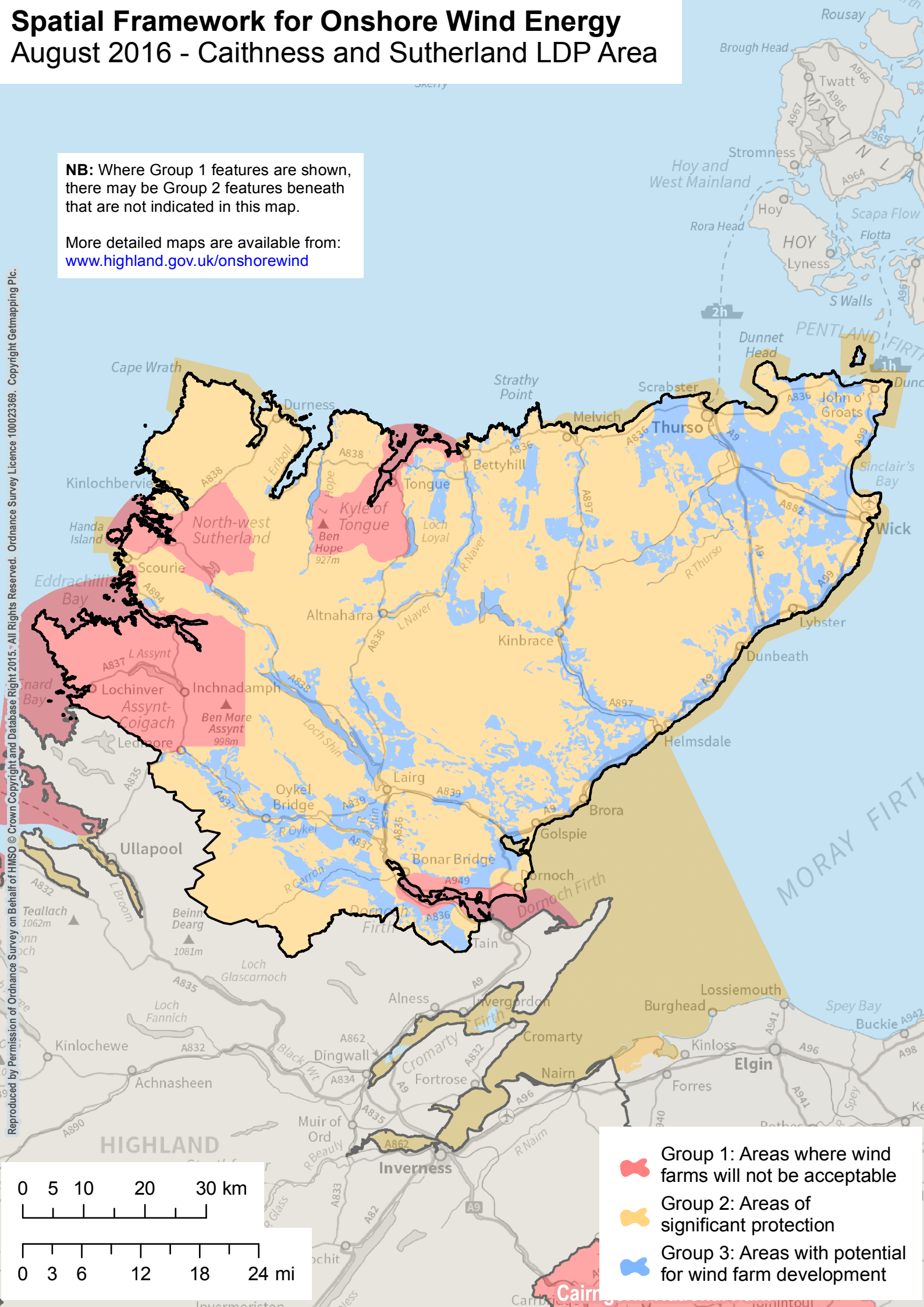
More detailed maps are available from:
www.highland.gov.uk/onshorewind



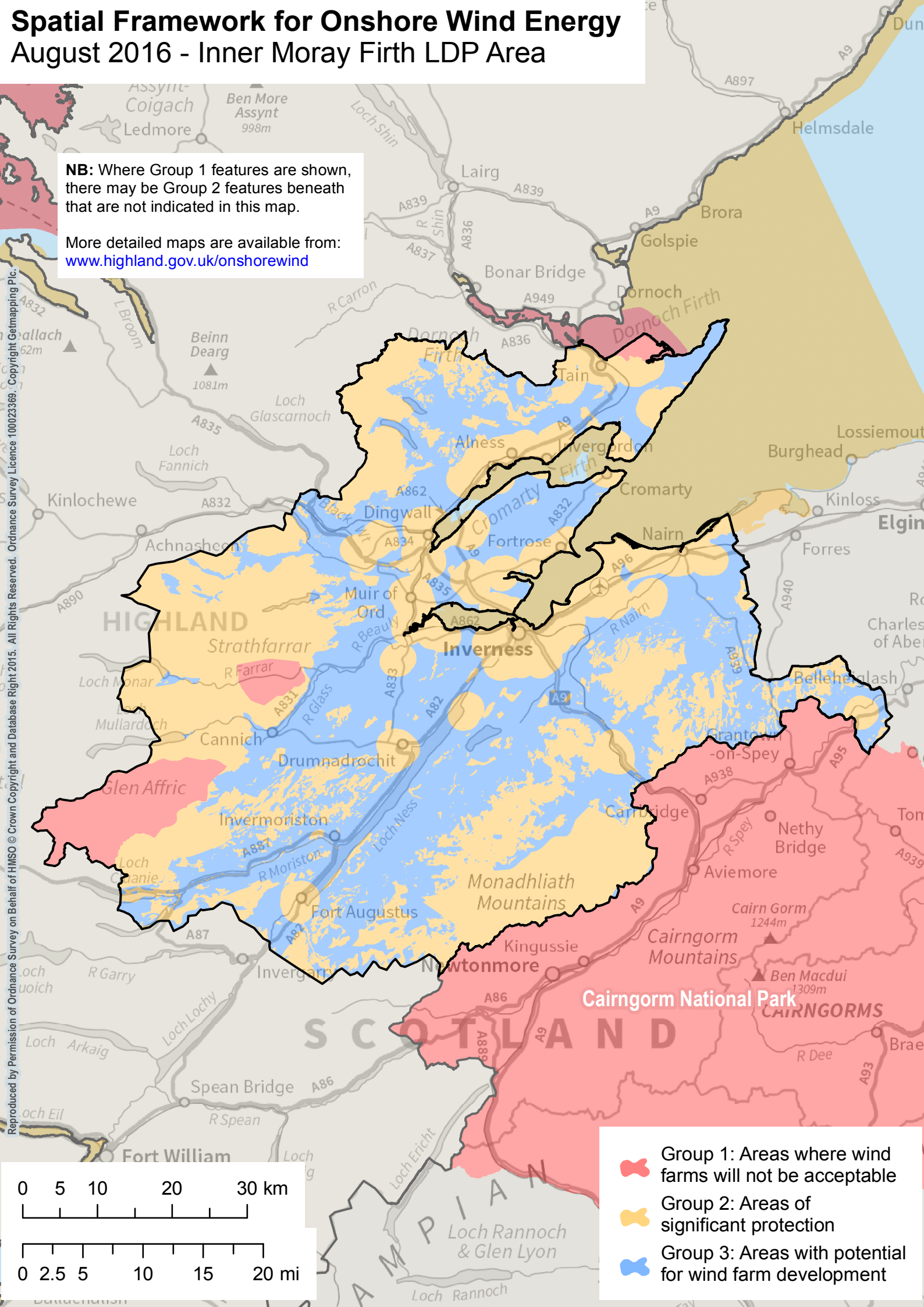
Spatial Framework for Onshore Wind Energy
August 2016 - Caithness and Sutherland LDP Area

NB: Where Group 1 features are shown, there may be Group 2 features beneath that are not indicated in this map.

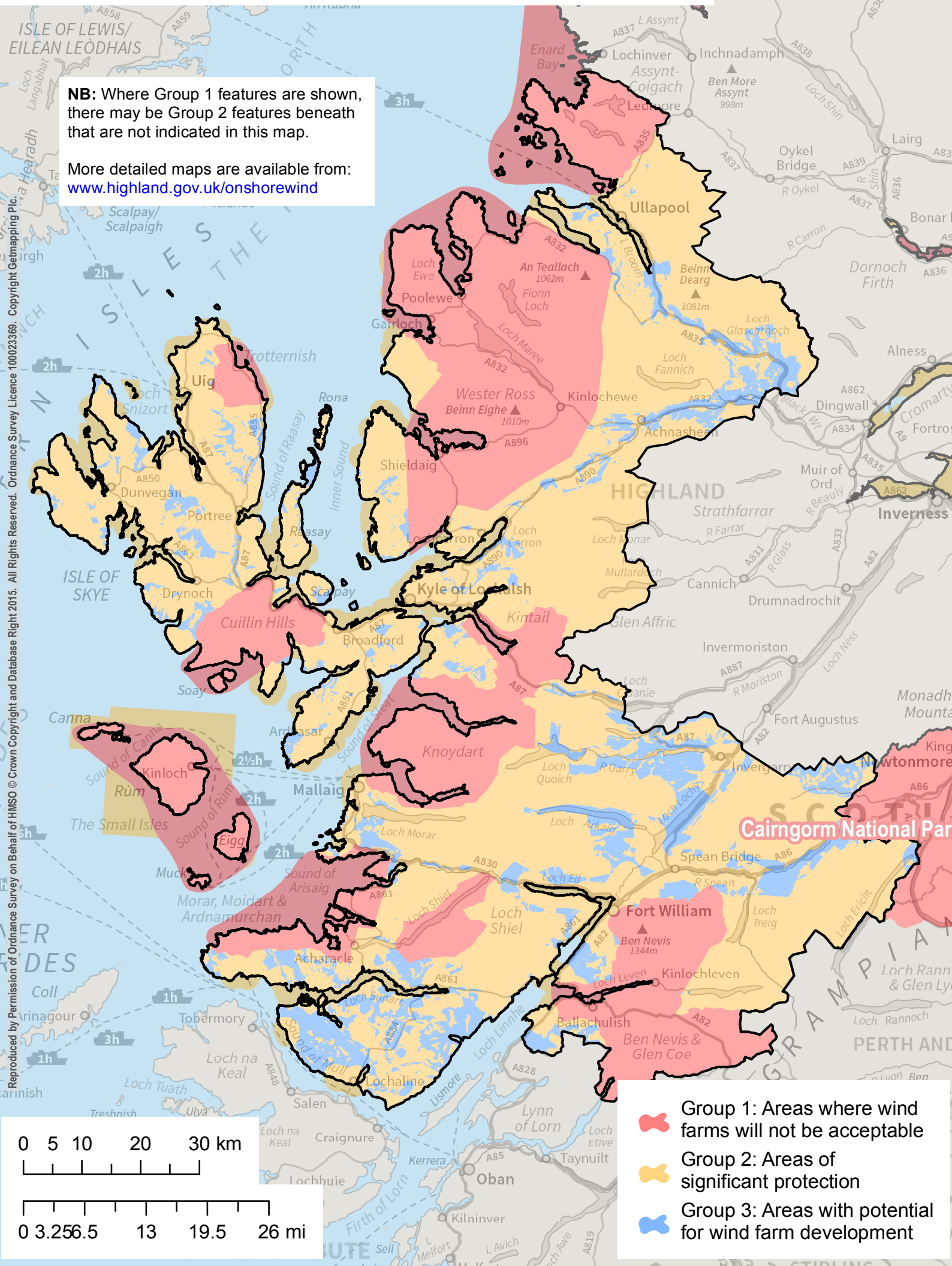
More detailed maps are available from:
www.highland.gov.uk/onshorewind



Spatial Framework for Onshore Wind Energy
August 2016 - Inner Moray Firth LDP Area



Spatial Framework for Onshore Wind Energy
August 2016 - West Highland and Islands LDP Area



3 Community and small-scale development

Leasachadh Coimhearsnachd agus Meud-beag

3.1 The following section provides advice and guidance about community and small-scale onshore wind energy developments.

Community Renewable Energy developments

3.2 The Scottish Government has ambitious targets for community and locally-owned renewables (at the time of writing, 500 MW by 2020). The HwLDP sets out the Council's support for community renewable energy developments.

3.3 A wide range of models exist whereby a community may develop renewable energy schemes. For a development to be considered a 'community' scheme, appropriate measures must normally be in place for the lifetime of the development for community ownership arrangements and for the power and/or income to go directly to an approved community organisation.

3.4 The Council/ Highlands & Islands Enterprise 'Community Toolkit' and the Scottish Government/ Community Energy Scotland publication 'Community Renewable Energy Toolkit' [7] provide useful information.

3.5 The Scottish Government's Good Practice Principles for Shared Ownership of Onshore Renewable Energy Developments [8] may also provide useful information for relevant proposals.

Advice for Small-scale Developments

Small-scale: Preparing Proposals

3.6 All proposals for the installation of a small scale wind turbine will require approval from the Council either through the prior notification process or a planning application. Engaging in pre-application discussion will help avoid delays during the application process and will identify any problems/issues with proposals at an early stage. Further information concerning the Pre- Application Advice Service is available online [9].

3.7 Anyone wishing to install a wind turbine should therefore speak to the local planning office of the Council at an early stage in the development process, in order to find out:

- whether or not the proposed development will require Environmental Impact Assessment (as a first step the prospective developer should therefore seek a screening opinion from the local planning office, an EIA screening opinion request form can be accessed online [10]);
- whether or not the proposed development is covered by 'Permitted Development Rights' (a permitted development guidance note can be accessed online [11];
- what type of application will therefore require to be submitted to the Council;
- what information should be submitted as part of the application.

3.8 Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency also provide a range of advice and guidance:

3.9 Assessing the impact of small scale wind energy proposals on the natural heritage [12]

3.10 Siting and Design of Small Scale Wind Turbines of between 15 and 50 metres in height [13]

3.11 Micro-renewables and the natural heritage [14]

7 http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2009/03/20155542/0
8 http://www.localenergyscotland.org/media/79714/Shared-Ownership-Good-Practice-Principles.pdf
9 http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/1385/pre-application_advice_local_development_application_form
10 http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/10905/eia_screening_opinion_form
11 http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/3030/guidance_note_for_permitted_development
12 http://www.snh.gov.uk/planning-and-development/renewable-energy/onshore-wind/generaladvice-and-information/
13 http://www.snh.gov.uk/planning-and-development/renewable%C2%ACenergy/onshore-wind/landscape-impacts-guidance/
14 http://www.snh.gov.uk/planning-and-development/renewable%C2%ACenergy/micro-renewables/

3.12 Appendix 1 of SEPA Standing Advice for planning authorities and developers on development management consultations [15]

Small-scale: Planning Applications

3.13 Applications for planning permission or for prior notification/prior approval can be made online through the ePlanning Portal; alternatively the respective application forms and guidance notes are available from Council Offices and can be downloaded online [16]

3.14 This Supplementary Guidance should be read in conjunction with the relevant application form and guidance notes when preparing a proposal for submission.

3.15 In the case of applications for planning permission for wind turbine(s), please note that applications for Planning Permission in Principle will not be encouraged as detailed information is required for the assessment of such applications.

3.16 The following are the minimum requirements for applications for planning permission or for prior notification/prior approval in respect of wind turbine(s), and in the case of Full Planning Applications their validation is dependent upon these requirements being met:

- The appropriate completed application form (including landowner certificate in the case of Planning applications);
- Plan sufficient to identify the land to which the application relates – the application site must be outlined in red and must include all development associated with the wind turbine/s e.g. access, roads/tracks, borrow pits, transmission routes, cabins etc. Any other land owned by or within the control of the applicant must be outlined in blue;
- Plan showing the situation of the land in relation to the locality and in particular in relation to neighbouring land;
- Such other plans and drawings as are necessary to describe the development; and the appropriate fee, which is as follows:
    - In the case of planning applications – development involving wind turbines is classed as the erection, alteration or replacement of plant or machinery and the planning application fee is £401 for each 0.1ha of the site area, subject to a maximum of £20,055 (fees at May 2016).
    - In the case of prior notification/approval applications – £78 (fees at May 2016).

3.17 In order to avoid delays, applicants are requested to submit the following at the time of submission of the application as this information is required to enable us to assess the application:

- Make, model, output and tower height of the proposed turbine(s);
- Elevation drawings of the turbine(s);
- Visual assessment/visualisations (incl. photos of the site from primary view points e.g. roads, paths etc.); and
- Noise assessment/information where required by and in accordance with the relevant details contained in this Guidance.

Small-scale: Visualisation Assessment

3.18 The following guidelines outline when we will require visualisations to be lodged in support of proposals for small-scale wind turbines.

3.19 There may, however, be occasions where applications fall outwith the below criteria, but visualisations are nonetheless considered necessary; you are therefore advised to seek guidance from the relevant Local Planning Office at an early stage prior to submitting a planning application.

15 http://www.sepa.org.uk/media/136130/sepa-standing-advice-for%C2%ACplanning-authorities-and-developers-on-development-management-consultations.pdf
16 http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/180/planning_-_applications_warrants_and_certificates/143/planning_permission.

3.20 In all cases where visualisations are required, they must comply with the Council's Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments [17]. Scottish Natural Heritage's visualisation guidelines should also be referred to.

3.21 Visualisations will be required in support of proposals for small-scale wind turbine(s), if:

- two or more turbines are proposed; or
- the hub height of the turbine would exceed 15m, measured from the ground to the uppermost point of the hub; or
- the turbine(s) would be located within a 'Sensitive Area' as defined in section 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (being Sites of Special Scientific Interest; Land subject to Nature Conservation Orders; International Conservation Sites; National Scenic Areas; World Heritage Sites; Scheduled Monuments; National Parks) or, in terms of local/regional landscape features, a Special Landscape Area (SLA), wild land areas or an area designated as having important Views Over Open Water; or
- the turbine(s) would be located outwith the 'Sensitive Areas' and local/regional landscape features listed above, but could have significant impact on their safeguarded interests where relevant in terms of landscape and views; or
- the turbine(s) would be located within, or within the general visual envelope/setting of, a Conservation Area or Category A listed building.

3.22 Applicants will be expected to provide a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) for their scheme at an early stage, which will help to identify the requirements for visualisations and ensure that the requirements are relevant and proportionate to the particular case, including an appropriate set of viewpoints being identified.

3.23 To enable assessment of the potential cumulative impact of the proposal, visualisations should in particular include all other relevant wind turbines, be they existing, consented or subject of an application yet to be determined. Where cumulative impact is likely to be a significant issue to determination of the proposal, additional visualisations may be required.

Domestic Turbines: Permitted Development

3.24 For the purposes of defining if a proposal is a Permitted Development under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 (as amended) [18] a turbine will be considered to be domestic where:

- its primary purpose is to power a domestic property;
- its total installed capacity is not more than 6KW; and
- the annual output of electricity exported to the grid does not exceed the total energy requirements of the domestic property by more than 25%.

3.25 Class 6G of the Order provides for the installation, alteration or replacement of a free standing wind turbine within the curtilage of a dwelling in certain cases without the need for a planning application. One of the conditions that must be met is that the turbine is used only for the purposes of producing electricity or heat for domestic consumption using microgeneration equipment. However development is not permitted under the Order and a planning application is required if:

- it would result in the presence within the curtilage of a dwelling of more than one free standing wind turbine; or
- the wind turbine would be situated less than 100m from the curtilage of another dwelling; or
- the site is located within: a conservation area; a world heritage site; a site of special scientific interest; a site of archaeological interest; or within the curtilage of a listed building.

3.26 Wind turbines attached to buildings have no permitted development rights and therefore require planning permission.

17 http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/12880/visualisation_standards_for_wind_energy_developments
18 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/

3.27 Wind turbine proposals which are permitted development do however require the submission of an application for prior notification in respect of the design and size of the proposed wind turbine, and a determination as to whether our prior approval is required in respect of the siting and external appearance of the turbine.

Other information that may be required

3.28 Advert fee – We are required to place a notice in a local newspaper where there are no premises on neighbouring land to which a neighbour notification can be sent. The advert fee is £110 and we will advise if this is required (fees at May 2016).

3.29 A Design Statement must be submitted with planning applications for wind turbines which are located within: a world heritage site; a conservation area; a historic garden or designed landscape; a national scenic area; a site of a scheduled monument; or the curtilage of a Category A listed building.

3.30 It should be noted that the above is not exhaustive as requirements for additional information vary on a case by case basis. You are advised to seek pre-application advice so that any additional requirements can be identified at an early stage. For example you may need to carry out surveys, assessments or consultations for potential impacts on designated areas (such as European nature conservation sites), species and habitats, the water environment, peatland, landscape, aviation and defence interests or in terms of shadow flicker or flood risk. You may also be required to prepare plans for environmental management or mitigation in relation to the impacts of your development. We may refer you to other policy or guidance of the Council and/or that of external national organisations, such as those referred to elsewhere in this document.

3.31 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) – Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is designed to identify the likely significant environmental effects of certain types of development, before planning applications are determined. This helps us to understand the predicted environmental effects of a proposal and to identify the potential for reducing, avoiding or offsetting any adverse impacts, before a planning application is determined.

3.32 All proposals for wind turbines within the following 'sensitive areas' require to be screened for the need for EIA: Sites of Special Scientific Interest; Land subject to Nature Conservation Orders; International Conservation Sites; National Scenic Areas; World Heritage Sites; Scheduled Monuments; National Parks.

3.33 Proposals for wind turbines not located within 'sensitive areas' which involve more than 2 turbines, or where the hub height of any turbine or height of any other structure exceeds 15m also require to be screened for the need for EIA. Screening for the need for EIA should be carried out prior to the submission of a planning application. Further information can be obtained from your local planning office. Where screening determines that an EIA is required, the EIA should be subject of a scoping to identify the matters to be covered in the Environmental Statement. This will help to ensure that the EIA carried out is fit for purpose, relevant and proportionate.

3.34 It should be noted that proposals for any wind turbine which requires EIA will require submission of a planning application and is not permitted development. The planning application should be accompanied by the Environmental Statement. Also it should be noted that a higher advert fee is required for an application accompanied by an EIA.

4 Key Development Plan Considerations

Prìomh Bheachdachaidhean a' Phlana Leasachaidh

4.1 This section sets out how important features and assets identified in HwLDP are expected to be safeguarded in relation to onshore wind energy development.

4.2 Where smaller and larger scale wind energy developments are referred to, these generally follow the definitions below, but may vary depending on a range of factors that will be taken into account on a case by case basis:

- Smaller-scale wind energy development- generally turbines below 30m to blade tip
- Larger-scale wind energy development- generally turbines of 30m or above to blade tip

Siting and Design of Wind Turbines and Wind Farms

4.3 Sensitive siting and design plays an important part in making wind energy developments an accepted feature of the environment. The optimum position for a turbine will depend on individual circumstances and will be influenced by the size and type of turbine and its surrounding environment.

4.4 HwLDP sets out our specific expectations for safeguarding important natural environment features, some of which relate to the high quality landscapes of Highland. HwLDP also sets out our expectations for the proportionate landscape assessment of development proposals. These policies are relevant to wind energy development and particularly the siting and design of schemes.

4.5 The operational efficiency of a windfarm, whilst key for commercial and energy generation reasons, is a matter for developers. However the Council does expect these considerations to be balanced with adequate mitigation of adverse impacts, siting and design of schemes is a key aspect of such mitigation.

4.6 Design and layout of access tracks and other infrastructure will also be an important consideration in terms of the overall impact of a scheme and developers are expected to provide details of these aspects of the development. This includes associated infrastructure like plans for connecting the scheme to the electricity transmission grid (whilst it is acknowledged that such information is not always available, or subject to change, the Council strongly encourage this information to be provided in order to consider the scheme in its entirety).

4.7 The evolution of the design of a scheme provides useful information for assessing applications. Developers are encouraged to illustrate and explain the steps taken in developing the design and layout of their project, for example how it has responded through iterations to any issues that have been identified through that process.

4.8 SNH have guidance on Siting and designing windfarms in the landscape (2014) [19] and guidance on siting and design for turbines at the lower height ranges (2012) [20] , and these should be referred to when designing schemes.

4.9 The cumulative impact (which includes but is not limited to landscape and visual impacts, including on residential amenity) of an increasing number of wind turbines within a locality in Highland is a matter that the Council monitor. There are particular pressure areas for wind energy development in Highland that are addressed in the 5 'Highland Strategic Capacity' section of this guidance.

Landscape and Visual Effects

4.10 All proposals should seek to avoid significant adverse landscape and visual effects individually and cumulatively, taking into account other built and permitted proposals as well as valid planning applications not yet determined (the weight apportioned to each will reflect their position in the planning process).

19 http://www.snh.gov.uk/publications-data-and-research/publications/search-the-catalogue/publication-detail/?id=2128
20 http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A675507.pdf

4.11 The following key aspects may be relevant in the assessment of a proposal and should be taken into account when preparing an application. They are not tests, but rather highlight where there may be key issues to consider:

- National Parks, National Scenic Areas and mapped wild land areas;
- Special Landscape Areas (including their citations [21]);
- The capacity of the local landscape character (as defined within a Landscape Character Assessment) to accommodate the proposal;
- 2km from residential buildings and boundaries of settlements (mapped, where relevant)
- Important public views (this includes considering impacts to popular viewpoints, the adopted road network, key and designated tourist routes, public footpaths, core paths and other recognised visitor locations).

4.12 The scope of assessments required to address the key aspects above should be agreed with the Council at the earliest opportunity, for example through the Council's 'Pre-application Advice' service. This may include, for example, confirmation that there are residential properties in the vicinity of a proposal and/ or important public views that should be assessed for visual amenity within a landscape and visual assessment, taking into account the sensitivity of visual receptors.

4.13 Applicants should also seek to engage with local community groups to help identify locally valued features and assets, for example, by engaging with Community Councils and local interest groups.

4.14 Where effects are unavoidable, appropriate mitigation will be required to overcome or otherwise minimise impacts. For example, this may include:

- Careful siting of turbines to seek to reduce overall impact of the scheme;
- Amending turbine configurations, including hub height, rotor diameter, and blade rotation speed;
- Adjusting the number of turbines;
- Considering turbine colour, including any variation from the typical off-white/ pale grey colours;
- Design and arrangement of any lighting required to minimise its impact;
- Undergrounding of any power lines connecting individual turbines to any on-site sub-station;
- Undergrounding or sensitive treatment of those power lines connecting any wind farm sub- station to the electricity distribution system;
- Arrangements for any transformers for individual turbines (the Council expects these to be accommodated and enclosed within the turbine mast in order to reduce the landscape and visual impact of the development);
- Length, route, visibility and methods and materials used in the construction of access tracks.

4.15 The Council has Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments (2015) [22] and developers will be expected to follow these in preparing their submission. These differ from guidance by SNH in their publication Visual Representation of Windfarms [23] (2014); but, the Council's standards do not seek additional information, rather the information to be presented in a particular way. Developers are encouraged to discuss and confirm intentions for the preparation of visualisations with the Council in advance of preparing their submission.

4.16 The following criteria set out key landscape and visual aspects that the Council will use as a framework and focus for assessing proposals, including discussions with applicants. Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek 'Pre-application Advice' to help identify what criteria are relevant to their proposal.

4.17 The criteria do not set absolute requirements but seek to ensure that developers are aware of key constraints to development. It is the Council's expectation that applicants will site and design schemes to avoid significant adverse impacts in order that they reflect the criteria below. The assessment will be based on the characteristics of the proposal and its surrounding area (e.g. existing turbine scale, density, landscape character etc.):

21 http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2937/assessment_of_highland_special_landscape_areas.pdf
22 http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/12880/visualisation_standards_for_wind_energy_developments.pdf
23 http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/heritagemanagement/Visual%20representation%20of%20wind%20farms%20-%20version%202.1%20-%20December%202014.pdf

Criterion 1	Measure
Relationship between Settlements/Key locations and wider landscape respected.	The extent to which the proposal contributes to perception of settlements or key locations being encircled by wind energy development
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	Turbines are not visually prominent in the majority of views within or from settlements/Key Locations or from the majority of its access routes.

Criterion 2	Measure
Key Gateway locations and routes are respected	The extent to which the proposal reduces or detracts from the transitional experience of key Gateway Locations and routes.
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise detract from landscape characteristics which contribute the distinctive transitional experience found at key gateway locations and routes.

Criterion 3	Measure
Valued natural and cultural landmarks are respected	The extent to which the proposal affects the fabric and setting of valued natural and cultural landmarks
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	The development does not, by its presence, diminish the prominence of the landmark or disrupt its relationship to its setting.

Criterion 4	Measure
The amenity of key recreational routes and ways is respected.	The extent to which the proposal affects the amenity of key recreational routes and ways (e.g. Core Paths, Munros and Corbetts, Long Distance Routes etc.)
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of key routes and ways.

Criterion 5	Measure
The amenity of transport routes is respected	The extent to which the proposal affects the amenity of transport routes (tourist routes as well as rail, ferry routes and local road access)
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of transport routes

Criterion 6	Measure
The existing pattern of Wind Energy Development is respected.	The degree to which the proposal fits with the existing pattern of nearby wind energy development, considerations include: • Turbine height and proportions, • density and spacing of turbines within developments, • density and spacing of developments, • typical relationship of development to the landscape. • previously instituted mitigation measures • Planning Authority stated aims for development of area

Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	The proposal contributes positively to existing pattern or objectives for development in the area.

Criterion 7	Measure
The need for separation between developments and/ or clusters clusters is respected	The extent to which the proposal maintains or affects the spaces between existing developments and/ or clusters
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	The proposal maintains appropriate and effective separation between developments and/ or clusters

Criterion 8	Measure
The perception of landscape scale and distance is respected	The extent to which the proposal maintains or affects receptors' existing perception of landscape scale and distance.
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	The proposal maintains the apparent landscape scale and/or distance in the receptors' perception.

Criterion 9	Measure
Landscape setting of nearby wind energy developments is respected	The extent to which the landscape setting of nearby wind energy developments is affected by the proposal.
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	Proposal relates well to the existing landscape setting and does not increase the perceived visual prominence of surrounding wind turbines.

Criterion 10	Measure
Distinctiveness of Landscape character is respected	The extent to which a proposal affects the distinction between neighbouring landscape character types, in areas where the variety of character is important to the appreciation of the landscape.
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	Integrity and variety of Landscape Character Areas are maintained.

Safety and Amenity at Sensitive Locations

4.18 A range of issues that are afforded policy provision in HwLDP are set out below that specifically address the potential effects of wind energy developments on safety and residential amenity.

4.19 The Council considers all residential buildings to be particularly sensitive to wind energy development. Where larger scale developments are proposed within 2km of residential buildings and settlements, applicants will be expected to clearly demonstrate how potential impacts on amenity have been avoided or mitigated.

4.20 Impacts to communities' amenity should be assessed at a range of receptor locations including residential properties, work places and recognised visitor sites. This should include consideration of receptors outwith any defined settlement boundary.

4.21 The following issues will be taken into consideration when assessing proposals, the scope of assessments required should be agreed with the Council as early in the planning process as possible.

a. **Safety**: All proposals should seek to avoid significant adverse effects on the safety of any residential or regularly occupied property including: noise pollution, ice throw in winter conditions, shadow flicker or shadow throw. It may be appropriate to set back turbines from such properties or implement turbine shut-down when necessary, although significant separation will normally be expected in any case.The Council encourage schemes to be designed in order that turbines are proposed to be sited at least a minimum distance equivalent to twice the height of the turbine to blade tip from public roads and railways. This is to ensure adequate safety to road and rail from turbine collapse and to limit any potential impact of distraction caused to users (including cyclists, horse riders, pedestrians etc.). This distance will also retain the ability for micro-siting that would result in the turbines being constructed closer to the public road or railway whilst still maintaining a sufficient set back distance.

b. **Landscape and visual impacts:** All proposals should seek to avoid or mitigate impacts on landscape and visual amenity. The principles that will guide assessment of these issues are set out in the section on 'Landscape and Visual Effects'

c. **Noise**: The Council consider noise as a particularly sensitive issue. The assessment methods used and key guiding principles that will form the basis of noise assessment are set out in the section on 'Noise Assessment'.

d. **Shadow flicker, and blade glint, glare and light effects**: Wind energy schemes should always be designed to avoid causing shadow flicker, blade glint, glare and light effects to any regularly occupied buildings not associated with the development. Where this cannot be achieved, the Council will expect wind energy developments to be located a minimum distance of 11 times the blade diameter of the turbine(s) from any regularly occupied buildings not associated with the development. Within a distance less than 11 times the blade diameter, a shadow flicker assessment will be required. The Council may support a scheme that relies on mitigation, where it is deemed to be effective. In such instances turbine shutdown systems will be the required mitigation. The increase in distance from the widely accepted 10 times rotor diameter to 11 is to account for the northern latitudes of Highland- this is in line with the conclusions of the DECC Update of UK Shadow Flicker Evidence Base, 2011 [24].

e. **Mitigation by conditions**: The Council may impose planning conditions to ensure adequate mitigation of impacts on amenity at sensitive locations, for example to address: noise levels; traffic management; commissioning and decommissioning arrangements and correction of any electro-magnetic interference. Scottish Government's planning advice discusses these matters further and provides further guidance and assessment methods.

4.22 Due to the potential impacts arising from wind energy developments, the presence of wind turbines may have some limiting effects on the potential to subsequently develop land in the area for other uses. It is therefore important to consider the impact of proposed wind energy development not only on existing land uses but also those permitted or which are included as specific proposals in the Development Plan. The scope of assessment necessary to consider such impacts should be agreed with the Council.

Safety of Airport, Defence and Emergency Service Operations

4.23 All proposals should seek to avoid significant adverse effects, individually and cumulatively, on airport, defence or emergency service operations. This includes flight activity; navigation and surveillance systems; and associated infrastructure.

4.24 A consultation proforma was agreed between the British Wind Energy Association and key aviation consultees such as the Ministry of Defence, National Air Traffic Service and the UK Civil Aviation Authority to initiate a consultation. Applicants are encouraged to engage this process where relevant. Furthermore the MOD also provides advice through their wind energy and aviation helpline number: 0121 311 3847, and through an online form [25].

24 http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121217150421/http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/what_we_do/uk_supply/energy_mix/renewable/planning/on_of_wind/shadow_flicker/shadow_flicker.aspx
25 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/286293/20131119_consultation_pro-forma.doc

4.25 Developers should make themselves aware of the full extent of the aviation stakeholders in their area who may be affected by their proposal. The CAA general advice continues to be that developers of potential wind farms should engage with aviation stakeholders at the earliest opportunity, using the guidance provided in CAA Publication 764. Any impact on aviation can therefore be mitigated ahead of the formal planning process.

4.26 When designing and siting proposals developers should pay particular regard to:

- MOD 'Safeguarding Extents'
- Health & Safety Executive Safeguarding Zones
- NATS En Route Plc Safeguarding Maps3
- Department of Trade and Industry "Wind Energy and Aviation Interest – Interim Guidance"
- Airport Safeguarding Surfaces
- Private Airfields

Operational Efficiency of Other Communications

4.27 The siting of wind turbines must have regard to radio, TV, telecoms and other communication systems. Developments shall be assessed by consultation with relevant operators. Planning conditions or legal agreements may require developers to correct any electromagnetic interference at their own expense. The Joint Radio Company should be contacted for joint screening for telemetry or microwave links in use by either electricity or gas utilities.

Operational Efficiency of Wind Energy Developments

4.28 The Council expect that wind farms should be efficient. Therefore existing and consented wind farms' operational efficiency should not be compromised by adjacent development proposals. For example:

- where a new adjacent wind farm proposal could reduce the wind resource of the existing or consented scheme;
- where a new adjacent proposal for another type of use, for example a large industrial building, could reduce the wind resource of the existing or consented scheme; or
- where there is an allocated development site for another type of use (e.g. an allocated housing site in an adopted Local Development Plan) that may have the potential to limit the efficiency of the proposal (e.g. by requiring mitigation).

4.29 It is also the Council's expectation that mitigation measures, for example turbine shut down, should be proposed only as a last resort as this has potential to adversely impact on the efficiency of the scheme.

4.30 To find out more about the location of windfarm developments and proposals, applicants should refer to the Highland Windmap [26] and the Council's eplanning webpages [27].

The Natural and Historic Environment

4.31 HwLDP policies set out how we manage all development in relation to our rich natural and historic environment. The following list highlights key aspects related to onshore wind:

a. Any proposal likely to have a significant effect on a European site (Special Area of Conservation or Special Protection Area) should provide sufficient information to enable the Council to carry out an 'appropriate assessment' of its implications for the European site in view of its conservation objectives, in line with the Conservation (Natural habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 as amended. If it cannot be demonstrated that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned, it can only proceed if there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest. Where the site concerned hosts a priority species however, the overriding interest must relate to human health, public safety or have beneficial consequences of primary importance to the environment.

