Agenda Item	**7.4**
Report No	**PLS-20-24**

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: South Planning Applications Committee

Date: 30 April 2024

Report Title: 22/05955/S36: Tomchrasky Limited

Land 3200M NW Of Dalchreichart Cemetery, Dalchreichart, Glenmoriston

Report By: Area Planning Manager – South

Purpose/Executive Summary

Description: Tomchrasky Wind Farm - Erection and operation of a wind farm comprising 14 wind turbines with a maximum blade tip height of 185m, up to 50 battery storage units, anemometer mast, access tracks, four borrow pits and associated infrastructure

Ward: 12 – Aird and Loch Ness

Development Category: National Development (Section 36 Application)

Reason referred to Committee: National Development (Section 36 Application)

All relevant matters have been taken into account when appraising this application. It is considered that the proposal accords with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and is acceptable in terms of all other applicable material considerations.

Recommendation

Members are asked to agree the recommendation to **Raise no Objection** to the application as set out in section 11 of the report.

1.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

1.1 The Highland Council has been consulted by the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit (ECU) on an application made under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 (as amended) for the construction and operation of the Tomchrasky Wind Farm and associated infrastructure. The application is for 14 wind turbines having a maximum ground to blade tip height of 185m. The proposal is expected to generate approximately 84 MW of power depending on the turbine model chosen, plus up to 50 MW of battery energy storage. This proposal falls under the provisions of the Electricity Act and is classed as National Development by National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) due to the generating capacity being in excess of 50 MW.

1.2 Key elements of the development include:

- 14 turbines of up to 185 metres ground to tip height and up to 150 metres blade diameter, with internal transformers;
- A Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with an indicative storage capacity of 50 MW;
- Associated turbine compound areas including foundations and hardstanding areas for erecting cranes at each turbine location;
- Substation to provide a connection to the grid network;
- Underground cables linking the turbines to the substation, typically placed along internal access tracks;
- A temporary construction compound;
- A anemometry met mast up to a height of 110 metres and associated infrastructure;
- An upgraded site access junction with the A887(T), approximately 275 metres east of the junction between the A887(T) and the A87(T);
- 14.4 km of new access track, of which 8 km will be floated across areas of deeper peat;
- 1.9km of upgraded existing track;
- 9 new and 5 upgraded watercourse crossings; and
- Up to 4 borrow pits for the extraction of stone and aggregate used in the construction of the wind farm.

1.3 The grid connection from the on-site substation has been confirmed and will be subject to a separate consent application by the network operator.

1.4 The final design of the turbine (colour and finish), ancillary electrical equipment, landscaping and fencing etc. are expected to be agreed with the Planning Authority,

by condition, at the time of project procurement. Turbine manufacturers regularly update designs that are available, thereby necessitating the need for some flexibility on the design details.

1.5 Permission is sought to operate the windfarm for 30 years from the date of final commissioning. Following this period, a further planning application would be required to determine any future re-powering of the site. Should that option not be pursued, the development would be decommissioned with above ground infrastructure being removed and the ground reinstated.

1.6 The applicant anticipates that the construction period will last approximately 18 months. All construction activities on site will be guided by a Construction and Environment Management Plan (CEMP).

1.7 Whilst public consultation for Section 36 applications is not mandatory, the applicant held two public exhibitions on the 31 August and 21st September 2022 at the Glenmoriston Millennium Hall, Invermoriston, to seek the views of the local community. The events ran from 15:00 to 18:00 hrs both days, adverts were placed in regional newspapers 14 and 7 days before the events and letters were sent to stakeholders and via the project website. A Pre-application Consultation Report accompanies the applications that sets out how public consultation has informed the submitted proposal.

1.8 The applicant sought an EIA Scoping Opinion in November 2020 and subsequently used the Council's Pre-Application Advice Service for major developments in Autumn 2021 and Spring 2022. At that time the applicant proposed 29 turbines at 220 metres to blade tip. The pre-application feedback raised concerns regarding the extent of visibility within sensitive areas and the potential significant impacts, in particular with regards to the Glen Affric National Scenic Area and Wild Land Area 24. It was considered that the pre-application proposal had potential for high landscape and visual impacts over a small area. As a result of this consultation the proposed development was reduced to 15 turbines at 185m to blade to tip. Following a meeting with The Highland Council on 29th March 2022, this was subsequently reduced to 14 turbines at 185m to tip.

1.9 The application is supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), the contents of which have been informed through the EIA Scoping exercise. The EIAR contains chapters on: EIA Approach and Methodology; Planning and Energy Policy; Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; Ecology; Ornithology; Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Soils; Transport and Access; Cultural Heritage; Noise; Social Economics, Tourism and Recreation; Climate Change and Carbon Balance; and other considerations including Shadow Flicker and Safety. The application is also accompanied by a Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement and Pre-Application Consultation Report.

1.10 EIA Further Environmental Information (FEI) was also submitted during the application's determination. This contains a Geomorphological Report to address concerns raised in NatureScot's consultation response relating to the potential for sediments entering watercourses which link with the River Morriston Special Area of Conservation (SAC). No variations were made to the application during the course of the application's determination.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The proposal site extends over 2,815 ha of which 10.5 ha would be developed for permanent wind farm and BESS infrastructure with an additional 5.3 ha temporarily developed for construction purposes, as reported in the EIAR. The site is located on the northern slopes of Glen Moriston, approximately 13km north west of Fort Augustus and 3.5km west of Dalchreichart to the south west of Glenmoriston. The site extends from the River Moriston south up to 508m AOD at Beinn an t-Sìthein. It includes the south facing slopes above, and to the north and northwest of, Tomchrasky Farm, which is northeast of the River Doe.

2.2 Ground cover is predominantly undifferentiated heather moorland with some rough grassland, coniferous plantation, and several lochans and small streams on the lower ground running between the hills and is currently used for livestock grazing. It is drained by the Allt Bhuruisgidh/ Allt Bhodaich to the west, and Allt a Chrionn from the Loch Beinn an t-Sìthein. The eastern part of the site is drained by the Allt na Muic. Each of these watercourses and additional minor tributaries flow into the River Moriston. There is an existing hydro-electric infrastructure on the site with an underground penstock crossing to the west of the turbine area.

2.3 There are dams and power station infrastructure in the wider area at Loch Cluanie, Loch Loyne and Dundreggan. Numerous overhead power lines (OHL) and associated towers cross the local area, with the closest line following the Old Drove Road (Eve's Road) to the east of the site. There is a large hatchery near Torgyle, Inchmore Hatchery within Glen Moriston. The Great Glen lies approximately 13km away to the southeast beyond the Inverwick to Beinneun ridge. Loch Garry, Loch Loyne and Loch Cluanie lie in the mountainous area around 15km to the southwest of the site. Glen Affric and the Carn Eighe to Toll Creagach Ridge are approximately 15km to the north west.

2.4 Key recreational interests in the area include Fort Augustus and the Caledonian Canal, the village of Invermoriston and adventure activities such as kayaking and canoeing. Walking / hiking and cycling are also popular, the closest trail being the Great Glen Way which passes near to Invermoriston and Section 3 of the Loch Ness 360 (Invermoriston to Fort Augustus) which passes approximately 10km to the south of the site. The Fort Augustus to Mandally section of the Scottish National Trail and the Cannich to Allt Beithe section of the Affric Kintail Way also pass within 10km of

the site, and three core paths run through the site (HI7, HI99 and HI105). The site is accessed via the A887 Trunk Road (T), just east of the junction with the A87(T).

Environmental Designations and Habitats

2.5 The River Moriston Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located partly within the proposed development site with the qualifying features being freshwater pearl mussels and Atlantic salmon. The West Inverness-shire Lochs Special Protection Area (SPA) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is in the south west of the study area with qualifying species black throated diver and common scoter.

2.6 A variety of habitats are present around the site. The EIAR investigated the potential impact of the proposals on badgers, otters, pine martins, red squirrels, fish and freshwater pearl mussels, and the Rannoch brindled beauty moth (Nationally scarce A UKBAP). The site and surrounds have been surveyed for breeding birds and transient birds. There is known potential for areas of Ground Water Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTEs) within the site, with these habitats relating to springs and marshy grassland areas. The proposal site is located with a Drinking Water Protected Area (DWPA) associated with Loch Ness, as well as within catchments associated with the Great Glen Hydro Scheme, with infrastructure associated with the development likely to affect the hydrology of the area. There are dams located on the River Doe and Allt Bhuruisgidh within the proposed development site.