26 http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/198/planning_-_long_term_and_area_policies/152/renewable_energy/5
27 http://wam.highland.gov.uk/wam/

b. Developers are reminded that even if their proposal is not within a Natura site, it may still have potential to have an effect on a site, including its qualifying interests, and this should be taken into account in assessing a proposal.

c. Applicants may refer to relevant SNH guidance, for example their Guidance on Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas [28] and Guidance on Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments [29]. Where a habitat management plan is necessary developers should consult the SNH guidance: Good Practice During Windfarm Construction [30].

d. Proposals should seek to avoid compromising the natural environment resources of Highland. Potential for significant adverse effects on nationally important features must be clearly outweighed by social or economic benefit of national importance.

e. All proposals must have regard to the Highland Special Landscape Areas including their citations [31] that summarise key characteristics; qualities; sensitivities, and measures for enhancement. These citations will be used to assess impacts of proposals where relevant.

f. All proposals should seek to avoid significant adverse effects on the siting, context or setting of historic environment assets, including direct physical, indirect or cumulative impact. The Council will have regard to the importance and qualities of the asset, the nature of the impacts, and the effectiveness of any mitigation proposed.

g. Applicants may refer to relevant Historic Environment Scotland publications including information on Environmental Impact Assessment and the Historic Environment [32] and their Managing Change Guidance Note on Setting [33], and the Council's Historic Environment Strategy [34] and other information [35]

h. Where a proposal is likely to have significant effects on the qualities of a mapped area of wild land, as identified on the SNH Wild Land Areas Map (2014) a wild land assessment shall be required, and should be carried out in line with current SNH guidance [36]. Wind energy developments within mapped areas of wild land are unlikely to be supported unless it can be demonstrated that significant effects on the qualities of these areas can be substantially overcome by siting, design and other mitigation. Development outwith mapped areas of wild land that could have significant effects upon perceptual qualities of the wild land area may also require a wild land assessment.

i. Onshore Wind Energy developments have potential to impact upon species and habitats, for example by disturbance or collision risk. This may also include cumulative impacts that could have a limiting effect on the potential for future development. Developers should refer to HwLDP policies for details of the protection afforded to species and habitats. Species identified in Schedules 2 and 4 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 as amended (European Protected Species) should seek to avoid any adverse impacts on these species. Where a license is required, the Council must be satisfied that all three tests could be met under Regulation 44.

j. The Council will give due consideration to the wider natural heritage beyond the confines of designated sites, particularly those listed below, where they are of major importance or contribute to the coherence of the Natura network of European sites:

- Areas of habitats listed in Annex 1 and the habitats of species of community interest listed in Annexes 2, 4 and 5 of the Habitats Directive;

- Areas which support habitats of naturally occurring wild birds, particularly those on Annex 1 of the Birds Directive, migratory species and birds of conservation concern on the Red and Amber Lists.

k. Consideration will also be given to species listed in Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) [37]. Licensing requirements have been added by s. 18 of the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 inserting s. 16 (3) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended. Thus where a licence is required the Council will need to be satisfied that (a) undertaking the conduct so

28 http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A994842.pdf
29 http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A675503.pdf
30 http://www.snh.gov.uk/publications-data-and-research/publications/search-the-catalogue/publication-detail/?id=1618
31 http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2937/assessment_of_highland_special_landscape_areas.pdf
32 https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/environmental-assessment/our-role-in-environmental-impact-assessment/
33 http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/setting-2.pdf
34 http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/11047/highland_historic_environment_strategy.pdf
35 http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20004/local_history_and_heritage/512/protecting_the_historic_environment
36 http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/looking-after-landscapes/landscape-policy-and-guidance/wild-land/mapping/
37 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/contents

authorised will give rise to, or contribute towards the achievement of, a significant social, economic or environmental benefit, and (b) there is no other satisfactory solution. The Council has Supplementary Guidance on statutorily protected species [38] and this should be referred to by any prospective developer.

l. The potential for impacts of any secondary developments such as power lines or transmission stations (for example sub-stations, switching stations etc.) should also be addressed where relevant.

The Water Environment

4.32 Developments should be designed to avoid impacts upon the water environment wherever possible. There should remain a minimum buffer of 50 m between any works and the water environment. Where impacts on the water environment cannot be avoided then developers will be expected to demonstrate how these impacts will be mitigated. The water environment includes ground water, surface water (including water supplies), and groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystems. The measures proposed to protect the environment during construction should be included in a Construction Environmental Management Plan and detailed Schedule of Mitigation. SEPA's Planning Guidance on Windfarm Developments [39] provides detailed advice.

4.33 When formulating ideas and designs for the site prior to submitting their planning application, applicants should contact SEPA, Scottish Water and other relevant organisations at an early stage to discuss their proposals and to ensure they meet necessary requirements. This opportunity may be available through the 'Pre-application Advice' service the Council provides.

Peat

4.34 The HwLDP sets out clear expectations about how development should safeguard the peat resource. It is a key asset that requires safeguarding because it plays a central role in climate change mitigation and adaptation through carbon sequestration as well as other greenhouse gases. Wind energy development in Highland is often proposed in areas where peat may be present, to varying extents and to differing levels of sensitivity. The following list sets out key factors to be taken into account when considering a development proposal that has potential to affect peat, it should be included in a Peat Management Plan, within a 'Construction Environmental Management Plans':

a. Site investigation should begin early in the EIA design process. Where peat is found to be present on site, developers will be expected to provide geotechnical and hydrological information, including information on the risk of landslide and peatslide related to the development.

b. Peat survey and site assessment should inform the siting and design of wind turbines and all associated infrastructure. Through this assessment, impacts on peat should be avoided, for example, by careful siting of the windfarm components to avoid deep peat, and avoid altering hydrological regimes. Applicants should ensure that the information gathered for such site options is clear, concise and shows detailed mapping of peat depth and all proposed development activities together (e.g. Turbines, access tracks and proposed borrow pits), as well as details of the basic peatland characteristics.

c. Where relevant, applicants should have regard to the 'carbon rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat (CPP)' map produced by SNH. Classes 1 & 2 on that map are a Group 2 constraint in the Spatial Framework, a nationally important mapped environmental asset. The SNH map is not a definitive guide to the distribution of CPP across Scotland. It indicates where the resource is likely to be found and should be used to guide development away from the most sensitive resources. Therefore, if a proposal is brought forward in an area identified as CPP, and it is found that the development will be located on carbon rich soils, deep peat or priority peatland habitat, it is unlikely to be supported unless it can be demonstrated through the Environmental Impact Assessment process that any significant effects on the qualities of the area(s) can be substantially overcome through siting and design or by suitable mitigation. Impacts must consider all stages from project inception to wind farm operation and decommissioning.

d. Mitigation of effects on peat and mapped CPP may include construction methods such as the use of floating tracks or piling for turbine foundations. It may also take the form of habitat restoration or habitat improvements, which may be achieved in areas of the site not being developed, and possibly on other

38 http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/3026/highland_statutorily_protected_species_supplementary_guidance
39 http://www.sepa.org.uk/media/136117/planning-guidance-on-on-shore-windfarms-developments.pdf

peatland sites. Proposed restoration and improvements should be presented in a draft Habitat Management Plan that provides sufficient information to demonstrate how proposals will be implemented and managed.

e. When considering applications, the Council will expect to receive clear information about the whole life carbon balance of the proposal. This can be undertaken, for example, by using a 'Carbon Calculator'. Schemes applying under Section 36 of the Electricity Act (1989) are required to use the carbon calculator [40].

4.35 Proposals on peatland should have regard to the following key publications:

- Peat Landslide Hazard and Risk Assessments; Best Practice Guide for Proposed Electricity Generation Developments [41]
- Calculating Carbon Savings from Wind Farms on Scottish Peatlands – A New Approach [42]
- SEPA's Regulatory Position Statement – Developments on Peat [43]
- Good Practice during Windfarm Construction guidance [44] (developed by Scottish Renewables, SNH, SEPA and FCS).
- Peat Hazard and Risk Assessment Guide [45], particularly in relation to peat slide/bog burst risk
- Development on Peatlands: Site Surveys [46]
- The Scottish Land Use Strategy [47]
- Assessment of Peat Volumes, Reuse of Excavated Peat and Minimisation of Waste [48]
- The National Peatland Plan [49] and other local management strategies.

Trees and Woodland

4.36 HwLDP sets out how trees and woodland (including commercial forestry plantations) should be managed and safeguarded in relation to development. There are a number of detailed considerations that have to be taken into account. Developers are strongly encouraged to seek early advice from the Council and other key stakeholders, for example through the 'Pre-application Advice'service.

4.37 The following list highlights key issues related to trees and woodland:

a. Targeting of commercial forestry plantations for windfarm development is becoming more commonplace because such areas are often less constrained by conservation designations and can benefit from existing road infrastructure. Where tree felling is a key component of a proposal, the individual or cumulative effects could result in substantial loss of commercial woodland resources, which is contrary to Scottish Government Policy: Scottish Forest Strategy (2006) [50].

b. The Scottish Government has a policy on the 'Control of Woodland Removal' [51]. Annex B of that policy paper identifies windfarms as being one of the principal causes of woodland removal between 1990 and 2008. It gives criteria for determining the acceptability of woodland removal both with and without a requirement for compensatory planting. Annex C provides broad guidance on meeting acceptability criteria for woodland removal and any prospective developer should demonstrate that their proposal meets the necessary criteria.

c. Where tree removal is a component of a proposal, developers will be expected to provide information on the fate and use of all felled material and detailed proposals for compensatory planting. Proposals should be in line with the joint SNH, Forestry Commission Scotland and SEPA guidance Use of Trees Cleared to Facilitate Development on Afforested Land (2014) [52].

40 http://informatics.sepa.org.uk/CarbonCalculator/
41 http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2006/12/21162303/0
42 http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Business-Industry/Energy/Energy-sources/19185/17852-1/CSavings
43 https://www.sepa.org.uk/media/143822/peat_position_statement.pdf
44 http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A1168678.pdf
45 http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2006/12/21162303/0
46 http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Environment/Countryside/Landusestrategy
47 http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Environment/Countryside/Landusestrategy
48 http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00455955.pdf
49 http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A1697542.Pdf
50 http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/supporting/strategy-policy-guidance/forestry-strategy
51 http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/supporting/strategy-policy-guidance/woodland-expansion/control-of-woodland-removal
52 http://www.sepa.org.uk/media/143799/use_of_trees_cleared_to_facilitate_development_on_afforested_land_sepa_snh_fcs_guidance-_april_2014.pdf

d. Developers should minimise loss of woodland wherever possible. The Council has a Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy [53] and Supplementary Guidance on Trees, Woodlands and Development [54] and these should be referred to by prospective developers.
e. Developers are strongly encouraged to submit any woodland management proposals and, where relevant, details of compensatory planting plans as early as possible. It may be relevant to include details of the potential for impacts, including cumulative impacts, and the scope should be agreed with the Council.

Tourism and Recreation

4.38 Tourism and recreation are important elements in the Highland economy. The Council will have regard to a range of considerations as set out below, the nature and scope of any assessments required should be agreed in advance with the Council and may include a tourism impact assessment:

- relevant research into the potential effects of wind farms on tourism and recreation (for example, Scottish Government's commissioned report into The economic impacts of wind farms on Scottish tourism [55] (2008) and Visit Scotland's Wind Farm Consumer Research [56] (2011));
- the potential for socio-economic benefits to be derived from development proposals, for example, evidence of community benefit discussions. Further information can be found in the section on 'Socio-economic benefits of onshore wind development';
- the potential for effects on industries for which Highland's landscape is important - for example tourism and recreation; and,
- the potential for secondary effects for tourism and recreation, such as a change in land use that causes adverse effects, for example, a change from forestry to a wind farm, or where there are potential benefits like improved public access in the area.

Public Access

4.39 All proposals should seek to avoid significant adverse effects on the quality and quantity of public access. This will include any effect on a route included in a Core Paths Plan [57], an access point to water, wider access rights or Rights of Way as provided by the Scottish Rights of Way Society. The Council will encourage developers to improve path networks and create new opportunities for access. Members of the public access land around wind farms so applicants are encouraged to erect information boards at entrances to sites to make members of the public aware of relevant information and any potential risks.

4.40 SNH provide advice on public access in their Good practice during windfarm construction guidance [58].

4.41 Developers are urged to consider adequate mitigation of any adverse effects. This should include:

- retention of any existing path or water access point while maintaining or enhancing its amenity value; or
- alternative access provision maintaining the same level of amenity, safety and convenience for public use.

4.42 For a proposal classified as a Major Development the Council will require the developer to submit an Access Plan. This should show the existing public, non-motorised public access footpaths, bridleways and cycleways on the site, together with proposed public access provision, both during construction and after completion of the development (including links to existing path networks and to the surrounding area, and access points to water). The right of responsible access must be maintained during construction. SNH's Guidance for the Preparation of an Outdoor Access Plan [59] and The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 should be referred to.

53 http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/891/highland_forest_and_woodland_strategy.pdf
54 http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/354/trees_woodlands_and_development_supplementary_guidance
55 http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2008/03/07113554/0
56 http://www.visitscotland.org/pdf/Windfarm%20Consumer%20Research%20final_docUpdatedx.pdf
57 http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1457/tourism_and_visitor_attractions/163/paths_in_the_highlands
58 http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A1168678.pdf
59 http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/B639282.pdf

Traffic and Transport Interests

4.43 All proposals should seek to avoid significant adverse effects on the public road network individually and cumulatively with other built and permitted proposals as well as valid planning applications not yet determined (the weight apportioned to each will reflect their position in the planning process).

4.44 Ideally locations should be chosen where the road network has suitable alignment, width and strength to carry abnormal loads and the construction traffic associated with the scale of the development proposed. In locations where the existing road network does not meet these requirements, the developer may be required to undertake mitigation works to bring the road to a suitable standard before the commencement of works. The suitability of the road network (including mitigation) shall be adequate for the lifetime impact of the development from construction through maintenance and decommissioning.

4.45 The proposals for the use of the public roads and mitigation works will require the approval of the Roads Authority. Developers will be required to enter into a Section 96 (Roads Scotland Act) agreement with the Council to cover damage to the public roads by construction traffic and may be required to provide a bond as surety. Developers should consider measures to reduce the impact of construction traffic on the road network. The passage of the abnormal loads required for the transport of turbine components can be problematic and should be given very early consideration in the planning of projects.

4.46 Developers will be required to undertake a Transport Assessment to establish the transport impacts of the construction traffic associated with the development, the suitability of the existing road network, the impact on existing road users and adjacent communities, and the requirements for any mitigation works. This should include pre-application negotiation with the Roads Authority to agree the extent and nature of necessary strengthening, improvements and other mitigation works. Where trunk roads are to be used for transporting abnormal loads, a trunk roads assessment should be undertaken in consultation with Transport Scotland, further guidance is available from the Transport Scotland website [60]. Equally, where temporary or permanent mitigation is proposed to the trunk road network will require to be discussed and agreed with Transport Scotland.

4.47 The Council will seek, where appropriate, to follow a strategic approach to coordinate mitigation works in areas where more than one scheme is permitted. This will maximise the benefits of road improvements to developers as well as other road users. In such instances, developers may be required to undertake mitigation, or contribute towards a larger scheme of works.

4.48 For development of wind farms below 10MW not subject to formal EIA, applicants should refer to Appendix 1 of SEPA's Standing Advice for Planning [61] etc. for guidance of the principles SEPA apply to development management. This advice includes information on a range of information, including reference to flooding and pollution from the construction of wind farms and associated infrastructure.

Electricity and Gas Infrastructure

4.49 An appropriate separation distance is required in the vicinity of electricity transmission underground cables, overhead lines and underground gas transmission pipelines. The proposed turbines need to take account of factors beyond the immediate wayleave by providing sufficient distance to safeguard the infrastructure and a sufficient operation and maintenance distance. Other parts of the proposal or activities which the developer intends to undertake may trigger need for consultation with the relevant grid company. Developers are therefore advised to consult the relevant grid company for further advice on whether the work they are intending to undertake has the potential to affect their infrastructure. Developers are also strongly advised that they should obtain their written consent prior to submission of the planning application, this will help to provide a fuller understanding of the constraints present and how the development will overcome them.

Noise Assessment

4.50 For the purposes of noise assessment only, 'large' refers to turbines with a rotor diameter of 16m and above, 'smaller' refers to turbines below that size.

60 http://www.transport.gov.scot/road/maintenance/prioritising-bridge-maintenance#Abnormal load routing
61 http://www.sepa.org.uk/media/136130/sepa-standing-advice-for-planning-authorities-and-developers-on-development-management-consultations.pdf

4.51 The guidance document 'ETSU-R-97 - The assessment & rating of noise from wind farms (ETSU)' is acknowledged by both the UK & the Scottish Governments as representing best practice in terms of the assessment of noise from wind turbines. Since its publication, the Institute of Acoustics has published a Good Practice Guide (GPG) and supplementary guidance notes [62] for the application of ETSU, and has been acknowledged as best practice. ETSU sets out a framework for measuring wind farm noise and suggests acceptable noise levels that balance a reasonable degree of protection for noise sensitive receptors with enabling developers and local authorities to deliver and assess development without being unreasonably burdened. Noise assessments submitted in support of applications for large wind turbines should therefore be undertaken in accordance with ETSU and the GPG as these documents contain the guiding principles upon which the Council will base their assessment.

4.52 The British Wind Energy Association (BWEA) Small Wind Turbine Performance and Safety Standard (2008) is the guide used by the Council in assessing smaller scale wind turbine applications, and which has provided a proportionate and effective framework for assessing smaller turbine noise impacts on sensitive receptors. We will continue to keep under review the appropriateness of this assessment method, and may use an amended method if one becomes available. In the meantime we will continue to use the BWEA approach in respect of smaller wind turbines, where appropriate we will also have regard to ETSU and the GPG.

4.53 In assessing proposals we will include a focus on the following key principles:

a. Highland Council's expectation is that all proposals will seek to achieve noise limits at sensitive locations that are at the lower end of the range indicated in national guidance, and we may seek limits lower than that in certain circumstances. This is because, in effect, national guidance addresses an average and therefore does not account for Highland's generally lower level of background noise. For example, Highland has a generally low density of development and less noise-generating industry and transport infrastructure, with certain features like motorways not present. The specific limit will depend on area specific factors and applicants are strongly encouraged to engage with the Council at the earliest opportunity to discuss noise limits of their proposal.
b. Further to the above, the selection of proxy background monitoring locations should also reflect this approach. Monitoring locations should be chosen which have very similar characteristics to the properties they will represent. Where such locations do not exist or cannot be used, the expectation is that monitoring locations with the lowest background levels will be chosen to represent other properties. Applicants are advised to liaise with the Council to discuss monitoring locations prior to installation of equipment.
c. Where noise from more than one wind turbine development may have a cumulative impact at any noise sensitive location, applicants must ensure this is adequately assessed in accordance with best practice, which includes consideration of both predicted and consented levels.
d. Research into amplitude modulation is ongoing and currently there is no accepted best practice for measuring, monitoring or setting limits. Should any such guidance become available, Highland Council will expect developers to follow its recommendations.

Borrow Pits

4.54 Aggregate and other mineral resources required for a proposal should be sourced from local quarries, rather than creating borrow pits on-site.

4.55 The Council will only support the use of on-site borrow pits where it can be clearly demonstrated that there are significant environmental or economic benefits compared to obtaining material from local quarries.

4.56 For schemes where borrow pits are supported, information should be provided about what potential environmental impacts may arise if material sourced from borrow pits is found not to be suitable for all required construction activities.

62 http://www.ioa.org.uk/publications/wind-turbine-noise

Mitigation

4.57 Where mitigation is to be provided by the developer in response to likely impacts of the development, developers should ensure that it is available throughout the lifetime of the development and the Council will require arrangements to be in place to secure this. Mitigation may include both on-site and off-site measures, which may be covered by management plans, including in 'Construction Environmental Management Plans'. Measures will typically be secured where appropriate by planning conditions or by Section 75 Legal Agreements. The Council will look for developers to provide mitigation plans that set out the mitigation necessary and how it will be delivered.

4.58 The Council will check on the implementation of any required mitigation. This will include site visits where necessary and responding to issues raised by community liaison groups, the public and other stakeholders.

4.59 Should there be changes to a development outwith those permitted by the conditions set with the planning consent, a developer may be asked to submit an application for non-material variation of the planning consent. At this stage the Council will assess whether the variation is non-material (this can include requests for further information e.g. additional visualisations). At the discretion of the Council, enforcement action may be taken, The Council's Planning Enforcement Charter [63] provides further information.

Construction Environmental Management Plans

4.60 Major developments and developments subject to Environmental Impact Assessment will be expected to follow a robust project environmental management process, following the approach set out in the Council's Guidance Note for construction environmental management plans [64].

4.61 Applicants should engage with the Council as early as possible about plans for the construction of their proposal, for example using the Council's 'Pre-application Advice' Service, this will assist in identifying what relevant elements should be included in the plans.

Restoration Bonds

4.62 The Council will seek assurance that the landowners of a proposed windfarm site can access funds to restore their land at the end of the operational life of the development. The Council will also seek to ensure that funds are available to enable the Council itself to undertake such site restoration if the need arises.

4.63 Where windfarms are concerned, the Council needs to ensure, as far as it can, that there will be robust financial guarantees in place over sufficiently long periods to enable this to be undertaken if required, bearing in mind that windfarm permissions typically span a 25 year period. These should be secured either by bond of caution (Bond) or by irrevocable letter of credit (LoC) from an appropriate bank. Parent Company Guarantees will not be accepted. Bonds/LoCs from major banks are a safer way of securing the Council's interests in these cases. These will be reviewed, typically every five years, to ensure that the value of bond is sufficient to restore the site at the end of the permission.

4.64 Applicants should be clear from the outset about any elements of their proposed scheme that they intend to retain once the site is restored so that these can be factored into any assessments.

4.65 Further information about restoration and decommissioning are included in the following guidance:

- Heads of Planning Scotland Position Statement on the Operation of Financial Mechanisms to Secure Decommissioning, Restoration and Aftercare of Development Sites [65]
- Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape [66]

63 http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1302/our_planning_enforcement_charter.pdf
64 http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2644/construction_environmental_management_process_for_large_scale_projects.pdf
65 https://hopscotland.files.wordpress.com/2014/08/hops-6-7-15-position-statement-on-bonds-with-appendices2.pdf
66 http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/strategy/renewables/Guidance_Siting_Designing_wind_farms.pdf

- Decommissioning and Restoration Plans for on-shore wind farms [67]
- Planning for development: What to consider and include in Habitat Management Plans [68]
- SNH Commissioned Report 591: Research and guidance on restoration and decommissioning of onshore wind farms [69]

Repowering

4.66 The Council supports the principle of repowering in appropriate circumstances. Scottish Planning Policy outlines that "areas identified for wind farms should be suitable for use in perpetuity". Repowering schemes are treated as new planning applications and are therefore assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account all of the relevant factors set out in this guidance. However, the site's existing use as a wind farm will be a material consideration in deciding an application.

4.67 When considering new proposals, the Council will take into account the existing use as a wind farm, the extent to which the new proposals make use of existing infrastructure, and will balance this with all of the development plan considerations set out in HwLDP and this Supplementary Guidance. This will include consideration of the most up to date situation e.g. natural environment, including designations and features identified since the original permission was granted. Applicants for repowering schemes should have regard to the SNH Guidance Decommissioning and Restoration Plans for on-shore wind farms [70].

67 http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A1434319.pdf
68 http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/B1159444.pdf
69 http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/commissioned_reports/591.pdf
70 http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A1434319.pdf

5 Highland Strategic Capacity

Comas Ro-innleachdail na Gàidhealtachd

5.1 Given the current pressures for development Highland is experiencing, it is important that the Council assess the baseline and provide clear guidance for all stakeholders about Highland's potential for wind energy development.

5.2 The following sets out the method the Highland Council is using to assess the strategic capacity for wind energy development. As part of this approach, we will take into account the generic assessment criteria set out in the section on 'Landscape and Visual Effects'.

5.3 Six areas are included in the study. Loch Ness is complete, and the remaining areas are in progress and will be subject to public consultation prior to inclusion in the Guidance.

- Loch Ness
- Black Isle, surrounding hills and Moray Firth coast (including Dava Moor)
- Caithness
- East and Central Sutherland
- North Coast
- Skye

5.4 Before considering this section of the Guidance, the following points should be noted:

- This section does not introduce additional constraints to those set out in the Spatial Framework for Onshore Wind Energy, nor should it be used as part of a sequential approach to wind farm planning. The study is intended to provide additional strategic considerations that identify sensitivities and potential capacity.
- For clarity, the appraisal of landscape and visual sensitivity shown in the tables for each Landscape Character Area (LCA) only discuss landscape and visual aspects, other factors including a suite of natural and historic features and designations recognised and afforded policy protection in HwLDP are considered in the subsequent stages of mapping strategic capacity, as described in the methodology below.
- LCAs are described and assessed broadly, and therefore the following serves as a guide, assessment of specific proposals will take into account site and proposal-specific factors. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate how their proposals align with the conclusions of the assessments, and if they do not, will be expected to demonstrate why they are still appropriate developments.
- When considering the sensitivity appraisal of one LCA, it is important to consider this alongside neighbouring LCAs and those specifically mentioned in the appraisal. This is because effects of development may reach beyond the individual LCA and the qualities of the wider landscape experienced by visual receptors may comprise several LCAs, therefore the wider context has to be taken into account.

5.5 In order to provide a strategic guide for onshore wind energy, a study was implemented for a range of geographical areas of Highland. This involved identifying landscape characteristics; key valued visual assets; landscape and visual sensitivities, and an indication of the scope for future development. A working group undertook the study, and included Landscape, Development Management and Development Plans Officers from Highland Council, working alongside Officers from Scottish Natural Heritage bringing together their range

of technical and local knowledge and expertise. The work was informed by the guidance provided in Spatial Planning for Onshore Wind Turbines- natural heritage considerations [71] (SNH, 2015) as well as other landscape capacity and sensitivity resources [72].

5.6 The results of the landscape and visual sensitivity appraisal set out key aspects for each study area that The Council will take into consideration when managing planning applications for all scales of onshore wind energy development. It is a guide that provides context for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, provides general advice on the likely form of development appropriate in different areas and, in the Strategic Capacity section, identifies scope for development. The study should be referred to alongside the Development Plan and the rest of this Supplementary Guidance.

5.7 Whilst it is essential that Highland contributes to meeting climate change targets, and that socio-economic benefits of wind energy development are realised, this study focused specifically on those aspects that require further clarification, based on experience of planning cases in Highland. Finding the balance between the benefits of a particular scheme and the impacts it may present will be the subject of careful consideration on a case by case basis at the Development Management stage.

5.8 The purpose of this section is to provide guidance about where the Council considers are the least constrained locations for onshore wind energy development within existing pressure areas and to highlight key sensitivities that should be addressed in any onshore wind energy development planning application. This purpose is achieved through a strategic-level assessment of key landscape and visual factors superimposed over national policy and Development Plan policy constraints.

Identifying study areas

5.9 The extensive geographical expanse Highland Council covers requires a focus of resources to those areas facing the greatest pressure for wind energy development. The Highland Windmap [73] is used to review current wind energy development along with Officer's local knowledge to identify pressure areas. The high-level landscape divisions shown in the SNH mapping of Landscape variety in Scotland [74] (SNH, 2014) are also used to help define study areas based on their distinctiveness and identity, along with relevant Landscape Character Assessments, and prominent landforms that terminate views or clearly define study area extents. While boundaries are identified, reference is also made to views and features outwith the area where they play a significant role within the study area e.g. contributing to setting/ sense of place.

Characterising study areas

5.10 Each study area is considered as a whole, reviewing current and future patterns of wind energy development based on planning application information available at the time of review. The area is then divided into sub-areas, based on SNH Landscape Character Areas, and refined or grouped into larger areas where appropriate. For clarity and ease of use, a reference code and place-specific title is devised to identify individual Landscape Character Areas within the Landscape Character Type.

5.11 Desktop analysis is undertaken to identify potential key routes and key views that capture the essence of an area's particular qualities, and to identify relevant features and landscape designations. This work involves reviewing GIS datasets, aerial imagery and Ordnance Survey mapping.

5.12 Site visits are undertaken by members of the working group. These enable the group to experience the areas and consider particular landscape and visual sensitivities, confirm key routes and key views and achieve consensus on any particular issues.

5.13 **Modelling turbine visibility**

5.14 A GIS model was developed to provide information to the working group about turbine exposure across Highland. The model used height (to blade tip) data of all consented, constructed and operational turbines overlain on a 50 meter-resolution bare surface digital terrain model. A count of the number of turbines visible

71 http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A1663759.pdf
72 http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/looking-after-landscapes/tools-and-techniques/landscape-capacity-and-sensitivity/
73 http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/198/planning_-_long_term_and_area_policies/152/renewable_energy/5
74 http://www.snh.gov.uk/about-scotlands-nature/scotlands-landscapes/landscapes-varieties/

within a 40 km radius of the centre point of each 50 meter grid cell was then calculated. A correction factor was then applied to these counts for each grid cell to account for the diminishing effect of turbine visibility as distance increases - distance decay (see Miller, D.R. *et al*. 2010. [75]). This modified count of turbines provided a relative measure of turbine exposure that was grouped and expressed as 'Highest, High, Medium, Low and Lowest Exposure'. The GIS results of this model are used during the analysis of study areas.

5.15 Appraising LCAs

5.16 Based on the results of desktop research and fieldwork, an appraisal is undertaken for each Landscape Character Area. A simple table is used to provide a summary for each appraisal.

5.17 The landscape character area and the role it serves in the wider landscape is briefly described.

5.18 Any key views, routes or gateways relevant to the area are identified. For each study area key routes and views are included in a table and information provided on what landscape character areas and visual receptors are relevant to it.

5.19 Landscape sensitivity to large-scale wind farms, small individual turbines and access infrastructure is appraised using a combination of:

- A four-point scoring system;
- Consideration of moderating factors;
- Professional judgement.

5.20 This process is aided by the use of the following record chart that drew upon information from the West Lothian Landscape Capacity Study [76] and the Cumulative Landscape and Visual Assessment of Wind Energy in Caithness [77], as well as discussions during site visits for the Loch Ness Study Area:

75 http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/999/assessment_of_landscape_sensitivity_to_wind_turbine_development_in_highland_summary_report.pdf
76 http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/2513/SPG-Landscape-capacity-Study-for-Wind-Energy-Development-in-West-Lothian/pdf/technical-windenergy.pdf
77 http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/830/cumulative_landscape_and_visual_assessment_of_wind_energy_in_caithness

Area Ref, LCT and Name:	
*Scale of 1-4, 1 being most susceptible to change	

SMALL

Landscape Characteristics	Landscape Susceptibility* to Small Scale Wind Developments			
	1	2	3	4
Landform: apparent scale	Massive	Large	Medium	Small
Landform complexity	Uniform	Simple	irregular	Intimate or complex
Land Cover	Uniform	Simple	varied	Intimate or complex
Habitation	Little or no Built Env	Main Settlement Significant nucleated village	Scattered Housing/ Township	Farmstead/Rural node Significant Industrial site
Enclosure	Unenclosed	Large 500m+	Medium 200-500m	Small <200m
Moderating Factors:				

LARGE

Landscape Characteristics	Landscape Susceptibility* to Large Scale Wind Developments			
	1	2	3	4
Landform: apparent scale	small	Moderate	Large	Massive
Landform complexity	Intimate or complex	irregular	Simple	Uniform
Land Cover	Intimate or complex	varied	Simple	Uniform
Habitation	Main Settlement	Significant nucleated village	Scattered Housing/ Township	Little or no Built Env Significant Industrial site
Enclosure	Small <200m	Medium 200 - 500m	Large 500m+	Unenclosed
Moderating Factors:				

INFRASTRUCTURE

Landscape Characteristics	Landscape Susceptibility* to Access Infrastructure			
	1	2	3	4
Slopes	Steep and oriented towards key route or settlement	Moderate and oriented towards key route or settlement	Steep and visible from key route or settlement	Other
Vegetation pattern/ enclosure	Uniform low vegetation cover offering little screening	Variety of vegetation heights giving intermittent screening	Areas of differing vegetation where tracks can be routes along existing boundary lines.	Vegetation cover which can absorb track.
Presence of existing roads and tracks	None	Few	Some	Extensive
Roadside features w/r to junction formation	Continuous boundary eg.trees/hedge/wall. Existing cross-slope road - extensive retaining works to align junction. Narrow road - needing wider bellmouth .		Level ground, wire stock fencing	Level ground, no boundary structures.
Moderating Factors:				

5.21 Visual receptor categories for each study area are identified and their sensitivity defined as highest, medium or lower.

5.22 Current wind energy development within the landscape character area is described.

5.23 Based on the appraisal undertaken, a judgement of the likely potential for wind energy development for each Landscape Character Area is recorded.

5.24 As stated by Scottish Government in their Onshore Wind - Some Questions Answered [78] webpage, areas of strategic capacity *are essentially Group 3 areas from the spatial framework.* For each study area, the Spatial Framework Group 3 Area is mapped and the conclusions of each Landscape Character Area's potential for development overlain in a GIS. this provides an indication of areas that may have potential based, on the landscape and visual sensitivity appraisal.

5.25 A further appraisal is then undertaken to identify any other potential constraints to an area being identified as having strategic capacity (e.g. Special Landscape Areas, regularly occupied buildings, and any other relevant features), taking into account the potential for cumulative impacts of identifying areas.

5.26 **Synthesis and conclusions**

5.27 Areas are agreed between Council Officers and the conclusions mapped.

5.28 Unless otherwise stated, where more than one area of strategic capacity is identified in a study area, no judgement is made about which area should be prioritised for development.

5.1 Loch Ness Strategic Capacity

5.29 The Council has appraised the Loch Ness study area and considered its potential strategic capacity. The appraisal concludes that whilst there may be opportunities for further development in the study area, particularly in association with existing schemes, there is no strategic capacity. This is consistent with Scottish Government advice which states that "Areas of strategic capacity are essentially Group 3 areas from the spatial framework … where it may be desirable to restrict smaller-scale wind turbines to allow larger wind turbines/farms to come forward … [but such work] should not be used to define individual wind farms as strategic" ('Onshore Wind Some Questions Answered'). The following factors contributed to the conclusion that there is no strategic capacity in the study area:

- particularly high landscape and visual sensitivities identified;
- a large coverage of Group 2 Spatial Framework features; and
- a majority of Group 3 areas located closer to settlements, residential properties or Special Landscape Areas.

5.2 Loch Ness Landscape Sensitivity

Mothalachd Cruth-tìre Loch Nis

5.30 The following tables set out the results of the landscape sensitivity appraisal for the Loch Ness study area.

5.31 Loch Ness and the Great Glen are of substantial natural and cultural heritage interest. The area contains key transport routes, including the A82(T) and Caledonian Canal, important settlements and visitor attractions that are of national and international importance, as well as areas of valued recreation interest, including the well used Great Glen Way.

5.32 The close proximity of the study area to the major population centre of Inverness, and the role of the A82(T) and A9(T) roads that provide relatively easy access make it particularly sensitive to development. An existing pattern of wind energy development exists that is mainly comprised of larger wind farm schemes. There continues to be focused pressure for large scale development in the area.

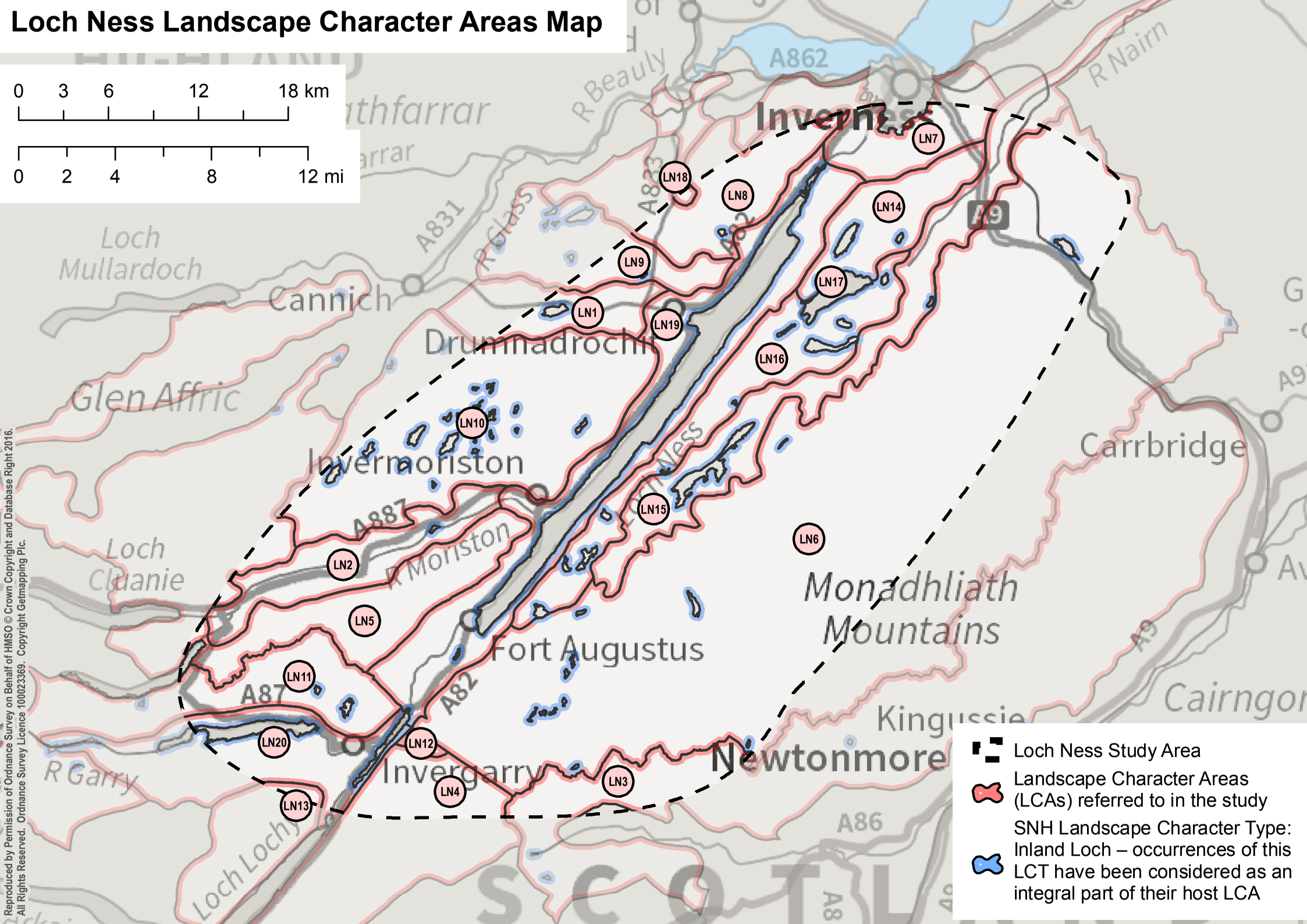
78 http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/Policy/Subject-Policies/low-carbon-place/Heat-Electricity/renewables-advice/Questions

5.33 The study area is adjacent to designations of national importance such as the Cairngorm National Park and National Scenic Areas, there are several wild land areas identified and parts of the study area are designated as Special Landscape Areas.