2.7 Class 1 and 2 peatlands, which are defined as nationally important carbon-rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat of high conservation value, lie to the north west and west of the site. Peat depths across the site are generally shallow with localised pockets of deeper peat found in hollows between the areas of high topography.

2.8 Coire Dho Geological Review (GCR) site is located within the site boundary and contains landforms and glacial deposits that illustrate the development and sudden drainage of an ice dammed lake during the Loch Lomond Stadial. Glen Doe GCR site is also located within the site and is part of the Moine block noted for its highly metamorphosed rocks of Precambrian age. This GCR is located at the existing access track along the River Doe but is over 380m from proposed infrastructure, so no loss of geological features is anticipated.

Landscape Designations, Wild Land and Landscape Character

2.9 The proposed development site does not lie within any landscape designations. Designated landscapes and Wild Land Areas, which require assessment as agreed through the EIA Scoping process, are set out below:

Designated Landscape	Distance and direction from the proposed development
National Scenic Area	
Glen Affric	5km NW
Wild Land Areas (WLA)	
24 – Central Highlands	Adjacent to N site boundary
Special Landscape Areas (SLA)	
Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel	3km W

2.10 The site is situated within the Rugged Massive-Inverness Landscape Character Type (LCT) 220 which occurs from above Glen Moriston to Bunloinn Forest to the south and from Loch Cluanie to the hills south of Glen Affric to the north and the Wooded Glen – Inverness LCT 226 which covers Glen Moriston from west of Invermoriston to Loch Cluanie. As well as LCT 220 and 226, the assessment focuses on those LCTs that are closer to the proposed development site including Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Inverness, LCT 230 and Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness LCT 222.

Built Heritage

2.11 Scheduled monuments scoped into assessment include:

Site Name	Scheduled Monument Number	Location
Fort Augustus-Bernera military Road, 1,890m W of Ceannacroc Lodge	SM11484	Western part of site
Balnacarn Township 550m WSW	SM11482	Eastern part of site
Fort Augustus-Bernera Military Road, 570m SE of Achlain	SM11483	Within 1km study area
Tir nan Og' Cairn 335m SSW	SM11494	South-eastern part of 1km study area

2.12 Listed buildings scoped into assessment include:

Site Name	Listed Building Category and Number	Distance and direction from the proposed development
Glenmoriston Ceannacroc Bridge over River Moriston	B - LB14994	Within 1km south of site
Glenmoriston Achlain House	C - LB14995	Within 1km south of site
Torgoyle Bridge over River Moriston	A – LB14996	Within 5km south of site

2.13 A total of 30 cultural heritage assets were identified within the proposed development site including fords and viaducts associated with the Scheduled Ancient Monument of the Fort Augustus-Bernera Military Road 1,890m W of Ceannacroc Lodge and the location of a corn drying kiln (asset 82) associated with Balnacarn township.

Cumulative Development

2.14 Appendix 1 of this report provides details of operational, consented / under construction, and in planning wind farm projects that the applicant reported to have been taken into consideration in their cumulative assessment, which has been scoped down to a 35km radius from the turbines. The EIAR is dated November 2022 and in that time the cumulative picture has changed with the permission for Millennium South Wind now having expired, and Bunloinn, Cloiche, and Bhlaraidh Wind Farms having been consented in the intervening period. This has been reviewed and updated. Scope for cumulative impacts predominantly arise from other constructed wind farms across the southern side of Glen Moriston including Beinneun and Millennium group, and from the recently consented Bunloinn Wind Farm to the south west.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

3.1	21.12.2020	20/04561/SCOP - Tomchrasky Wind Farm - Erection and operation of wind farm comprising of up to 29 wind turbines with maximum blade tip height 220m, access tracks, borrow pits, substation, control building and ancillary infrastructure	Scoping Response Issued

3.2	06.09.2016	16/03602/SCOP - Tomchrasky wind farm (18 Turbines over 50MW)	Scoping Response Issued
3.3	19.07.2016	16/02517/FUL - Erection of met mast up to 80m in height (with a lightning finial 2.5m above) (renewal of permission 14/00005/FUL)	Planning Permission Granted
3.4	12.02.2014	14/00005/FUL - Erection of met mast up to 80m in height (with a lightning finial 2.5m above)	Planning Permission Granted
3.5	16.12.2013	13/03875/FUL - Erection of 80m high anemometer mast (with a lightning finial extending 2.5m above)	Planning Permission Granted

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4.1 Advertised: Section 36 Application

Date Advertised: EIA - The Herald 05 December 2022; The Edinburgh Gazette 06 December 2022; and, The Inverness Courier 06 and 13 December 2022

Additional Information -The Edinburgh Gazette 26 March 2024; The Inverness Courier 23 April 2024

Representation deadline: 30 April 2024.

Representations Received by The Highland Council: 4 (1 objection, 3 in support)

Representations Received by The Energy Consents Unit: 0

4.2 Material considerations raised in objections are summarised as follows:

- Potential watercourse pollution, including cumulative impacts – FEI Geomorphological assessment report assessment is considered inadequate as it does not represent worst case (watercourse peak flow / restricted access issues); and
- Potential ornithological, biodiversity and ecology impacts.

4.3 Material considerations raised in support are summarised as follows:

- sensitive siting from a landscape perspective;
- not located in a protected area;
- a small community with virtually no local services – this would benefit all residents in the area to support the local population;
- help meet renewable energy targets; and

- in principle policy support for wind farms having been established.

4.4 Non-Material considerations raised: None.

4.5 All letters of representation received by the Council are available for inspection via the Council's eplanning portal which can be accessed through the internet www.wam.highland.gov.uk/wam . Any representations received by the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit can be accessed via www.energyconsents.scot It should be noted that some representations may have been submitted to both The Highland Council and Energy Consents Unit, and that those representations made to the Highland Council only, may not be taken into consideration by the Energy Consents Unit.

5. CONSULTATIONS

Consultations undertaken by The Highland Council

5.1 **Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston Community Council (Host)** was consulted although did not respond.

5.2 **Glengarry Community Council** was consulted although did not respond.

5.3 **Glenurquhart Community Council** was consulted although did not respond.

5.4 **Lochduich Community Council** was consulted although did not respond.

5.5 **Strathglass Community Council objects** to the application and voices concerns relating to the visual impact on the Glen Affric NSA and WLA24 which give rise to major social and economic implications for the area, as well as adverse impacts on the popular Core Path IV05.03 Eve's Road, which takes walkers and cyclists from Invermoriston to Glen Affric. The Community Council also has concerns regarding cumulative impacts arising due to other wind farm developments and the use of aviation safety lighting.

5.6 **Access Officer** does not object to the application subject to conditions to secure an Outdoor Access Plan. The Access Officer has considered the proposal's likely impacts on three public rights of way (H17, H105 and H199) and three routes that form part of the wider path network. These include routes to neighbouring Munros and Corbetts as well as a long-distance option between Invermoriston and Glen Affric.

5.7 **Development Plans Team** do not object to the application and provide information on the salient policy considerations of the proposal including the potential for community benefits and developer contributions.

5.8 **Ecology Officer** does not object to the application subject to conditions for a finalised Habitat Management Plan, Construction Environment Management Plan, an Environmental Clerk of Works, and pre-construction surveys. The Ecology Officer has considered the proposal in relation to protected species, biodiversity compensation and enhancement, which are considered in the main text of the report.

5.9 **Environmental Health** does not object to the application subject to conditions to secure limit operation and construction noise levels at noise sensitive locations, and details of a dust suppression scheme during construction works. The EHO is satisfied that the applicant has clarified matters previously raised in relation to operational noise limits and that cumulative noise levels will not exceed relevant limits.

5.10 **Flood Risk Management Team** does not object to the application and has no specific comments.

5.11 **Forestry Officer** does not object to the application but considers that more detail regarding the impact of the proposal on riparian, native woodland, along with compensatory planting measure should be provided, which can be secured by condition.