Summary of key findings from landscape and visual sensitivity appraisal

5.34 The area immediately surrounding Loch Ness is unlikely to be appropriate for any form of wind energy development. The straths and land around the loch to the NW, N and NE are only likely to be appropriate for smaller scale individual turbines associated with farm steadings or other rural buildings. The remaining capacity for larger scale development is limited. The study identifies that any remaining capacity for this scale of development should be focused around existing clusters that are generally found in rolling uplands, rugged massif and rocky moorland Landscape Character Types, but only where these are well designed, integrated into the existing pattern of development and do not undo the landscape and visual mitigation agreed for existing schemes. These limitations will help to limit any additional cumulative effect and increase the potential for future development to share existing site infrastructure.

Loch Ness Landscape Character Areas Map



5.2.1 Key Views

Name	Description	Locations Available	Description of Value/Significance	LCAs important to the integrity of views
Loch Ness West	End-to-end views over Loch Ness looking southwest.	Loch End Aldourie Castle Designed Landscape Dores Beach and An Torr on Loch Ness	Iconic views, much used in promotions for the area, which reveal the scale of the Loch and Great Glen. The apparent recession of the loch's parallel shores to a vanishing point giving the impression of infinity (the point at which parallel lines meet) enhances the perceived scale of the landscape. View is also emblematic of, if not characteristic of, the wider Highlands.	19 - Broad Steep Sided Glen 16- Farmed and Wooded Foothills 6 - Rolling Uplands (south Western end only) 11, 12- Rocky Moorland 4 - Smooth Moorland Ridges5 - Rugged Massif 10- Rocky Moorland Plateau (SE edge only)
Loch Ness East	End-to-end Views over Loch ness looking Northeast	Fort Augustus Abbey Caledonian Canal, Ft Augustus On Loch Ness		19- Broad Steep-sided Glen 9, 10- Rocky Moorland Plateau (SE edge only) 8 - Rocky Moorland Plateau with Woodland (SE Edge only) 7 - Rolling Farmland and Woodland 14- Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland 16- Farmed and Wooded Foothills (NW edge only)
Urquhart Castle from Loch	Water-level views looking up at Castle. Angle limits visibility of LCAs beyond the Broad Steep Sided Glen/immediate Great Glen slopes and Wooded Glen/Glen Urquhart	On Loch Ness	Views are of classic composition, conforming closely to the ideal of the 'picturesque' as described by Gilpin. Composition is quintessentially Highland in its combination of Loch and steep rugged slopes forming a backdrop to a ruined castle. The view is readily accessible to people touring the GG by water, be in a traverse of the CC or day trips out of Inverness.	1 - Wooded Glen 9, 10- Rocky Moorland Plateau (specifically boundaries with 1 and 20. 19- Broad, Steep-sided Glen

Urquhart Castle Land based	Generally elevated views looking towards the castle from above. Results in views where castle is partially or completely back dropped by water. Extent of Broad Steep Sided Glen included in angle of view limited by shortness of view.	Within Historic Scotland site at Urquhart Castle A82 above Castle. Autumn/Winter some views from A82 across Urquhart Bay. Mostly obscured by trees.	The view is less classically picturesque than that available from the water, but is highly valued for the scenic composition, the relative novelty of the viewpoint being superior to the castle.	19- Broad Steep-sided Glen 9, 10- Rocky Moorland Plateau (SE edge only) 8 - Rocky Moorland Plateau with Woodland (SE Edge only) 7 - Rolling Farmland and Woodland 14- Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland 16- Farmed and Wooded Foothills (NW edge only)
Loch Ness from Urquhart Castle	Views primarily towards the North east and Urquhart Bay.	Primarily from Grant Tower or path from Visitor centre	This is a high impact view which gains its value from a combination of its scenic composition and it its rarity value. Elevated views over large lochs are often only accessible by hillwalking, these 'high reward' views are available to casual visitors.	20 - Broad Steep Sided Glen 9 - Rocky Moorland Plateau 8 - Rocky Moorland Plateau with Woodland 7 - Rolling Farmland and Woodland 14- Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland 16- Farmed and Wooded Foothills (NW edge only)
Great Glen from Meall Fuar-mhonaidh	Principal views are NE and SW up and down the Great Glen	Summit Meall Fuar-mhonaidh	Unique perspective of the Great Glen, accessible to both tourists and locals, popular climb.	NB While Rolling Uplands are highly visible from this location, they do not form part of the main direction of view. View SW: 10-Rocky Moorland Plateau 20- Broad Steep Sided Glen 5 - Rugged Massif 11, 12- Rocky Moorland 21- Broad Forested Strath 4 - Smooth Moorland Ridges 13- Interlocking, Sweeping Peaks View NE: 8 - Rocky Moorland Plateau with Woodland 9, 10-Rocky Moorland Plateau 14-Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland 19- Broad Steep Sided Glen

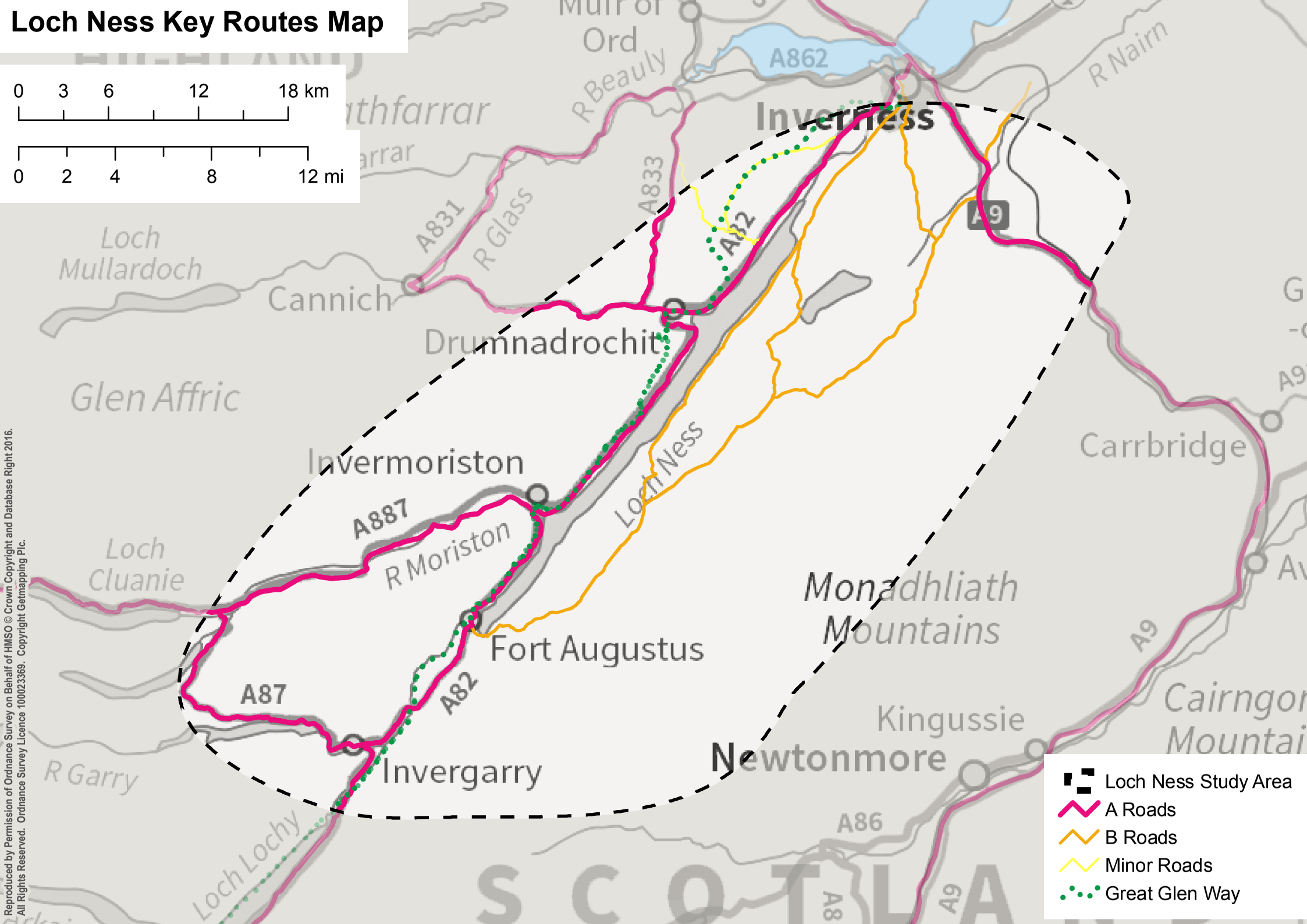
Loch Tarff, 'Local Hero' location	View over range of LCTs looking West North West	Passing Place east of Loch Tarff	Very scenic, something of a 'cult interest' location?	16- Farmed and Wooded Foothills 5 - Rugged Massif 11- Rocky Moorland 13- Interlocking Sweeping Peaks
A87 Viewpoint above Loch Garry	Panoramic views, easily accessible by tourists. Across the Great Glen, east to the rolling uplands, west to rugged massifs and sweeping interlocking peaks mostly outwith Study area	A87 Viewpoint, possibly nearby Heritage Trail at Daingean	Marked on OS. Opportunity for motorists to take in the panoramic views of the Great Glen and Western hills with L Garry in the middle-ground looking like a map of Scotland	21- Broad Forested Strath 13- Interlocking Sweeping Peaks 4 - Smooth Moorland Ridges 6 - Rolling Uplands
A887T Views west	Not a 'point view' but a corridor from which the sequence of westward views forms a significant transitional experience which cannot be pinpointed to one 'Gateway location'.	A887T Views west from points west of Achlain	Important to the experience in transition in scale and character of landscape across the watershed	5- Rugged Massif 2 - Wooded Glen 10- Rocky Moorland Plateau

5.2.2 Key Routes

Route Name/ Number	LCAs passed through/Bordered	Receptors
A82 T	Broad Steep Sided Glen	Local residents People from wider highland area Tourists
B862 Stratherrick	Broad Steep Sided Glen Farmed and Wooded Foothills Rolling Uplands Farmed Straths Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland	Local Residents Recreational users from wider highland area Tourists
B851 Strathnairn and Loch Ness side	Farmed Straths	Local Residents Recreational users from wider highland area Tourists
A9 T	Rolling Uplands Farmed Straths Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland Rolling Farmland and Woodland	Local residents People from wider highland area Tourists
A833 Glen Convinth	Wooded Glens Rocky Moorland Plateau Rocky moorland plateau with Woodland	Local Residents Recreational users from wider highland area Tourists
A831 Glen Urquhart	Broad Steep-sided Glen Wooded Glens	Local Residents Recreational users from wider highland area Tourists
A887 T Glen Moriston	Broad Steep-sided Glen Wooded Glens	Local Residents Recreational users from wider highland area Tourists
A87 T above Loch Garry	Rocky Moorland Broad Forested Strath	Local Residents Recreational users from wider highland area Tourists
B861 Tombreck-Inverness	Farmed Straths Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland Rolling Farmland and Woodland	Local Residents Recreational users from wider highland area
B852-South Loch Ness shore	Broad Steep-sided Glen Farmed and Wooded foothills	Local Residents Recreational users from wider highland area Tourists
Dunain-Blackfold-Abriachan	Rolling Farmland and Woodland Rocky Moorland Plateau with Woodland Broad Steepsided Glen	Local Residents Recreational users from wider highland area Tourists

Minor Road - Caiplich (UC1072)	Broad Steep Sided Glen Rocky Moorland Plateau with Woodland	Local Residents
Minor Road - Bunloit	Broad Steep-sided Glen	Local Residents Recreational users from wider highland area Tourists
Great Glen Way	Broad Steep Sided Glen Rocky Moorland Plateau Rocky Moorland Plateau with Woodland	Recreational users
Great Glen Canoe Trail (closer to shores than routes used by larger and commercial craft)	Inland Loch with some portage over Broad Steep Sided Glen LCT	Recreational users
Caledonian Canal and lochs - Open water	Inland Loch Broad Steep Sided Glen LCT	Recreational users

Loch Ness Key Routes Map



5.2.3 Landscape Character Area 1

LN1: Glen Urquhart, Wooded Glen

<table>
<tr><td>Description of Landscape Role</td><td colspan="2">The glen forms the corridor by which the A831 enters and exits the Great Glen, allowing people to move between Strathglass and Loch Ness. The glen becomes narrower and steeper sided as it descends towards Loch Ness, limiting outward views and contributing to the sense of arrival on reaching the broad, steep-sided glen LCA and the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td colspan="2">The LCA is not visible from the bulk of the Great Glen, the boundary with the broad, steep-sided glen LCA may form part of the backdrop to views of Urquhart Castle from Loch Ness.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td colspan="2">• A831 Glen Urquhart from Milton to Bearnock/Braefield - Visibility is restricted to the interior of the glen, where wooded slopes are seen across the narrow cultivated glen floor.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td colspan="2">The glen forms a transitional corridor, contributing to a gateway sense of arrival at Drumnadrochit, where the landform opens out to the broad, steep-sided glen LCA and the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td colspan="2">The landscape is heavily influenced by human activity and habitation. Woodland in the glen creates spaces of human scale and an intimate small scale landscape.
The landscape is also sensitive to development in adjacent LCAs where turbines close to the boundary may compromise the perceived scale of the landscape and, if occupying opposing sites above the LCA, may create an adverse effect of appearing to surround and overwhelm the space.
<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4, 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale WFs</th><th>Small individual</th><th>Access infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>3</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity</td><td>Residents of immediate locality
People at Key Viewpoints
Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium</td><td>Residents of wider region
People using Key Routes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lower</td><td>Users of other routes
People engaged on work</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td colspan="2">Access track for Bhlaraidh Wind Farm</td></tr>
</table>

Potential for wind energy development	No scope for Large or Medium turbines, singly or in groups. Scope for: • Micro and small scale turbines strongly associated with existing buildings/land use, therefore avoiding higher ground. • typical appropriate group size:- up to 3 • Well sited access track development which exploits existing routes on glen slopes.

5.2.4 Landscape Character Area 2

LN2: Glen Moriston, Wooded Glen

Description of Landscape Role	The glen forms the corridor by which the A887T enters and exits the Great Glen, ultimately connecting the east and west coasts. The glen is sparsely populated.	
Key Views	*A887T Views west*	
Key Routes	*A887T Glen Moriston* -Visibility is restricted to the interior of the glen, where wooded slopes are seen across the narrow cultivated glen floor.	
Gateways	Transitional corridor between A887 and A7 at Bun Loyne Junction and Achlain: Not a 'point view' but a corridor from which the sequence of westward views forms a significant transitional experience which cannot be pinpointed to one 'Gateway location'.	
Landscape Sensitivity	**1. The lower reaches of the glen:** east of Torgyle Bridge landscape is heavily influenced by human activity and habitation. Woodland in the glen creates spaces of human scale and an intimate small scale landscape.	

Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity Scale of 1-4, 1 being most susceptible to change		
Large Scale Wind Farms	Small individual	Access infrastructure
1	3	3

2. Upper reaches west of Torgyle Bridge: more open and the cultivated and inhabited character drops away giving a perception of larger scale landscapes and vaster distances.

Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity Scale of 1-4, 1 being most susceptible to change		
Large Scale Wind Farms	Small individual	Access infrastructure
1	2	3

Sensitive Visual Receptors	Highest Sensitivity	• Residents of immediate locality (the majority of properties on the Tomcrasky road approximately half a kilometre north of the A887T or east of Torgyle Bridge).

		• People at Key Viewpoints • Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers
	Medium	• Residents of wider region • People using Key Routes
	Lower	• Users of other routes • People engaged on work
Current Wind Energy Development	Beinneun Wind Farm access, existing visibility of turbines in *Rugged Massif/Rocky Moorland Landscape* south of LCA.	
Potential for wind energy development	No scope for Large or Medium turbines, singly or in groups. Scope for: • Micro and small scale turbines strongly associated with existing buildings/land use, therefore avoiding higher ground. • typical appropriate group size:- up to 3 • Well sited access track development which exploits existing routes on glen slopes.	

5.2.5 Landscape Character Area 3

5.35 Please note, a small part of LN 3 was included for practical purposes but is not representative of the landscape character area as a whole and largely falls into different viewsheds and therefore an appraisal was not carried out.

5.2.6 Landscape Character Area 4

LN4: South east side of Great Glen south of Loch Oich, Smooth Moorland Ridges.

Description of Landscape Role	Area forms a transition from study area south to the rest of the Great Glen. Seen as part of layered landscape to south-east when seen from A87/ ridge to north of Loch Garry.
Key Views	• May form part of backdrop in *Loch Ness West* • Part of views down the Great Glen from Meall Fuar-mhonaidh
Key Routes	• A87 above Loch Garry - LCA Seen as part of layered landscape to south-east when seen from A87/ ridge to north of Loch Garry. • A82 T Great Glen around Loch Oich, Broad Forested Strath.- LCA viewed from glen floor at 90 degrees to direction of travel. Roadside trees generally limit views for travellers.
Gateways	N/A
Landscape Sensitivity	Partially covered by Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA, with intervisibility with Loch Ness SLA. Important to the integrity of the form of the Great Glen.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="3"><table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4, 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small individual</th><th>Access infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>2

(due to potential effect on perceived integrity of Great Glen)</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity</td><td>Residents of immediate locality

People at Key Viewpoints

Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium</td><td>Residents of wider region,

People using Key Routes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lower</td><td>Users of other routes

People engaged on work</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td colspan="2">No consents</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for wind energy development</td><td colspan="2">No scope for Large or Medium turbines, singly or in groups.

Scope for:

• Micro and small scale turbines strongly associated with existing buildings/land use, therefore avoiding higher ground.

◦ typical appropriate group size:- up to 3

• Well sited access track development which exploits existing routes on glen slopes
• The boundaries between Smooth Moorland Ridges and Rolling Uplands LCA6 are not clear on the ground. There may be scope for continuation of the development pattern appropriate to the Rolling Uplands in the boundary area which lies within the Study Area.</td></tr>
</table>

5.2.7 Landscape Character Area 5

LN5: Ridge between Fort Augustus and Glen Moriston, including Beinn Loinne and slopes above Tomcrasky, Rugged Massif.

<table>
<tr><td>Description of Landscape Role</td><td colspan="2">The section of the LCA within the Study Area is the eastern spur, running between Glen Moriston and the Great Glen, of a much larger extent of the LCT which extends west onto Skye and north to Strathfarrar. The spur forms the northern edge of the Great Glen above the southern end of Loch Ness and Fort Augustus.

The area contributes to a perception of vast scale and distance in the landscape and provides a visual link to the wilder landscape characters further to the west.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td colspan="2">• Great Glen from Meall Fuar-mhonaidh (defines the north edge of the glen in views west).
• Loch Tarff, 'Local Hero' location (forms part of middle distance leading to Sweeping Interlocking Peaks).
• Loch Ness West (defines north edge of Great Glen).</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td colspan="2">• A887-Glen Moriston
• A87 - above Loch Loyne
• A82 - Aberchalder/Ft Augustus
• B862 - Loch Tarff and west</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td colspan="2">A87 - above Loch Loyne</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Value and Sensitivity</td><td colspan="2">The LCA runs from the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA to the Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA, though most of the LCA within the study area is not designated. Much of the wider Landscape Character Type (LCT) is covered by NSA and SLA designation and further development within the Study Area portion of the LCA is likely to be highly visible from popular peaks within the designations.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4, 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small individual</th><th>Access infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity</td><td>Residents of immediate locality

People at Key Viewpoints

Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium</td><td>Residents of wider region,

People using Key Routes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lower</td><td>Users of other routes</td></tr>
</table>

		People engaged on work
Current Wind Energy Development	Beinneun/Millennium Wind Farms cluster forms around the boundary between Rugged Massif and Rocky Moorland, mostly on south facing slopes with some west facing. Development occupies elevated sites above key routes through glens	
Potential for wind energy development	Some scope for limited additional development at scale of existing schemes, where it can be shown to improve the visual relationship of existing schemes, and where existing access infrastructure can be shared.	

5.2.8 Landscape Character Area 6

LN6: Monadhliath ridge and tops, Rolling Uplands.

Description of Landscape Role	The most extensive landscape in the Study Area. External views are mostly from elevated viewpoints north of Loch Ness where it presents a multi-layered receding landscape, giving an impression of vast extent. From within LCA itself views are varied in character according to elevation.
Key Views	• *Loch Ness West* (Most of LCA is obscured by intervening LCAs and topography, but southern end sweeps down to meet *the Broad, Steep Sided Glen LCA* and frames the central portion of long views). • *Great Glen from Meall Fuar-mhonaidh* (Forms a sweeping receding landscape to the south).
Key Routes	• B862 Stratherrick- much of the LCA is screened from the road by landform, but there is potential for development located on slopes above LCA15 Farmed Straths or on the plateau beyond to have prominence to the south of the road. • A9 - The road passes through the LCA in the north of the study area giving some views towards existing developments, and long views of development in the LCA are received outwith the study area, travelling south from Tore. Additional development may be seen in association with existing development
Gateways	N/A
Landscape Sensitivity	LCA is generally visible from either within the LCA or from more distant elevated vantage points. The height of existing schemes means that development on the ground may be visible where the ground level itself is not, making distinctions between developments indistinct. Therefore, maintaining space between the developments is important to prevent coalescence. Although the LCA is large, it forms a strong contrast to the Rugged and Rocky LCTs which oppose it across the Great Glen. That contrast has a value, which should be protected by ensuring that wind energy development on the elevated ground on both sides of the Great Glen remains inferior in scale and extent to the landscape character and does not diminish their apparent distinctiveness or the effect of the Great Glen as a great natural boundary. Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2"><table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Scale of 1-4, 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small individual</th><th>Access infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>2-3

Generally the LCT has a lower sensitivity, this LCA is rated higher in recognition of existing density of development.</td><td>1</td><td>3 from east side

2 from west side</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity</td><td>People at Key Viewpoints Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium</td><td>Residents of wider region

People using Key Routes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lower</td><td>Users of other routes

People engaged on work</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td colspan="2">Development consists broadly of:
• large windfarms set 2.5-3km back from Rolling Uplands Boundary with Farmed Straths LCAs.
• Generally the layout is deeper in the axis perpendicular to the Great Glen than the parallel axis.
• Tend to be contained within shallow 'bowls' in the landscape which are visible from within the LCA but not in more distant views
• Earlier developments appear at a regular spacing of 7-10km edge to edge. More recent applications/scoping reduce this spacing.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for wind energy development</td><td colspan="2">No scope for small or medium turbines

Limited scope for

• Micro turbines where closely associated with buildings
• additional Large turbines within the existing pattern

Turbines should:

• not breach skyline when viewed from north side of Loch Ness.
• Be set back from Key Routes
• Preserve mitigation established by current schemes
• Maintain the landscape setting of each existing scheme.
• Avoid coalescence with current positioning
• respect spacing and scale of existing development pattern.

Development of turbines (all scales) in other locations within the LCA should be avoided to ensure that the scale of the landform is maintained and that perspective - when viewed across the loch in particular - is not adversely affected.</td></tr>
</table>

5.2.9 Landscape Character Area 7

LN7: Inverness hinterland and south slopes of Beauly Firth, Rolling Farmland and Woodland.

<table>
<tr><td>Description of Landscape Role</td><td colspan="3">Setting of Inverness

Indicative of productivity of land and historic wealth</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td colspan="3">• Loch Ness East
• Urquhart Castle Land based
• Loch Ness from Urquhart Castle
In the Key Views the LCA itself is not clearly distinguished, being distant and not physically prominent, however large scale turbines located in the LCA between Inverness and the Great Glen would tend to become focal in these views.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td colspan="3">• A9- views across LCA to Inverness, Black Isle and The Aird. Strong sense of arrival in settled landscape after the less populated and cultivated landscapes of the A9 route south of Inverness.
• B861 Tombreck-Inverness- route passes through LCA between LCA14 Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland, and Inverness.
• Dunain - Blackfold - Abriachan: minor road, forming part of The Great Glen Way, long distance route. Partly within LCA but mostly within LCA8, Rocky Moorland Plateau with Woodland. Travelling east, the LCA forms the setting for Inverness.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td colspan="3">A9 at Inshes: Sense of arrival at Inner Moray Firth and Inverness.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Value and Sensitivity</td><td colspan="3"><table><tr><td colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4, 1 being most susceptible to change</td></tr><tr><td>Large Scale Wind Farms</td><td>Small individual</td><td>Access infrastructure</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity</td><td colspan="2">Residents of immediate locality

People at Key Viewpoints

Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium</td><td colspan="2">Residents of wider region,

People using Key Routes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lower</td><td colspan="2">Users of other routes

People engaged on work</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td colspan="3">none</td></tr>
</table>

Potential for wind energy development	No scope for Medium or Large turbines Some scope for turbines at following scale: • Micro- typical appropriate group size -single • Small - typical appropriate group size -single Turbines should be: • associated with buildings • Set back from Key Routes

5.2.10 Landscape Character Area 8

LN8: Glen Convinth, Rocky Moorland Plateau with Woodland

Description of Landscape Role	Provides enclosure and definition to Great Glen. The LCA is transitional, carrying one from the space around Inverness or above the Great Glen to Strathglass and Beauly area, moving from one space to another. A place in its own right but distinctly dividing other landscapes.
Key Views	• Loch Ness East • Urquhart Castle Land based • Loch Ness from Urquhart Castle From these views only the areas of the LCA which border the *Broad Steep Sided Glen LCA* are themselves prominent, but large scale development further into the interior of the LCA may affect these views. • Great Glen from Meall Fuar-mhonaidh Any development in the LCA would be visible in this area, though not necessarily impinge on the principle directions of view.
Key Routes	• A833 Glen Convinth - views within Study Area limited • Dunain - Blackfold - Abriachan/Great Glen Way- views towards Loch ness and Inverness • Minor Road - Caiplich- links A883 and A82 giving views to both sides of the Aird ridge.
Gateways	Abriachan- marks approximate transition of the higher ground of the Aird to the Great Glen when traveling south-east. Moniack Mhor - locally significant gateway area where views open out towards Beauly strath.
Landscape Value and Sensitivity	The LCA provides a valued break in development between Fairburn Wind Farm and the cluster in the Rolling Uplands of the Monadhliath. This respite is of particular value to the Great Glen Way where it helps to prevent a sense of encirclement by development in the areas which experience views across the watershed towards the Beauly Firth as well as the Great Glen.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="3">Commercial woodland is a key feature in this LCA at present and is represented in broad swathes. Development of the type which has previously been proposed would change the character of the woodland with keyholing and oversailing the plantation with turbines, adding an additional layer of complexity to the landscape.

<table><tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4, 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr><tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small individual</th><th>Access infrastructure</th></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2-3</td><td>3</td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity</td><td colspan="2">People at Key Viewpoints

Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium</td><td colspan="2">Residents of wider region

People using Key Routes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lower</td><td colspan="2">Users of other routes

People engaged on work</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td colspan="3">None</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for wind energy development</td><td colspan="3">No scope for medium or large scale turbines.

Some scope for turbines at following scale:

• Micro- typical appropriate group size -single
• Small - typical appropriate group size -single

Turbines should be:

• associated with buildings
• Set back from Key Routes
• Clear of higher ground
• Clear of boundary areas with the Broad Steep Sided Glen LCA, particularly in locations where development would impinge on the Key Views.</td></tr>
</table>

5.2.11 Landscape Character Area 9

LN9: Eskdale Muir through to Meall na h-Eilrig (hill above Drumnadrochit), to the north, Rocky Moorland Plateau.

Description of Landscape Role	Road through gives an intense burst of wilderness experience and some fine elevated views towards other LCTs which seem vast and distant.
Key Views	• *Loch Ness from Urquhart Castle*

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">Only in areas east of the A833 would development be likely to impinge directly in the key view.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td colspan="2">• A833 Glen Convinth -views across plateau, mostly towards north.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Value and Sensitivity</td><td colspan="2">Part of LCA is more settled and influenced by visibility from road, which affects sensitivity.
<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4, 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small individual</th><th>Access infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>3 for LCT, 2 for LCA a due to settlement, road access and higher sensitivity of neighbouring types.</td><td>2-3</td><td>3</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity</td><td>People at Key Viewpoints
Visitors/tourists including
cyclists and walkers
Residents within the LCA</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium</td><td>Residents of wider region
People using Key Routes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lower</td><td>Users of other routes
People engaged on work</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td colspan="2">None</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for wind energy development</td><td colspan="2">No scope for medium or Large Scale Turbines
Some scope for turbines at following scale:
• Micro- typical appropriate group size -single
• Small - typical appropriate group size -single
Turbines should be:
• associated with buildings
• Set back from Key Routes
• Clear of higher ground
• Limited to west of A833</td></tr>
</table>

5.2.12 Landscape Character Area 10

LN10: Separation of Glen Urquhart and Glen Moriston, Rocky Moorland Plateau.

<table>
<tr><td>Description of Landscape Role</td><td colspan="3">No roads through, views from distance or within LCA on foot. Provides middle ground foil to Rugged Massif in views from Meall Fuar-mhonaidh.

Adds a sense of vastness to perceptions of distance.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td colspan="3">• Urquhart Castle from Loch
• Urquhart Castle Land based
• Loch Ness West
• Loch Ness East

From these views only the areas of the LCA which border the Broad Steep Sided Glen LCA are themselves prominent, but large scale development further into the interior of the LCA may affect these views.

• Great Glen from Meall Fuar-mhonaidh

Any development in the LCA would be visible in this area, though not necessarily impinge on the principle directions of view.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td colspan="3">• Great Glen Way- around Bunloit and Grotaig the route has views into the LCA
• A82 around Inver Coille to Invermoriston
• A887 around Dundreggan</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td colspan="3">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td colspan="3">Most of the Landscape Character Area lies outside the SLA designation, Meall Fuar-mhonaidh itself is included and is an attraction in its own right, and affords views of SLA and wider area. The experience of the landscape from the summit of Meall Fuar-Mhonaidh would be degraded if there were a perception of the peak being encircled by development.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4, 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small individual</th><th>Access infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity</td><td>People at Key Viewpoints

Visitors/tourists including

cyclists and walkers</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium</td><td>Residents within the LCA and wider region

People using Key Routes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lower</td><td>Users of other routes</td></tr>
</table>

		People engaged on work
Current Wind Energy Development	Within Study Area: Bhlaraidh Wind Farm	
	Outwith Study Area: Corrymony Wind Farm	
	While there is a concentration of development forming in this area, there is no clear pattern, beyond presence within the Plateau area. Developments vary in scale of turbines and extent of individual development.	
Potential for wind energy development	No scope for small or medium turbines Limited scope for • Micro turbines where closely associated with buildings • additional Large turbines within the existing pattern Turbines should: • Be set back from Key Routes • Preserve mitigation established by current schemes • Maintain the landscape setting of each existing scheme. • respect spacing and scale of existing development pattern. • minimise visual confusion from higher ground to the west and north and with Meall Fuar-mhonaidh	

5.2.13 Landscape Character Areas 11 & 12

LN11: Rocky Moorland, High ground around north and west of Glen Garry.

LN12: Rocky Moorland, Small area above Loch Oich to south.

Description of Landscape Role	Not prominent in the landscape but providing a transition between Rugged Massif and Smooth Moorland types. Its elevated position mean turbines located here may be visible even when their bases are not.
Key Views	• *Loch Ness West* • *Great Glen from Meall Fuar-mhonaidh* • *Loch Tarff, 'Local Hero' location* While the LCA does not form a prominent feature in the Key Views, large scale development based within the LCA may do so.
Key Routes	• A87- between Loch Loyne and Loch Garry • A887-Glen Moriston. While the LCA5 itself is not visible, development on the boundary ridge with the adjacent LCA5, Rugged Massif would potentially be. • A82-locally

<table>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td colspan="3">A87 - above Loch Loyne</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td colspan="3">The LCA is important to the setting of Loch Garry and its interaction with other LCTs. The area between Loch Ness and Loch Lochy is significant in the transition of landscape character experienced when moving along the Great Glen.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4, 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small individual</th><th>Access infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>LCA11</td><td>2

(The LCT sensitivity would be relatively low due to its large scale and simplicity. The LCA is more sensitive due to existing levels of development).</td><td>1</td><td>3</td></tr>
<tr><td>LCA12</td><td>1</td><td>2-3</td><td>2</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity</td><td colspan="2">People at Key Viewpoints

Visitors/tourists including

cyclists and walkers</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium</td><td colspan="2">Residents within the LCA and wider region

People using Key Routes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lower</td><td colspan="2">Users of other routes

People engaged on work</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td colspan="3">Developments cluster around the boundary between Rugged Massif and Rocky Moorland, mostly on south facing slopes with some west facing.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for wind energy development</td><td colspan="3">Some scope for limited additional development at scale of existing schemes, where it can be shown to improve the visual relationship of existing schemes, and where existing access infrastructure can be shared.</td></tr>
</table>

5.2.14 Landscape Character Area 13

LN13: Sweeping Interlocking Peaks, Hills forming enclosure to north of Loch Lochy

<table>
<tr><td>Description of Landscape Role</td><td colspan="3">While this LCA is seen most impressively from further west on the A82 as the hills sweep down to the shore of Loch Lochy, they are also significant in layered views into the west from elevated locations in the west of the study area.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td colspan="3">• Loch Tarff, 'Local Hero' location
• Great Glen from Meall Fuar-mhonaidh
• A87 Viewpoint above Loch Garry

The LCA forms a moderately prominent feature within wide panoramas in the Key Views.

Large scale development based within the LCA may become a focus in views and detract from the role the LCA plays in the wider landscape composition.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td colspan="3">• B862- Loch Tarff, and
• A87 above Loch Garry

See Key Views</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td colspan="3">A87 - above Loch Loyne</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td colspan="3">The mountains above Loch Lochy are key to the Special Qualities identified for the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA. And form part of the closure of long views west along Loch Ness.

<table><tr><td colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4, 1 being most susceptible to change</td></tr><tr><td>Large Scale Wind Farms</td><td>Small individual</td><td>Access infrastructure</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity</td><td>People at Key Viewpoints

Visitors/tourists including

cyclists and walkers

People using Key Routes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium</td><td>Residents within wider region,</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lower</td><td>Users of other routes

People engaged on work</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td colspan="2">None</td></tr>
</table>

Potential for wind energy development	No scope for development

5.2.15 Landscape Character Area 14

LN14: Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland, Lochashie, Drummossie and Carr Ban

Description of Landscape Role	Interspersed with small local roads the LCA is important to the perception of Inverness's location at the edge of a vaster, wilder landscape. Seen from elevated locations north of Loch Ness the LCA forms part of the layered landscape which rises from the loch to the Monadhliaths.	
Key Views	• *Loch Ness East* • *Urquhart Castle Land based* • *Loch Ness from Urquhart Castle* • *Great Glen from Meall Fuar-mhonaidh*	
Key Routes	• B862 Stratherrick - borders western edge at Loch Duntelchaig • A9 - cuts through LCA briefly at Drummosie • B861 Tombreck-Inverness	
Gateways	N/A	
Landscape Sensitivity	Views of the LCA from outside its boundaries largely occur from elevated plateau LCAs across the Great Glen and from Inverness. Views from Inverness largely encompass the area of the LCA which is outside the SLA boundary.	
Sensitive Visual Receptors	Highest Sensitivity	Residents within the LCA People at Key Viewpoints Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers People using Key Routes
	Medium	Residents within wider region People viewing LCA from elevated Plateau Landscape areas across the Loch
	Lower	Users of other routes People engaged on work
Current Wind Energy Development	Smaller developments:	

Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity Scale of 1-4, 1 being most susceptible to change		
Large Scale Wind Farms	Small individual	Access infrastructure
2	3	2

	Easterton of Duntelchaig. No pattern established.
Potential for wind energy development	No scope for medium or large scale turbines. Some scope for turbines at following scale: • Micro- typical appropriate group size -single • Small - typical appropriate group size -single Turbines should be: • associated with buildings • Set back from Key Routes • Clear of higher ground • Clear of boundary areas with the *Broad Steep Sided Glen LCA*, particularly in locations where development would impinge on the Key Views. • Turbines should not breach interim horizons when seen from key view locations.

5.2.16 Landscape Character Area 15

LN15: Farmed Straths, Strath Errick and Strath Nairn

Description of Landscape Role	The Strath character becomes more pronounced to the north east as the strath narrows and deepens and the contrast between the more intense habitation and agriculture with the moorland surrounding moorland and uplands is stronger. The deeper Strath strongly divides the surrounding LCAs while the broader upper strath provides a more subtle transition.
Key Views	While the views within the strath are of value, the LCA does not play a role in the Key Views previously identified.
Key Routes	• B862 Stratherrick- linear route aligned with and running length of strath, • B851 Strathnairn- linear route aligned with and running length of strath • A9 -Moy/Daviot - crosses Strathnairn
Gateways	N/A
Landscape Sensitivity	The Landscape is mostly small in scale with views contained by the landforms. Land use is intimate in scale.

Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity Scale of 1-4, 1 being most susceptible to change		
Large Scale Wind Farms	Small individual	Access infrastructure

	1 | 3-4 | 2-3	
Sensitive Visual Receptors	Highest Sensitivity	Residents within LCA Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers People using Key Routes
	Medium	Residents within wider region
	Lower	Users of other routes People engaged on work
Current Wind Energy Development	Large Windfarm access tracks for: • Dunmaglass Wind Farm • Dell Wind Farm • Corriegarth Wind Farm Small Category: • Craggie Farm	
Potential for wind energy development	No scope for medium or large scale turbines. Some scope for turbines at following scale: • Micro- typical appropriate group size -single • Small - typical appropriate group size -single Turbines should be: • associated with buildings • Set back from Key Routes • Clear of higher ground • Turbines should not breach interim horizons when seen from key view locations. Access Tracks should: • avoid open slopes • share existing infrastructure where possible.	

5.2.17 Landscape Character Areas 16 & 17

LN16: Farmed and Wooded Foothills, Loch Tarff to Loch Duntelchaig

LN17: Farmed and Wooded Foothills, sliver on the north shore of Duntelchaig

Description of Landscape Role	Part of SLA

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">Lying above the Broad Steep Sided Glen and below the Rolling Uplands the LCA plays a key role in perception of scale and distance in the landscape. It is seen as a skyline from the Loch shore level and as the middle ground of a complex layered landscape when perceived from plateau locations across the Great Glen.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td colspan="2">• Urquhart Castle Land based
• Loch Tarff, 'Local Hero' location
• Loch Ness West
• Loch Ness East
• Urquhart Castle Land Based
• Loch Ness from Urquhart Castle
Lying between the Broad, steep-sided Glen LCA and the Rolling Uplands LCA (though separated by the lower lying Farmed Strath LCA), the area forms a significant part of the enclosure of Loch Ness and the Great Glen to the south side.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td colspan="2">• B852 - Above Foyers -views within LCA
• B851 - Charleston to Kindrummond - views within LCA
• Dunain - Blackfold - Abriachan - elevated views across loch showling LCA as part of layered landscape rising from Loch to Monadhliaths.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td colspan="2">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td colspan="2">The location of this LCA between the higher ground of the Rolling Uplands and the steep sides of the Great Glen means it can be seen in a range of contrasting relationships to other landscape characters, limiting its ability to absorb development.
<table><tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4, 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr><tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small individual</th><th>Access infrastructure</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>3-4</td><td>1</td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity</td><td>People at Key Viewpoints
Visitors/tourists including
cyclists and walkers , Users of the Great Glen Way
People using Key Routes
Residents within the LCA</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium</td><td>Residents of Plateau level LCAs across the Great Glen
Residents within the wider region</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lower</td><td>Users of other routes
People engaged on work</td></tr>
</table>

Current Wind Energy Development	Category Small: • Dalcrombie • NE Of Lodge Dores
Potential for wind energy development	No scope for medium or large scale turbines. Some scope for turbines at following scale: • Micro- typical appropriate group size -single • Small - typical appropriate group size -single Turbines should be: • associated with buildings • Set back from Key Routes • Clear of higher ground • Turbines should not breach interim horizons when seen from key view locations.

5.2.18 Landscape Character Area 18

LN18: Enclosed Farmland, The Aird

<table>
<tr><td>Description of Landscape Role</td><td colspan="2">Almost entirely outside study area, but is surrounded on three sides by the Rocky Moorland Plateau with Woodland. West facing slopes allow views over Glen Convinth and towards crofting settlements in the Beauly river strath.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td colspan="2">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td colspan="2">• Minor Road - Caiplich
• A833 Glen Convinth
The routes effectively define the eastern and western extents of the LCA within the Study Area.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td colspan="2">Moniak Mhor - locally significant gateway area where views open out towards Beauly strath.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td colspan="2">Setting of Beauly and dispersed communities inland and to the coast.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4, 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><td>Large Scale Wind Farms</td><td>Small individual</td><td>Access infrastructure</td></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>3</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity</td><td>Residents within the LCA

Visitors/tourists including

cyclists and walkers

People using Key Routes</td></tr>
</table>

	Medium	Residents within the wider region
	Lower	Users of other routes People engaged on work
Current Wind Energy Development	None	
Potential for wind energy development	No scope for medium or large scale turbines. Some scope for turbines at following scale: • Micro- typical appropriate group size -single • Small - typical appropriate group size -single Turbines should be: • associated with buildings • Set back from Key Routes • Clear of higher ground	

5.2.19 Landscape Character Area 19

LN19: Area directly around Loch Ness, Broad Steep-Sided Glen.

Description of Landscape Role	Area directly around Loch Ness and Settled areas at the mouths of the glens Urquhart and Moriston and the area between Fort Augustus and Loch Oich. Part of SLA and provides the immediate setting of Loch Ness and Urquhart Castle. This is the LCA from which most people travelling through the Great Glen will experience the surrounding LCAs.
Key Views	• *Loch Ness West* • *Loch Ness East* • *Urquhart Castle from Loch Ness* • *Urquhart Castle land based* • *Loch Ness from Urquhart Castle* These views are all available from locations within the LCA, therefore it is essential to their composition and appreciation. • Great Glen from Meall Fuar-mhonaidh • A87 Viewpoint above Loch Garry The LCA forms part of the wider, complex scenery from these locations and is important to their integrity.
Key Routes	• A82 T- linear route aligned with loch and glen side slopes • B862 Ashie Moor-Scaniport • A831 Glen Urquhart - views of entrance to glen from the west and across glen

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>

A887T Glen Moriston - views of entrance to glen from the west and across glen
B852- South Loch Ness shore - primarily views across loch to northern side, but also close views of south side
Dunain - Blackfold - Abriachan - elevated views across Great Glen to southern side
Minor Road - Caiplich- elevated views across Great Glen to southern side
Great Glen Way - views from variety of elevations along northern side of glen.

</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>

Loch Dochfour - marking transition between lochside landscapes and LCA7, Rolling Farmland and Woodland.
Drumnadrochit - marking transition from LCA1 Wooded Glen, to Broad Wooded Glen
Invermoriston - marking transition from LCA2 Wooded Glen, to Broad Wooded Glen
Fort Augustus - arrival at Loch Ness from south
Dores - arrival at Loch Ness from Inverness hinterland
Invergarry - transition into great glen from Glen Garry

</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>The LCA forms the heart of the SLA and is the essential setting of Loch Ness and the principle settlements around the Loch.
<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4, 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small individual</th><th>Access infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity</td><td>Residents within the LCA
People at Key Viewpoints
Visitors/tourists including
cyclists and walkers and boat users
People using Key Routes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium</td><td>Residents wider region</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lower</td><td>Users of other routes
People engaged on work</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>Category Small:

Drummond, Dores

</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for wind energy development</td><td>No scope for medium or large scale turbines.
Very Limited scope for

turbines at following scale:

</td></tr>
</table>

	• Micro- typical appropriate group size -single • Small - typical appropriate group size -single Turbines should be: • associated with buildings • Set back from Key Routes • not impinge on Key Views

5.2.20 Landscape Character Area 20

LN20: Great Glen around Loch Oich, Broad Forested Strath.

<table>
<tr><td>Description of Landscape Role</td><td colspan="3">Setting of Loch Garry

Middle ground of panoramic views experienced to west from A87</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td colspan="3">• Great Glen from Meall Fuar-mhonaidh

Forms part of the wider setting in views of the chain of Lochs west down the Great Glen.

• A87 Viewpoint above Loch Garry

The viewpoint allows people to look down towards Loch Garry and appreciate its resemblance from this angle to a map of Scotland. The Loch is the key focus of the view.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td colspan="3">• A82 (T) between Laggan and Aberchalder - views may be limited by roadside vegetation.
• A87 above Loch Garry</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td colspan="3">• A87 - above Loch Loyne
• Invergarry - transition into great glen from Glen Garry</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td colspan="3">The LCA is important to the setting of Loch Garry and its interaction with other LCTs in the area between Loch Ness and Loch Lochy is significant in the transition of landscape character experienced when moving along the Great Glen.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4, 1 being most susceptible to change</td></tr>
<tr><td>Large Scale Wind Farms</td><td>Small individual</td><td>Access infrastructure</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>2-3</td><td>3</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity</td><td colspan="2">Residents within the LCA

People at Key Viewpoints

Visitors/tourists including

cyclists and walkers</td></tr>
</table>

		People using Key Routes
	Medium	Residents within the wider region
	Lower	Users of other routes People engaged on work
Current Wind Energy Development	None	

Potential for wind energy development	No scope for medium or large scale turbines.
	Very Limited scope for
	• turbines at following scale:
	  • Micro- typical appropriate group size -single
	  • Small - typical appropriate group size -single
	Turbines should be:
	  • associated with buildings
	  • Set back from Key Routes
	  • not impinge on Key Views	

6 Glossary

Beag-fhaclair

- **Cluster-** One or more wind energy developments comprising more than one turbine that form a coherent strategic grouping within a landscape.
- **CPP-** Carbon Rich Soil, Deep Peat and Priority Peatland Habitat.
- **Cumulative Impact-** Changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other developments (not just similar developments) or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together. This includes proposals that have been permitted as well as those that have been submitted and are waiting to be determined.
- **Density**
    - **Turbine density** - typical spacing of turbines within a single development,
    - **Wind Farm Density -** typical spacing of distinct developments within a cluster.
- **SG**- Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance
- **EIA-** Environmental Impact Assessment
- **HwLDP**- Highland-wide Local Development Plan
- **Key Routes-** An important route that captures the essence of an area's particular qualities.
- **Key Views-** An important view that is experienced from a particular location and capture the essence of an area's particular qualities.
- **Landmark-** A prominent or conspicuous landscape feature, building or other place, often visible over distance, that is of historical, aesthetic or cultural significance.
- **Landscape Setting-** How the development or proposed development sits within the wider landscape.
- **Larger-scale wind energy development-** generally turbines of 30m or above to blade tip
- **LCA-** Landscape Character Area= Geographical areas made up of a particular landscape character type.
- **LCT-** Landscape Character Type= Distinct types of landscape homogeneous in character, and generic in nature, that may occur in different areas , but share similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation and historical land use and settlement pattern, and perceptual and aesthetic attributes.
- **Pattern-** Consistent characteristics of siting and design of wind developments within a cluster.
- **Smaller-scale wind energy development-** generally turbines below 30m to blade tip
- **Spatial Framework-** A spatial framework identifies those areas that are likely to be most appropriate for onshore wind farms as a guide for developers and communities. Development proposals should take account of the spatial framework. The spatial framework is to be set out in the Council's development plan. National policy says that when Councils prepare their spatial frameworks, they should follow the approach set out in Table 1 of SPP. This involves identifying: Areas where wind farms will not be acceptable; Areas of significant protection;Areas with potential for wind farm development.

- **Strategic Capacity-** The least constrained areas that may be able to accommodate larger-scale onshore wind energy developments. Scottish Government's description is as follows: "Areas of strategic capacity are essentially Group 3 areas from the spatial framework … where it may be desirable to restrict smaller-scale wind turbines to allow larger wind turbines/farms to come forward … [but such work] should not be used to define individual wind farms as strategic." ('Onshore Wind Some Questions Answered').
- **THC-** The Highland Council
- **Visual Receptor-** individuals or defined groups of people that have the potential to be affected by wind energy developments. The visual impact of one or more wind energy developments can be experienced in succession along routes, as well as from individual locations.

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Iomraidhean

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The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Development and Infrastructure Service

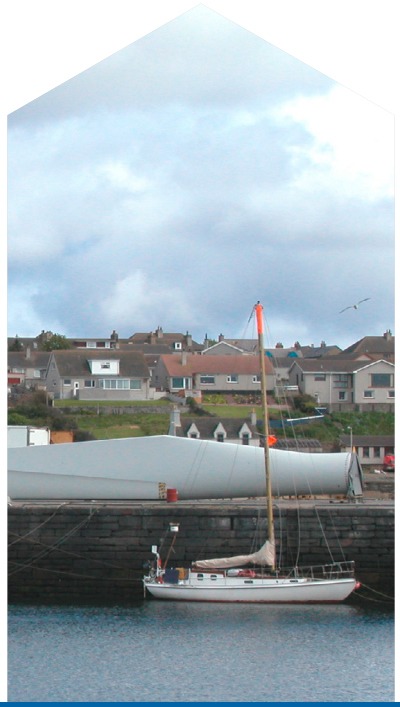
Seirbheis an Leasachaidh agus a' Bhun-structair

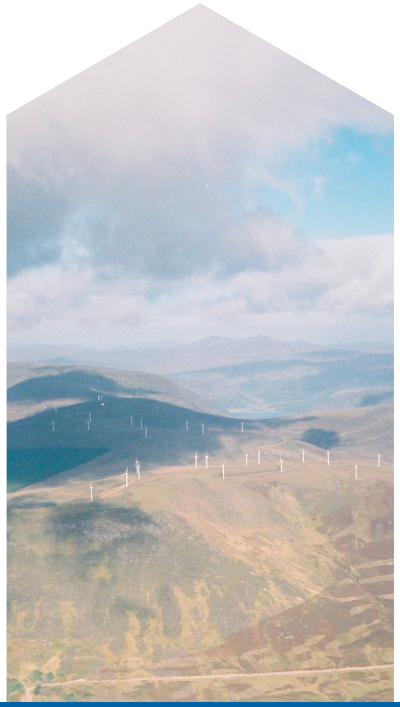
The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal:

Black Isle, Surrounding Hills and Moray Firth Coast Caithness

Addendum Supplementary Guidance: "Part 2B", December 2017 - being part of the Highland Strategic Capacity content of the suite: "Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance, November 2016 (with addendum, December 2017)".





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This document presents two landscape sensitivity appraisals, one for the Black Isle, Surrounding Hills and Moray Firth Coast study area and one for the Caithness study area. It also contains associated strategic capacity conclusions. This document was adopted as Supplementary Guidance to the Highland-wide Local Development Plan in December 2017.

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Black Isle, Surrounding Hills and Moray Firth Coast Strategic Capacity

1.1 The Council has appraised the Black Isle, Surrounding Hills and Moray Firth Coast study area and considered its potential strategic capacity. The appraisal concludes that whilst there may be opportunities for some limited development in the study area, where it takes into account the conclusions for the relevant LCA appraisal, there is no strategic capacity. Scottish Government advice states that "Areas of strategic capacity are essentially Group 3 areas from the spatial framework … where it may be desirable to restrict smaller-scale wind turbines to allow larger wind turbines/farms to come forward … [but such work] should not be used to define individual wind farms as strategic" ('Onshore Wind Some Questions Answered'). The following factors contributed to the conclusion that there is no strategic capacity in the study area:

- multiple overlapping landscape and visual sensitivities identified in the appraisal across the study area;
- a large coverage of Group 2 Spatial Framework features, which includes a lot of settlements with boundaries identified in the Local Development Plan that are important for the strategic growth of the region and where the development of windfarms should not restrict this growth;
- a large amount of the remaining Group 3 areas being located relatively close to residential properties (i.e. settlements and individual properties without an identified boundary in the Local Development Plan);
- a large amount of the remaining Group 3 areas located relatively close to Group 2 features identified for landscape and visual sensitivities/ qualities;
- in some instances, remaining Group 3 areas are within or in proximity to Special Landscape Areas;
- remaining Group 3 areas being fragmented and at the scale of an individual site which guidance on SPP makes clear should not be regarded as strategic capacity.

Black Isle, Surrounding Hills and Moray Firth Coast Landscape Sensitivity

1.2 The following tables set out the results of the landscape sensitivity appraisal for the Black Isle, Surrounding Hills and Moray Firth Coast Study Area.

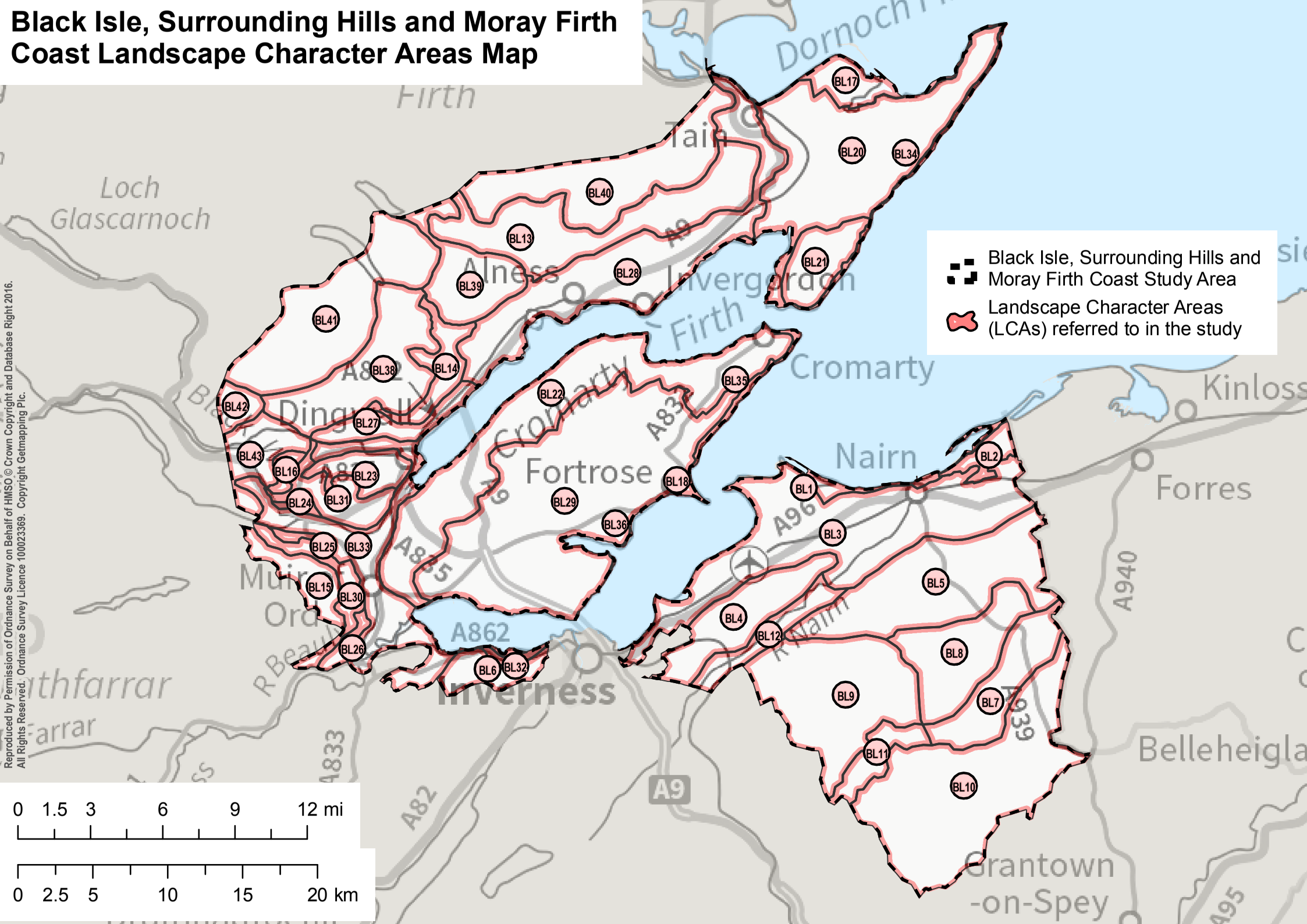
1.3 The Black Isle and Ben Wyvis range serve as important focal points in the Inner Moray Firth region, the most populated area of Highland that includes the City of Inverness. Views from the Ben Wyvis range are extensive across and beyond the study area and not every view is referenced in the study, but it should always be considered. This means that the area is sensitive to development. However the baseline does include a number of schemes that have been permitted, are sometimes in view and form part of the experience of the area. The presence of important landscape features that define the Inner Moray Firth area and relatively easy access for people to enjoy a range of popular locations add to the area's sensitivity to wind energy development. Whilst there is some consented, under construction and operational larger scale development within or near the study area (Moy, Tom nan Clach, Novar, Fairburn, Farr, Glen Kyllachy), development is mainly comprised of smaller scale turbines associated with residential properties and farms.

Summary of key findings from landscape and visual sensitivity appraisal

1.4 The Black Isle, Ben Wyvis range, northern shores of the Cromarty Firth and shores of the Moray Firth inland to Dava are unlikely to be appropriate for large scale development. However, some of these areas may have potential for small and micro-scale development, with several exceptions including the Ben Wyvis range, the sections of the Moray Firth coast along the Fearn Peninsula and south coast of the Black Isle from Chanonry Point east. The north and central parts of the Fearn Peninsula and parts of the foothills rising from the north shores of the Cromarty Firth may have some potential for medium scale development. There may be some limited potential for larger scale development in LCA BL10 where development respects the space and scale of existing development, is well contained and respects the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moor SLA, including its particular sensitivities set out in the SLA citation. There may be some limited potential for larger

scale development in LCA BL40 where development respects horizons, the sense of place of the Moray Firth, the Ben Wyvis SLA and key views, and respects the mitigation of nearby wind farms. There may also be some potential in parts of LCA BL9 where it avoids locations and layouts where Key Characteristics and Special Qualities of the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA are diminished and locations and layouts where turbines would create a prominent focus in the layered landscape perceived from key viewpoints to the north.

Black Isle, Surrounding Hills and Moray Firth Coast Landscape Character Areas Map



Key Views

Key Views

Name	Description	Locations Available	Regional/local importance Value/Significance	LCAs important to the integrity of views
Views From				
Ben Wyvis	Extensive and varied panoramas. Mountain profiles of Wester Ross and Sutherland to the north and west, the indented coastline and settled, fertile lowlands of Easter Ross and the Black Isle to the east, and the distant summits to the south.	Extensive across study area	Regional/SLA- As the only Munro on the eastern seaboard, Ben Wyvis affords expansive, almost aerial views across the region. Views take in panoramas of lochs and distant mountains but also give unique perspective on the settled landscapes of the Black Isle, and Cromarty and Moray Firths. Landscapes which lie between Ben Wyvis, other SLAs and Key Routes will be particularly important to its relationship with its landscpae hinterland.	Including but not limited to: 13, 14, 16 FOREST EDGE FARMING 22, 23 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 27 OPEN STEEPFARMED SLOPES 28, 29 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 38-40 ROUNDED HILLS AND MOORLAND SLOPES 41 ROUNDED MOUNTAIN MASSIF 42 ROUNDED ROCKY HILLS 43 WOODED GLENS AND ROCKY MOORLAND
Chanonry Point	General views of Firth. Specific views to Fort George and towards Sutors.	Chanonry Point	Regional/SLA- Popular tourist site, location on spit allows wide views over water to coastal features. Highly valued for Lighthouse and views of dolphins, porpoise and seals.	1 SOFT COASTAL SHORE 3 COASTAL FARMLAND 18 COASTAL SHELF 21-22 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 29 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 34-37 CLIFFS AND ROCKY COAST

Ft George	General views of Firth. Specific views to Chanonry Point and towards Sutors.	Ft George and approaches	Regional/SLA- Popular tourist site, location on spit allows wide views over water to coastal features. Highly valued for historic barracks location.	1 SOFT COASTAL SHORE 3 COASTAL FARMLAND 18 COASTAL SHELF 21-22 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 29 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 34-37 CLIFFS AND ROCKY COAST
Fyrish Monument	General views of Cromarty Firth and surrounding area including the Sutors within the Sutors of Cromarty, Rosemarkie and Fort George SLA. More distant views west to Ben Wyvis SLA and south to Monadhliaths.	Fyrish Monument	Local/Regional- Views into SLA Elevated, almost aerial views of the firth have rarity as well as scenic value.	21-22 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 27 OPEN STEEP FARMED SLOPES 28-29 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 38-40 ROUNDED HILLS AND MOORLAND SLOPES 41 ROUNDED MOUNTAIN MASSIF
Kessock Bridge	Travelling south: primary views to south and east, - Inner Moray Firth, Alturlie Point, Inverness and slopes rising towards Monadhliaths. Travelling North: primary views to north and west, - Beauly Firth, Craig Phadraig and the Black Isle.	Kessock Bridge	Local- Views primarily incidental to travel. Important for the Sense of Place of Inverness and Inner Moray Firth and helping people orientate themselves in the landscape.	3 COASTAL FARMLAND 6 ROLLING FARMLAND AND FOREST/WOODLAND 18-19 COASTAL SHELF 29 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 33 FARMED RIVER PLAINS 36-37 CLIFFS AND ROCKY COAST
Cromarty Harbour	Water level views from edge of Cromarty Conservation Area. Cromarty Firth generally, views of changing collection of rigs.	Cromarty Harbour and locations with outlook in and around Cromarty	Regional/SLA- Interest arises from Historic nature and connections of Cromarty itself and from contrast between the stone harbour and the modern rigs and cruise ships seen in the Firth.	13 FOREST EDGE FARMING 20 LOWLAND PLAIN FARMING 21-22 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 28 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 40 ROUNDED HILLS AND MOORLAND SLOPES

Portmahomack	Westward views into Dornoch Firth NSA and northwards to Sutherland coastal hills. Due to the curving shoreline the views into the designated landscape are seen in context with a foreground of either Portmahomack and Balnabruach.	Seafront and village	National- (although Portmahomack is 2km outside NSA, westward views are across Coastal Shelf portion of it) Otherwise Regional for views to Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA. The curving shore and juxtaposition of coastal settlement with sea and distant hills creates a valued and picturesque scenic composition.	17 COASTAL SHELF 20 LOWLAND PLAIN FARMING
Dornoch coast-Representative location, Lonemore	Views across NSA to Ross-shire Views are from within the Dornoch Firth NSA, across the firth and Morrish More which are included in the designation to the low relief landscape of the Lowland Plain Farming on the Fearn peninsula, which lies beyond.	Dornoch coast-including Dornoch Links, Cuthill Links and airstrip	Regional- The relatiely low lying nature of the Lowland Farming Plain allows long open views from the Dornoch Coast, emphasising a perception of space, distance and appreciation of east coast light effects.	17 COASTAL SHELF 20 LOWLAND PLAIN FARMING 21 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 28 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES
Tarbat Ness/Wilkhaven Point	Views west over the plateau of Tarbat Ness/Wilkhaven Point, north to Sutherland hills in Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA.	Paths and roads around Tarbat Ness	Local-Regional/SLA- The close horizon caused by the topography of the Ness/Point creates a sense of detachment from the wider landscape and emphasises the simplicity of the composition of fields, roads and walls and contrasts with the distinctive line of the Sutherland Hills to the North.	17 COASTAL SHELF 20 LOWLAND PLAIN FARMING 34 CLIFFS AND ROCKY COAST

Strathpeffer Conservation Area	Views down Strath Peffer to Cromarty Firth and Black Isle, framed by the Knockfarrel Ridge and the the heights of Inchvannie, Keppoch, Fodderty and Brae.	Eagle Stone, Spa Gardens, Square, Hotels etc	Local- Views notable for the distinctive shape of Knockfarrel and the convex farmed slopes which roll over the northern horizon.	23 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 27 OPEN STEEP FARMED SLOPES 33 FARMED RIVER PLAINS
A9T between Duncanston and Causeway	Views across Cromarty Firth to Wyvis massif in Wyvis SLA and Ross-shire hills.	A9 between Duncanston and Causeway	Regional/Local- views across Cromarty Firth to Wyvis SLA and Ross-shire hills The view presents a broad and scenic backcloth to the Cromarty Firth, allowing appreciation of the landscape transition from farmed and settled coastal fringe, through forestry and moorland to distant peaks. The view is valued for its focus on Ben Wyvis and sense of transition from the landscapes of the Moray Forth to the Cromarty Firth and northern hills.	14 FOREST EDGE FARMING 22 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 27 OPEN STEEP FARMED SLOPES 28 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 38-39 ROUNDED HILLS AND MOORLAND SLOPES 41 ROUNDED MOUNTAIN MASSIF
Foulis Point	Views to Black Isle and down Cromarty Firth. Main feature of views is the dominance of water and that summits of the Ross-shire hills and Wyvis massif are obscured by the convex slopes closer to the shore.	Foulis Point	Local- Recreational location-Tourism. Popular tourist site, location on point allows wide views over water to coastal features and oil rig structures when moored in the firth. Highly valued for views of seals.	22 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 27 OPEN STEEP FARMED SLOPES 28 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES

Clachnaharry Lock	Views north to Black Isle and west up Beauly Firth.	Clachnaharry Lock	Historic/Tourism importance- Also proxy for views from South Kessock Breakwater path. Conservation Area. Classically composed picturesque views are important to the setting and experience of Inverness itself.	6 ROLLING FARMLAND AND FOREST/WOODLAND 19 COASTAL SHELF 22 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 29 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 33 FARMED RIVER PLAINS 37 CLIFFS AND ROCKY COAST
Knockfarrel	Panoramic views, taking in Novar and Fairburn windfarms, plus more distant developments in the Monadhliaths.	Knockfarrel	Local/Scheduled Monument- Hill Fort: This is a high impact view which gains its value from a combination of its scenic composition, historic nature and accessibility. The Fort lies a short, though steep walk from the car park. The car park itself affords similar views although the summit of Knockfarrel obscures views to the east.	14-16 FOREST EDGE FARMING 22-23 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 27 OPEN STEEP FARMED SLOPES 31 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 33 FARMED RIVER PLAINS 38 ROUNDED HILLS AND MOORLAND SLOPES 41 ROUNDED MOUNTAIN MASSIF 42 ROUNDED ROCKY HILLS 43 WOODED GLENS AND ROCKY MOORLAND
Nairn Beaches	Views over open water to Black Isle, esp SLA and Sutors.	Nairn Beaches from Nairn Golf Course to Culbin Sands	Regional- Views to SLA - Tourism Views	1 SOFT COASTAL SHORE 3 COASTAL FARMLAND 20 LOWLAND PLAIN FARMING 21-22 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 28 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 34-35 CLIFFS AND ROCKY COAST

Lochindorb	Views of Lochindorb and Lochindorb Castle.	Shores of Lochindorb	Regional/SLA- Views at the heart of the SLA which have a strong sense of place adding to its sense of spaciousness, wide views, and sparse human presence. The composition of views of the castle on its island within the loch has elements of the picturesque.	3 COASTAL FARMLAND 4-5 ROLLING FARMLAND AND FOREST/WOODLAND 7 NARROW WOODED VALLEY 9-10 ROLLING/OPEN UPLAND 11 VALLEY IN ROLLING/OPEN UPLAND
Allanfearn Junction A96T	Views towards Kessock Bridge, Meall Fuar-mhonaidh.	Allanfearn Junction A96	Regional- Inverness setting. The value of the view lies in the attractive composition of the Kessock Bridge in combination with Craig Phadraig and Ord Hill and more Distant hills including Meall Fuar-mhonaig in the Great Glen, which creates sense of arrival at head of Great Glen and Inverness.	3 COASTAL FARMLAND 4, 6 ROLLING FARMLAND AND FOREST/WOODLAND 19 COASTAL SHELF 29 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 33 FARMED RIVER PLAINS 37 CLIFFS AND ROCKY COAST
A9T at Inshes	Views towards Black Isle and Wyvis Massif.	A9 at Inshes/Milton of Leys.	Regional- Inverness setting. Important to sense of arrival at Inverness/Settled coastal area. Transition from landscape of Monadhliaths to great Glen and Moray Landscapes as identified in SNH's Landscapes of Scotland.	3 COASTAL FARMLAND 4, 6 ROLLING FARMLAND AND FOREST/WOODLAND 19 COASTAL SHELF 29 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 37 CLIFFS AND ROCKY COAST 38 ROUNDED HILLS AND MOORLAND SLOPES 41 ROUNDED MOUNTAIN MASSIF

Culloden Battlefield Visitor Centre	Views North, South and West. East mostly obscured by trees.	Culloden Battlefield Visitor Centre- primarily from elevated viewpoints on Visitor Centre Roof.	Cultural/Historic significance- Conservation Area Views to surrounding landscape important to setting of battlefield.	3 COASTAL FARMLAND 4, 5 ROLLING FARMLAND AND FOREST/WOODLAND 9, 10 ROLLING/OPEN UPLAND 11 VALLEY IN ROLLING/OPEN UPLAND 12 FARMED STRATH 22 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 29 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 36, 37 CLIFFS AND ROCKY COAST

Views To				
Ben Wyvis	A substantial hill massif, a broad, relatively level summit ridge more than 7 kms long. Isolated from the main mountain areas to the west and north, its bulk and profile make it a dominant landmark in the inner Moray Firth area.	Across region. Inverness centre, Bridge Street Bridge North side of Black Isle Muir of Ord etc	Regional from North side of Black Isle and from Craig Phadrig. "Ben Wyvis is an important part of the wider landscape setting for settlements in the inner Moray Firth, not least Inverness. Here some of the most iconic views downriver from the city centre feature Wyvis as a backdrop and over the year the changing colours of the hill act as a visual marker of the changing seasons for local residents." Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas (SLA Citations).	13,14, 16 FOREST EDGE FARMING 22-24 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 27 OPEN STEEP FARMED SLOPES 28, 29, 31 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 33 FARMED RIVER PLAINS 38-40 ROUNDED HILLS AND MOORLAND SLOPES 41 ROUNDED MOUNTAIN MASSIF 42 ROUNDED ROCKY HILLS 43 WOODED GLENS AND ROCKY
Black Isle from Inverness (Ord Hill as representative)	The long ridge of the Black Isle provides the back drop to the northern shore of the Beauly/Inverness Firths and the south shore of the Cromarty Firth.	Across Inverness and Culloden area	Regional The Black Isle is important for its own sense of place and for the definition it brings to the firths which it divides.	18 COASTAL SHELF 22 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 29 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 36-37 CLIFFS AND ROCKY COAST
North Sutor **South Sutor**	Twin headlands at North and South Sutor which stand guard over the entrance to the Cromarty Firth.	From A9 and associated settlements north of Cromarty Firth. From Fyrish monument. From Nairn beaches. From Black Isle and Fearn peninsula.	Regional/SLA The Sutors are valued for their gateway and landmark properties, defining the entrance of the Cromarty Firth and contrasting with the shallower slopes of the farmland around the Firth.	18 COASTAL SHELF 20 LOWLAND PLAIN FARMING 21, 22 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 29 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 34, 35 CLIFFS AND ROCKY COAST

Fyrish Monument	Monument, built in 1782, on Fyrish Hill (Cnoc Fyrish) near Alness.	It is visible throughout the Foothills of Easter Ross and, more distantly, from the farmland of the Northern Black Isle	Local A key local landmark and recreational destination. The access paths are popular with walkers, runners and mountain bikers.	13,14 FOREST EDGE FARMING 22 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 28 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 38 ROUNDED HILLS AND MOORLAND SLOPES
Chanonry Point **Fort George**	Opposing low lying promontories which reach out to each other and mark the entrance to the Inner Moray Firth. Both promontories have landmark buildings at their seaward extremities and are vantage points in their own right.	Visible from Kessock bridge and surrounding area generally. The SLA Citation states that the promontories are ' best appreciated from the higher ground adjacent and to the north'.	Regional/SLA The promontories are valued for their distinctive forms and the gateway they form between the open coast and expansive waters of the Moray Firth and the intimate landscapes of the Beauly and Inverness Firths.	18 COASTAL SHELF 3 COASTAL FARMLAND 35-37 CLIFFS AND ROCKY COAST 28 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES
Lochindorb	Views of Lochindorb and Lochindorb Castle.	Shores of Lochindorb	Regional/SLA Views at the heart of the SLA which have a strong sense of place adding to its sense of spaciousness, wide views, and sparse human presence. The composition of views of the castle on its island within the loch has elements of the picturesque.	3 COASTAL FARMLAND 4-5 ROLLING FARMLAND AND FOREST/WOODLAND 7 NARROW WOODED VALLEY 9-10 ROLLING/OPEN UPLAND 11 VALLEY IN ROLLING/OPEN UPLAND
Inverness and Kessock bridge from Allanfearn Junction A96	Views towards Kessock Bridge, Meall Fuar-mhonaidh, Ord Hill etc.	A96 from Allanfearn Junction	Regional- Setting of Inverness Regional Inverness setting. The value of the view lies in the attractive composition of the Kessock Bridge in combination with Craig Phadraig and Ord Hill and more distant hills including Meall Fuar-mhonaig in the Great Glen, which creates sense	3 COASTAL FARMLAND 4, 6 ROLLING FARMLAND AND FOREST/WOODLAND 19 COASTAL SHELF 29 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 33 FARMED RIVER PLAINS 37 CLIFFS AND ROCKY COAST

			of arrival at head of Great Glen and Inverness.	