5.12 **Historic Environment Team** does not object to the application. The mitigation in the EIAR recommends a watching brief across a selected area. This is generally appropriate. The impacts of this development are within an acceptable range. A programme of archaeological works will be required, and the applicant will need to submit a detailed written scheme of investigation to agree these works. The required mitigation can be secured by means of a condition.

5.13 **Landscape Officer** does not object to the application and provides advice regarding the assessed landscape and visual impacts of the proposal including an assessment against the 10 Criterion as set out in Highland Council's Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance. Landscape and visual impact matters are considered in detail in the main body of the report.

5.14 **Transport Planning Team** does not object to the application subject to conditions to secure a finalised Construction Transport Management Plan to include provisions for the developer to consult with the local community and the Local Area Roads Office, as well as a wear and tear agreement to mitigate construction impacts on the Council maintained public road network.

Consultations Undertaken by the Energy Consents Unit

5.15 **British Telecom** does not object to the application. It should not cause interference to BT's current and presently planned radio network.

5.16 **Crown Estates Scotland** does not object to the application. No assets of the Crown Estate Scotland are affected by the proposal.

5.17 **Highlands and Islands Airports Limited** does not object to the application. An initial holding objection has been withdrawn post receipt of an Aviation Impact Feasibility Study (AIFS).

5.18 **Historic Environment Scotland** does not object to the application. An initial holding objection has been withdrawn post receipt of additional visualisations showing that the proposals would not raise issues of national significance for the setting of Fort Augustus-Bernera Military Road, 1890m W of Ceannacroc Lodge (SM11484).

5.19 **Ironside Farrar review of the Peat Landslide Hazard Risk Assessment (PLHRA)** does not object to the application. Its initial Stage 1 and Stage 2 check reports identified shortcomings in the applicant's Peat Landslide Hazard Risk Assessment (PLHRA), which the developer has now satisfactorily responded to. It advises that if there are areas where peat exists that have not been probed accordingly, further probing will be required.

5.20 **JRC Windfarms** does not object to the application as there are no predicted interference issues with respect to radio systems within its remit, based on known interference scenarios and the data provided.

5.21 **Marine Scotland Science** does not object to the application subject to conditions to secure that the proposed monitoring programme is integrated with the water quality (and fish population monitoring programme to follow MSS monitoring programme guidelines**.**

5.22 **Ministry of Defence - Defence Infrastructure Organisation** does not object to the application, subject to conditions to secure an aviation lighting scheme detailing how the development will be lit throughout its operational lifetime in order to maintain civil and military aviation safety, and, to ensure the applicant provides the relevant notifications to the Ministry of Defence in a timely manner.

5.23 **National Air Traffic Control Services** does not object to the application. The proposal does not conflict with the safeguarding criteria for air traffic.

5.24 **NatureScot** does not object subject to conditions to secure finalised a Construction Environmental Management Plan, a Peat Management Plan, an Operational Management Plan, and an Habitat Management Plans, as wells as to secure information regarding works to decommission the development. It has considered the application in relation to impacts on the River Morriston Special Area of Conservation, the West Inverness-shire Lochs Special Protection Area, and, the Glen Affric National Scenic Area. Its comments are considered in more detail in the main body of the report.

5.25 **Scottish Environment Protection Agency** does not object to the application subject to conditions to secure mitigation measures in relation to works involving the disturbance of peat, along with a finalised Peat Management Plan, Borrow Pit Restoration Plan, and Decommissioning and Restoration Plan. Conditions are also required to secure that works are carried out in accordance with the Schedule of Mitigation (Table 15.1) and Construction Environment Management Plan (Appendix 15.1), which will also require to be finalised.

5.26 **Scottish Forestry** does not object to the application and are broadly content with the forestry assessment set out in Technical Appendix 3-2 but recommend that prior to any tree felling, agreement is reached with Scottish Forestry in relation compensatory planting. As such SF request conditions to secure details of the proposed compensatory planting including location, size, timing, monitoring and maintenance.

5.27 **Scottish Water** does not object to the application but advises that the application site falls within a Drinking Water Protected Areas (DWPA) catchment and therefore requests conditions to secure mitigation measures are in place to protect drinking water quality along with monitoring and notification procedures.

5.28 **Transport Scotland** does not object to the application subject to conditions to secure details of the access junction design, Road Safety Auditing, an Abnormal Indivisible Loads Assessment and Implementation strategy, as well as a finalised Construction Traffic Management Plan, and a decommissioning plan.

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY AND OTHER MATERIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Appendix 2 of this report provides details of the documents that comprise the adopted Development Plan, including details of pertinent planning policies as well as adopted supplementary guidance, and other material policy considerations which are relevant to the assessment of the application.

7. PLANNING APPRAISAL

7.1 Should Ministers approve the development, it will receive deemed planning permission under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended). Although not a planning application, the Council processes Section 36 applications in a similar manner given that planning permission may be deemed to be granted.

7.2 Schedule 9 of The Electricity Act 1989 contains considerations in relation to the impact of proposals on amenity and fisheries. These considerations mean the developer requires to:

- have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving

flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest; and

- reasonably mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects.

7.3 It should be noted that for applications under the Electricity Act 1989 that the Development Plan is just one of a number of considerations, and therefore Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 which requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, is not engaged. That said, the application still requires to be assessed against all policies of the Development Plan relevant to the application, all national and local policy guidance and all other material considerations relevant to the application.

Planning Considerations

7.4 The key considerations in this case are:

a) Compliance with the Development Plan / Other Planning Policy
b) Energy and Economic Benefits
c) Design, Landscape and Visual Impacts
d) Construction
e) Roads, Transport and Access
f) Water, Flood Risk, Drainage and Peat
g) Natural Heritage (including ornithology)
h) Built and Cultural Heritage
i) Noise and Shadow Flicker
j) Telecommunications
k) Aviation
l) Other Material Considerations

Development Plan / Other Planning Policy

7.5 The Development Plan comprises National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), the adopted Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP), the adopted Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP), and all statutorily adopted supplementary guidance, including the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG).

7.6 Appendix 3 of this report provides an assessment of compliance with the Development Plan / Other Planning Policy.

7.7 As a proposal relating to an energy generation station above 50MW capacity, the principle of the wind farm development is established in national policy, with the proposed development type considered to be of national importance for the delivery of the national Spatial Strategy. NPF4 considers that Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure will assist in the delivery of the Spatial Strategy and Spatial Priorities for the north of Scotland, and that Highland can continue to make a strong contribution toward meeting Scotland's ambition for net zero. Alongside these ambitions, the strategy for Highland aims to protect environmental assets as well as to stimulate investment in natural and engineered solutions to address climate change. This aim is not new and will clearly require a balancing exercise to be undertaken, which is reflected throughout NPF4. At the regional level, HwLDP also offers support for renewable development proposals where they are located, sited and designed such as they will not be significantly detrimental overall, individually or cumulatively with other developments. To inform this assessment, the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG) provides a methodology to consider landscape and visual effects against the "thresholds" listed in its 10 criterion, which are designed to assist the application of HwLDP policy in judging the final balance of benefits versus disbenefits of any given scheme.

Energy and Economic Benefit

7.8 The Council continues to respond positively to the Government's renewable energy agenda. Installed onshore wind energy developments in Highland account for around 30% of Scotland's installed onshore wind energy capacity, with a substantial number of onshore wind farm applications pending consideration at present. While The Highland Council has effectively met its own target, as previously set out in the Highland Renewable Energy Strategy, it remains the case that there are areas of Highland capable of absorbing renewable developments without significant widespread effects.

7.9 Notwithstanding any impacts that this proposal may have upon the landscape resource, amenity and heritage of the area, the development could be seen to be compatible with Scottish Government policy and guidance and increase its overall contribution to the Government, UK and European energy targets, with the development having the potential to generate up to 84MW in addition to an indicative battery storage capacity of 50MW. Based on a typical capacity factor, the development is likely to generate approximately 272,260 MW per year based on an estimated capacity factor of 37%. This is the equivalent to powering 70,151 homes.