Key Routes

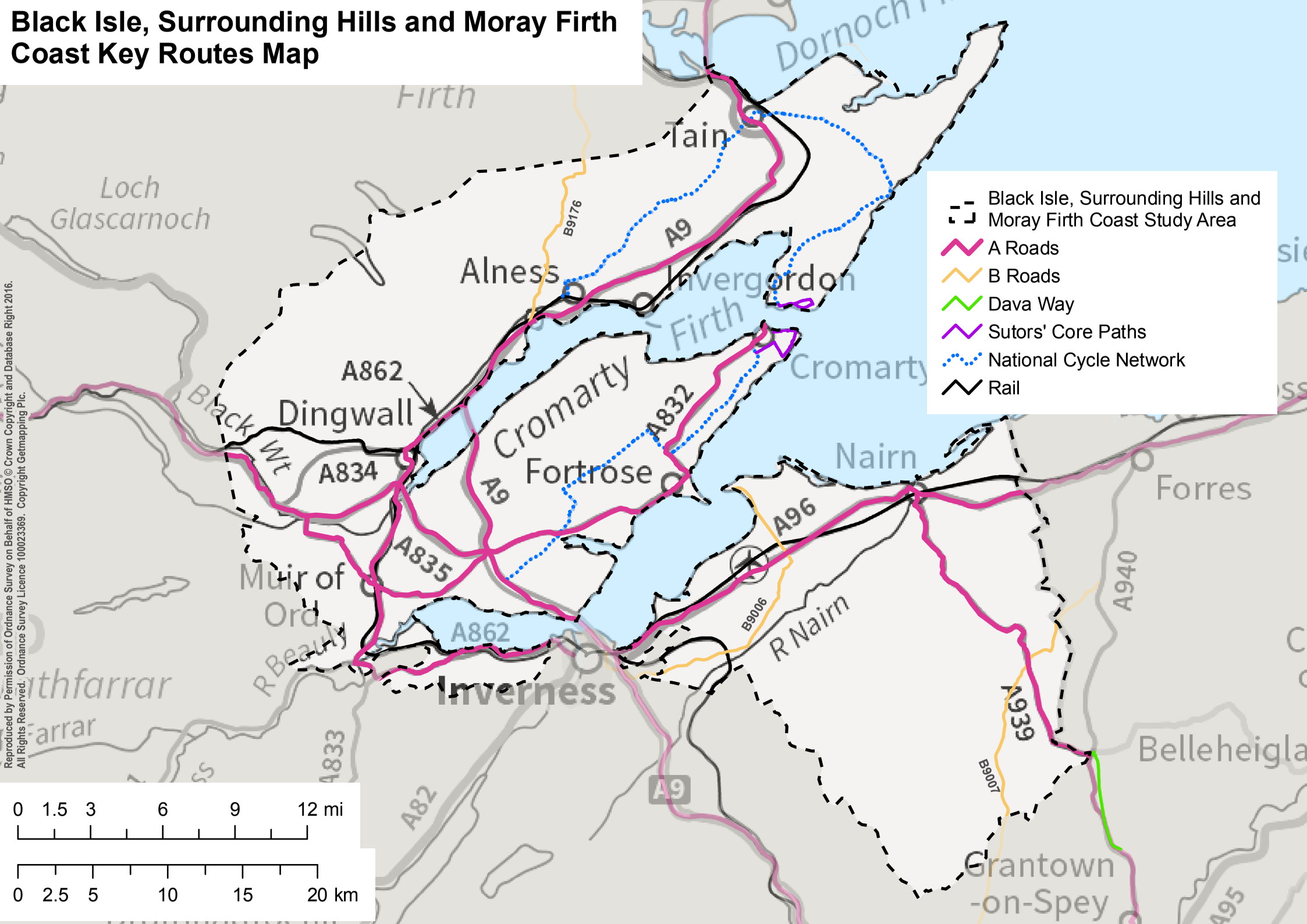
Key Routes

Name	LCAs Passed through/Bordered	Receptors
A9T	13 FOREST EDGE FARMING 17 COASTAL SHELF 20 LOWLAND PLAIN FARMING 37 CLIFFS AND ROCKY COAST 22 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 27 OPEN STEEP FARMED SLOPES 28, 29 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES	Local residents People from wider Highland area Tourists
A835	22-24 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 29, 31 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 33 FARMED RIVER PLAINS 43 WOODED GLENS AND ROCKY MOORLAND	Local residents People from wider Highland area Tourists
A862	6 ROLLING FARMLAND AND FOREST/ WOODLAND 19 COASTAL SHELF 22-24 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 27 OPEN STEEP FARMED SLOPES 32 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 33 FARMED RIVER PLAINS	Local Residents Recreational users from wider Highland area
A832	18 COASTAL SHELF 22, 25 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 29 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 33 FARMED RIVER PLAINS	Local Residents Recreational users from wider Highland area Tourists
B9176 (Struie)	13 FOREST EDGE FARMING 28 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 40 ROUNDED HILLS AND MOORLAND SLOPES	Local Residents Recreational users from wider Highland area Tourists
A96	3 COASTAL FARMLAND	Local residents People from wider Highland area Tourists

B9007	10 ROLLING/OPEN UPLAND 7 NARROW WOODED VALLEY	Local Residents Recreational users from wider Highland area Tourists
A939	3 COASTAL FARMLAND 5 ROLLING FARMLAND AND FOREST/WOODLAND 7 NARROW WOODED VALLEY 8 UPLAND MOORLAND AND FORESTRY 9-10 ROLLING/OPEN UPLAND	Local Residents Recreational users from wider Highland area Tourists
B9006	3 COASTAL FARMLAND 4 ROLLING FARMLAND AND FOREST/WOODLAND 12 FARMED STRATH	Local Residents Recreational users from wider Highland area Tourists
Railway – Far North Line	17, 19 COASTAL SHELF 20 LOWLAND PLAIN FARMING 22 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 27 OPEN STEEP FARMED SLOPES 28, 32 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 33 FARMED RIVER PLAINS	Local residents Commuters People from wider Highland area Tourists
Railway – Kyle of Lochalsh Line	23 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 27 OPEN STEEP FARMED SLOPES 33 FARMED RIVER PLAINS 38 ROUNDED HILLS AND MOORLAND SLOPES 43 WOODED GLENS AND ROCKY MOORLAND	Local Residents Recreational users from wider Highland area Tourists
Inverness - Aberdeen Railway Line	2 COASTAL FOREST 3 COASTAL FARMLAND	Local residents Commuters People from wider Highland area Tourists
Highland Railway Line	3 COASTAL FARMLAND 4 ROLLING FARMLAND AND FOREST/WOODLAND 12 FARMED STRATH	Local residents Commuters People from wider Highland area Tourists
Core paths at Sutors	20 LOWLAND PLAIN FARMING 21, 22 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 34, 35 CLIFFS AND ROCKY COAST	Recreational users
National Cycle Network 1	13 FOREST EDGE FARMING 28 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES	Local residents Commuters People from wider Highland area Tourists

Cyclists between Allangrange and Tain via Nigg Ferry	21, 22 OPEN FARMED SLOPES 29 FARMED AND FORESTED SLOPES 20 LOWLAND PLAIN FARMING	Local residents Commuters People from wider Highland area Tourists

Black Isle, Surrounding Hills and Moray Firth Coast Key Routes Map



Gateways

Gateways

Location	Description and Direction of Travel	The Landscapes of Scotland(TLoS) Boundary Reference (where relevant)
B9176 in Vicinity of Balnacraig, south of Dalneich Bridge	Heading southwards on Struie road this point has a sense of arrival in the Cromarty Firth,	Approximately in threshold of TLoS Areas 12 and 13, Ross and Easter Ross.
Dornoch bridge/Edderton roundabout	Outwith area as drawn, but crossing large water body creates sense of arrival.	Junction of TLoS 9,12 and 13
A9 roundabout Calrossie	Change from traveling around the edge of a landmass to going up and over it. Quite a different feeling.	
A9 at Duncanston	Heading North, Duncanston is the point at which views open out to the north giving first views of Wyvis and Cromarty Firth.	
Torepark	Heading South, views over Black Isle to Monadhliaths open out just north of Torepark giving first views towards Monadhliath hills	
A835 at Leanaig junction	Travelling north, at this point the road emerges from cuttings which have restricted the view since the brow of the hill at Newton of Ferintosh, and reveals first views into Conon Valley/Cromarty Firth	
Kessock Bridge	Gateway to Inverness, Smithton etc. when headed south	Junction between TLoS 13 & 14
A835 at junction with A832	The approximate point at which the gradually revealed view towards Achilty Tor and the Fannichs etc is finally unobscured.	Approximate boundary of TLoS 13 & 18
A834 Strathpeffer	Outlook down the strath. Quite fleeting	Approximate Boundary of TLoS 12 & 13
A9/A862 roundabout Ardullie heading east	Point at which traffic from Dingwall emerges from tree lined twisty road with changes of perspective to open firth.	
A939 straight between SLA boundary and Cairngorms strath (where Dava Way runs parallel)	'Threshold' to the Dava moor landscape when travelling north	Approximate boundary between TLoS 20 and 21; Monadhliaths and Speyside.
A939 at Junction with A940	'Threshold' to the Dava moor landscape when travelling south on A940. Coincidental with SLA northern boundary.	

A939 Milestone area	'Threshold' to the Dava moor landscape when travelling south on A939. Coincidental with LCA boundary between Narrow Wooded Valley and Rolling Upland.	
A9 at Inshes	Sense of arrival at Inner Moray Firth and Inverness.	Approximate junction of TLoS 14,19 & 20

BL1: Carse of Delnies, Culbin, Nairn Dunes to the Bar

Area Ref and Name	**BL1: Carse of Delnies, Culbin, Nairn Dunes to the Bar**
LCT	Soft Coastal Shore
Description of Landscape Role	Flat, open ground adjacent to the sea, though in more extensive areas the sea may be out of view. Characterised by a feeling of impermanence and changeability in response to the power of sea and wind. High water table and poor drainage influence vegetation. LCA includes two golf course areas at Nairn and Dunbar courses. Carse of Delnies lies partially within the Sutors of Cromarty, Rosemarkie and Fort George SLA. Location of the SLA on the edge of the Firth adds prominence to any potential development, far beyond the prominence of the LCA itself. However the LCA is not consistent and the inclusion of the shoreward portion of Nairn town creates a significant change of character.
Key Views	Nairn Beach- views along the shore are characteristic of Nairn Beach and the setting of the town and development within the LCA would feature in these views.
Key Routes	A96T and Inverness/Aberdeen Rail Line – The LCA is not likely to be visible from the road, or railway. However the low lying nature of the ground between the road/rail corridor and the LCA means that turbine development would be visible and interrupt coastal views.
Gateways	N/A
Landscape Sensitivity	The LCA within the Study Area is centred around Nairn, which is a significant tourist centre selling itself on its coastal location, with accommodations, caravan and camping sites, beaches and other facilities. The low lying character of the coastal strip would add to the vertical emphasis of wind energy development. Location of the LCA on the edge of the Firth adds prominence to any potential development, far beyond the prominence of the LCA itself.

Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change		
Large Scale Wind Farms	**Small Individual**	**Access Infrastructure**
1	2	1

Sensitive Visual Receptors	**Highest Sensitivity** • Residents of immediate locality. • People at key viewpoints. • Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers. • People using Key Routes. **Medium** • Residents of wider region. • Users of other routes. **Lower** • People engaged on work.
Current Wind Energy Development	None
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Large or Medium turbines, singly or in groups. Scope for: • Micro and Small scale turbines strongly associated with existing buildings/land use, in the more developed part of the LCA, i.e. campsite, golf courses or marina.

BL2: Kingsteps to Cothill

Area Ref and Name	BL2: Kingsteps to Cothill
LCT	Coastal Forest
Description of Landscape Role	Extensive plantation landscape, whose external uniformity belies the complexity of landform, habitats and woodland structure, which may be apparent within the plantation. The plantations are publicly accessible and contain networks of paths and tracks which are a popular recreational resource. A small number of farms, crofts and residences are located within the LCA on the forest edge.
Key Views	N/A
Key Routes	Short length of the Inverness/Aberdeen Rail Line, east of Nairn. In long views (25km) from A9T at the Kessock Bridge.
Gateways	N/A
Landscape Sensitivity	While not highly visible, the LCA is well known in the area and a popular recreational resource, whose origins as means of stabilising blown sand are relatively widely understood.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>Location of the LCA on the edge of the Firth adds prominence to any potential development, far beyond the prominence of the LCA itself.

<table><tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr><tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality.
• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.
NCR1 passes along the route. C1159 Core paths within forest.

Medium

• Residents of wider region.
• Users of other routes.
Local routes close to LCA.

Lower

• People engaged on work.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>None.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for Wind Energy Development</td><td>No scope for:

• Large or Medium turbines, singly or in groups.

Scope for:

• Micro or <25m Small turbines strongly associated with existing buildings/land use at the forest edge.</td></tr>
</table>

BL3: Seafield to Hardmuir

Area Ref and Name	BL3: Seafield to Hardmuir
LCT	Coastal Farmland
Description of landscape Role	A broad strip of flat to gently undulating farmland lying on the coastal plain between the coastal shore and forests to the north, and farmed and wooded foothills to the south. The LCA carries the main east-west transport corridor of the A96T and the Inverness/Aberdeen Rail Line. In addition to Farmland the LCA also accommodates Inverness Airport and some significant industrial and business sites and settlements.

<table>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td>Chanonry Point - in views out the LCA forms the immediate backdrop to the Moray Firth, development would be seen in context with the Lighthouse and Fort George.

Fort George – in views out the LCA forms the immediate setting to the south of the fort.

Kessock Bridge - in views out the LCA frames the firth to the south and is seen in combination with Craig Phadraig and Ord Hill and more Distant hills including Meall Fuar-mhonaig in the Great Glen.

Allanfearn Junction A96T - the western extent of the LCA lies between the junction and Kessock Bridge/Meall Fuar-mhonaidh.

Nairn Beaches - Although the LCA runs closely to the south of the beaches, it does not directly bound them or fall between the beaches and principal directions of view.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td>A96

A939

B9006

Inverness - Aberdeen Railway Line

Highland Railway Line</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>The area provides the setting for the main settlement of Nairn as well as Ardersier, Auldearn and a spread of farms, individual properties and townships and is immediately adjacent to Culloden and Balloch. The consented new town development at Tornagrain straddles the boundary between Rolling Farmland And Forest/Woodland and Coastal Farmland, the development will share qualities with Nairn which is characteristic of the Coastal Shore LCT, while its siting will be more strongly related to Smithton and Balloch.

The LCA is therefore densely habited and crossed by network of minor and access roads in addition to the main A96T, rail corridor and airport; making it one of the most heavily ‘observed’ parts of the Highlands. The density of roads mean that each part of the LCA is visible from a variety of locations and from receptors engaged in a wide variety of activities.

In views from the Black Isle the LCA is seen as part of a layered landscape below Rolling Farmland and Forest, Rolling Upland and Upland Moorland and Forestry and parts of the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA.

From within the LCA views encompass a range of views, from wide open views emphasising the horizontal, to more limited views into pockets of farmland bounded by woods and plantations.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
</table>

	1 | 3 | 2
Sensitive Visual Receptors	**Highest Sensitivity** • Residents of immediate locality. • People at key viewpoints. • Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers. • People using Key Routes. • Users of other routes **Medium** • Residents of wider region. **Lower** • People engaged on work.
Current Wind Energy Development	Easterton Farm: 3 small turbines 21m. Meikle Geddes: 1 small 40m. Brackla Farm: 1 small 26m. Cawdor School: 1 small 18m. Culloden Academy: 1 small 18m. Most of the LCA has no development, though there is the beginning of a pattern of turbines clustering between the B9090 and the River Nairn, just north of the boundary with the adjacent Rolling Farmlands and Forest LCA. The turbines are all well set back from roads and seen in context with productive businesses and in scale with the existing network of overhead power lines.
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Large or Medium turbines, singly or in groups. • Small or Micro turbines in groups of more than 3. Some scope for: • Small and micro turbines. • continuation of existing pattern. Turbines should be: • set back from roads. • strongly associated with buildings/land use. • in scale with other energy infrastructure/overhead lines. This is a pattern that is limited in its impact on surrounding LCAs and preserves the legibility of the landscape pattern.

BL4: Balvonie of Inshes to Loch Flemington

<table>
<tr><th>Area Ref and Name</th><th>BL4: Balvonie of Inshes to Loch Flemington</th></tr>
<tr><td>LCT</td><td>Rolling Farmland and Forest/Woodland</td></tr>
<tr><td>Description of landscape Role</td><td>The LCA is a mixture of agricultural lands and woodlands skirting substantial areas of modern housing development at Culloden, Smithton, Balloch and the small settlement of Croy. The consented new town development at Tornagrain straddles the boundary between Rolling Farmland And Forest/Woodland and Coastal Farmland, the development will share qualities with Nairn which is characteristic of the Coastal Farmland LCT, while its siting will be more strongly related to Smithton and Balloch.

The topography forms a rounded ridge running north east to south west, the southern flank forming the northern enclosure of the River Nairn valley.

Culloden Battlefield site and Visitor Centre is located on the ridge with views to the Wyvis Massif in the north and the Monadhliath in the south. Immediate horizons are obscured by forestry in the north,east & west. Higher elevation from the roof terrace of the centre gives views to the Ross-shire hills and Rocky Moorland and Massif west of Muir of Ord.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td>From outwith the LCA it is most prominent in general views from the southern flank of the Black Isle, where it is visible across the firth as a part of a layered landscape, between Culloden, Smithton etc, the Coastal Farmlands and the Rolling Upland and Upland and Glen landscapes. This is typified in the Key Views from Chanonry Point and from Fort George.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td>The LCA runs close to the A96T between Balloch and Lochside, giving some prominence to the northern flank of the LCA from the transport corridor.

The Highland Line loops through the LCA, sometimes on embankments giving elevated views of the south east side of the ridge.

B9006.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>The area provides the setting for a spread of farms, individual properties and townships and is immediately adjacent to Culloden and Balloch. It is therefore densely habited and crossed by a network of minor and access roads.

The LCA is a key element in the distinctive horizontal layering of the landscape in views across the firth, which give the landscape scale and depth.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>3</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity</td></tr>
</table>

	• Residents of immediate locality. • People at key viewpoints. • Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers. • People using key routes. • Users of other routes. **Medium** • Residents of wider region. • People using key routes. **Lower** • People engaged on work.
Current Wind Energy Development	None
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Medium or Large turbines, singly or in groups. Such development would overwhelm spaces and risk visual confusion in the layers of the landscape when viewed from greater distance. Scope for: • Small and Micro turbines in groups of 1-3. Turbines should be: • set back from roads. • strongly associated with buildings/land use. • in scale with contained landscape spaces created by rolling landscape and woodland matrix. • clear of tops of ridgelines. Particular care should be taken to avoid development which skylines from the vantage point of Culloden Battlefield and Visitor Centre.

BL5: Cantraydoune to Darnaway Forest

Area Ref and Name	BL5: Cantraydoune to Darnaway Forest
LCT	Rolling Farmland and Forest/Woodland
Description of landscape Role	The LCA is a mixture of agricultural lands generally surrounded by extensive woodlands, with a spread of individual properties and farms within the agricultural areas and at the woodland edges. There are small settlements at Cawdor, Littlemill and Piperhill. There is a series of connected gentle ridges and hills aligned north east to south west.

<table>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td>From outwith the LCA it is most prominent in general views from the southern flank of the Black Isle, where it is visible across the firth as a part of a layered landscape between Culloden, Smithton etc, the Coastal Farmlands and the Rolling Upland and Upland and Glen landscapes. This is typified in the Key Views from Chanonry Point and from Fort George.

Within the LCA views tend to be open to the north, when not constrained by woodland and otherwise limited to close horizons by rolling landform.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td>A939

The LCA is largely screened from the A96 within the study area by topography and roadside forestry.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>The LCA provides the setting for a spread of farms, individual properties and small settlements and townships. It is therefore relatively densely habited and crossed by a network of minor and access roads.

It is a key element in the distinctive horizontal layering of the landscape in views across the firth, which give the landscape scale and depth.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>3</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality.
• People at key viewpoints.
• Users of other routes.

Where routes pass through LCA

Medium

• Residents of wider region.
• People using Key Routes.

A9 south of Tore and A832 on Black Isle

Lower

• People engaged on work.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>None</td></tr>
</table>

Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Medium or Large turbines singly or in groups. Such development would overwhelm spaces and risk visual confusion in the layers of the landscape when viewed from greater distance. Scope for: • Small and Micro turbines in groups of 1-3. Turbines should be: • set back from roads. • strongly associated with buildings/land use. • in scale with contained landscape spaces created by rolling landscape and woodland matrix. • clear of tops of ridgelines. The rolling nature of the landscape and existence of pockets of agricultural land within a woodland matrix creates a variety of contained spaces within which Small and Micro scale turbines may be appropriate where strongly associated with rural buildings and businesses. There will be a limit to the number of turbines which spaces can absorb and development should be restricted to groups of 1-3. There is no scope for Medium or Large turbines as they would overwhelm spaces and risk visual confusion in the layers of the landscape when viewed from greater distance. All development should avoid placement on the top of ridges.

BL6: Lentran to Englishton Muir

Area Ref and Name	BL6: Lentran to Englishton Muir
LCT	Rolling Farmland and Forest/Woodland
Description of landscape Role	The LCA is a mixture of agricultural lands and woodlands on the south side of the Beauly Firth. A number of gentle north-south ridges which terminate in a north facing slope form the topography. The area is part of the setting of the Beauly Firth and contributes to containment of views from the north, west and east. Views from within the LCA are primarily available to residents as there is no through public road. The LCA has extensive woodland and plantation which surrounds agricultural land on the upper slopes and forms a backdrop to it on the lower slopes.
Key Views	The LCA is a constituent part, but not the focus, of views from Clachnaharry Loch and the Kessock Bridge.
Key Routes	A962 - passes below LCA and forms border between LCA and LCA-BL19. Visibility of LCA from road is limited by topography and tree cover.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>A9 - there is visibility of the LCA from the Kessock Bridge north for approximately 3km when travelling north.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>Kessock Bridge – limited potential to impact on gateway qualities.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>The area provides the setting for a spread of crofts/smallholdings, individual properties and townships and is immediately adjacent to the Beauly Firth. Habitation is relatively light and although there is a road network there is no through public road.

It is a key element in the containment of views south across the firth, where the patchwork of ground cover contributes to understanding of landscape scale.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>3</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality.
• People using key routes.

A862 where road runs close to the LCA boundary

Medium

• People at key viewpoints.
• Residents of wider region.
• People using key routes.

A9 between Munlochy Junction and Kessock Bridge

Lower

• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.
• People engaged on work.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>None</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for Wind Energy Development</td><td>No scope for:

• Medium or Large turbines, singly or in groups.

Such development would overwhelm spaces and risk visual confusion in the layers of the landscape when viewed from greater distance.

Scope for:

• Small and Micro turbines in groups of 1-3.

Turbines should be:</td></tr>
</table>

	• set back from roads. • strongly associated with buildings/land use. • in scale with contained landscape spaces created by rolling landscape and woodland matrix. • clear of tops of ridgelines. The rolling nature of the landscape and existence of pockets of agricultural land within a woodland matrix creates a variety of contained spaces within which Small and Micro scale turbines may be appropriate where strongly associated with rural buildings and businesses. There will be a limit to the number of turbines which spaces can absorb and development should be restricted to groups of 1-3. There is no scope for Medium or Large turbines as they would overwhelm spaces and risk visual confusion in the layers of the landscape when viewed from greater distance. All development should avoid placement on the top of ridges. Particular care should be taken to avoid development which skylines when seen from north of the Firth.

BL7: Banchor to Airdrie Mill

Area Ref and Name	**BL7: Banchor to Airdrie Mill**
LCT	Narrow Wooded Valley
Description of landscape Role	The LCA forms a contained, sheltered and secluded landscape with views limited by its topography and extensive woodlands. It also provides a distinctive landscape break, curtailing the northern extent of Dava Moor and marking the transition from Upland Moorland and Forestry to Open Rolling Upland.
Key Views	The SLA itself is generally hidden from vantage points outwith its own boundaries.
Key Routes	The A939 and B9007 are generally contained by woodland or passing through small agricultural areas set within woodland, with glimpses down into the wooded valley available. The break in topography contributes to the 'visual connectivity with the higher mountain ranges to the north' experienced from the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA and particularly from the A939 and Dava Way.
Gateways	The LCA contributes to the sense of Gateway found at the A939 Milestone area.
Landscape Sensitivity	Seclusion and enclosure provided by the enclosed landform and pattern of woodland gives the landscape of the LCA an intimate scale. The LCA's 'invisibility' from the outside adds to a sense of a hidden and protected place.

Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change		
Large Scale Wind Farms	**Small Individual**	**Access Infrastructure**

	1 | 3 | 2
Sensitive Visual Receptors	**Highest Sensitivity** • Residents of immediate locality. • Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers. • Users of other routes. *Within LCA only* **Lower** • People engaged on work.
Current Wind Energy Development	None.
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Large or Medium turbines. Limited scope for: • Turbine groups. • Small and Micro turbines. Turbines should be: • set back from roads. • strongly associated with buildings/land use. • in scale with contained landscape spaces created by woodland matrix and valley landform. • in groups of appropriate scale to space, most often this will mean single turbines. • held back from upper slopes of the valley to avoid interruption of horizons as seen looking towards LCA and to avoid excessive skylining and domination of space. • limited to <25m.

BL8: Balmore

Area Ref and Name	BL8: Balmore
LCT	Upland Moorland and Forestry
Description of Landscape Role	The LCA forms a visual transition zone between the Open Rolling Upland to the south and the Rolling Farmlands and Forest to the north (although the Narrow Wooded Valley LCA BL7 lies between the Open Rolling Upland and Upland Moorland and Forestry, views generally 'skip over' the valley in long views.) Broad, gentle slopes combined with extensive woodland and forestry mean that views out are expansive, but infrequent.

<table>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td>From outwith the LCA it is most prominent in general views from the southern flank of the Black Isle, where it is visible across the firth as a part of a layered landscape, between the Coastal Farmlands and the Rolling Upland and High Moorland and Ridgeland landscapes. This is typified in the Key Views from Chanonry Point and from Fort George.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td>The visual corridor from the A939 within the LCA is limited by the convex landform and woodland cover to views into the richer agricultural pocket around Redburn.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>The intimate scale of agricultural areas which are visible from Key Routes would be vulnerable to any scale of development that over-rode the perception of containment.

The more extensive areas of coniferous plantation cover and moorland tend to occupy the higher ground: development in these locations would be prominent in the layered landscape perceived from key viewpoints to the north and impact on the sense of spaciousness, wide views and visual connectivity with the higher mountain ranges to the north, which is found in the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>3</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality.
• People at key viewpoints.
• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.
• People using key routes.
• Users of other routes.

Within LCA only

Medium

• Residents of wider region.
• People using key routes.

Lower

• People engaged on work.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>None.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for Wind Energy Development</td><td>No scope for:

• Large or medium turbines.

Limited scope for:</td></tr>
</table>

	• turbine groups. • Small and Micro turbines. Turbines should be: • set back from roads. • strongly associated with buildings/land use. • in scale with contained landscape spaces created by woodland matrix and undulating landform. • in groups of appropriate scale to space, most often this will mean single turbines. • held back from higher ground to avoid interruption of horizons as seen looking towards LCA and to minimise skylining and domination of space. • limited to <25m.

BL9: North of Drynachan Lodge to Findhorn

Area Ref and Name	BL9: North of Drynachan Lodge to Findhorn
LCT	Rolling/Open Upland
Description/landscape Role	Elevated and expansive undulating plateau with rounded hills rising to around 100-200m above the general level of the plateau. Generally the plateau is hidden from outwith the immediate area and the hills are visible from higher elevations to the north, across the firth, or from other points in the eastern tail of the Monadhliaths. Habitation is limited to the fringes of the LCA, generally in the locations where forestry overlies the landform, creating a transitional fringe between the Rolling Farmlands and Forest of LCA BL5. The higher hills in the south of the LCA forms the northern bound of the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA.
Key Views	The LCA forms part of the layered landscape visible in long views from the North, while not in itself being a focus within the view.
Key Routes	NCR1 runs along the minor road (C1052) from Dalroy to Wester Galcantray, which forms the northern boundary of the LCA and has direct views into the LCA.
Gateways	N/A
Landscape Sensitivity	The nature of the Landscape itself is not inherently incompatible with wind energy development. Susceptibility to wind energy development arises from the role of the LCA in the wider landscape and the degree to which any development would intrude in the layering of the landscape. While the LCA itself is not prominent, the relatively low relief within the higher ground would have only limited potential to screen development, leaving any development here prominent in the wider landscape. The boundary areas to the north have a much more immediate relationship to more heavily inhabited areas and will tend to share the susceptibilities of those areas rather than the higher upland areas.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>The existing presence of unclassified roads and tracks within the valley bottom suggests that some limited infrastructure could be accommodated away from the side slopes and rolling summits of the hills.

<table><tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr><tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality.
• Visitors/tourists
including cyclists and walkers NCR1 between Dalroy and Wester Galcantray.

Medium

• People at key viewpoints.
• Residents of wider region.
• Users of other routes.

Unclassified Drynachan-Highland Boath road.

Lower

• People using key routes.
• Users of other routes.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>None within LCA, Moy at 125m to tip, in adjacent LCA to the west, outwith the study area.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for Wind Energy Development</td><td>Northern Slopes

No scope for:

• Large or Medium turbines.

Scope for:

• Small and Micro turbines.

Turbines should be:

• strongly associated with existing buildings/land use.
• <25m.
• single turbines.
• clear of higher ground.

Upland Plateau and Summits

No scope for:

• Small and Micro Turbines.

Some scope for:</td></tr>
</table>

	• Large or Medium Turbines. Turbines should: • Avoid locations and layouts where Key Characteristics and Special Qualities of the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA are diminished. • Avoid locations and layouts where turbines would create a prominent focus in the layered landscape perceived from key viewpoints to the north.

BL10: Tom nan Clach, Lochindorb to Airdrie Mill, South of River Findhorn

Area Ref and Name	BL10: Tom nan Clach, Lochindorb to Airdrie Mill, south of River Findhorn
LCT	Rolling/Open Upland
Description/landscape Role	Elevated and expansive undulating plateau with rounded hills rising to around 100-200m above the general level of the plateau. The plateau is generally hidden from outwith the immediate area and the hills are generally visible from higher elevations to the north, across the firth, or from other points in the eastern tail of the Monadhliaths.The LCA lies between the Findhorn Valley (including Narrow Wooded Valley (BL7 Banchor to Airdrie Mill) LCA and Valley in Rolling/Open Upland (BL11 Milton of Moy to Banchor) LCAs) and the Upland and Glens LCT (outwith the Study Area). Most of the LCA lies within the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA, sharing common boundaries in places. The south eastern edge of the LCA falls along the southeast shore of Lochindorb, the largest body of open water within the LCT.
Key Views	The LCA forms part of the layered landscape visible in long views from the North, while not in itself being a key focus within the views. Key View is from minor road on south eastern shore of Lochindorb, where iconic views of Lochindorb castle, backdropped by rolling upland are gained.
Key Routes	B9007: Following the line of the old Military Road north-south through the LCA, views east are largely blocked by rising ground, focusing views across the plateau edged by rolling hills. A939: Runs north-south through the LCA. In the northern section it runs just west of Cairn Duhie, which blocks direct views to the east. A940: The route does not run through The Highland Council's area, but gives views towards Cairn Duhie from the adjacent LCA within Moray. Dava Way: following the disused railway line from Forres to Grantown the route crosses the LCT outwith The Highland Council's boundary, but allows views across the Uplands and Glens.
Gateways	Gateway at A939 Milestone: when travelling south, a sense of entering a more remote and isolated moorland landscape.
Landscape Sensitivity	The nature of the Landscape itself is not inherently incompatible with wind energy development.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>Susceptibility arises from the role of the particular landscape character area in the wider landscape and the degree to which any development would intrude:

1. in the layering of the landscape when seen in more distant key views in the north.
2. on the perception of the landscape and Key Qualities and Characteristics of the SLA. The High Table-land of the area affords borrowed views to more distant hills while obscuring views of the inhabited shores of the firth, major transport corridors and conurbations. It is this perception of limitless horizons and apparent isolation which is highly valued in this LCA and SLA.

While the LCA itself is not prominent, the relatively low relief within the higher ground would have only limited potential to screen development.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality.
• People at key viewpoints.

Viewpoints within LCA- Lochindorb

• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.
• Residents of wider region
• People using key routes.

Medium

• Users of other routes.

Lower

• People engaged on work.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>Tom nan Clach.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for Wind Energy Development</td><td>Some scope for:
• Single Micro and <25m Small turbines:
  • associated with buildings.
  • at the periphery of the high table-land.
• Medium or Large development:
  • where well designed and contained.
  • where design respects spacing and scale of existing development pattern.</td></tr>
</table>

	• where development would not detract from Key Characteristics and Special Qualities of the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA. • where development respects borrowed views to more distant hills in the north. • Particular Sensitivities to change are identified in the SLA Citation.

BL11: Milton of Moy to Banchor

Area Ref and Name	BL11: Milton of Moy to Banchor
LCT	Valley in Rolling/Open Upland
Description/landscape Role	The LCA is very limited in extent forming a break within the Rolling Uplands LCT (Between LCAs BL9 and BL10.) The Valley is steep sided and up to 150m deep with a small number of largely estate-related properties adjacent to farmland on the valley floor. Valley sides generally have moorland cover, with some muirburn apparent, with some areas of woodland, mostly on the south facing slopes.
Key Views	There are no key views identified within the LCA itself. The nature of the LCA prevents its visibility in key views from outwith the LCA.
Key Routes	N/A
Gateways	N/A
Landscape Sensitivity	The narrowness of the valley and steep sides limit the extent of any views within the LCA, creating a series of more intimate spaces and framed views. The lack of expansive views makes the impact of development within these spaces very apparent and difficult to mitigate. Medium or Large developments would dominate the available space and have the potential to protrude incongruously into the Rolling/Open Upland LCAs (BL9 and BL10) and impinge on the Key Characteristics and Special Qualities of the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA.

Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change		
Large Scale Wind Farms	**Small Individual**	**Access Infrastructure**
1	2	1

Sensitive Visual Receptors	**Highest Sensitivity** • Residents of immediate locality. **Medium** • People at key viewpoints. • Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers. • Users of other routes.

	Lower • Residents of wider region. • People using key routes. • People engaged on work.
Current Wind Energy Development	None
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Large or Medium turbines. Scope for: • Small and Micro turbines. Turbines should be: • strongly associated with existing buildings/land use. • <25m. • single turbines. • clear of higher ground. • clear of boundary areas with Rolling/Open Upland LCAs (BL9 and BL10). Turbines should not breach interim horizons when seen from viewpoints to the north.

BL12: Clava to White Bridge

Area Ref and Name	BL12: Clava to White Bridge
LCT	Farmed Strath
Description/landscape Role	The higher section of the Nairn river valley is a clearly distinguished river plain with agricultural land uses flowing between well-defined side slopes, with the north facing slopes having rougher, moorland type covering or forestry. Below Cantray the LCA is little distinguished from the adjacent Rolling Farmland and Forest LCAs of BL4 and BL5 and as the strath landform levels out substantially towards the coastal plain and the valley sides are not distinguished by vegetation. The Culloden Muir Conservation Area overlaps the LCA.
Key Views	The nature of the topography means that the strath itself is generally hidden from view outside the LCA. Views of the higher ground of the LCA at Drummore of Clava are available from Culloden Visitor Centre, but not into the Strath itself.
Key Routes	B9006 Principal views into the LCA from outside are available from the Highland Railway Line as it passes between Newton of Culloden and Drummore of Clava, where receptors can look down on Clava, across to Culloden Muir and down the strath as the line crosses the viaduct.

<table>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>The higher strath sides and locations such as Drummore of Clava are visible as a part of the layered landscape in longer views from the north, and more locally in views from the Highland Railway Line and Culloden Visitor Centre, where development would potentially disrupt important skylines of midground horizons.

Within the strath are a series of spaces and enclosures where the limited outward views would potentially amplify the focused impacts of development on the sense of scale.

The settings of Clava Cairns and Culloden Battlefield and Visitor Centre should be treated as particularly sensitive.

The narrowness of the LCA heavily restricts potential for Medium or Large developments, which would dominate the available space and have the potential to protrude incongruously into the Rolling/Open Upland LCA - BL9, Coastal Farmland LCA - BL3 and Rolling Farmland and Forest/Woodland - BL4 and BL5.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality.
• People at key viewpoints.
• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.

Medium

• Residents of wider region.
• Users of other routes.

Lower

• People using key routes.
• People engaged on work.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>None</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for Wind Energy Development</td><td>The restricted extent of the LCA heavily restricts potential for development.

Some potential for Micro and Small, individual turbines where related to habitation/farms.

No potential for Medium or Large developments which would dominate the available space and have the potential to protrude incongruously into Rolling Farmland and Forest LCAs (BL4 and BL5) and impinge on the setting of Culloden Muir Conservation Area.

No scope for:</td></tr>
</table>

	• Large or Medium turbines. Scope for: • Small and Micro turbines. Turbines should be: • strongly associated with existing buildings/land use. • <25m. • single turbines. • clear of higher ground. • clear of boundary areas with Rolling/Open Upland LCA - BL9, Rolling Farmland and Forest LCAs - BL4 and BL5. Turbines should not breach interim horizons when seen from viewpoints to the north.

BL13: Ardross - Balnagown and BL14: Swordale - Redburn

Area Ref and Name	**BL13: Ardross-Balnagown** **BL14: Swordale-Redburn**
LCT	Forest Edge Farming (and Strathrusdale Inland Farmed Strath as part of BL13)
Description/landscape Role	The LCA sits between the Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes LCT, beyond the Study Area, and the Farmed and Forested Slopes LCA BL28. The LCA is transitional in nature, combining a range of gradients and land uses. The balance of ground cover is more biased towards forestry than in the Farmed and Forested Slopes LCAs and slopes are generally steeper. The band of the LCA runs broadly southwest-northeast, with main slopes facing south east. A gentle ridge formation creates a shallow pocket at the base of the higher slopes which often contains agricultural ground associated with rivers and streams running broadly parallel to the coast. Minor straths run back into the Uplands to the north west, the Averon valley landscape being dominated by the Ardross Castle Designed Landscape. Farming occupies the gentler strath floors with forestry covering the main slopes, though forestry also occurs on gentler slopes at Newmore Wood and Badachonacher Moss. The wooded slopes form a backdrop to the more settled coastal strip and tend to add a sense of remoteness to the moorland tops which emerge above them.
Key Views	The area is primarily seen from within and immediately adjacent to the LCA and from locations on the north side of the Black Isle. Much of the area is hidden from the viewpoint at Fyrish monument by the landform, though may be seen from other points on the ridge, but is visible as part of the setting of Fyrish in views from the Black Isle and A9.
Key Routes	A9 travelling North, Duncanston to Nigg Roundabout.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>A9 Travelling south, Tain to Ardullie Roundabout.

B9176 Struie Road from Stittenham to Gateway in Vicinity of Balnacraig, south of Dalneich Bridge.

NCR1 passes through the LCA.

Outwith the LCA

A835 travelling north from Leanaig to Maryburgh roundabout, looking east.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>Views at Gateway on A9 between Duncanston and Causeway.