7.10 There will also be carbon losses as a result of the development, including those related to turbine manufacture and impact on peat. When taking into consideration the potential renewable energy generation, displacement and savings of carbon and carbon losses, the proposed development is expected to payback the carbon cost in 4.5 years compared to grid mix electricity generation. This means it is expected that the development would make a positive contribution to offsetting carbon emissions after 4.5 years following the date of final commission with the proposal reported by the applicant to have an overall beneficial effect on climate change.

7.11 The project anticipates a construction period of approximately 18 months and an operational period of 30 years. There are likely to be some adverse effects caused by construction traffic and disruption, particularly during the construction phase when abnormal loads are being delivered to site. Such projects can offer investment/opportunities to the local, Highland, and Scottish economy, including businesses ranging across the construction, haulage, electrical and service sectors. The socio-economic impact offered by the applicant suggests a minor beneficial economic impact in the Highlands and Scotland during construction. The annual economic impacts for operation were assessed as negligible beneficial.

7.12 The applicant has identified that the capital cost of the development is estimated to be £111 million. They estimate that around a third of investment will occur within Scotland (£40 million) as a whole, with a third accruing to the Highland area (£13.3 million). They estimate that around 426 job years are expected to be created in Scotland during the construction phase, with approximately 155 job years created in the Highland region.

7.13 Operation and maintenance spend is estimated to be in the order of £5 million per year with £2.9 million accruing to Scotland and £2.1 million to the Highland region. It is estimated that this will create 30 FTE jobs annually in Scotland with around 20 being created in the Highland region.

7.14 The effect of introducing NPF4 Policy 11 c) relating to the need for energy development to maximise socio-economic benefits of which community benefit forms a part, means that this is now material to the determination of an application. Additionally, NPF4 Policy 25 provides support for development that is consistent with local economic priorities and where they contribute to local and/or regional community wealth building strategies. The Council is currently in the process of developing its priorities, along with partners, through the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan and the work on production of a community wealth building strategy that is under way. This work will set a strategic framework along with identifying many of the local priorities and projects to promote and encourage economic activity and retain wealth within the Highland area. The ongoing Local Place Plans initiative will likely identify other opportunities. While many opportunities are likely to be identified locally, there will be a need to consider the opportunities

available from a strategic perspective in order to ensure that communities across all of Highland benefit. Community benefit will be expected to form part of that strategic consideration.

7.15 With the absence of the Council having a Community Wealth Building Strategy in place, and no community ownership being proposed, the proposal cannot be given any additional support under NPF4 Policy 25. That said, the applicant has committed to offering £5,000 per installed MW per year, index-linked, community benefit to the local area. As part of this offering, the applicant is engaging with the local community and exploring a direct electricity payment to properties closest to the development to help offset increasing costs of living. The applicant is also looking at the following:

- Cycle Path provision: exploring upgrading parts of a cycle path along the proposed access route to improve access and recreation;
- Battery Storage: exploring how to best make use of the battery storage capability and if there are local users that could directly benefit from this facility; and,
- Cultural Heritage: given the project proximity to important heritage assets such as the Augustus to Bernera Military Road and Scheduled Monuments including the Balnacarn Township and Torgoyle Bridge, The applicant is engaged with HES and the Council, exploring offering information boards and data sharing to denote the important features and enhance the local understanding of the assets.

7.16 The Council has commissioned a study on what maximising benefits from development might look like with the intention of providing further guidance. Whether what is on offer, while not without merit, can be said to be considered as maximising socio-economic benefit, particularly for the wider Highland area will need to be an area for further discussion with the applicant, and conditions could be imposed to secure the socio-economic benefits reported in the EIAR, as well as a scheme for community benefit.

Design, Landscape and Visual Impacts

7.17 EIAR Chapter 3 describes the scheme's evolution through several design and layout iterations including for 29 turbines of 220m tip height at Scoping stage, through 23 turbines also of 220m tip height at pre-application stage, an interim design of 18 turbines at 185m tip height, amended to 15 turbines and again to the current 14 turbines of 185m tip height as informed by further survey work and pre-application discussions with consultees and THC Planning Officers. The stated reasons for the site's selection (EIAR Volume 2, Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1) include that the site benefits from good wind resource, proximity to commercially viable grid connection as well as the road network, there being no landscape and environmental designations within the application site, as well as the site's distance from residential properties and settlements.

7.18 The Chapter sets out that the design of the wind farm has followed a constraints based approach in order that mitigation on environmental effects is embedded within the design, with key constraints including landscape character and visual amenity; ground conditions, topography and peat; noise sensitive receptors; watercourses, private water supplies and related infrastructure; ornithology; and, cultural heritage features. For example, the chapter sets out that all turbines are now located on the same plateau outwith forested areas and wholly within the same LCT (LCT220 Rugged Massif – Inverness), which is expected to improve views from key viewpoints. The applicant also advises that consideration has also been given to comments received from the local community following two public exhibitions in late summer and early autumn 2022.

7.19 It is also important that siting, layout, and design principles consider the cumulative effects arising from a proposal's relationships with other wind energy developments in its wider context given the ever increasing presence of turbines in the landscape. Wind farm design should take into account the baseline and potential future baseline conditions. In this instance, the application does not relate to any operational wind farm, being its own standalone development with some separation from existing and approved schemes, although with landscape, visual, and environmental linkages with schemes in the wider area.

7.20 As such, factors such as the degree to which nearby developments follow similar 'development patterns' in terms of siting, layout, and design can determine the degree to which schemes sit harmoniously or discordantly together in the landscape. Therefore, similarities and differences between receiving landscapes and Landscape Character Types; the degree to which the size and scale differences between the schemes and individual components, especially turbine proportions such as relative tip and hub heights, rotor diameters, and direction of rotor spin, are experienced by receptors and what effects these have such as the enjoyment of the view qualities, amongst others, are key in the assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects.

7.21 As stated, the turbines will be wholly placed within the Rugged Massif – Inverness LCT, with the specific Landscape Character Area (LCA) unit, which encompasses a notable part of Glen Affric to the north and northeast, both northern and southern slopes of Glen Moriston, and straddles the A87 to take in Bunloinn and Beinneun Forests over a distance of some 20km, and as far east as Portclair Forest above the western banks of Loch Ness. Several operational, approved, and proposed wind farms are contained within this LCA including, from southwest to southeast, Bunloinn (recently approved), Beinneun and Extension, and Millennium Wind Farms (each operational). In addition, the Bhlaraidh/Corrimony cluster is similarly located north of the A887 but is sited centrally within the adjoining LCT222 – Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness.

7.22 While the siting of these wind farms within the LCA demonstrates that the general LCT and specific LCA have been accepted as having capacity to host wind energy development, it is salient to the assessment that these wind farms occur south of the A87/A887 and are not contained wholly within Glen Moriston. Also salient is that these developments are noticeably on higher ground, for example Bunloinn turbines are sited between 360m and 550 AOD, the Beinneun/Millennium cluster between 465m and 705m AOD, and the Bhlaraidh/Corrimony cluster between 440m and 540m (heights are approximate). The turbines of Tomchrasky on the other hand would all sit below 350m AOD. As such, it is not just the suitability of the northern section of the LCA that requires assessment, but more specifically the northern flanks of Glen Moriston. Nevertheless, the layout of the scheme reflects that of wind energy developments in the wider area, in plan form at least, with the scheme appearing as a relatively coherent but not rigid arrangement of turbines.

7.23 Furthermore, the proposal is for 14 turbines with maximum tip heights of 185m and indicative hub heights and rotor diameters of 110m and 150m respectively. The largest operational turbines within the 35km EIAR study area are the seven Beinneun Extension turbines at 136m ground to tip height to the site's south while the smallest are the five 100m high turbines of Corrimony to the northeast. The majority of operational turbines are between 113.5m and 125m ground to tip height, with some at 135m. However, the approval of Cloiche and Corriegarth 2 Wind Farms will introduce turbines at 149.9m to the study area, the maximum allowed before visible aviation safety lighting is required, while Bhlaraidh Extension will introduce turbines of 180m and Bunloinn turbines of 200m to tip. Consequently, understanding the visual effects resulting from the interaction of Tomchrasky with various turbines sizes of these schemes is also key to the assessment.

7.24 Not only is consideration of how the siting, design of developments relate to each other and the cohesiveness of their relationship to their surroundings from fixed viewpoints important, but also how wind farms relate to each other in terms of their frequency when moving through the landscape. Such consideration includes understanding the visual separation between schemes, which is important in order to allow receptors to experience and appreciate the character of the landscape and any special natural, architectural, cultural, and historic features in between. Care and attention are therefore required regarding design, siting and location to avoid detrimental impacts. Indeed, NatureScot's Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape Guidance notes that it can be particularly challenging to accommodate multiple wind farms in an area, and so advances windfarm design objectives of limiting visual confusion and reinforcing the appropriateness of each development for its location.

7.25 As with all wind farm development, there remains potential for significant residual landscape and visual effects that require further consideration even though mitigation is embedded in to the design. Any assessment must pay particular

attention to the specific Landscape Character Area (LCA) of the receiving landscape, as well as any landscape designations in the wider area, susceptible receptors, and public views. The implications of the application proposal on the perceptual experience of the landscape and the visual experience of the receptor are considered in the respective Landscape Impact and Visual Impact sections below. These assessments set out that the applicant has generally responded positively to the constraints of the site and its wider context through careful consideration of the scheme's siting, layout, and design, and that the site is considered suitable for the development of the wind farm as proposed in landscape and visual terms.

7.26 It is noted however that the applicant has requested a siting allowance of 100 metres to allow the development to respond to and mitigate against unforeseen environmental constraints during construction works. However, excepting for the substation and battery energy storage compound, which may be permitted a larger allowance, micrositing allowances should not exceed 50m to ensure that changes to the positioning of turbines and infrastructure do not result in a significantly changed proposal than that as has been assessed through the LVIA and CLVIA. As such, a condition to restrict the micrositing allowance to 50m is suggested with this report.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

7.27 The applicant has presented a number of submissions to illustrate the landscape and visual impact of the development both singularly and cumulatively with existing and consented windfarm developments. The EIAR includes a description of the design process, along with assessments against several Landscape Character Types (LCT), Glen Affric National Scenic Area (NSA), and the Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel Special Landscape Area (SLA), and Wild Land Areas. A total of 16 viewpoints across a study area of 35km have been assessed, however all viewpoints are within 25km of the development. These viewpoints are representative of a range of receptors including communities, recreational users of the outdoors, and road users. The expected bare earth visibility of the development can be appreciated from the Volume 4a Chapter 5 Figure 5-1 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) to 45km, which shows the ZTV to blade tip height, Figure 5-2 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) AT 1:100,000 scale (with Viewpoints), and Figure 5-3 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) of Hubs and Tips. The remaining Volume 4a Chapter 5 Figures shown ZTV with LCTs, landscape designations, and cumulative with existing and proposed wind farms within the study area. The information submitted is considered sufficient to allow the Planning Authority to come to a reasoned conclusion on the likely landscape and visual effects of the development.

7.28 The methodology for the LVIA is described in EIAR Volume 3 Technical Appendix 5-1 and generally follows that set out in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA3). As set out in para 3.32 of GLVIA 3 the "LVIA should always clearly distinguish between what are considered to be significant and

non-significant effects". The applicant judges Significant Effects following the combination of judgements based on the Sensitivity of the Receptor against the Magnitude of Change. It is noted here that it would be perfectly reasonable to expect a development of the type, size, scale, and texture of a wind farm to result in significant landscape and visual impacts, bearing in mind that significant effects do not necessarily equate to unacceptable effects.

7.29 The Sensitivity of the receptor (landscape or visual) is defined by the receptor's susceptibility to change against the importance (value) of the landscape / view. For landscape 'susceptibility' is "the ability of the landscape receptor […] to accommodate the Development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies - GLVIA3, Page 88. For visual receptors, higher susceptibility to change are those whose attention or interest is focussed on their surroundings whereby the Council considers recreational users moving through the landscape at slower speeds such as cyclists as having a High Susceptibility to wind energy development. Receptor Sensitivity is defined as being High, Medium, or Low in the applicant's methodology.

7.30 Judgement of Magnitude of Change is based on an assessment of factors such as the size or scale of the change; the geographical extent of the area influenced by the change; the degree to which the change contrasts to the baseline conditions in terms of form, texture, scale, and mass; and the development's duration and reversibility. In that way, the assessment of the proposal as a singular development includes an element of assessing cumulative effects, as the Magnitude of Change occasioned by a new wind farm will be lower in landscapes and views that already have existing onshore wind energy developments. As with Receptor Sensitivity, Magnitude of Change is also set at High, Medium, and Low.

7.31 It will be observed that the applicant has refrained from using intermediate categories to describe Receptor Sensitivity and the Magnitude of Change such as 'Medium-high' or 'Medium-low' for example. However, this assessment has judged sensitivity and Magnitude of Change at some receptors to be more appropriately described by these intermediary categories.

7.32 According to the definitions provided in the methodology, there are four main Levels of Effect; Major, Moderate, Minor, and Negligible with impacts of Major and Moderate Levels of Effect corresponding to Significant Effects. Those effects classified as Minor, and Negligible are considered to be Not Significant. The applicant has not followed a strict matrix approach in judging the Level and therefore the Significance of Effect, but rather has applied professional judgement according to textually described criteria in Tables 5-1-1 through 5-1-6 (EIAR Volume 3 Technical Appendix 5-1). For example, the applicant has assessed the Level of visual Effects at Viewpoints 4, 5, and 9 as Major however a matrix approach would assess a Medium

Receptor Sensitivity and High Magnitude of Change as resulting in a lower intermediary Level of Effect of Major-Moderate, although this would still be 'Significant'.

7.33 The Council would generally always prefer a matrix approach so that the assessor's logic is easier to follow and so that results are consistent. Nevertheless, the applicant's consideration of each receptor and viewpoint is clearly stated in EIAR Volume 3 Technical Appendices 5-2 (Landscape Character Assessment), 5-4 (Assessment of Visual Effects), 5-5 (Assessment of Cumulative Effects), 5-6 (Implications for Designated Landscapes), and 5-7 (Wild Land Assessment) and there is no concern that the EIAR is non-GLVIA3 compliant.

7.34 A summary of the applicant's assessment and officer appraisal of this assessment, which highlights the differences and any concerns with regard to visual impact, can be found in Appendix 5 of this report.

7.35 In terms of the assessment of Cumulative Effects and notwithstanding the assessment of Magnitude of Change as described above, the cumulative landscape and visual assessment (CLVIA) focusses on: 1) The Consented Scenario - wind farms that may be consented but not yet built; and, 2) The In-Planning Scenario - as yet undetermined applications (including those under appeal).

7.36 In this instance the applicant's methodology states that 'there are no consented schemes that are not within or adjacent to clusters of existing turbines, such that the relationships between wind farms/groups is no different from the existing scenario (the LVIA). The consented scenario is therefore not considered further'. However, as is to be expected, the cumulative picture has changed since the preparation of the EIAR and therefore the officer's assessment of cumulative visual effects, which is also included in Appendix 5 of this report, will refer to schemes that have moved from the in-planning scenario to the consented scenario (Bhlaraidh Extension, Bunloinn and Cloiche Wind Farms).

7.37 The CLVIA then, as described in the methodology, is an assessment of the relationships between wind farms in the cumulative baseline and how those relationships will change with the addition of the proposed development. In that way, the addition of the proposal is considered in terms of how it effects the character of a landscape and/or view; i.e., a landscape with occasional wind farms, a landscape with wind farms, or a wind farm landscape as described in Section 3.4 of the methodology. The applicant advises that a Significant in-combination cumulative effect is one where the addition of Tomchrasky would result in a perceptual change of character such that it moves from one level to the next. As with the LVIA, there are again four Levels of Effect, however, the applicant's written assessments do not include judgements of the Magnitude of cumulative effect. This has however been undertaken and detailed in the officer's analysis presented in Appendix 5.

7.38 In addition to the above, the applicant has included assessments of the effects of the development on the special qualities of the Glen Affric NSA, and the special qualities of both the Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA, as well as the wild land qualities of Wild Land Area (WLA) 24: Central Highlands. The WLA assessments are noted and appreciated with particular regard as to how they have informed the design of the proposal. However, given the policy status of WLAs in NPF4 relative to energy developments, this report does not include a review of this aspect of the LVIA.