Views from Leanaig Gateway.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>The area is a part of the layered landscape visible when viewing the Ross-shire Hills and Wyvis Massif from the Black Isle. It plays a significant role in creating a gradation of the landscape from coastal development, through agriculture and Forestry to the moorland tops. This banding helps to create a clear separation between landscape character areas which are suited to different types of development.

<table>
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Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
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<tr><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>3</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality.
• People at key viewpoints.
• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.
• Residents of wider region.
• People using key routes.

Medium

• Users of other routes.

Lower

• People engaged on work.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>Two pairs of medium scale turbines at the boundary of the LCA with LCA BL13 Forest Edge Farming.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for Wind Energy Development</td><td>No scope for:

• Large turbines.

Scope for:

• Medium and Small turbines:</td></tr>
</table>

	• consistent with existing development pattern. • located within pockets of farming land. • set back from Key Routes. • single turbines or pairs. • clear of higher ground. • Micro Turbines: • associated with buildings.

BL15: Cul Mor - Auchmore

Area Ref and Name	BL15: Cul Mor-Auchmore
LCT	Forest Edge Farming
Description/landscape Role	While this shares a character designation with LCAs 10a and 10b, the topography and role in the landscape and to some degree the farming element is markedly different. The LCA slopes generally towards the east north east in a continuous slope. Farming is more limited to rough grazing which blends into moorland vegetation, in contrast with the more cultivated farmland in other examples of the LCT. The convex slope combined with the forestry cover means that the upper slopes are not visible from the majority of common vantage points. The LCA reads in the landscape as covering the wooded steeper slopes below the bare rocky moorland summits to the west.
Key Views	From Knockfarrel and the elevated crofting areas around Balvaird and Newmore.
Key Routes	The area is primarily visible from the A835 as it tracks west from Maryburgh roundabout and out of the study area. The A862 between Marybank and Muir of Ord is limited in views by landform and roadside vegetation.
Gateways	N/A
Landscape Sensitivity	The sensitivity of the LCA lies in its role within the wider landscape. In the locations where the LCA is visible, it forms a layer which compresses the transition from Rocky Moorland summits to rich farmland plain into a very small range. Development in this location, where visible from the key routes and settlements would be likely to reduce the distinctiveness of skylines and the perception of scale of the landscape.

Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change		
Large Scale Wind Farms	**Small Individual**	**Access Infrastructure**
1	2	2

Sensitive Visual Receptors	**Highest Sensitivity** • Residents of wider region. • People using key routes. **Medium** • Residents of immediate locality. • People at key viewpoints. • Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers **Lower** • Users of other routes. • People engaged on work.
Current Wind Energy Development	Existing development: pair of large turbines at Auchmore approximately 80m.
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Large turbines. Scope for: • Medium and Small turbines. Turbines should be: • consistent with existing development pattern. • located within pockets of farming land. • set back from Key Routes. • single turbines or pairs. • clear of higher ground and set back from skylines.

BL16: Ulladale and Kinellan

Area Ref and Name	BL16: Ulladale and Kinellan
LCT	Forest Edge Farming
Description/landscape Role	The LCA is small in extent and of intimate character, positioned between Strathpeffer and Contin and looping around the north of Strathpeffer's Ord Hill and dropping into Strath Peffer[1] in the east and towards Contin to the west. The LCA forms the setting to Loch Kinellan and its Crannog, and to the Strathpeffer Golf Course, as well as giving access to the extensive tracks and trails within LCA BL43 - Wooded Glens and Rocky Moorland.
Key Views	Knockfarrel – the LCA is seen as a part of the layered landscape between the viewer and Ben Wyvis, forming the setting for Strathpeffer. Strathpeffer Conservation Area – The LCA itself is largely screened from the Conservation Area by Ord Hill to the north-west, but development within the LCA may be visible at the skyline.

<table>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td>A9 - Cromarty Causeway – the LCA is seen to the west as a part of the layered view providing the termination of Strath Peffer.

A835 – views of the LCA are limited by landform, but development within the LCA may be visible within layered horizons.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>A835 at Leanaig junction- the LCA itself is not distinguishable within the views, but development within the LCA may be visible above the interim horizon of the BL31 and BL23 LCAs and seen in the context of both Ben Wyvis SLA and the existing development in BL23. Where such development impinged on the skyline qualities of the Ben Wyvis SLA this may affect the gateway qualities of the location.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>The sensitivity of the LCA lies both in its local role as part of the countryside setting of Strathpeffer and Contin and in its role within the wider landscape.

Development in this location may:

• dominate spaces.
• reduce legibility of layered landscape in longer views.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality.
• People at key viewpoints.
• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.

Medium

• Residents of wider region.
• People using key routes.

Lower

• Users of other routes.
• People engaged on work.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>None.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for Wind Energy Development</td><td>No scope for:

• Large or Medium turbines.

Limited scope for:

• Small and Micro turbines.

Turbines should be:</td></tr>
</table>

	• strongly associated with existing buildings/land use. • <25m. • single turbines. • clear of higher ground and skylines.

1. Strath Peffer denotes the strath, rather than the town of Strathpeffer

BL17: Morrich More

Area Ref and Name	BL17: Morrich More
LCT	Coastal Shelf
Description of Landscape Role	Low lying coastal flats on south shore of Dornoch Firth. An area with periodic limitations on access related to the Ministry of Defence Danger Area and lack of through routes, so mostly viewed from outside area. Contrasts with the softer, settled landscape of the lowland farming plain which it divides from the firth and the Rounded Hills to the west, seeming to relate more closely to the waters of the firth. Character is influenced by MoD buildings. Within Dornoch Firth NSA and contributing to 'The tranquillity of an undeveloped coastline' Special Quality.
Key Views	Present in views from Dornoch coast- representative location at Lonemore and from Portmahomack.
Key Routes	A9, primarily when travelling south, from Dornoch Bridge. B9176 viewpoint (outwith Study Area) part of distant composition. Railway- Far North Line
Gateways	N/A
Landscape Sensitivity	The area has a strong horizontal emphasis and sense of separation from the more settled adjacent landscape. The flat extent of the area leads the eye beyond to the Sutherland landscapes. Turbine development would create new focus diminishing the prominence of the Firth and landscapes beyond.

Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change		
Large Scale Wind Farms	**Small Individual**	**Access Infrastructure**
2	2	3

Sensitive Visual Receptors	**Highest Sensitivity** • Residents of immediate locality. • People at key viewpoints. • Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers. *NCR1 passes within 1.5km, parallelling the boundary for 2km.* • Users of other routes.

	Medium • Residents of wider region. • People using key routes. *Potential visibility from Far North Rail Line and A9 at Dornoch Bridge Gateway.* • Users of other routes. *Including recreational visitors/tourists to Portmahomack and Tarbat Ness.* **Lower** • People engaged on work.
Current Wind Energy Development	None within LCT area. Wider area has few developments, 1 micro, 2 small and 1 medium all associated with buildings: • Inver Primary School: 15m to hub • 600m northeast of Baladie Farm: 37m to hub • Aldie Farm x2: 20.60m to hub
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for turbine development. NB. While the Landscape Character Sensitivity assessment does not give the highest sensitivity to the LCA, the sensitivity of the neighbouring National Scenic Area reduces development scope further.

BL18: Chanonry Point

Area Ref and Name	BL18: Chanonry Point
LCT	Coastal Shelf
Description/landscape Role	Site encompasses part of Fortrose Conservation Area, including the Cathedral as well as farmland, housing, school site, Caravan Parks, Golf Course, Lighthouse, beaches and coastal core paths, parking and cafes. The car park on the Point is heavily used by visitors. Dolphin viewing is key activity. Area allows views up and down firth which would otherwise only be available from on the water. Relationship with opposing Fort George Spit. Part of Sutors of Cromarty, Rosemarkie and Fort George SLA and which forms the gateway between the open coast and expansive waters of the Moray Firth and the intimate landscapes of the Inverness and Beauly Firths.
Key Views	Key feature in views from Fort George. Visible in views from Allanfearn Junction A96 and from Kessock Bridge and from watercraft in the Firth as well as aircraft using Inverness Airport.
Key Routes	**Outwith LCA** A96 A9 A832
Gateways	N/A

<table>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>Encroaching turbines would be likely to diminish landmark features such as Chanonry Light and Fort George.

The Chanonry spit's low topography and projection into the firth would lend undue prominence to all but the smallest scale of turbine.

The narrowness of the spit means that any other infrastructure would be likely to overwhelm existing landuses.

The 13m high lighthouse would readily be overwhelmed in the landscape by taller structures.

<table>
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Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality.
• People at key viewpoints.
• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.
Including people engaged in recreation, i.e. Dolphin spotting, Golfing, walking or sailing leisure craft.
• People using key routes.
A832 in proximity.
• Users of other routes.
Local roads.

Medium

• Residents of wider region.
Although not 'key views' development would be visible in many residential views on both sides of the Firth.
• People using key routes.
A96 south of Firth.

Lower

• People engaged on work.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>None within area: Wider area has the following within the Farmed and Forested Slopes LCT, backdropped by south east facing slopes.
• Easter Templands: 18.40m to hub
• Carsewood Fortrose: 21m to hub
• Black Isle Education Centre Raddery:12m to hub</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for Wind Energy Development</td><td>No scope for:

• Large or Medium turbines.

Limited scope for:

• Small and Micro turbines.</td></tr>
</table>

	Turbines within 1km of lighthouse should be: • associated with buildings. • single. • < approx. 8m tip height. Turbines > 1km from lighthouse should be: • single or paired. • <25m high. • located at the foot of the slope, backdropped by Farmed and Forested Slopes.

BL19: Bunchrew Point

Area Ref and Name	BL19: Bunchrew Point
LCT	Coastal Shelf
Description/landscape Role	A small area of coastal shelf which lies between the A862/Far North Line transport corridor and the Beauly Firth. The area includes a Country House Hotel, Farm, Camping and Caravan Site with some permanent residence, mature woodland and arable farmland.
Key Views	Significant in views to and from Clachnaharry Lock.
Key Routes	A862 A9 from Kessock Bridge to approx. Munlochy Junction. Railway - Far North Line
Gateways	Development would be visible from Kessock Bridge.
Landscape Sensitivity	Small extent of the area and its location, between the transport corridor (including National Tourist Route) and shore, enhances the susceptibility of the area to change arising from development. While outside the area, the immediate proximity of Bunchrew Village and Englishton add to the susceptibility.

Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change

Large Scale Wind Farms	Small Individual	Access Infrastructure
1	3	2

Sensitive Visual Receptors	**Highest Sensitivity** • Residents of immediate locality. *Including settlements immediately outwith the LCT area.* • People at key viewpoints. *Clachnaharry Loch.* • Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.

	Area is a small, but significant residential hub for tourists. • People using key routes. *A862 and Far North Rail Line.* **Medium** • Residents of wider region. *Visibility across the firth for residents of Charleston etc.* • Users of other routes. *C class road on north shore of Beauly Firth.* **Lower** • People engaged on work.
Current Wind Energy Development	No pattern of development within the Beauly Firth area.
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Large or Medium turbines. Limited scope for: • Small and Micro turbines. Turbines should be: • strongly associated with existing buildings/land use. • <25m. • single turbines.

BL20: Fearn Peninsula

Area Ref and Name	BL20: Fearn Peninsula
LCT	Lowland Plain Farming
Description/landscape Role	This is a self-contained Landscape area of intensive agriculture with a range of settlement ranging from nucleated and linear villages to the periphery of a main settlement, townships, scattered farmsteads and occasional industrial sites. The area provides the inland setting of the North Sutor in the Open Farmed Slopes LCT and the Morrich More in Coastal Shelf LCT.
Key Views	North Sutor - present in views from interior of LCA and south east coast. Cromarty Harbour – Partial views to east. Nairn Beach – Northern portion of view, but at 20km distance. **Local Views** Dornoch Coast – directly opposing coast. Tarbat Ness – is a significant local landmark features, visible in views from within the LCA and to the north around Dornoch. Portmahomack - west and northward views take in northern coastal sections of LCA.

<table>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td>A9 – North and southbound the area is visible to the east of the route, but limited by roadside vegetation and topography.

Railway - Far North Line

Core Paths at Sutors

National Cycle Network 1 (Cyclists between Allangrange and Tain via Nigg Ferry)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>The landscape sensitivity in this LCA arises from a number of factors:
• views towards local landmarks such as the North Sutor and Tarbat Ness which may be diminished by encroachment of turbines.
• its contribution to the setting of Tain, particularly in views from north of Dornoch Firth.
• self contained nature of the LCA as experienced within the LCA.

<table><tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr><tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>3</td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality.
Given nature of topography, not all residents would be affected by development within LCA interpret as immediate locality of any proposal.
• People at key viewpoints.

Specifically the closer and more tourist-relevant viewpoints including North Sutor, Portmahomack and Cromarty Harbour.

• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.

NCR1 from Tain to Nigg Ferry, core paths around Hilton of Cadboll and Balintore.

• Users of other routes.

Medium

• People at key viewpoints.

Including more distant viewpoints such as Nairn Beach and Dornoch Coast

Lower

• Residents of wider region.

Views into area from west are relatively limited in the medium range.

• People engaged on work.</td></tr>
</table>

Current Wind Energy Development	Existing development is limited and includes 2 micro turbines, Small turbines associated with school buildings and disused airfield site. Medium turbine at Baladie Farm. All locations present a legible association with buildings/consumers of energy.
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Large turbines. Limited scope for: • Medium turbines. Turbines should be: • Related to communities and of appropriate scale. • Avoid intrusion in Key Views, especially view to North Sutor. Limited scope for: • Small and Micro Turbines. Turbines should be: • strongly associated with existing buildings/land use. • single turbines. • clear of higher ground and skylines.

BL21: North Sutor

Area Ref and Name	BL21: North Sutor
LCT	Open Farmed Slopes
Description/landscape Role	The North Sutor and Hill of Nigg form a significant landform visible from around the Cromarty Firth and from the south coast of the Inner Moray Firth, represented by views from Nairn. The landform, together with the South Sutor, creates a distinctive feature marking the entrance to the Cromarty Firth.
Key Views	The North Sutor and Hill of Nigg form a prominent landmark visible from the Black Isle, Fearn Peninsula and Cromarty and Moray Firths.
Key Routes	A9 between Alness and Tain Sutors Core Paths National Cycle Network 1 (Cyclists between Allangrange and Tain via Nigg Ferry)
Gateways	A9 Nigg Roundabout: the landform is framed in views on the approach to the roundabout from the north.
Landscape Sensitivity	The landmark quality of the landforms within the LCA increases its susceptibility to change arising from development. The contrast of the steeper higher ground compared to the relative flatness of the Lowland Plain Farming makes the LCA particularly vulnerable to impact on appreciation of scale and distance.

<table>
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<tr><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>
Highest Sensitivity
• Residents of immediate locality.
• People at key viewpoints.
Cromarty Seafront.
• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.
NCR1 runs along the northern edge of the LCA linking to the Nigg Ferry route.
• Residents of wider region.
The feature enjoys a high visibility around the Cromarty Firth.
• People using key routes.
A9 south to the Gateway location at Nigg Roundabout, east between Broomhill and Delny.
Medium
• Users of other routes.
Local roads and elevated routes within Farmed and Forested Slopes and Forest Edge Farming.
Lower
• People engaged on work.
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>Present development within the LCA is restricted to one small turbine at Strath of Pitcalnie. Two applications for 5 and 3 medium turbines respectively have been refused for Hill of Nigg.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for Wind Energy Development</td><td>
No scope for:
• Large or Medium turbines.
Limited scope for:
• Small and Micro turbines.
Turbines should be:
• strongly associated with existing buildings/land use.
• <25m.
• single turbines or pairs.
</td></tr>
</table>

	• clear of higher ground and skylines. • not excessively clustered at base of hill where the effect may be of a 'fence' of turbines separating the landform from the neighbouring lower lying ground.

BL22: South Sutor and Northern Black Isle

Area Ref and Name	BL22: South Sutor and Northern Black Isle
LCT	Open Farmed Slopes
Description/landscape Role	The LCA covers the North Sutor and the north facing slopes of the Black Isle, looking out over the Cromarty Firth and towards the Ross-shire hills and Wyvis Massif. The LCA provides a foil to the Firth as viewed from the northern side.
Key Views	A9 between Duncanston and Causeway - views towards Wyvis and Ross-shire Hills across firth and northern shore of LCA. Ben Wyvis. Cromarty – Views towards the firth are variable, at times oil rigs are the main focus and at others, the Ross-shire hills.
Key Routes	A9 between Duncanston and Causeway – representative of experience within the LCA where the openness of views to the north is significant to appreciation of the Wyvis Massif. A9 and NCN1 (Cyclists between Allangrange and Tain via Nigg Ferry) – north side of the Cromarty Firth, LCA is a constant presence defining the firth. A835 A832 A862 Sutors Core Paths
Gateways	A9 at Duncanston. A835 at Leanaig junction. Foulis Point and Balnacraig Gateway – LCA is seen across the Firth and is significant in composition of views and experience of the Firth.
Landscape Sensitivity	The frequency of scattered housing means that this is a relatively densely populated landscape, despite the agricultural appearance. The single direction of slope and presence of sensitive visual receptors across the firth mean that poorly sited turbines risk dominating both the views towards the Black Isle and the experience of the Firth.

Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change		
Large Scale Wind Farms	**Small Individual**	**Access Infrastructure**

	1 | 3 | 2
Sensitive Visual Receptors	**Highest Sensitivity** • Residents of immediate locality. • People at key viewpoints. *Views towards Wyvis Massif and views south across Firth* • Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers. *NCR1 and major tourist route.* • People using key routes. *A9 and A862, NCR1 within LCA.* • Users of other routes. *B9169 where outlook to Wyvis Massif is significant part of experience of travel.* **Medium** • Residents of wider region. *The enclosed and inward looking nature of the settlement around the Cromarty Firth focuses attention and significance on changes affecting experience.* • People using key routes. *A9 and A862, NCR1 within Study Area, outside LCA.* • Users of other routes. *Old Evanton Road, higher level cross-firth views.* **Lower** • People engaged on work.
Current Wind Energy Development	There is a single small turbine east of the A9 at Tore Farm, three small turbines near Navity in the east of the LCA and a single Micro turbine at Brae.
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Large or Medium turbines. Some scope for: • Micro - typical appropriate group size -1-3. • Small - typical appropriate group size -1-3. Turbines should (be): • strongly associated with existing buildings/land use. • <25m. • clear of higher ground and skylines. • not impinge on Key Views. • set back from Key Routes. • respect spacing and scale of existing development pattern

BL23: Knockfarrel and Blackwood

Area Ref and Name	BL23: Knockfarrel and Blackwood
LCT	Open Farmed Slopes
Description/landscape Role	The LCA comprises very steep north facing and gentler south facing slopes, divided by the ridges between Cnoc Mòr and Knockfarrel and then a broader rounded ridge which drops towards Pitglassie. The north side encompasses the Designed Landscape at Strathpeffer Spa Gardens and the iron-age fort of Knock Farril and overlaps the Strathpeffer Conservation Area. The LCA also forms the southern enclosure of Strath Peffer(1), with end views of the distinctive hill being a feature of the road west from Dingwall. The south facing slopes form part of the setting for Loch Ussie and are a component in views towards the Wyvis Massif with its agricultural character contrasting with the wilder slopes of the massif.
Key Views	Views from: • Strathpeffer Conservation Area. • Knockfarrel. Views to: • Ben Wyvis.
Key Routes	Kyle of Lochalsh Railway Line A835 A862
Gateways	A834 at Strathpeffer A835 at Leanaig junction
Landscape Sensitivity	Prominent position in views towards Wyvis from gateway location on A835 at Leanaig junction. Wyvis is a key regional landmark and of National significance for the distinctiveness of the landscape. The area also forms significant enclosure for the contained landscapes of Loch Ussie and Strath Peffer.

Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change		
Large Scale Wind Farms	**Small Individual**	**Access Infrastructure**
1	2	2

Sensitive Visual Receptors	**Highest Sensitivity** • Residents of immediate locality. • People at key viewpoints. • Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers. *Knockfarrel is well visited, car park allows high landscape views even for people who cannot walk to the Fort.* • Residents of wider region. *Conon Bridge, Maryburgh and properties between the firth and B9169.* • People using key routes. *A835 from Leanaig to Maryburgh roundabout.* • Users of other routes. *A834 within Strath Peffer.* **Lower** • People engaged on work.
Current Wind Energy Development	A string of single turbines running approximately east west from Knockfarrel Township to Pitglassie Farm, generally following the ridge between north and south facing slopes as it drops towards the firth. One Medium scale, four small scale. Reading as related, but distinct developments.
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Large or Medium turbines. Limited scope for: • Small and Micro turbines – capacity most likely north of Loch Ussie and south of Knockfarrel ridge. Turbines should (be): • associated with buildings. • respect spacing and scale of existing development pattern. • maintain the landscape setting of each existing scheme. • preserve mitigation established by current schemes. • not breach interim horizons when seen from key view locations. • clear of higher ground and skylines particularly as seen from Strath Peffer[1]. The northern slopes and ridge line have no scope for development. Some scope for Small/Micro may exist on shallower slopes outwith the visual link between Knockfarrel and Strathpeffer.

1. Strath Peffer denotes the strath, rather than the town of Strathpeffer
1. Strath Peffer denotes the strath, rather than the town of Strathpeffer

BL24: Kinnahaird

Area Ref and Name	BL24: Kinnahaird
LCT	Open Farmed Slopes
Description/landscape Role	Farmed slope forming part of the break between the richer farming lands of the east and the landscapes dominated by forestry, moorland and rough grazing to the west.

<table>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td>No key views, but significant as part of the appreciation of landscape transition.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td>A835.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>A835 at junction with A832.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>Limited extent of the area limits scope for development.
<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity
• Residents of immediate locality.
• People using key routes.
A835 and A832 around Marybank.
• Users of other routes.
A834 between Contin and Strathpeffer.
Medium
• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.
Lower
• Residents of wider region.
• People engaged on work.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>None</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for Wind Energy Development</td><td>No scope for:
• Large or Medium turbines.
Very Limited scope for:
• Small and Micro turbines.
Turbines should be:
• associated with buildings.
• single.
• clear of higher ground and skylines</td></tr>
</table>

BL25: Marybank/Coul of Fairburn

Area Ref and Name	BL25: Marybank/Coul of Fairburn
LCT	Open Farmed Slopes

<table>
<tr><td>Description/landscape Role</td><td>Farmed slope forming part of the break between the richer farming lands of the east and the landscapes dominated by forestry, moorland and rough grazing to the west.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td>Not significant in key views, but significant as part of the appreciation of landscape transition.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td>A832</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>A835 at junction with A832.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>Limited extent of the area limits scope for development.

<table><tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr><tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality.
• People using key routes.
A835 and A832 around Marybank.
• Users of other routes.
A834 between Contin and Strathpeffer.

Medium

• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.

Lower

• Residents of wider region.
• People engaged on work.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>None</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for Wind Energy Development</td><td>No scope for:

• Large or Medium turbines.

Very Limited scope for:

• Small and Micro turbines.

Turbines should be:

• Associated with buildings.
• <25m.
• single.</td></tr>
</table>

BL26: Ruisaurie

<table>
<tr><th>Area Ref and Name</th><th>BL26: Ruisaurie</th></tr>
<tr><td>LCT</td><td>Open Farmed Slopes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Description/landscape Role</td><td>Farmed slope, south-east facing, forming part of the break between the richer farming lands of the east and the landscapes dominated by forestry, moorland and rough grazing to the west. Provides backdrop to Beauly and carries several overhead power lines.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td>No key views, but significant as part of the appreciation of landscape transition.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td>A862

Far North Rail Line

Both of these applicable from around Beauly and Muir of Ord.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>Limited extent of the area limits scope for development.
<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality.
• Residents of wider region.
Including Beauly and Muir of Ord, not wider.
• People using key routes.
A862, Far North Rail Line.

Medium

• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.

Lower

• People engaged on work.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>None</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for Wind Energy Development</td><td>No scope for:

• Large, Medium or Small turbines.

Very Limited scope for:

• Micro turbines.</td></tr>
</table>

	Turbines should be: • associated with buildings. • clear of higher ground

BL27: Heights of Fodderty and Brae to Ardullie

Area Ref and Name	BL27: Heights of Fodderty and Brae to Ardullie
LCT	Open Steep Farmed Slopes
Description/landscape Role	Steep farmed slopes forming northern enclosure of Strath Peffer(1) and the upper Cromarty Firth, backdrop to Dingwall. Transition between richer farmed fields of the valley floor and the moorland and forestry dominated landscapes above. South and south east facing slopes separated by outskirts of Dingwall and remnant policy park/farmland.
Key Views	Views from Strathpeffer and Knockfarrel. Local views from Dingwall centre towards Ben Wyvis.
Key Routes	A9 A862 Railway - Kyle of Lochalsh Line **Outwith LCA** A835
Gateways	Views across firth from A9/Gateway location, represented by location between Duncanston and Causeway. In these views the LCA is an essential part of views to the Wyvis Massif. Gateway views on A835 at Leanaig junction towards Wyvis Massif.
Landscape Sensitivity	Layering in views from the south with existing turbines in LCA BL23. Potential to impinge on views to Wyvis Massif. Narrowness of LCA means turbines on upper slopes would primarily be skylined or seen against other LCAs. Small scale of Strath Peffer(2) would increase relative prominence of development.

Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change		
Large Scale WindFarms	**Small Individual**	**Access Infrastructure**
1	2	1

Sensitive Visual Receptors	**Highest Sensitivity** • Residents of immediate locality. *Including immediately adjacent residential areas of Strathpeffer and Dingwall.* • People at key viewpoints. *Local View Points specifically Strathpeffer and Knockfarrel.* • People using key routes. *A835 and A9.* • Users of other routes. *A834 and Old Evanton Road.* **Medium** • Visitors/tourists including cyclist and walkers. • Residents of wider region. *Specifically residents within LCA where facing directly towards.* • People using key routes. *A9T.* • Users of other routes. *Other local network roads.* **Lower** • People engaged on work.
Current Wind Energy Development	Existing development limited to 3 small turbines. Turbine at Upper Docharty being 2 bladed.
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Large or Medium turbines. Limited scope for: • Small and Micro turbines. Turbines should (be): • single turbines or pairs. • <25m. • strongly associated with existing buildings/land use. • clear of higher ground and skylines. • not breach interim horizons when seen from key view or gateway locations. • avoid visual confusion with development in BL23 when viewed from south.

1. Strath Peffer denotes the strath, rather than the town of Strathpeffer
2. Strath Peffer denotes the strath, rather than the town of Strathpeffer

BL28: Foothills of Easter Ross Hills

Area Ref and Name	BL28: Foothills of Easter Ross Hills
LCT	Farmed and Forested Slopes
Description/landscape Role	Area provides the main corridor for the A9 along the north shore of the Cromarty Firth, east of Ardullie, and continues north where it provides the transition between the Lowland Plain Farming of the Fearn Peninsula and the Forest Edge Farming of the Ross-shire Hills. The LCA includes three significant settlements, Tain,

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>Invergordon and Alness, a range of smaller settlements, both inland and coastal, and the Designed Landscapes of Novar, Tarbat House and Balnagown Castle. Beyond the Study Area, the LCA continues around coast to the south side of the Dornoch Firth.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td>Views from and to Fyrish Monument.

From Cromarty Harbour.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td>A9 within LCA and in approaches.

B9176

Railway - Far North Line

National Cycle Network 1</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>Gateway at Nigg roundabout identifies a point on the edge of the LCA where there is an abrupt transition to the Lowland Plain Farming LCA BL20.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>This is a busy residential and transport corridor which is also highly visible from the south side of the firth. Receptors typically experience a range of perspectives, views travelling north and south and views from outside the LCA. The LCA is narrow, sandwiched between the more steeply rising ground of the Forest Edge Farming LCA and the waters of the Cromarty Firth, meaning that development is seldom seen in the context of the LCA alone.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality.
• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.
NCR1 crosses the area south of Tain and passes through the Forest Edge Farming before re-entering the LCA on a minor road at Alness and following the B817.
• People using key routes.
A9 and Far North Rail line within LCA and at approaches.
• Users of other routes.
Minor roads within LCA.

Medium

• People at key viewpoints.

Lower

• People engaged on work.</td></tr>
</table>

Current Wind Energy Development	There are a number of turbines of different sizes within the LCA: • Two pairs of medium scale turbines at the boundary of the LCA with LCA BL13 Forest Edge Farming. • Two pairs of small turbines 300-750m from A9. • One 2-bladed small turbine within Alness Golf Course. • One Micro scale turbine at Invergordon Leisure Centre.
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Large turbines. Scope for: • Medium or Small turbines. • Micro turbines. Turbines should be: • in continuation of existing pattern. • small and Medium turbines generally in pairs. • medium and Small turbines generally located to inland margin of LCA. • micro scale turbines associated with buildings. • set back from Key Routes

BL29: Black Isle Centre and South

Area Ref and Name	**BL29: Black Isle Centre and South**
LCT	Farmed and Forested Slopes
Description of Landscape Role	The LCA effectively falls into two parts, the fully forested top ridge of the Black Isle and the lower slopes which form a patchwork of woodland and fields oriented either to the south east or north west (around Culbokie). The ridge of the Black Isle is significant in the regional definition of space, forming the backdrop and skyline to the southern bounds of the Cromarty Firth and the northern bounds of the Inner Moray Firth.
Key Views	From: • A9 at Inshes. • Culloden Battlefield Visitor Centre. • Clachnaharry Lock. • Fort George. • Chanonry Point. • Kessock Bridge. • Allanfearn Junction A96. • Fyrish Monument. To: • Chanonry Point.
Key Routes	A832 A9

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>A835

National Cycle Network 1 (Cyclists between Allangrange and Tain via Nigg Ferry)

Outwith LCA

A96

A862

B9176

Inverness-Aberdeen rail line.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>A9 at Inshes

A9 at Torepark

B9176 near Balnacraig.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>Within the LCA the susceptible characteristics are: setting of villages, views out over firths, views into areas enclosed by woodlands and forestry, high density of scattered rural housing.

Looking towards the LCA the susceptible characteristics are the distinctive ridgeline of the Black Isle and the seaward slopes, the scale of the landscape and scale of the patchwork of open/forested ground.

<table><tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr><tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality.
• People at key viewpoints.
Viewpoints with directly focused and closer views i.e.

• A9 at Inshes
• Clachnaharry Lock
• Fort George
• Chanonry Point
• Kessock Bridge

• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.
The Black Isle has a high level of caravan and camping sites accommodation, in addition to B&B, Guesthouses and holiday lets. NCR1 passes through LCA on minor roads (as part of the Nigg Ferry loop).
• People using key routes.
Limited mostly to A832 within the LAC, other routes offer only limited exposure to the area.
• Users of other routes.</td></tr>
</table>

	Local roads within the LCA where they would be exposed to any new development.
	
	Medium
	
	• People at key viewpoints.
	  • *A9 at Inshes*
	  • *Clachnaharry Lock*
	• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.
	• Residents of wider region.
	Residents of Moray Coast areas and north side of Cromarty Firth in particular who may have focused views from home.
	• People using key routes.
	A69 and A9 outwith LCA.
	
	Lower
	
	• Users of other routes.
	• People engaged on work.

Current Wind Energy Development	Existing development is limited to: • two pairs of Small turbines. • two individual Small turbines. All turbines are approximately 25m to tip and sited such that they are only apparent within a limited local area.
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Large or Medium turbines. Some scope for: • Small and Micro turbines. Turbines should be: • associated with buildings. • <25m. • single or in pairs. • in locations where topography and woodland limits their presence in longer views. • emulate existing pattern.

BL30: Eastern Foothills of Central Highland Hills

Area Ref and Name	BL30: Eastern Foothills of Central Highland Hills
LCT	Farmed and Forested Slopes
Description/landscape Role	LCA provides a backdrop to the Farmed River Plain landscapes of the Conon and Beauly Rivers, and to Muir of Ord. It provides a transitional landscape between the Farmed River Plain and the Forest Edge Farming on higher ground to the west, with an upper limit of around 200m height.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>Visibility of LCA is largely restricted to areas enclosing the Beauly Firth and having a westerly outlook and the Farmed River Plain LCA BL33 around Beauly, Muir of Ord and Marybank.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td>Kessock Bridge and Clachnaharry Lock - the area is a small component part of these views, seen at a distance of over 12km

Knockfarrel - a component in the landscape over 6-10km, but neither a focus of view nor in a key direction of view.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td>Outwith LCA

A862 between Beauly and Muir of Ord.

A832 between Muir of Ord and Marybank.

A835 between Maryburgh and Marybank.

Highland Line between Beauly and Conon Bridge.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>A835 near Marybank</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>Within the LCA the susceptible characteristics are: setting of Muir of Ord and Marybank, views out over straths, high density of scattered rural housing.

Looking towards the LCA the susceptible characteristics are the skyline of the enclosing valley side, the scale of the landscape and scale of the patchwork of open/forested ground.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality.
Within LCA and immediately adjacent/facing.
• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.
Beauly is a popular tourist stop, with hotels and historic Priory.
• People using key routes.
Only in immediate vicinity of LCA.
• Users of other routes.
Within LCA.

Medium

• People at key viewpoints.

Lower

• People engaged on work.</td></tr>
</table>

Current Wind Energy Development	None
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Large or Medium turbines. Some scope for: • Small and Micro turbines. Turbines should be: • associated with buildings. • <25m. • single or in pairs. • in locations where topography and woodland limits their presence in longer views. • emulate existing pattern within LCA BL29.

BL31: Brahan Estate, Cnoc Mòr and Loch Ussie

Area Ref and Name	**BL31: Brahan Estate, Cnoc Mòr and Loch Ussie**
LCT	Farmed and Forested Slopes
Description/landscape Role	The LCA shares the elevated landform between the Conon and Peffery Rivers with LCAs BL23 Knockfarrel and Blackwood and BL24 Kinnahaird Open Farmed Slopes. The LCA also extends north, through the Strathpeffer Spa Gardens Designed Landscape, Strathpeffer Conservation Area and the Castle Leod Designed Landscape, enclosing the head of Strath Peffer(1) at Achterneed. The southern portion of the LCA, south of the A835 and north of the River Conon, forms the greater part of the Brahan Estate Designed Landscape of surviving 17th century parkland and policy woodlands. North of this, steep slopes and cliff faces rise approx. 100m above the road to woodland and plantation which wraps around Cnoc Mòr and the south side of Loch Ussie . The age of plantations means that felling and restructuring are also features of the LCA. In the east the LCA forms the western setting of Maryburgh and at its western extent takes in the formally laid out fields around Coul Mains, similar in character to those within the Brahan Estate Designed Landscape. From the south the LCA is seen as a part of the supporting composition of the Ben Wyvis SLA.
Key Views	From: • Knockfarrel – the Loch Ussie basin and wooded slopes beyond form the midground of views to the south and west. To: • Ben Wyvis- views mainly from the south side of the River Conon and Beauly Firth. While the LCA itself is not prominent from Muir of Ord, the possibility

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>of development based there being seen prominently against the flanks of Wyvis adds to the views' importance.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td>• A835 within LCA – Much of the LCA to north of road not immediately visible from this stretch, but some views across Brahan Estate Designed Landscape.
• A835 west of LCA - views towards Cnoc Mòr, seen above LCA-BL24.
• A835 Leanaig Junction north to Maryburgh Roundabout - views towards upper section of LCA, seen in context with Wyvis and LCA-BL3.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>• A835 Leanaig Junction – Gateway experiences revelation of Wyvis as dominant landscape feature, LCA is seen to the west of Wyvis as part of the ascending landform which frames and supports Ben Wyvis.
• A835/A832 Junction – Gateway experience is a sense of emergence into the long settled and cultivated landscapes of the Cromarty Firth.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>Within the LCA the susceptible characteristics are: settings of Ben Wyvis, Knockfarrel, Loch Ussie, Brahan, Spa Gardens and Castle Leod Designed Landscapes, Strathpeffer Conservation Area and Maryburgh.

Looking towards the LCA the susceptible characteristics are the backdrop of Ben Wyvis, the scale of the landscape and scale of the patchwork of open/forested ground.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality.
• People at key viewpoints.
• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.
• Residents of wider region.
• People using key routes.

Medium

• Users of other routes.

Lower

• People engaged on work.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>None.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for Wind Energy Development</td><td>No scope for:

• Large or Medium turbines.

Limited scope for:</td></tr>
</table>

	• Small and Micro turbines. Turbines should (be): • associated with buildings. • respect spacing and scale of existing development pattern. • maintain the landscape setting of each existing scheme. • preserve mitigation established by current schemes. • not breach interim horizons when seen from key view locations. • clear of higher ground and skylines particularly as seen from Strath Peffer(1). Ben Wyvis is recognised as a regionally important landscape through its SLA designation, any development which would diminish the prominence of Ben Wyvis should be avoided.

1. Strath Peffer denotes the strath, rather than the town of Strathpeffer
1. Strath Peffer denotes the strath, rather than the town of Strathpeffer

BL32: Englishton to Blackpark

Area Ref and Name	BL32: Englishton to Blackpark
LCT	Farmed and Forested Slopes
Description/landscape Role	The LCA is a mix of wooded and agricultural ground sloping down to the Beauly Firth, with woodland generally associated with stream courses. The LCA sits between areas of Coastal Shelf and Rolling Farmland and Woodland at BL19 and BL6 and mostly to the south of the road/rail transport corridor of the A862. Views of the LCA from the road are largely obscured by landform and railway embankments, but train passengers will have views to the south. The LCA forms part of the general setting of the Firth and is more highly visible from points north of the firth or from the Clachnaharry Lock where it is integral to the general scene rather than a feature in its own right.
Key Views	• Clachnaharry Lock - LCA forms part of setting of Firth. Development within LCA has potential to form a focal point, diminishing scenic views of Firth. • Kessock Bridge - LCA forms part of setting of Firth. Development within LCA has potential to form a focal point, diminishing scenic views of Firth.
Key Routes	A862 within LCA - visibility of LCA is limited, but development may be visible. A9 - limited visibility northbound from Kessock Bridge to approx. Munlochy Junction. Railway - Far North Line
Gateways	Kessock Bridge - The gateway qualities at this location generally arise from the bridge structure, experience of crossing water and either arriving at or leaving Inverness. While development in LCA may be visible, it is unlikely to impinge on gateway qualities.
Landscape Sensitivity	Within the LCA the susceptible characteristics are:

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>

setting of the Beauly Firth.
views west along the firth as obtained from Kessock Bridge and Clachnaharry Lock where development would potentially appear as creating a focus in competition with the scenic composition.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>
Highest Sensitivity

Residents of immediate locality.
People at key viewpoints.
Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.

Medium

Residents of wider region.
People using key routes.

Lower

Users of other routes.
People engaged on work.

</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>None.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for Wind Energy Development</td><td>
No scope for:

Large or Medium turbines.

Limited scope for:

Small and Micro turbines.

Turbines should be:

associated with buildings.
<25m.
single turbines.
set back from Key Routes

</td></tr>
</table>

BL33: Peffery, Conon, Beauly Rivers and Newton Burn

Area Ref and Name	BL33: Peffery, Conon, Beauly Rivers and Newton Burn
LCT	Farmed River Plains

Description/landscape Role	LCA covers the fertile and intensively farmed valley bottoms of the Newton Burn, River Peffery, River Conon and Black Water, and the River Beauly, linked by the higher ground of Muir of Ord which forms the watershed between the Beauly and Cromarty Firths. The LCA is generally narrow and contains most of the area's traditional service centres and transport links, meaning that many of the adjacent LCAs are primarily seem from the context of the Farmed River Plains LCA.
Key Views	The low lying nature of the LCA means it is not prominent in views from outwith the area and rising topography will tend to obscure views. Views from: • Kessock Bridge and Clachnaharry Locks - the area is a small component part of these views, seen at a distance of 8 or more km, but centrally placed within the view. Large scale development, particularly around Beauly or Kirkhill would hence be prominent in these views. • Knockfarrel and Strathpeffer Conservation Area: views directly down into Strath Peffer(1). • A9 between Duncanston and Causeway: views over Dingwall and some way up Conon and Peffrey river valleys, development on valley floor would be backdropped and framed by rising ground. Views to: • Ben Wyvis, important as a regional, scenic landmark element in backdrop of views from eg central Dingwall, the A832 approaching Muir of Ord from south, and the Far North rail-line between Berryfield and Wester Lovat. Views are available from other locations within the LCA, but often the hill is obscured by intervening higher ground or vegetation.
Key Routes	• A862 from Lentran to Dingwall. • A832 from Muir of Ord to Marybank. • A835 Marybank to Contin. • Far North Rail Line. • NCR1 between Dingwall and Maryburgh roundabout. All listed routes run within the corridor of the LCA.
Gateways	A835 at junction with A832. Travelling west, the LCA will occupy the foreground of views towards Torr Achilty.
Landscape Sensitivity	Density of population and presence of main transport routes suggest a high receptor awareness of development and a high likelihood of residential amenity and general views from routes being affected. Development would mostly be backdropped by surrounding LCAs with risk of a perceived reduction in scale and distance to hill landscapes.

Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change		
Large Scale Wind Farms	**Small Individual**	**Access Infrastructure**
1	2	3

Sensitive Visual Receptors	**Highest Sensitivity** • Residents of immediate locality. • People at key viewpoints. *Knockfarrel views to Strath Peffer.* • Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers. *Beauly is a tourist centre, with Historic Priory and people on way to/from Affric. NCR1 Maryburgh Roundabout/Dingwall.* • Residents of wider region. *Adjacent LCAs have residential which often have primary views across straths and valleys.* • People using key routes. *Use for commuting, tourism as well as local access.* • Users of other routes. *A834 through Strath Peffer.* **Lower** • People engaged on work.
Current Wind Energy Development	Existing development limited to two consents for Micro turbines in Dingwall Business Park. One consent is expired and one remains unbuilt.
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Large or Medium turbines. Very Limited scope for: • Small and Micro turbines. Turbines should (be): • associated with buildings. • <25m. • single turbines. • set back from Key Routes. • not impinge on views across water, or towards Ben Wyvis from key routes or on residential amenity.

1. Strath Peffer denotes the strath, rather than the town of Strathpeffer

BL34: Portmahomack to North Sutor, BL35: North West Black Isle Coast, BL36: South Central Black Isle Coast and BL37: South East Black Isle Coast

Area Ref and Name	**BL34: Portmahomack to North Sutor** **BL35: North West Black Isle Coast** **BL36: South Central Black Isle Coast** **BL37: South East Black Isle Coast**
LCT	Cliffs and Rocky Coast

<table>
<tr><td>Description/landscape Role</td><td>Steep coastal fringe to the south easterly coasts of the Black Isle and Fearn Peninsula. The LCAs are primarily viewed from immediately adjacent to the LCA, from within the LCA or in views across water towards the LCA.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td>• Chanonry Point.
• Fort George.
• Nairn Beach.
• Kessock Bridge.
• Clachnaharry Lock.
• Tarbat Ness.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td>Sutors Core Paths

Outwith LCA

A9 brief views between Drummossie and Kessock Bridge.

A96 intermittent views across firth.

A862 low views across Beauly Firth.

A832 aligned views travelling west from Fortrose to Avoch.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>• A9 at Inshes.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>Inaccessibility of LCA and prominence in views towards when backdropped by neighbouring LCAs. Prominence in coastal views where available from seaboard villages.

<table><tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr><tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality.
• People at key viewpoints.
• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.
• People using key routes.
A9 and A832 where close views would be available.

Medium

• Residents of wider region.
• People using key routes.
More distant routes where seen across water and not in main focus of view.

Lower</td></tr>
</table>

	• Users of other routes. • People engaged on work.
Current Wind Energy Development	None
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Large turbines. • Medium turbines. • Small turbines. Limited scope for: • Micro turbines. Turbines should (be): • associated with buildings. • clear of higher ground and skylines. • not breach interim horizons when seen from key view locations.

BL38: Above Dingwall

Area Ref and Name	BL38: Above Dingwall
LCT	Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes
Description/landscape Role	The LCA is not primarily visible from the A9, but sits between the Forest Edge Farming LCA at BL14 and the Rounded Mountain Massif of BL41 – Ben Wyvis. While much of the ground is hidden in long views from the south, the distance provided between the closer more domestic landscape and the wilder mountain slopes and summit of Ben Wyvis and the Ross-shire Hills is valuable in emphasising the contrast in character. From the A835 the LCA is much more prominent forming a distinct moorland clad layer in the landscape which divides the slopes of Wyvis from the more agricultural and policy woodland remnants of the landscape immediately above Dingwall.
Key Views	From: • Knockfarrel – Views out to the east look directly into the LCA and development would be seen in context of Ben Wyvis and the wider Cromarty Firth landscape. • A9 Duncanston. Visibility of the LCA itself is limited, but due to the height of wind turbines, visibility of development in the LCA is likely. Turbines and blades appearing between the layers of the landscape would have potential to reduce the clarity and legibility of the landscape, adversely affecting the regionally important setting of the Ben Wyvis SLA, the Ben itself and appreciation of scale and distance in the landscape. • Ben Wyvis – Views to the south east likely to be affected. To: NB: Development within the LCA is likely to be visible from locations where the LCA itself is not. • Ben Wyvis – Regionally significant views from north side of Black Isle and further south.

<table>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td>Railway - Far North Line

Outwith LCA

A835 from around Newton of Ferintosh to the River Conon gives views towards the LCA where it is seen as a clear layer within an ascending landscape structure. Development in this area would potentially reduce the clarity and legibility of the landscape, adversely affecting the setting of the Ben Wyvis SLA, the Ben itself and appreciation of scale and distance in the landscape.

A9 from around Duncanston to Cromarty Causeway. As for Gateway-A9 Duncanston.

A834- The LCA is intermittently visible from around Dingwall. It is likely that development within the southern portion of the SLA would be visible from this route and create a new focus within views towards Ben Wyvis. This would have the potential to diminish the existing character and sense of place.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>• A9 at Duncanston- Gateway qualities relate to revelation of views of the Cromarty Firth and Ben Wyvis. Development in this LCA would be unlikely to affect qualities relating to the Cromarty Firth, but have potential to diminish regionally significant scenic and landmark qualities relating to Ben Wyvis by detracting focus. Development within the LCA is likely to be visible from locations where the LCA itself is not.
• A835 Leanaig Junction – Gateway experiences revelation of Wyvis as dominant landscape feature, LCA is seen below the southern slopes of ben Wyvis, as part of the ascending landform which frames and supports the regionally important landform. Development in this LCA would risk diminishing the landmark qualities of Wyvis and hence the Gateway qualities of the location. The existing development at Novar, within the BL41 Rounded Mountain Massif on the slopes of Meall an Tuirc and Cnoc Gille Mo Bhrianaig is visible immediately beyond the LCA.
• A834 Strathpeffer- The gateway qualities derive from the sense of entry into Strath Peffer[1] from Strathpeffer Conservation Area. The LCA is visible to the north of views which are channelled east and development which was visible in this area would have potential to impact on the sense of place, the setting of Conservation Area and the setting of the Spa Gardens Designed Landscape.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>Within the LCA the susceptible characteristics are: setting of the Cromarty Firth, Ben Wyvis and the Ben Wyvis SLA, the setting of Strathpeffer Conservation Area and the Spa Gardens Designed Landscape.

Ben Wyvis is a pivotal landmark feature of the Cromarty Firth, particularly in its upper reaches, and its prominence which is a Special Quality of the SLA should be protected as such; while Ben Wyvis itself lies outwith the LCA, the LCA is interleaved in the layers of the landscape such that development would be seen to be intimately associated with the Ben.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
</table>

Sensitive Visual Receptors	**Highest Sensitivity** • Residents of immediate locality. • People at key viewpoints. • Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers. • People using key routes. **Medium** • Residents of wider region. • Users of other routes. **Lower** • People engaged on work.
Current Wind Energy Development	None
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Large turbines. Limited Scope for: • Medium turbines. Any Medium turbines should: • Not breach interim horizons when seen from key locations. • Not impinge on Key Views • Protect legibility of layered landscape in longer views. • Protect the Key Characteristics and Special Qualities of Ben Wyvis SLA. • Preserve mitigation established by current nearby schemes. Very limited scope for: • Small and Micro turbines. Any Small and Micro turbines should (be): • <25m. • associated with buildings. • clear of higher ground and skylines. • not breach interim horizons when seen from key locations. • not impinge on Key Views. • protect legibility of layered landscape in longer views. • protect the Key Characteristics and Special Qualities of Ben Wyvis SLA.

1. Strath Peffer denotes the strath, rather than the town of Strathpeffer

BL39: Above Evanton

Area Ref and Name	BL39: Above Evanton
LCT	Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes

Description/landscape Role	The LCA is an area of elevated and complex topography between Glen Glass and the valley of the Ardross River. The slopes facing the Cromarty Firth are forested, with high levels of leisure access via tracks and paths and the ridge is surmounted by the, well visited, local landmark of the Fyrish Monument. The more northward slopes and summits are open moorland. The LCA is seen in long views from the south as well as in closer views as the immediate setting and backdrop of Alness and Evanton. The valleys which divide this LCA from BL38 and BL40 also allow visibility from the south to extend further north into the LCA. The LCA is immediately south of the Novar Wind Developments in the Rounded Mountain Massif LCA BL41 and provides a sense of separation between that development and the settled landscape of the Cromarty Firth.
Key Views	From: • Fyrish Monument - Views from the monument are most expansive to the south and east, over the Cromarty Firth, but also give views to the remainder of the LCA and related LCAs to east and west. Development between Fyrish and the coast would have some relation to the industrial land uses in the Firth coastal strip, but diminish views towards other landmarks such as the Sutors in the Sutors of Cromarty, Rosemarkie and Fort George SLA. To: NB: Development within the LCA is likely to be visible from locations where the LCA itself is not. • Fyrish Monument, The Monument is a significant local landmark whose scale and prominence would be diminished or obscured by development which affected the skyline of this LCA as viewed from the Cromarty Firth area.
Key Routes	**Outwith LCA** A9T- the LCA is visible from the A9T northwards from the north side of the Black Isle until just south of Alness. Views vary from angled views including Glen Glass to views where the LCA appears as a simple wooded screen slope. Development in the area would be likely to appear related to the Novar developments and due to the main directions of view could create a confusing composition where apparent scale of the landform becomes less legible and appears diminished. A835 – While views of the LCA are more distant, from Leanaig Junction north the LCA is seen in the north east in relation to the Novar Developments. Additional development in this LCA would be read as relating to Novar and would increase its visual weight and prominence to the potential detriment of the prevailing landmark qualities of Ben Wyvis and the SLA.
Gateways	• A9 at Duncanston- Gateway qualities relate to revelation of views of the Cromarty Firth and Ben Wyvis. Development in this LCA would be unlikely to affect qualities relating to the Cromarty Firth, but have potential to diminish qualities relating to Ben Wyvis by detracting focus. Development within the LCA is likely to be visible from locations where the LCA itself is not. • A835 Leanaig Junction – Gateway experiences revelation of Wyvis as dominant landscape feature, LCA is seen to the east of Wyvis as part of the ascending landform which frames and supports Ben Wyvis. Development

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>in this LCA would risk diminishing the landmark qualities of Wyvis and hence the Gateway qualities of the location.
• B9176 in vicinity of Balnacraig, south of Dalneich Bridge. The Gateway qualities when travelling south are experienced in the sense of arrival in the enclosed Cromarty Firth from the progression of Moorland and Forest Landscapes. Any visibility from this road towards development in the SLA would be primarily behind a viewer at this location and it is not likely that Gateway qualities would be diminished. The oblique angle of the LCA to the route will also reduce the likelihood of impact on qualities when travelling north.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>Within the LCA the susceptible characteristics are: setting of the Cromarty Firth, Ben Wyvis and the Ben Wyvis SLA, the setting of Fyrish Monument and the Novar and Ardross Castle Designed Landscapes.

Ben Wyvis is a pivotal landmark feature of the Cromarty Firth, particularly in its upper reaches, and its prominence which is a Special Quality of the SLA should be protected as such; while Ben Wyvis itself lies outwith the LCA, the LCA forms a part of the supporting array of hills which ‘bookend’ Ben Wyvis, such that development would be seen to be intimately associated with the Ben.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity
• Residents of immediate locality.
• People at key viewpoints.
• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.
• People using key routes.

Medium
• Residents of wider region.

Lower
• Users of other routes.
• People engaged on work.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>None.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for Wind Energy Development</td><td>No scope for:
• Large turbines.
• Small and Micro turbines.

Limited Scope for:
• Medium turbines.</td></tr>
</table>

	Any Medium turbines should: • not breach interim horizons when seen from key locations. • not impinge on Key Views. • protect legibility of layered landscape in longer views. • protect prominence of Fyrish Monument in longer views. • protect relationship with wider landscape as experienced from Fyrish Monument. • protect the Key Characteristics and Special Qualities of Ben Wyvis SLA. • preserve mitigation established by current nearby schemes.

BL40: Above Invergordon

Area Ref and Name	BL40: Above Invergordon
LCT	Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes
Description/landscape Role	The LCA is mainly composed of Forested slopes, beyond which glimpses of rounded moorland summits and Beinn Tharsuinn windfarm are sometimes visible. When viewed from low on the north side of the Black Isle the LCA is more strongly comparable to the Forest Edge Farming which it borders at LCA-BL13. Habitation pushes up close to the LCA boundary at Lamington and Ardross, making the LCA seem less remote from the settled Firth than BL38 and BL39. The LCA also has a network of tracks and paths, including Core Paths and leisure parking facilities. In wider views the LCA appears as a forested backdrop to Invergordon and a barrier between the settled firth and wilder landscapes to the north.
Key Views	• Cromarty Harbour- The LCA provides significant containment to the view and a foil to the oil exploration structures which are, at times, present in the Firth. Development visible from here would add to complexity of the views. Development on the south facing slopes would appear to be intrusive in this section of the firth and in combination with oil rig structures may overwhelm the landscape scale to its detriment. • Nairn – Although distant, structures may be visible over the top of the Black Isle, as structures moored in the Firth sometimes are, creating a potential for confusion in the landscape.
Key Routes	B9176 passes through the LCA and has a distinctive character of remoteness and moorland exposure. Development in proximity to the road may diminish this experience **Outwith LCA** A9- development within the LCA may be visible over a length of around 40km, travelling north and 20km travelling south. The LCA is seen from the road as a part of a layered landscape which provides containment without focus. Development which spills over the horizon formed by the LCA would appear to diminish the sense of containment.

<table>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>

B9176 in vicinity of Balnacraig, south of Dalneich Bridge. The Gateway qualities are experienced in the sense of transition between the enclosed Cromarty Firth and the progression of Moorland and Forest Landscapes. Development in the LCA adjacent would be unlikely to diminish the gateway qualities.

</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>
Within the LCA the susceptible characteristics are: setting of the Cromarty Firth, Setting of the Designed Landscape cluster at Balnagown Castle and Tarbat House, the setting of Ardross Castle Designed Landscape and the setting of Sutors of Cromarty, Rosemarkie and Fort George SLA.
<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>3</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>
Highest Sensitivity

Residents of immediate locality.
People at key viewpoints.
Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.

Medium

Residents of wider region.
People using key routes.

Lower

Users of other routes.
People engaged on work.

</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>None.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for Wind Energy Development</td><td>
Limited Scope for:

Large turbines.
Medium turbines.

Any Large or Medium turbines should (be):

located where the bases of turbines are on the far side of horizon to maintain the containment of space.
not of such a scale so to overwhelm the landscape and sense of place of the Moray Firth.
not breach interim horizons when seen from key locations.
not impinge on Key Views.
protect legibility of layered landscape in longer views.
protect the Key Characteristics and Special Qualities of Ben Wyvis SLA.
preserve mitigation established by current nearby schemes.

Very Limited scope for:
</td></tr>
</table>

	• Small and Micro turbines. Any Small and Micro turbines should (be): • around the fringes of LCA where it borders LCA BL13. • <25m. • associated with buildings. • clear of higher ground and skylines. • not breach interim horizons when seen from key locations. • not impinge on Key Views. • protect legibility of layered landscape in longer views. • protect the Key Characteristics and Special Qualities of Ben Wyvis SLA.

BL41: Ben Wyvis Massif (South)

Area Ref and Name	BL41: Ben Wyvis Massif (South)
LCT	Rounded Mountain Massif
Description/landscape Role	South eastern face of Ben Wyvis and Little Wyvis together with the smaller hills of Meall an Leathaid and Cnoc Gille Mo Brianaig to the east. This is the face of the Wyvis massif which forms a significant landmark visible from much of the Cromarty Firth, the north side of the Black Isle, from Central Inverness and from the A9 approaching Inverness from Drummossie Brae. The LCA lies mostly within the Ben Wyvis Special Landscape Area, and the citation describes the Special Qualities and Key Characteristics of the landscape. Ben Wyvis and its supporting hills are a pivotal and defining landmark for the area, acting as compass, timepiece and weathervane.
Key Views	• A9 Duncanston. The LCA is prominent in the view and a key focus. Turbines and blades appearing against the face of the massif would reduce the clarity and legibility of the landscape and be read in association with existing turbines on Meall an Leathaid and Cnoc Gille Mo Brianaig, adversely affecting the Ben Wyvis SLA's Key Characteristics and Special Qualities, the Ben itself and appreciation of scale and distance in the landscape. Turbines appearing on the skyline of Ben Wyvis would diminish its prominence and impoverish the landscape and visual resource over a wide area. • Ben Wyvis- views to and from the summit of the Ben would be severely compromised by turbines in close proximity, separating viewers from the view.
Key Routes	**Outwith LCA** • A9 • A835 • A862 From all routes where clear views of Wyvis are obtained, there would be a significant change to the experience of the route to the extent that Ben Wyvis would no longer stand as a clear focal point in its own right. The scale of the mountain would appear diminished and its distinctiveness in the landscape reduced as development was read in association with existing turbines on Meall an Leathaid and Cnoc Gille Mo Brianaig.

<table>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>

A9 at Duncanston- Gateway qualities relate to revelation of views of the Cromarty Firth and Ben Wyvis. Further development in this LCA would be unlikely to affect qualities relating to the Cromarty Firth, but significantly diminish qualities relating to Ben Wyvis by reducing its apparent scale and compromising the distinctiveness of its form and skyline.
A835 Leanaig Junction – Gateway experiences revelation of Wyvis as dominant landscape feature which is a culmination of the rising land to east and west. Further development in this LCA would significantly diminish the landmark qualities of Wyvis and hence the Gateway qualities of the location.

</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>
Within the LCA the susceptible characteristics are the presence and silhouette of Ben Wyvis itself. Ben Wyvis is a pivotal landmark feature of the Cromarty Firth, particularly in its upper reaches, and its prominence which is a Special Quality of the SLA should be protected as such.

The existing development on Meall an Leathaid and Cnoc Gille Mo Brianaig would be brought into greater prominence if there were a westward extension of development.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>
Highest Sensitivity

People at key viewpoints.
Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.
Residents of wider region.
People using key routes.

Medium

Residents of immediate locality.

Lower

Users of other routes.
People engaged on work.

</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>Novar and Novar Extension Medium and Large turbines arrayed primarily on the southern and western slopes of Meall an Leathaid and Cnoc Gille Mo Brianaig. Primary visibility is in views from the north slopes of the Black Isle and west towards Muir of Ord.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for Wind Energy Development</td><td>No scope for development.</td></tr>
</table>

BL42: Carn Gorm and Carn Loch an Tuirc

Area Ref and Name	BL42: Carn Gorm and Carn Loch an Tuirc
LCT	Rounded Rocky Hills

<table>
<tr><td>Description/landscape Role</td><td>The area is formed of moderate scale, well defined hills which connect the Wooded Glens and Rocky Moorland of Rogie and Tarvie to the Rounded Mountain Massif of Ben Wyvis.

In views towards Ben Wyvis from the south, the LCA forms part of the ascending landform which ‘bookend’ Ben Wyvis and act as a counterbalance to the Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes of Cnoc Cèislein to the east.

More locally the LCA is seen as a significant landform above the river, road and rail corridor at Garve, forming the eastern containment to Strathgarve.

NB views from the north are not considered in this Study Area.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td>• Knockfarrel – views from this location are panoramic and 360°. The LCA is clearly visible to the north-west, in proximity to the Ben Wyvis SLA and forming part of the ascending landform which builds towards the Wyvis summit.
• A9 at Duncanston - See Gateway descriptions.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td>Outwith LCA

A835 Newton of Ferintosh to Kinkell.

A9- northbound stretch near Duncanston and southbound after Cromarty Causeway to Duncanston.

See Gateway descriptions.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>• A9 at Duncanston-travelling North.
• A835 at Leanaig junction.
At both of these Gateways the LCA forms a part of the general composition of the landscape as landform builds up in height to the summit of Ben Wyvis. As Ben Wyvis is recognised as a regionally important landscape through its SLA designation, any development which diminished the prominence of Ben Wyvis would risk reducing the gateway qualities of the locations.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>Within the LCA the susceptible characteristics are: setting of Ben Wyvis and the Ben Wyvis SLA. While the LCA is not visible from these locations there is potential for turbines within the LCA to impacts on the setting of Strathpeffer Conservation Area and the Spa Gardens Designed Landscape.

Ben Wyvis is a pivotal landmark feature of the Cromarty Firth, particularly in its upper reaches, and its prominence which is a Special Quality of the SLA should be protected as such; while Ben Wyvis itself lies outwith the LCA, the LCA ‘bookends’ the massif to the west such that development would be seen to be intimately associated with the Ben.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
</table>

Sensitive Visual Receptors	**Highest Sensitivity** • People at key viewpoints. • Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers. • People using key routes. • People engaged on work. **Medium** • Residents of wider region. **Lower** • People engaged on work.
Current Wind Energy Development	None.
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for development.

BL43: Rogie and Tarvie

Area Ref and Name	BL43: Rogie and Tarvie
LCT	Wooded Glens and Rocky Moorland
Description/landscape Role	The LCA within the study area and east of the A835 is primarily forested ground with a wide network of tracks and trails, well used for walking, horse-riding and cycling. Forest areas are currently undergoing re-structuring/clearance/planting. West of the A835 woodland continues on the east facing slopes flanking the road, giving way to rocky moorland summits.
Key Views	• Knockfarrel – the LCA is seen as a part of the layered landscape between the viewer and Ben Wyvis, descending towards Castle Leod. • Strathpeffer Conservation Area – the LCA itself is largely screened from the Conservation Area by LCA BL16 - Forest Edge Farming, but development at the eastern side of the LCA may be visible at the skyline.
Key Routes	**Outwith LCA** • A9- Cromarty Causeway – the LCA is seen to the west as a part of the layered view providing the termination of Strath Peffer(1). • A835 within LCA – South of the Rogie Falls Car Park the road is very contained by landform and forestry with limited views, north of the Car Park views open out over the Loch na Croich area, giving views into LCA BL42 - Rocky Rounded Hills and Loch Garve. • A835 Newton of Ferintosh to Kinkell – the LCA itself is mostly not visible, but it is possible that development within the LCA would breach interim horizons of the view. • West Highland Railway Line- the line passes through the LCA and the valleys of the Rogie Burn and the River Peffery through a variety of cuttings and embankments with limited outward views.

<table>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>

A834 Strathpeffer- See Key View.
A835 at Leanaig junction- the LCA itself is not distinguishable within the views towards Wyvis at this point, but lies between the viewer and the BL42 LCA- Rounded Rocky Hills, such that development may be visible backdropped by this landscape or skylining. Where such development impinged on the skyline qualities of the Ben Wyvis SLA this may affect the gateway qualities of the location.

</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>
Within the LCA the susceptible characteristics are: setting of Ben Wyvis and the Ben Wyvis SLA. While the LCA is not visible from these locations there is potential for turbines within the LCA to impact on the setting of Strathpeffer Conservation Area and the Spa Gardens Designed Landscape.

Ben Wyvis is a pivotal landmark feature of the upper reaches of the Cromarty Firth, and its prominence which is a Special Quality of the SLA should be protected as such. While Ben Wyvis itself lies outwith the LCA, development in the LCA may be seen backdropped against the BL42 LCA- Rounded Rocky Hills which ‘bookends’ the massif to the west such that development would be seen to be intimately associated with the Ben.

<table>
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<tr><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>3</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>
Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality.
• People at key viewpoints.
• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers.

Medium

• Residents of wider region.
• People using key routes.

Lower

• Users of other routes.
• People engaged on work.
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>None.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for Wind Energy Development</td><td>
No scope for:

• Large or Medium turbines.

Limited scope for:

• Small and Micro turbines.

Any Small and Micro turbines should (be):
</td></tr>
</table>

	• around the fringes of LCA where it borders LCA BL13. • <25m. • associated with buildings. • set back from Key Routes. • clear of higher ground and skylines. • not breach interim horizons when seen from key locations. • not impinge on Key Views. • protect legibility of layered landscape in longer views.

1. Strath Peffer denotes the strath, rather than the town of Strathpeffer

Caithness Strategic Capacity

2.1 The Council has appraised the Caithness study area and considered its potential strategic capacity. The appraisal concludes that whilst there may be opportunities for further development in the study area, particularly of a smaller scale or in association with existing schemes, there is no strategic capacity. Scottish Government advice states that "Areas of strategic capacity are essentially Group 3 areas from the spatial framework … where it may be desirable to restrict smaller-scale wind turbines to allow larger wind turbines/farms to come forward … [but such work] should not be used to define individual wind farms as strategic" ('Onshore Wind Some Questions Answered'). The following factors contributed to the conclusion that there is no strategic capacity in the study area:

- multiple overlapping landscape and visual sensitivities identified in the appraisal, particularly in the remaining Group 3 areas to the west;
- a large coverage of a wide range of Group 2 Spatial Framework features;
- a large amount of the remaining Group 3 areas being located relatively close to settlements and residential properties (including settlements and individual properties without an identified boundary in the Local Development Plan);
- a large amount of the remaining Group 3 areas located relatively close to Group 2 features identified for landscape and visual sensitivities/ qualities;
- some remaining Group 3 areas located relatively close to Special Landscape Areas;
- remaining Group 3 areas being fragmented and at the scale of an individual site which guidance on SPP makes clear should not be regarded as strategic capacity.

Caithness Landscape Sensitivity

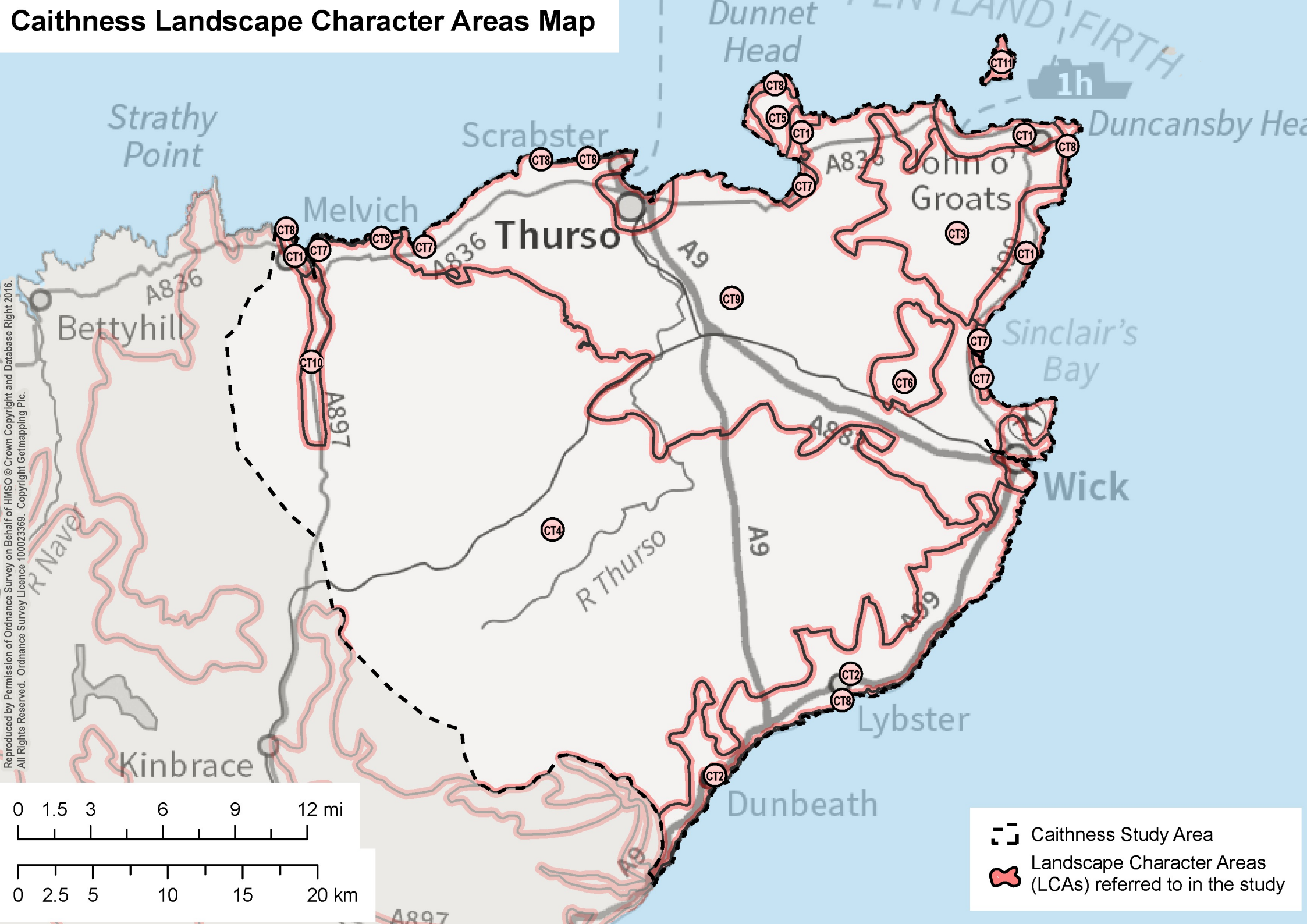
2.2 The following tables set out the results of the landscape sensitivity appraisal for the Caithness Study Area.

2.3 The Caithness Landscape is unique in Highland due to its particular and distinct natural landforms and settlement pattern. It is home to a range of internationally important features including the Flow Country and serves as a gateway to the Northern Isles and as a key tourist destination, including John O' Groats and Dunnet Head. The study area comprises three distinct environments; the coast with high cliffs and sandy bays, a moorland interior, and settled rolling agricultural landscapes. Key focal points to the south include Morven and Scaraben. There are large scale development clusters in the study area, concentrated mainly south and west of Wick to Causeymire, and others in the northeast and to the west of Thurso.

Summary of key findings from landscape sensitivity appraisal

2.4 There is limited potential for larger scale development within parts of the moorland interior. Where potential does exist, this should concentrate further development within existing clusters to consolidate them. In some instances new development proposals, including for repowering, could provide opportunities to improve the visual relationship of existing schemes with the landscape. The settled nature of the rolling agricultural landscapes means that such areas are only likely to be appropriate for some limited medium scale development, and small and micro scale turbines strongly associated with existing land use patterns. The coast is sensitive to development and is only likely to be appropriate for some small and micro scale development where it avoids the coastal edge and elevated transition into the moorland interior and avoids encirclement of settlement and sequential impacts along routes.