7.39 A key part of the of the Council's assessment of landscape and visual effects is a consideration of the proposal against the Criterion set out in Section 4 of the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG), with the assessment against the criterion and view as to whether the threshold set out in the guidance is met or not, contained in Appendix 6 to this report. Furthermore, landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development may be reversible as the scheme would be capable of being decommissioned as stated within the EIA FEI. However, as set out in Policy 11 (f) of NPF4, windfarm sites should be suitable in perpetuity, and it is therefore considered reasonable to assess the duration of all landscape and visual effects as non-reversible in that context.

Landscape Impacts

7.40 There are several aspects to consider in determining whether this development represents an acceptable degree of impact on landscape character, including:

- impacts on the Landscape Character Type (LCT) as a whole, as a unit (Landscape Character Area (LCA)), and on neighbouring LCTs;
- impacts on the local landscape composition closer to the development; and,
- direct and indirect impacts on landscape designations.

7.41 The proposal's specific effects on landscape character will result from the introduction of 14 large-scale moving man-made features in the landscape, with the turbines and, to a lesser degree, the associated tracks and other infrastructure, contrasting with the existing colour and texture of the hosting slopes and moorland and its interaction with the colour and texture of the wider landscapes that the development is experienced within. The development's lower lying infrastructure components will have greater influence where they are more visible, which varies due to the undulating topography of the site offering different levels of exposure and screening depending on the angle and elevation of the view.

7.42 While being a locally dominant presence, the size and scale of the proposal will decrease relative to the landscape as one moves away from it and crosses different landscape features, and therefore its influence on landscape character will decrease relative to distance and intervening landscape. In this instance, the proposal sits within a lower lying and gently sloping area of Rugged Massif – Inverness on the northern flanks of Glen Moriston with higher summits surrounding the site in all

directions except along the valley floor of the glen to the west. Therefore, the proposal's influence on landscape character will be strongest from facing slopes and summits within Glen Moriston and higher summits beyond. Where the development is highly screened or not visible, it will have negligible to zero influence on landscape receptors.

7.43 The site sits within LCT220, Rugged Massif – Inverness, with turbines being located outwith the Loch Ness Study Area (THC OWESG) although influencing sections of the LCT within it, particularly LN5). This LCT is characterised by its broad, sometimes rounded, rugged, and exposed mountains and summits formed in distinct parallel ranges that are connected by long ridges. These distinct ranges tend to be divided by the long east-west glens of the Wooded Glen Landscape Character Type. Underlying ground supports heather and rough grassland, as well as bog on the gentler slopes of blanket peat, with some rocky outcrops and occasional small birch and shrubby woodland. However, landcover is relatively uniform across hill bottoms and tops within the LCT making it difficult to perceive the size of hills as there is generally no obvious indication of either horizontal or vertical scale. The LCT induces a sense of remoteness, particularly in its interior due to the lack of settlement and relatively few signs of human activity. Moreover, while summits may provide expansive views in and out of the LCT, they also provide a strong sense of enclosure from internal and lower lying areas.

7.44 The applicant's assessment states that the 'scale of the landscape is large, and its characteristics indicate that the LCT has a greater ability to accommodate wind farms, although the landscape is vulnerable to additional modern elements on high tops and ridges that would be highly visible and detract from the sense of lack of human activity'. This is not contested, with the proposed development being extensive visibility throughout the hosting LCA with the notable exceptions of north of Carn a' Chaochain, a small section in the west at Loch Cluanie, and south of the summits above the southern slopes of Glen Moriston.

7.45 Beyond the LCA, there are pockets of visibility in LCT220 north of Glen Affric as well as the related Rugged Massif LCTs of Skye and Lochalsh (LCT365), and Lochaber (LCT238). These LCTs are very similar but do display some regional differences in character, however, are not included in the landscape character assessment due to the unlikelihood of significant effects.

7.46 Due to the presence of wind farms within the LCA and visibility of other clusters in nearby LCTs, the applicant judges the LCT to be of Medium Sensitivity to wind farm development. The applicant judges a High Magnitude of Change on the LCA for the area between Allt na Muic and the River Doe valley, and up to Meall Damh (493m AOD), Beinn an t-Sìthein (508 m AOD) and Carn a' Chaochain Chruaidh (506m AOD), there will be a high magnitude of change with the introduction of turbines and infrastructure. The effect on this area will be significant (major).

7.47 For other areas of the LCA, the applicant advises that there will be a greater sense of separation between the receptor and the proposed development, which will be seen along the valley from the Glen Moriston slopes to the west of the River Doe to above the Loch Cluanie dam. The applicant judges the Magnitude of Change to be Medium from this area due to the perception of the proposed development being within the same glen. The Level of Effect is judged to be Significant and Moderate.

7.48 Similarly, the applicant has considered that Tomchrasky would introduce a wind farm opposite the lower slopes to the south of Glen Moriston in addition to the wind farms above (the Beinneun and Millennium group). The assessment states that because this area will become slopes between rather than below wind farms, the Magnitude of Change is Medium due to combined effects with existing wind farms. The effect to the landscape character of this area, below the existing wind farms and roughly between their respective access tracks below Carn Criche and Cean a‘ Mhàim is judged to be Moderate and Significant in the EIAR.

7.49 In summary, the Level of landscape Effect of the proposed development on this LCT is judged in the EIA to be significant (major) for the proposed development site and its surroundings (between Allt na Muic and River Doe and below Beinn an t-Sithein); significant (moderate) from the area to the west of the River Doe, north of Beinn an t-Sithein; and the lower slopes of the Beinneun ridge and not significant for all other areas.

7.50 The LCA is bounded by LCT226 Wooded Glen – Inverness, with the Glen Affric LCA to the north and the Glen Moriston LCA (west of Invermoriston to Loch Cluanie and its lower slopes,) to the west, being the closest LCA to the turbines and the most salient LCA unit of this LCT to the assessment. The EIAR ascribes a judgement of High Magnitude of Change to the character of this LCA at the northern side of the A887 from Dalchreichart to Ceannacroc, and, from the A87-River Loynne corridor up to Loch Loyne Dam where woodland is more open. This Level of Effect is considered to be Moderate and Significant. However, Level of Effects at other parts of LCT within the Glen Moriston LCA will have Not Significant (Minor to Negligible) effects due to woodland/plantation cover and/or greater separation from the Proposed Development.

7.51 The northwest of the hosting LCA is bounded by an LCA of LCT230 Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Inverness, which includes the high ‘glaciated mountainous landscape with pyramidal rock peaks’ and ‘sweeping, concave slopes with screes plunging directly into deep glens or lochs’. The applicant judges the sensitivity of this landscape to wind energy development to be Medium because of its large scale and because existing turbines are viewed against the backdrop of the LCT from other LCTs, particularly in western views from the east. The EIAR advises of a Medium Magnitude of Change from the east facing slopes at the end of the Carn nam Feuaich ridge due to their proximity to the development resulting in a Moderate and

Significant Level of Effect. Beyond the Can a Choire Bhuidhe area, the applicant has assessed that the proposal will be seen beyond and below Meal Damh and Beinn an t-Sithean, with greater apparent separation distance. From here, the Magnitude of Change is low, and Level of Effect Minor and Not Significant.

7.52 A similar conclusion is reached for the adjoining LCA of LCT222 Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness to the east of the hosting LCA, which hosts the Corrimony / Bhlaraidh wind farm cluster. Visibility of the proposal is contained to the southwest section of the LCT222 LCA unit at a distance of 5 to 7 km away. The applicant has judged that the Magnitude of Change for this part of the LCA would be Medium, but that the Level of Effect would be Minor and not Significant. The proposal has very limited and isolated influence on this LCT beyond this southwest section.

7.53 The applicant has concluded that there will be no significant effects on whole LCTs, or indeed individual LCAs, and that as a whole there are no other significant effects on landscape character across the study area. Significant effects identified by the applicant occur within approximately 5km of the proposed development and are limited to the slopes of Glen Moriston, such that these may be considered localised.

7.54 In terms of local landscape composition, the proposal's visibility across several landscape character types and its siting within a transitional location, that provides a clear distinction between rugged massif landscape with wind farms to the east, and the turbine-free rugged massif landscape to the west is acknowledged. In this instance however, it is considered that the development's positioning on a long rising and enclosed slope, itself distinctive to the surrounding assemblage of landscape character types, along with its positioning away from abutting LCTs, in particular its set back from the boundary between Wooded Glen and Rugged Massif and back from the trunk roads, as well as its relative simplicity relative to the complex wider and grander landscape, combine to mean that Tomchrasky would not appear to overwhelm any one landscape character or undermine the distinction between LCAs. As such, none of the predicted landscape effects are likely to be sufficiently adverse to warrant an objection to the development on grounds of landscape character impact.

Designated Landscapes – Glen Affric NSA

7.55 The applicant has assessed the proposal on the Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) of Glen Affric NSA, which is approximately 5km from the nearest turbine at its closest point where there will be very limited and isolated influence from the development. VP10 (Sgurr nan Conbhairean) is representative of an elevated NSA boundary view of the development 8.4km to its west. Tomchrasky would have more influence on the NSA at the more distant northern slopes of the Glen up to the ridgeline and summits that define its northern boundary east of Càrn Eighe, between 10-15km, represented by VP14 (Toll Creagach).

7.56 The applicant has focused its assessment on three SLQs; namely, SLQ1 ‘One of the most beautiful glens in Scotland’, SLQ3 ‘A journey into wildness’, and SLQ6 ‘An historic and popular route through the Highlands’. As SLQ1 is best appreciated from locations in the glen whilst within the NSA, the proposal would not significantly impact this SLQ.

7.57 SLQ3 describes a transition from the more settled east (from Fasnakyle power station past isolated settlement and youth hostel) to the wilder west, where the general absence of man-made features imbues a sense of remoteness. However, the applicant contends that Tomchrasky would not introduce views of wind energy development to those locations where views across and out of the NSA are available, and as such do not consider its impact to be significantly detrimental to SLQ3.

7.58 SLQ6 describes that an historical drove road passed through the glen that is now popular with visitors. The applicant advises that this route is now known as the Affric-Kintail Way, which passes along the lochs and over the western upper reaches of the glen in to Kintail, which will not have visibility of the development. As with SLQ3, pathways over higher mountain ridges at the edges of the glen are already subject to influence from wind farm development at a distance, and as such, the applicant advises that this quality will not be significantly altered by Tomchrasky.

7.59 However, NatureScot’s response considers that turbine siting and aviation safety lighting would result in significant effects on the perceptual qualities of wildness and remoteness of SLQ3 as experienced from the NSA’s northern mountains. And, that this effect on the perception and experience of wildness and remoteness would have a knock on effect on the perception and experience of the wildness of the scenic composition of the glen westward as that relates to SLQ1. NatureScot considers that ‘the scenic composition of the physical characteristics of the glen described in SLQ1 is augmented by the wildness attributed to SLQ3; which combined culminates in the unique scenic composition of the glen’. NatureScot also considers that aviation lighting would further compound these effects at dusk, dawn and during periods of lower light, which in turn would significantly impact on SLQ6.

7.60 Notwithstanding its assessment, NatureScot has not objected to the proposal by virtue that the effects summarised above would be contained to the northern mountains of the NSA and would not be to the degree that the objectives of the designation and overall integrity of the Glen Affric NSA would be compromised. Indeed, its response advises that the significant effects from turbine lighting on SLQs 3 and 6 would be removed if a lighting scheme for invisible infra-red aviation lighting could be agreed with the CAA and Defence Infrastructure Organisation. It is understood that this technology is yet been adopted in the UK, but may be introduced in future, and therefore a condition could be applied to this wind farm to ensure that all visible aviation lighting is removed / switched off in that event.

7.61 NatureScot's response is acknowledged and understood. Its overall conclusion is not disputed. The NSA's SLQs will not be impacted to such a degree that integrity and/or objectives of the NSA would be compromised. It is not considered that the effects are sufficiently adverse to merit objection to the proposal, having given due regard to the fact that the SLQ's can be appreciated from many more accessible locations within the NSA.

Designated Landscapes – Moidart, Morar and Glen Siel SLA

7.62 This SLA is approximately 3km east of the nearest turbines and covers an extensive area of mountains, moorland, and lochs between Glen Shiel and Moidart, and takes in the coast of Arisaig while also abutting several NSAs including Glen Affric. The key landscape and visual characteristics are reflected in the Special Qualities (SQs) of the SLA under the heading 'Distinctive West Highland Composition'. That relate to:

- the pattern of east-west aligned mountain ridges, deep glens and lochs;
- much of the are represents the back door into Knoydart, Glen Shiel and Kintail with the area being popular with hillwalkers and wilderness enthusiasts;
- Loch Morar as hidden gem;
- the area is sparsely populated;
- quiet uninhabited glens and isolated peaks create a landscape with a sense of wildness and tranquillity;
- in the north the A87 (Invergarry-Kyle of Lochalsh) road hugs the shore of Loch Cluanie before winding through Glen Shiel;
- there is an intricate coastline and contrast of scale with the mountains.

7.63 The SLA Citation also sets out the designation's sensitivity to change, which it cites as being: 1) new buildings and structures creating distracting foci, reducing the strong sense of wildness, and potentially diminishing the perceived scale of the mountain interior; 2) land use changes that would introduce incongruous edges and contrast of textures and colours. In addition the moorland and mountain parts of this SLA are sensitive to the addition of linear elements that typically contrast to the openness and simplicity of the land cover, for example fences and tracks; 3) Additional residential and other development types in the coastal part of the area (onshore or offshore) which would alter the balance between built and natural features and have an adverse impact on the extent and character of views along the coast and to nearby islands.

7.64 The citation also lists potential for landscape enhancements including the removal and/or restructuring of incongruous coniferous forest blocks, removal of redundant fencing, employing landscaping techniques to limit or reduce impacts from improved or new roads, vegetation establishment to reduce impacts from drawdown scars, and improve facilities and infrastructure for visitors to the area.

7.65 The SLA is represented by VP10 Sgurr nan Conbhairean and VP15 Creag A' Mhàim. The applicant's assessment advises that 'these viewpoints are at the north-eastern corner of the SLA, and whilst visual effects will be significant from these locations, they do not alter the perception of the special qualities of the SLA which reflect the topography, glens, and uninhabited nature of the landscape. As such, the proposed development will not affect the reasons for which the SLA was designated.'

7.66 In terms of the SLA's sensitivities to change, specifically 1 and 2 as set out above, it is accepted that the turbines will be a distracting focus for receptors that may be looking out of the SLA while inside it at limited locations at its north-eastern edge. From here, the turbines will diminish the perceived scale of the low summits next to the development. These adjacent summits are however outside of SLA, and the mountains of the Ceannacroc horseshoe within the SLA would remain dominant in scale. Furthermore, although the associated infrastructure will contrast the openness and simplicity of the landcover at the application site, this is not a direct impact on the SLA itself. The applicant's assessment is therefore accepted.

Visual Impacts

7.67 EIAR Volume 2 Chapter 5 is supplemented by several Technical Appendices (EIAR Volume 3) including Technical Appendix 5-4, which provides a visual impact assessment of what the applicant considers the significance of the visual effect would be for the receptors at each viewpoint. Unsurprisingly, there is some difference between the applicant's assessment and the appraisal undertaken by officers, which is to be expected given the assessments are dependent on the application of professional judgement. However, for the majority of views the applicant's assessment of Significance of Effects is agreed. Differences in judgement are set out in Appendix 5 and in the main text below.

7.68 There is greater variance in opinion with regard the Sensitivity of Receptors, whereby the sensitivity is agreed at only three VPs with High Sensitivity (VPs 6, 10, and 15). Elsewhere the applicant considers a higher sensitivity at two VPs, one with residential receptors on a minor roads (VPs 1) and one at a layby with no promoted view (VP3). Additionally, the applicant considers a lower sensitivity at eight VPs. The Council generally considers passengers travelling in cars to be of higher susceptibility to wind farm development (VPs 2 and 4) as well as users of laybys with a scenic outlook (VP5 - particularly for receptors travelling north through a scenic route such as northwards from the A82 through the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA), and users of paths where there is an opportunity to appreciate the landscape and views (VPs 7, 8, 9, 11, and 16). At VP11, the applicant has advised that the presence of overhead lines (OHL) in the wider view reduces the susceptibility of receptors at that location to wind farm development. However, it is considered that the OHL would reduce the Magnitude of Change, rather than the receptor susceptibility and sensitivity in this instance.

7.69 It is important to note that while the receptor's sensitivity at certain VPs is regarded be higher than that reported in the LVIA, this does not mean that the sensitivity is judged to be High at all VPs. It should also be noted that not all receptors experiencing the development from all of the viewpoints would have a high sensitivity to the development.

7.70 There is also some variance in judgement of Magnitude of Change at three VPs. At VP5 (A87 Layby above Bun Loyne) and VP8 (Creag Bhog), this assessment considers the Magnitude of Change to be an intermediary level below at Medium-High instead of the applicant's judgement of High. For VP5, this is due to the relative containment and screening offered by the local topography concealing around half of the turbines to hub height. For VP8, it is the relative screening, containment, and presence of other wind farm developments in the view that reduces the Magnitude of Change again by an intermediary level. From VP11 (Beinn Bhan, Eve's Road), which is approximately 5km from the nearest turbine, the Magnitude is also judged to be an intermediary level higher than the applicant's assessment as turbines are foregrounded by several lower dips and summits, which means the array is read as being perceptibly wide in its landscape setting.

7.71 The applicant's assessment of the significance of the visual impact of the proposal as a standalone development concludes that the proposed development would result in significant visual impacts as a singular development at all VPs, with the exception of VPs 2 (A887, Inchmore Hatchery), 12 (Old Military Road, Inverwick), 13 (Meall Fuar 'mhonaidh), 14 (Toll Creagach), and 16 (Glas Bheinn). Barring VP4 (A887 below Bun Loyne) and VP16 (Glas Bheinn), these judgements are accepted. At VP2, the proposal is glimpsed above an industrial unit between a gap in roadside woodland planting from a new layby, which in reality few sensitive receptors are likely to use due to its position on a fast moving route next to a hatchery. As such, the turbines would be most often experienced in fleeting oblique views by road users. At VPs 12, 13, and 14 screening, distance, and the presence of other wind farm developments reduce the Magnitude of Change to Low at each of the VPs resulting in Medium-low and Not Significant Levels of Effect.

7.72 At VP4 (A887 below Bun Loyne), this assessment considers the Level of visual Effect to be Not Significant as opposed to the applicant's judgement of Significant due to the substantial screening afforded the development by landform limiting the visibility to five hubs and blades. However, the conclusion in the applicant's assessment does not appear to correspond with the visualisation or the description and may have been included in error. At VP16 (Glas Bheinn) however, this assessment considers a higher susceptibility of receptor combines with a Medium-Low Magnitude of Change to produce a Moderate Level of Effect, which is Significant despite the almost 18km distance. Nevertheless, the Level of Effect is not considered sufficiently adverse to recommend objecting to the proposal.

7.73 With the exception of VP2 (A887, Inchmore Hatchery), significant visual effects are found at all VPs up to 8.4km from the nearest turbine (VPs 1 – 11), and then again at VP15 (Creag A' Mhàim) and VP16 (Glas Bheinn) (Officer's assessment) at 13.8km and 17.8km respectively. As mentioned above, the type, size, scale, and texture of wind farm developments lend themselves to producing significant visual effects, and Tomchrasky is no exception.

7.74 In this instance significant visual effects arise from several factors; where the development is visible from relatively close proximity, particularly where landform offers limited screening, and where the scheme appears geographically wide, and/or breaks the skyline, which make it appear dominant in the landscape and in views. These effects are notable in VP1 (Dalchreichart), VP3 (A887 opposite Tomchrasky Farm), VP5 (A87 Layby above Bun Loyne), and VP7 (Old Military Road) all within 3.5km of the nearest turbine.

7.75 Further away, significant visual effects occur as a result of the scheme's exposure over a larger distance, for example where turbines are visible to base and/or when the scheme is viewed in relation to several geographical features that make it perceptually geographically wide, and/or reduce the perceived scale of features within and sense of distance in the landscape. These effects are evident at VP6 (A87 Layby near Memorial), VP9 (Coire Sgreumh), VP10 (Sgurr nan Conbhairean), VP15 (Crag A 'Mhàim), and VP16 (Glas Bheinn).

7.76 With regard the potential for cumulative visual effects, again there is general accord as to the significance of effects from all VPs with the exception of VP4 (A887 below Bun Loyne), which again appears to be based on an error in the text as explained above, VP9 (Coire Sgreumh), and VP16 (Glas Bheinn).

7.77 For VP9 (Coire Sgreumh), it is not agreed that the receptor would not experience the proposal in relation to other wind farms. As set out in Appendix 5, Tomchrasky will be visible in combination with Corriegarth and Corriegarth 2 turbines (Dell WF has negligible influence), which are visible on higher ground in the distance behind the southern slopes of Glen Moriston, which means that Tomchrasky will increase the vertical spread of turbines when experienced from this VP, the scheme will increase the influence of turbines in the view and make more distant turbines more noticeable. However, the distance and separation afforded by clear land between schemes and clusters reduces the interaction between them as they are legible as being within their own settings. The addition of Tomchrasky changes the degree to which the view is characterised by development from a landscape with occasional (distant) wind farms, to a landscape with occasional wind farms. Consequently, the Magnitude of cumulative Change is as assessed as High, with a Major-Moderate Level of cumulative Effect, which is Significant.

7.78 For VP16 (Glas Bheinn), this assessment has regard to the fact that Tomchrasky will occupy an important gap between Bunloinn and the Bhlaraidh, Beinneun, and Millennium cluster, whereby the array appears near continuous with Bunloinn such that its addition would result in the perception of wind farm landscape extending between the slopes of Beinn Loinne and Meall Dubh. The Magnitude of Change and Level of Effect is as with the singular assessment due to the presence of Bunloinn, now approved, and Beinneun and Millennium cluster, which remains a Significant cumulative Effect.

7.79 The Magnitude of Change and Level of Effect being the same as the singular assessment is also true at several of the VPs where Significant cumulative Effects are assessed; namely, VPs 3 (A887 opposite Tomchrasky Farm), 5 (A87 Layby above Bun Loyne), 6 (A87 Layby near Memorial), 9 (Coire Sgreumh), 10 (Sgurr nan Conbhairean), and 15 (Crag A 'Mhàim). This is explained by there being no discernible difference for the receptor when experiencing these views between the operational and consented scenario and the in-planning scenario. Furthermore, the same reason explains why there are no additional cumulative effects at VPs 2 (A887, Inchmore Hatchery), 13 (Meall Fuar 'mhonaidh), and 14 (Toll Creagach).

7.80 The Magnitude of Cumulative Change has, however, fallen a level at VPs 1 (Dalchreichart), 7 (Old Military Road), 8 (Creag Bhog), and 12 (Old Military Road, Inverwick). The reduction in the Magnitude of cumulative Change is largely explained by the fact that Tomchrasky would be experienced in successive views of other wind farms but would be the most stark and immediate wind farm in the experience.

7.81 The turbines will require to be lit for aviation safety on account of being over 150 metres in height so an assessment of the development's visual impact in the hours of darkness is required. The applicant has specified that visible cardinal red lighting will be fixed to the nacelle cells of Turbines 1, 4, 6, 7, 13, and 14, which will be screened below around -4 degrees from the horizontal, and visible through 360 degrees. The lighting will be of medium intensity 2000 candela dropping to 200 candela when viewed from distances of 5km or more in clear conditions, which has been calculated as equating to 95% of the time. No tower lights are proposed. While no specific assessment is provided in the EIAR with regard aviation lighting, hours of darkness effects have been assessed as part of the Wild Land Assessment (Volume 3 Technical Appendix 5-7), and under VP8, VP9 and VP10.

7.82 The applicant's visual assessment concludes the six visible red lights will be viewed 'against the dark background of the land to the north in some views from within Glen Moriston and from the A87 above Loch Loyne (northbound) and will potentially be seen from paths and tracks if people are there after dark. There are few off