Caithness Landscape Character Areas Map



Key Views

Key Views

Name	Description	Locations available	Description of value/significance	LCAs important to the integrity of views
Flow Country - east	Unobstructed views to south-west across Flow Country (& WLA) to distant hills (Morven & Scaraben)	A9 viewpoint (war memorial)	Views across largest area of Flow Country not affected by plantations, with dramatic looking hills forming southern extent (with Sutherland beyond).	CT4 – Sweeping moorland & flows
Flow Country - north	Views to west across Flow Country (& WLA) from popular archaeological sites	Ben Freiceadain & Ben Dorrery	Extensive views across a WLA and type views of Flow Country with abundant water bodies of all sizes.	CT4 – Sweeping moorland & flows
Flow Country - south	360° views, including aerial views across Flow Country and WLA	Morven & Scaraben	Highest hills in Caithness and popular with walkers. Aerial views across type Flow Country landscape probably cannot be bettered from another hill due to extensive area having no plantations.	CT4 – Sweeping moorland & flows
East Coast - north	Coastal views along east coast to Sarclet Head. Easily experienced by travellers heading north on A9.	A9 heading north from Newport/Borgue. Similar views from nearby bus stop & layby at Borgue.	Unobstructed view along coastline from road. Eye is drawn to cliffs & inlets/bays. Views of open sky, experience of weather & waves.	CT8 Halberry Head to Dunbeath) – High cliffs & sheltered bays CT2 - Coastal crofts & small farms
East Coast – north 2	Coastal views north along east coast to Duncansby Head and Orkney. Popular tourist destination and setting for Castle Sinclair Girnigoe.	Castle Sinclair Girnigoe, car park at Noss Head near lighthouse, Views from Sinclair Bay & possibly further west at Ackergill Tower &/or Reiss golf course.	Unobstructed views north along coastline from Sinclair's Bay to Duncansby Head & Orkney. Key tourist spot for castle, beach, broch, lighthouse, wildlife etc. Provides a setting for Castle Sinclair. Unique view that cannot be seen from main road (A99).	CT7 (Keiss and Ackergill Links)– Sandy beaches & dunes CT8 (Duncansby Head)– High cliffs & sheltered bays
East Coast – south	Expansive view south taking in sea, coast & inland areas. Setting for Keiss with views to prominent hills.	Layby 1 mile north of Keiss near Baptist Manse.	Extensive views south to hills & Noss Head. Hills of Morven, Scaraben & Ben Graims look impressive despite their relatively low height. Provides a setting for Keiss and Keiss castle. Influence of wide open skies & weather.	CT8 (Halberry Head to Dunbeath)– High cliffs & sheltered bays CT7 (Keiss and Ackergill Links) – Sandy beaches & dunes

East / North Coast Junction – north & northeast	Panoramic views north across Pentland Firth & towards Orkney. Easily accessible as on major tourist route to John O'Groats.	A99 viewpoint at Warth Hill	Panoramic views north over Cannisbay, John O'Groats, Stroma, Pentland Firth islands and Orkney. Impressive views even in poorer visibility & provides atmosphere for the view. Provides a setting for the popular tourist destinations to the north (John O'Groats, Duncansby Head, Orkney etc.). Views also possible to Hoy & West Mainland NSA in good visibility. Experience of weather, open skies & sea.	CT3 – Sweeping moorland & flows CT11 - Coastal Islands
East / North Coast Junction - Duncansby Head	360° views with main view south along coastline to the sea stacks and cliff faces of Duncansby. Easily accessible by tourists	Duncansby Head viewpoint. Coastal views to north & west from car park near lighthouse.	Iconic views of dramatic sea stacks & cliff faces. Beauty spot & very popular tourist attraction which provides 360° views. Views include Noss Head to the south, Dunnet Head/John O'Groats/Stroma to the West, Orkney/Pentland Firth/islands to the north & uninterrupted sea views to the east. A designated SLA. Unique view of cliffs which are usually experienced from the sea. Also provides an experience of weather, sea & coastal wildlife.	CT3– Sweeping moorland & flows CT8 (Duncansby Head, Dunnet Head)– High cliffs & sheltered bays CT1 (Canisbay, Keiss and Freswick Bay)– Coastal crofts & small farms CT11 - Coastal Islands
North Coast - Dunnet Head	Most northerly point on the British Isles. Elevated viewpoint providing easily accessible 360° views both out to sea & inland.	Dunnet Head viewpoint. Coastal views to north & west from car park at lighthouse.	Popular tourist destination as it is the most northerly point on the British mainland. 360° views available with extensive sea-views to the north, Orkney & Pentland Firth to northeast, east & west views of the Caithness north coast & extensive views inland. Immediate views to south of sweeping moorland intersected with lochs. Also provides easily accessible experience of weather, open skies, sea & coastal wildlife. A designated SLA.	CT3-6 – Sweeping moorland & flows CT8 (Spear Head, Dunnet Head)– High cliffs & sheltered bays CT9 – Farmed lowland plain CT11 - Coastal Islands
North Coast – north and northeast	Panoramic views over sea & towards Dunnet Head in the east. Easily accessible by tourists & residents.	Thurso waterfront. Car park and pier at the east end of the waterfront at Long Skerries. Similar views along the esplanade across Thurso Bay, from	Likely to be an important scenic view for local residents and visitors to Thurso. Main view north across sea and east to Dunnet Head. Provides a setting for Thurso. Experience of open skies & sea.	CT8 (Spear Head, Dunnet Head)– High cliffs & sheltered bays CT1 (Brough and Dunnet) – Farmed lowland plains

		Victoria walk at the west end of the waterfront & Neb point or Battery point.		
North Coast - west	Overlooks Thurso looking east and across to Dunnet Head	Layby on hill to west of Thurso on A836	Unusual view containing coastal town, rural settlement, agricultural land, scenic coast, dramatic distant headland (Dunnet Head) and islands (Hoy). View only "works" when travelling from west to east.	CT8 (Dunnet Head)– High cliffs & sheltered bays CT1 (Dunnet) – coastal crofts & small farms

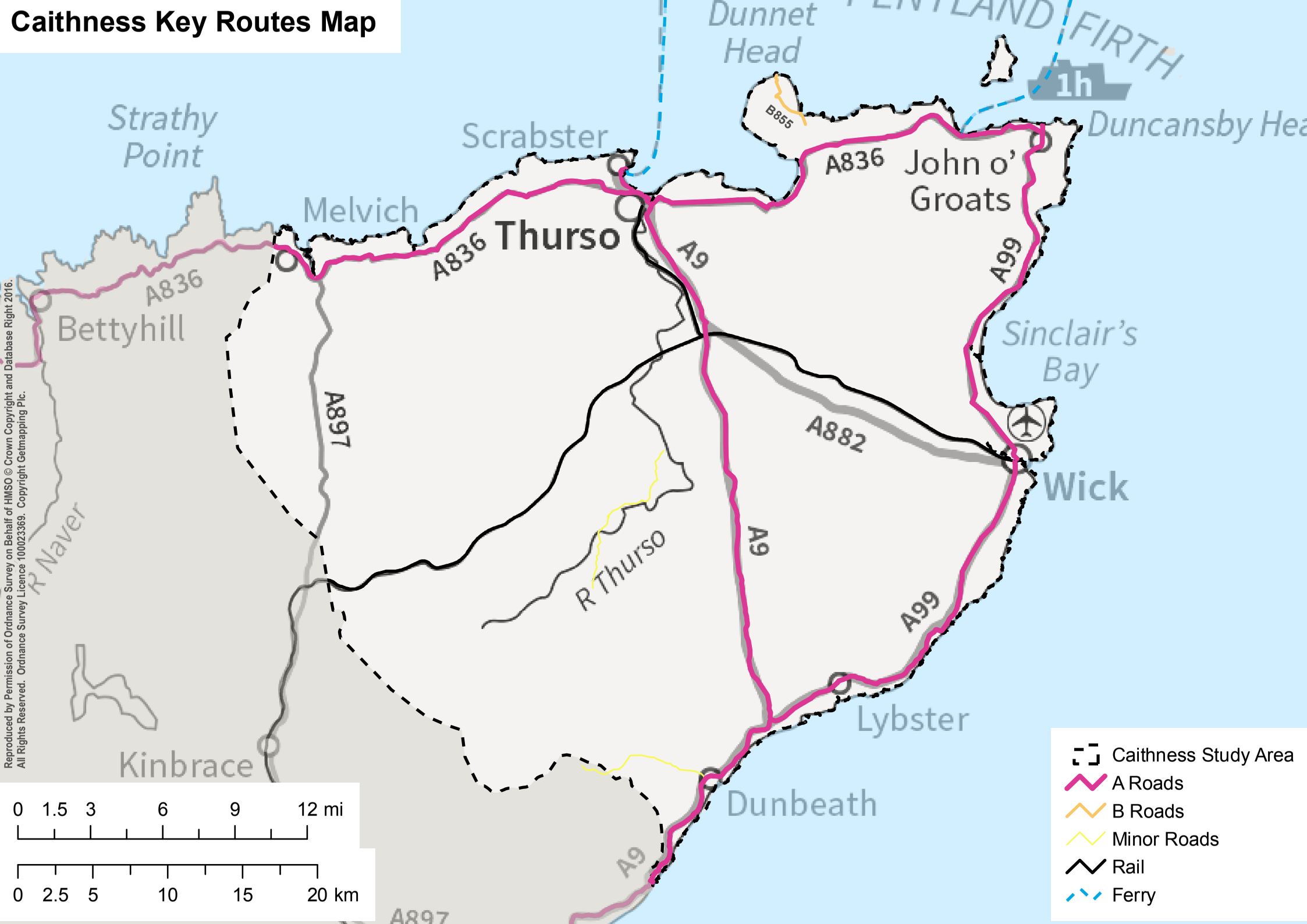
Key Routes

Key Routes

Route Name/ Number	LCAs passed through/ bordered	Receptors
A836 (Drum Hollistan – John O'Groats)	CT3 – Sweeping Moorland & Flows CT5 – Sweeping Moorland & Flows CT8 – High cliffs & sheltered bays CT9 – Farmed lowland plain CT7 – Sandy beaches & dunes CT1- Coastal crofts & small farms CT11 - Coastal islands CT10 - Strath CT4 - Sweeping Moorland & Flows	Local residents Tourists (part of NW Highlands route) Recreational users (kayaking, cycling, surfing)
Forsinard – Scotscalder train	CT4 – Sweeping moorland & flows CT9 – Farmed lowland plain	Local residents Tourists (mainly seasonal, including Lands End-John O'Groats walkers/cyclists) Recreational users
Minor road - Westerdale to Loch More	CT4 – Sweeping moorland & flows CT9 – Farmed lowland plain	Local residents Recreational users (anglers for River Thurso & walkers/cyclists) Tourists

Route Name/ Number	LCAs passed through/ bordered	Receptors
A9 Latheron to Causeymire	CT4 – Sweeping moorland & flows CT9 - Farmed lowland plain CT2 – Coastal crofts & small farms	Local residents Tourists, particularly route to Orkney/ferry
Orkney ferries from Scrabster & Gills Bay	CT8 – High cliffs & sheltered bays CT9 - Farmed lowland plain CT1 – Coastal crofts & small farms CT11 - Coastal islands	Tourists Local residents Commuters/long distance transport route
Minor road – Braemore (Dunbeath)	CT4 – Sweeping moorland & flows CT2 – Coastal crofts & small farms	Recreational users (angling, walking etc.) Local residents
Minor road – Brough to Dunnet Head	CT8 – High cliffs & sheltered bays CT5 – Sweeping moorland & flows CT1 – Coastal crofts & small farms CT9 – Farmed lowland plain	Tourists Recreational users Local residents
A99 – between Freswick & John O'Groats	CT3 – Sweeping moorland & flows CT1 – Coastal crofts & small farms CT11 – Coastal islands	Tourists (part of the primary north tourist route & North Coast 500 route) Local residents Recreational users
A9 – between Ord point & Latheron	CT4 – Sweeping moorland & flows CT 8 – High cliffs & sheltered bays CT2 – Coastal crofts & small farms	Tourists Local residents Recreational users Commuters/long distance transport route

Caithness Key Routes Map



Gateways

Location and description
LCA CT2- A9 heading north from Borgue
LCA CT3-The elevation of viewpoint demarcates the gateway between the north Caithness coast, Pentland Firth and Orkney landscape, and the eastern seaboard of Caithness.
LCA CT4- Further west there are key 'gateway' views as you cross the transition from the open flat moorland/agricultural plain of Caithness, to the more undulating and rugged moorland of Sutherland, which demarcates the boundary of the Study area.
LCA CT5- Dunnet Head contributes to the gateway views from the Mainland to Orkney Islands and as a landscape feature forms a distinctive and prominent landmark in many views from the surrounding area.
LCA CT8- High Cliffs at Dunnet Head and Duncansby Head demarcate the most northerly points of mainland Scotland, with clear open views to Orkney Islands.
LCA CT9- High point at Scrabster Hill on A836 – views to Dunnet Head and distant Orkney Islands.
LCA CT11- Contributes to the Pentland Firth panoramic gateway views north from the mainland to Orkney.

CT1: Melvich, Dunnet, Brough, Gills Bay, Canisbay, Keiss and Freswick Bay

Area Ref and Name	CT1: Melvich, Dunnet, Brough, Gills Bay, Canisbay, Keiss and Freswick Bay
LCT	Coastal Crofts and Small Farms
Description of Landscape Role	Have a relatively smaller scale character comprising a settled and farmed fringe located in three sections between Castlehill in the west and eastwards around the coast to north of Wick. Narrow areas predominantly support crofting, with strip fields and linear patterns of croft houses forming a pronounced landscape pattern. The landscape is predominantly contained by the Sweeping Moorland LCT 'island' which forms an important backdrop. These smaller sections of coastal fringes have a proportionately greater number of scattered dwellings, with infill contemporary development being larger and more prominent in scale.
Key Views	Landscape is highly visible being seen from major roads, in particular the A99. John o' Groats.
Key Routes	A99 and A836 run through these character areas parallel to the coast. B855 Orkney Ferries from Scrabster and Gills Bay
Gateways	None
Landscape Sensitivity	Narrow margin, relatively limited in extent in Caithness. Complex smaller scale distinctive and often historical landscape pattern with scattered settlement. Long settled featuring a range of historic structures, in particular crofting strips running between the uplands and coastal edge, bounded by stone slabs and dyke, and more recently post and wire fences, and archaeological features at the transition with Sweeping Moorland and Flows.

	Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change **Large Scale Wind Farms**: 1 **Small Individual**: 1 **Access Infrastructure**: 1
Sensitive Visual Receptors	**Highest Sensitivity** • Residents of immediate locality • Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers • People using Key Routes **Medium** • People at Key Viewpoints • Residents of wider region • Users of other routes **Lower** • People engaged on work
Current Wind Energy Development	No large, medium or smaller scale wind development existing. Infrequent smaller scale single turbines, of different designs sit well within the crofting pattern, visually linked to existing buildings.
Potential for Wind Energy Development	Due to the linear narrow, well settled and intimate landscape character of these crofting areas: No scope for: • Large turbines • Medium turbines Some scope for: • Small and Micro turbines Turbines should: • be <20m • sit within the existing crofting pattern and relate well to the scattered settlement • be sited and designed to avoid cumulative sequential impacts along routes and encirclement of residential properties.

CT2: Hempriggs to Berriedale

Area Ref and Name	CT2: Hempriggs to Berriedale
LCT	Coastal Crofts and Small Farms

<table>
<tr><td>Description of Landscape Role</td><td>Narrow character type comprising a settled and farmed fringe which is largely continuous along the south-east coast of Caithness extending between Wick and southwards beyond Dunbeath. The landscape is contained by the Sweeping Moorland LCT inland to the west which forms an important backdrop. These coastal fringes predominantly support crofting, with strip fields and linear patterns of croft houses forming a pronounced landscape pattern.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td>Landscape is highly visible being seen from major roads in particular the A99. A key view is East Coast – north (along the A9 north from Newport/Borgue).</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td>A99

A9

Minor Road - Braemore (Dunbeath)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>A9 heading north from Borgue</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>Character area CT2 (in comparison to the areas of Coastal Crofting further north), incorporates a greater geographical area, some 40km of coastline and a wider spread of area west to east between the uplands and the sea. However in a Caithness context the margin is still relatively narrow and limited in extent. The undulating landform creates a more convoluted western transition with ‘fingers’ of the Coastal Crofting areas, interlocking with elevated spurs of Sweeping Moorland. Each elevated spur partially subdivides the crofting landscape. Driving through this landscape creates a series of ‘rooms’ which are partially contained by each spur acting as an immediate visual horizon. Complex smaller scale distinctive landscape pattern, with scattered settlement. In comparison to the smaller extents of Coastal Crofting further north, field sizes are typically larger and more open in character emphasised by the broad, subtle convex slopes running west to east down to the abrupt coastal edge, and by the loss of stone dykes.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality
• People at Key Viewpoints
• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers

• People using Key Routes

Medium

• Residents of wider region
• Users of other routes

Lower</td></tr>
</table>

	• People engaged on work
Current Wind Energy Development	Infrequent smaller scale turbines located within narrow area, but typically sit well within undulations of landscape character. The single turbine at Latheronwheel is relatively prominent due to the medium scale of turbine set within the smaller scale crofting landscape, located on the upper elevations close to the Moorland Slopes transition. Buolfruich and Burn of Whilk wind farms are highly visible due to their large scale, located on the prominent spurs of Moorland which enclose the Coastal crofts landscape. The Beatrice offshore wind farm is consented and will sit around 15 km east of Lybster.
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Large turbines • Medium turbines Some scope for: • Small and Micro turbines Turbines should: • be single or in groups up to 3 • avoid encirclement of housing or small settlements • avoid causing sequential impacts along main routes • avoid the sensitive coastal edge and more elevated transition into the Sweeping Moorland landscape.

CT3: Northeast Caithness

Area Ref and Name	CT3: Northeast Caithness
LCT	Sweeping Moorland and Flows
Description of Landscape Role	This relatively contained area of the much wider LCT occurs across the most north easterly corner of Caithness, extending almost coast to coast and westwards to Burn of Lyth. The flat to gently undulating and smooth landform enables wide expansive views across Caithness and south and west into Caithness and Sutherland. At 60 to 70 m AoD this subtle increase in elevation, relative to the Farmed Lowland setting, provides a relatively more remote and unsettled contrast in character. Extending across and wedged between the apex of the north and east Caithness, the elevated landform provides an important backdrop and contrast in character to the narrow settled coastal seaboard.
Key Views	The open horizontal form of the landscape could allow wide 360 degree panoramas from any number of locations within this area, however the hinterland is relatively inaccessible. The key view is from the A99 at Warth Hill which provides uninterrupted panoramic views north across the Pentland Firth, and Canisbay, and John o'Groats towards Orkney.
Key Routes	A99 cuts across a small section of this LCA at Warth Hill. A836
Gateways	The elevation of viewpoint demarcates the gateway between the north Caithness coast, Pentland Firth and Orkney landscape, and the eastern seaboard of Caithness.

<table>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>The high landscape and visual sensitivity is derived from the location of this area of Sweeping Moorland in the north east corner of Caithness, and the subtle increase in elevation. The area affords a contrast in character from the small scale settled coastal seaboard to the larger scale, open and simple moorland landscape. It provides an important backdrop and visual horizon in many views along the coast. More strategically this provides some remaining landscape screening and separation from the clusters of wind energy development to the south and west.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>3</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality
• People at Key Viewpoints
• Flow Country and expansive moorlands are important attraction.

• Visitors/tourists inc cyclists and walkers

Additional Sweeping moorland important to the setting of Lone Mountains and hill tops where wide views are possible.

• Residents of wider region

LCT important to the distinctive sense of place of Caithness and regional identity.

Medium

• People using Key Routes

Important to local identity and enable wide views across to Lone Mountains and Coast.

Lower

• Users of other routes

• People engaged on work</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>Hill of Stroupster wind farm is located wholly within this area inland from Freswick Bay on the eastern seaboard. Situated within a not very extensive area of Sweeping Moorland and Flows, it projects a greater landscape dominance and visual presence. In particular in wider views from Caithness to the south, west and north (Duncansby Head) the wind farm development skylines and has an uneven composition which heightens its prominence. Lochend wind farm is a small group of larger scale turbines located to the very west of CT3. The two developments are partially physically and visually separated by the central elevated moorlands of CT3.</td></tr>
</table>

Potential for Wind Energy Development	Given the current extent of operational development, there are significant constraints to new development both larger and smaller scale, to ensure a proportional relationship between development scale and landscape character and setting is maintained, and avoid significant effects on the adjacent small scale narrow seaboard landscape. Limited scope for: • Larger scale development No scope for: • Smaller scale development Turbines should: • Consolidate and improve the existing layout of Stroupster • Avoid cumulative effects by ensuring turbine height and proportions are similar to existing turbines

CT4: Central Caithness

Area Ref and Name	CT4: Central Caithness
LCT	Sweeping Moorland and Flows
Description of Landscape Role	This LCT occurs extensively across Caithness and East Sutherland. The flat to gently undulating and smooth landform enables wide expansive views across Caithness and south and west into Sutherland and forms the setting to the Lone Mountains. On the fringes of the character type and into the transition with the farming land to the north are large scale blocks of forestry.
Key Views	The vast open horizontal form of the landscape allows wide 360 degree panoramas from any number of locations within and beyond this type: within - A9T War Memorial Viewpoint; Ben Freiceadain and Ben Dorrery; beyond – from the summits of Morven and Scaraben and with even just slight elevation from the immediate and wider landscape of Caithness and Sutherland. Views east from more elevated views along the A836 at places like Melvich are wide and expansive, running along the coast and south and east across the open moorland to the landmark hills of Scaraben.
Key Routes	Views from the A9T which crosses the area north to south, and the A836 to the extreme northwest. Views from the train provide uninterrupted views as you pass through this landscape. Further views are from the minor road to Braemore and also to Loch More.
Gateways	Further west there are key ‘gateway’ views as you cross the transition from the open flat moorland/agricultural plain of Caithness, to the more undulating and rugged moorland of Sutherland, which demarcates the boundary of the Study area.

Landscape Sensitivity

Gently sloping or undulating landform with strong horizontal composition, which whilst expansive and large in scale entails that any vertical features are highly prominent. Simplicity of composition comprising dominant land:sky horizon, which can be interrupted by vertical elements. Long, low and largely interrupted skylines offer extensive views. Lone Mountains punctuate the horizon and are important landmarks to the immediate south such as Scaraben, and further west at a greater distance are Ben Loyal and Ben Hope. There is a strong sense of remoteness and wildness within the core of the Flows and Moorlands as they are largely uninhabited and difficult to access and have an overriding natural character. To the south, large commercial forestry blocks appear as dark bands. Pylon lines punctuate CT4, running parallel to the A9T. The expansion of the substation south of Spittal is visually prominent. To the west the relatively abrupt transition from the more rugged Sutherland landscape character to the open flatter landform of Caithness provides a key gateway and is highly sensitive to windfarm development in the immediate and wider landscape (given wide open views) that would erode the clarity of this transition and interrupt experience of moving from one regional landscape to another.

Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change		
Large Scale Wind Farms	**Small Individual**	**Access Infrastructure**
3	1	3

Sensitive Visual Receptors

Highest Sensitivity

- Residents of immediate locality
- People at Key Viewpoints
  Flow Country and expansive moorlands are important attraction.
- Visitors/tourists inc cyclists and walkers

  Additional Sweeping Moorland important to the setting of Lone Mountains and hill tops where wide views are possible.
- Residents of wider region,

  LCT important to the distinctive sense of place of Caithness and regional identity.
- People using Key Routes

  Important to local identity and enable wide views across to Lone Mountains and coast.

Lower

- Users of other routes
- People engaged on work

Current Wind Energy Development	South within the LCA Buolfruich wind farm sits on the elevated moorland transition that forms an upland edge to the east seaboard, which raises its prominence. In the south and east area, existing larger scale developments of Causeymire and Camster are located wholly within the character type, and whilst relatively large in scale, the wide expansive landscape character provides a setting proportional to the scale of development. The turbine height and relatively limited extent of development, entails that they have a relatively simple contained relationship to the much wider landscape. However, further development is consented at this location including Wathegar, Bad a Cheo and Halsary wind farms. Distant views to Baillie Hill (around 25 km) are possible and highlights the prominence of this latter development across a significant part of Caithness. Other developments located on the transition to adjacent character types including Wathegar and Burn of Whilk appear less comfortable as their larger scale starts to dominate over the smaller scale of the adjacent landscape character. In the west of the LCA, whilst a relatively contained development, Baillie Hill is clearly visible and provides a prominent feature in the landscape, seemingly bringing the experience of the more managed Caithness landscape into the more uninhabited Sutherland. To a far lesser extent the turbines at Forss contribute to this cumulative experience of turbines in views along the coast.
Potential for Wind Energy Development	Significant constraints to development include the wild landscape of the Flow Country, which contributes to the visual setting of Lone Mountains LCT to the south and west, and the areas of transition to the adjacent character types. No scope for: • extension at Buolfruich Wind Farm, due to the current prominence of the existing wind farm • larger scale development to the west of the LCA where it impinges upon experience of the important landscape transition between Caithness and Sutherland. Even wind energy development within 10 to 15 km could significantly erode this experience. • Smaller turbines Limited scope for: • Larger turbines Turbines should: • concentrate and consolidate with existing development • maintain open, clear and direct views, which allow the appreciation of the wild landscape, in particular from the A9 • be designed so that the logical relationship between development scale and landscape character is maintained Extensions and repowering schemes should: • continue the scale, form and proportions of existing and consented development • avoid unnecessary cumulative effects

CT5: Dunnet Interior

Area Ref and Name	CT5: Dunnet Interior
LCT	Sweeping Moorland and Flows

<table>
<tr><td>Description of Landscape Role</td><td>This is a very small area of this character type the extent of which comprises the elevated moorland hinterland of the Dunnet Head peninsula, truncated in extent on three sides by the dramatic High Cliffs LCT. At the relatively high elevations punctuated by the two summits of Dunnet Hill (121m AoD) raising northwards to the high point at Easter Head (127m AoD), situated on the extreme north coast, the area is a pronounced landmark, which is highly prominent from the flatter Farmed Plain and Sweeping Moorland to the south. The prominence of this area is increased by the relative remoteness and uninhabited character of the peninsula. Dunnet Head contributes significantly to local and regional sense of place and is a key tourist destination, in particular to experience the ‘northern edge’ of mainland Scotland and indeed mainland Britain.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td>The open elevated landform allows wide 360 degree panoramas from any number of locations within this small area. Iconic views of dramatic sea stacks and cliff faces, with extensive panoramas to the north, Orkney and Pentland Firth, east and west views of the Caithness north coast, and extensive views south inland across to the landmarks hills of Scaraben and Morven. Immediate views to the south are of Sweeping Moorland intersected with lochs.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td>B855

Outwith LCA

A836</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>Dunnet Head contributes to the gateway views from the Mainland to Orkney Islands and as a landscape feature forms a distinctive and prominent landmark in many views from the surrounding area.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>Key to the high landscape and visual sensitivity of this landscape is the very small extent of Sweeping Moorland character present, the raised elevation and the location projecting out from the north coast.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality

• People at Key Viewpoints

Flow Country and expansive moorlands are important attraction.

• Visitors/tourists inc cyclists and walkers

Additional Sweeping moorland important to the setting of Lone Mountains and hill tops where wide views are possible.

• Residents of wider region</td></tr>
</table>

	LCT important to the distinctive sense of place of Caithness and regional identity. • People using Key Routes *Important to local identity and enable wide views across to Lone Mountains and coast.* • Users of other routes **Medium** • People engaged on work
Current Wind Energy Development	There is no existing wind energy development within this area. The existing large single turbine at Ratter Mains situated in the adjacent Farmed Lowland Plains is prominent in views.
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for turbine development. This is due to high sensitivity, prominence of the area and its significant contribution to local and regional character. The LCA is also sensitive to development in those LCAs it shares a border with as well as those in proximity to it.

CT6: Black Hill Mosses

Area Ref and Name	CT6: Black Hill Mosses
LCT	Sweeping Moorland and Flows
Description of Landscape Role	This is a relatively small area of this landscape character type, situated in the east of Caithness, extending from Wick River northwards to Burn of Lyth, to the west of Wick. The flat to gently undulating and smooth landform enables wide expansive views from the immediate open moorland, across the Farmed Lowland Plain LCT and into adjacent areas of Moorland Flows to the north and south.
Key Views	Whilst this LCA is small in scale, the open horizontal form of the landscape allows wide 360 degree panoramas from any number of locations within and beyond this type in particular the two minor roads crossing east to west.
Key Routes	None
Gateways	None
Landscape Sensitivity	Whilst this area has a gently undulating landform, with a relatively broad scale and simple character, it is primarily the limited extent of this area that heightens the sensitivity to change. In addition, being located between larger areas of the character types to the north and especially to the south, it provides a continuity of the character across the east of Caithness.

Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change		
Large Scale Wind Farms	**Small Individual**	**Access Infrastructure**

	1 | 1 | 2
Sensitive Visual Receptors	**Highest Sensitivity** • Residents of immediate locality **Medium** • People at Key Viewpoints • Visitors/tourists inc cyclists and walkers • Residents of wider region • People using Key Routes **Lower** • Users of other routes • People engaged on work
Current Wind Energy Development	There is currently no wind energy development within this character area. However there are clear views to Stroupster to the north and to the immediate overlapping wind farms of Wathegar and Camster, the extent of which will be increased with the consented extension of Camster, Halsary wind farm and Bad a Cheo. Causeymire is also visible beyond.
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for turbine development The key sensitivity of this area is the small extent and more strategic location between two adjacent areas of Sweeping Moorland that already contain wind energy development. Even smaller scale development could erode the clarity of separation and setting between existing clusters of larger scale development. As such this area should remain undeveloped.

CT7: Sandside Bay, Melvich Bay, Dunnet Bay and Keiss and Ackergill Links

Area Ref and Name	CT7: Sandside Bay, Melvich Bay, Dunnet Bay and Keiss and Ackergill Links
LCT	Sandy Beaches and Dunes
Description of Landscape Role	Sandy beaches are a rarer feature (relative to Sutherland) within Caithness, occurring as small areas contained by rocky bays. Set within the coastline backed by a well settled landscape, they are an important focus for recreation.
Key Views	Sequential views from coastal routes including A836, A99 and scenic views from adjacent coastal cliffs, Noss Head, Ackergill, Brough Head, Warth Hill, Holburn Head.
Key Routes	All component LCAs are accessed off the key coastal main road A836/A99.
Gateways	None

<table>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>Important focus for recreational and high scenic and landscape value. Small areas of this type within Caithness and as such are rare in this context. Whilst set within a well settled wider landscape, the natural qualities of sea, beach and dunes contribute to high qualities of wildness and seclusion.

<table><tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr><tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality

Important part of landscape and visual setting and recreational resources.

• People at Key Viewpoints

Many views within and into this character type. Within wider rocky coastal edge, beaches form important features.

• Visitors/tourists inc cyclists and walkers

Focus for visitors.

• Residents of wider region,
• People using Key Routes

Medium

• Users of other routes

• People engaged on work</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>None within LCA</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential for Wind Energy Development</td><td>No scope for turbine development

Given the relative rarity of this character type in Caithness, the small scales of areas and the recreational and scenic importance, there is considered to be no potential for development. Furthermore the relatively abrupt transition of this character type to those adjacent, should be considered sensitive to change.</td></tr>
</table>

CT8: Rubha Bhra to Dunbeath

Area Ref and Name	CT8: Rubha Bhra to Dunbeath (Including Red Point; Brims Ness; Spear Head; Dunnet Head; Duncansby Head; and Halberry Head to Dunbeath)
LCT	High Cliffs and Sheltered Bays
Description of Landscape Role	This narrow character type is found in sections along much of north Caithness, which comprise indented intricate rocky headlands with small inlets and Sandy

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>Beaches. To the southeast the section from Halberry Head to Dunbeath has a relatively more even coastline of cliffs and small bays.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td>Open elevated views are offered from a number of locations along this character type. Prominent and exposed headlands are a key draw including Dunnet Head, Duncansby Head, Noss Head, Keiss, Thurso waterfront, and sequential views from the A9, A836 and A99. Views from the Thurso/Orkney Islands and Gills Bay/Orkney Islands ferry routes are also important.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td>B855

A popular walk is from Duncansby Head to the stacks.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>High Cliffs at Dunnet Head and Duncansby Head demarcate the most northerly points of mainland Scotland, with clear open views to Orkney Islands.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>Narrow character type, featuring an intricate coastline of fissured cliffs, ravines, caves and stacks with small covers and narrow inlets regularly interrupting the cliffs. Key focus for scenic views and informal recreation, and imparts a strong sense of place to Caithness with views along the coast, of overlapping headlands. Immediate setting for several settlements. Character type has an elemental character influenced by the proximity of often turbulent seas and heightened by the dramatic rugged character. A strong sense of wildness is particularly associated with more remote stretches.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change</th></tr>
<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality

Setting to settlements and recreational and scenic value

• People at Key Viewpoints

Many key static and sequential views along headlands. Open water and rocky cliffs typically a key draw in views.

• Visitors/tourists including cyclists and walkers

Focus for recreation and contributes to distinctive sense of place.

• Residents of wider region

Medium

• People using Key Routes

• Users of other routes

• People engaged on work</td></tr>
</table>

Current Wind Energy Development	None. However, wind farms such as Forss are located in the adjacent Farmed Basin character type which runs up to and abuts the cliff landscape and forms a prominent feature.
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for turbine development. This narrow character type has a narrow delineation and high scenic and recreational value. The transition to the adjacent character types, including Farmed Plain and Crofting, and Moorland Slopes is typically abrupt and care should be taken in siting development away from this transition. Wind turbine development will appear disproportionately more prominent when sited in proximity to the Cliff coastline as the dramatic cliff landscapes form a key focus in views.

CT9: North Caithness

Area Ref and Name	CT9: North Caithness
LCT	Farmed Lowland Plain
Description of Landscape Role	Extensive landscape character type, extending across the north east of Caithness running between Wick to the east, and from Tang Head to Melvich along the north coast. As such this area forms a broad and relatively low-lying plain and basin bounded by the sea and inland by the expansive Sweeping Moorland and Flows. The landscape is predominantly farmed and well settled with a range of field scales relative to local topography. Given the geographical extent of the area there is considerable local variety in the extent to which different characteristics are displayed. Of note between the east and west, the scale of field patterns and types of boundaries, presence of woodland, presence of infrastructure and prominent built development all vary.
Key Views	The broad, low-lying character allows typically wide views within and across this landscape, but few scenic views. High viewpoints exist on the A836 at Melvich and east of Scrabster Hill. Sea views are open and expansive from the north coast between Mey and Melvich.
Key Routes	Sections of the A9, A836 and the A99. Minor Road - Westerdale to Loch More Railway - Forsinard to Scotscalder train **Outwith LCA** Orkney ferries from Scrabster & Gills Bay
Gateways	High point at Scrabster Hill on A836 – views to Dunnet Head and distant Orkney Islands.
Landscape Sensitivity	Whilst a broad, low lying landscape character, there are local undulations in topography which contribute to a local diversity of landscape scale and pattern. The widely settled character of farm buildings form small point features and coupled with small woodland copses, and a mosaic of fields provides scale indicators which are sensitive to larger scale development. This sensitivity is reinforced where the historic landscape is more prevalent in stone slab and dyke

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>field boundaries. Between Spittal and Thurso, there is a greater prevalence of larger scale infrastructure with numerous pylon lines linking into the existing, extended and new substations at Spittal and South Thurso. Existing prominent buildings include the Forss Business and Energy Park, Dounreay Nuclear Research Facility (currently being decommissioned) and Vulcan Naval Reactor Test Establishment (to be decommissioned); the JGC Engineering Facility (west of Thurso) and some of the larger scale agricultural sheds.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity
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<tr><th>Large Scale Wind Farms</th><th>Small Individual</th><th>Access Infrastructure</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• Residents of immediate locality

Residents are highly sensitive to wind farm development especially where it is more likely to sit within the landscape type in closer proximity. Care should be taken to site development taking cognisance of settlement pattern and local views. Encirclement of small settlement should be avoided.

• Residents of wider region

Medium

• People at Key Viewpoints

Most key viewpoints are located outwith the character type and as such will be more distant to any smaller scale development.

• Visitors/tourists inc cyclists and walkers

Development scale (height and numbers) is chosen to reflect the smaller to medium scale of the agricultural landscape. As such the landscape should be able to accommodate development although sequential cumulative views should be avoided.

• Users of other routes

Lower

• People using Key Routes
• People engaged on work</td></tr>
<tr><td>Current Wind Energy Development</td><td>A relatively small number of wind farms exist within this character type, with Forss and extension located adjacent to the coastal edge. The larger scale and more elevated location of Baillie wind farm south of Forss, has a relatively high prominence, extending the experience of turbines across this LCA and into neighbouring Sweeping Moorland, especially to the west. Elsewhere large wind farms sit on the transition within the wider Sweeping Moorland and Flows LCT and are prominent features. A single large turbine near Ham appears disproportionately dominant in the landscape, its scale conflicting with the smaller scale of the surrounding landscape. There is an infrequent number of existing</td></tr>
</table>

	smaller scale turbines, which typically appear as single features associated with farm steadings. Whilst these small turbines comprise a variety of designs, their small scale sits well within the undulating folds of the landscape, reducing their impact.
Potential for Wind Energy Development	Limited scope for: • Larger turbines Some scope for: • Medium turbines • Small and Micro turbines Turbines should: • be single or in small groups • be tied into the existing field and settlement pattern • be carefully chosen to ensure their height and numbers reflect the balance of development within the farmed basin such that no one development type dominates • if medium scale, be pulled back from the boundary with Sweeping Moorland LCT to maintain the clarity of the transition and avoid unnecessary cumulative effects • avoid cumulative impacts along routes and around settlements

CT10: Strath Halladale

Area Ref and Name	CT10: Strath Halladale
LCT	Straths
Description of Landscape Role	The full extent of Strath Halladale to the northwest is located within the Study Area. Halladale has a narrow linear form enclosed by the Sweeping Moorland on either side. The floor of the Strath is open and contains the sinuous form of the river, which forms a central visual focus. Dominant views are framed along the Strath, contained by the close proximity of the enclosing slopes. The relatively greater width of Strath Halladale accommodates the A897 linking the north and south east Sutherland coasts, with associated long established scattered settlement and change in land use.
Key Views	By its nature views are contained along the Strath. Key views are located at the juxtaposition with the coast, where views open out to the seascape at the mouth of the Strath.
Key Routes	A836
Gateways	None
Landscape Sensitivity	This relatively small character area derives its sensitivity from the distinct narrow linear space (contrasting markedly with the adjacent large swathes of Sweeping Moorland), the experience of enclosure and intimacy, land use pattern and in places settled historic character. **Degree of Landscape Character Sensitivity** Scale of 1-4; 1 being most susceptible to change

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Sensitive Visual Receptors	**Highest Sensitivity** • Residents of immediate locality • Visitors/tourists inc cyclists and walkers • People using Key Routes **Medium** • People at Key Viewpoints • Residents of wider region **Lower** • Users of other routes • People engaged on work
Current Wind Energy Development	No larger, or medium scale wind development existing. A limited number of smaller scale single turbines are located in relation to existing dwellings e.g. Kirkton Farm, south of Melvich.
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Large turbines • Medium turbines Some limited potential for: • Small and Micro turbines Turbines should: • be <20m • be sited within the existing crofting or settled land use pattern • relate well to the scattered dwellings • avoid conflict with classic framed views and the key visual focus of the river • avoid cumulative sequential impacts along routes

CT11: Island of Stroma

Area Ref and Name	CT11: Island of Stroma
LCT	Coastal Islands
Description of Landscape Role	This small scale island of just over 3.5km length north to south, is located 3kms off mainland Scotland immediately north of Huna. It has an overriding low lying

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>landform encircled by a rocky indented coastline. Located in close proximity to Caithness it provides a prominent local landmark in views from the mainland and to a lesser extent South Ronaldsay in Orkney. Stroma is not inhabited. Whilst there are existing buildings on Stroma, the island is uninhabited, and owned by one person who uses one house on the island as a base during lambing. Otherwise no one lives there for more than a few weeks in the year.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Views</td><td>Extensive panoramic views are afforded from the island of Stroma itself both along and across to the Caithness coast and north to Orkney. However the majority of viewers will see the island as part of the wide open panoramic Pentland Firth seascape. Views from Gills Bay/Orkney Islands ferry routes to Stroma are also important.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Routes</td><td>Outwith LCA

Views to Stroma from the A836 mainland coastal route.

Views from Orkney Ferry from Gills Bay</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gateways</td><td>Contributes to the Pentland Firth panoramic gateway views north from the mainland to Orkney.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Landscape Sensitivity</td><td>Small scale and low lying character type. Key focus for scenic views and informal recreation from the Mainland, and imparts a strong sense of place to Caithness with views along the coast, of overlapping headlands. Immediate setting for several settlements. Character type has an elemental character influenced by the proximity of often turbulent seas and heightened by the dramatic rugged character. A strong sense of wildness is particularly associated with more remote stretches.

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</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitive Visual Receptors</td><td>Highest Sensitivity

• People at Key Viewpoints

Many key static and sequential views along headlands. Open water and rocky cliffs typically a key draw in views.

• Visitors/tourists inc cyclists and walkers

Focus for recreation and contributes to distinctive sense of place.

• Residents of wider region
• People using Key Routes

Sequential routes in places run parallel in neighbouring character types, to coastline offering long direct views over cliffs and out to sea.

Medium</td></tr>
</table>

	• Users of other routes **Lower** • Residents of immediate locality • People engaged on work
Current Wind Energy Development	None
Potential for Wind Energy Development	No scope for: • Large or medium turbines • Small turbines that could interrupt views Some potential limited scope for: • Single small or micro scale turbines where they are related to existing dwellings, such that they become part of the built fabric of Stroma and do not impinge on views. However given the uninhabited status of Stroma, it is unlikely that such development would be required. Care should be taken to avoid wind energy development on mainland Scotland on the coastal seaboard north of the A836 in the immediate vicinity of Stroma, where they could interrupt and obscure views to the Island of Stroma.

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd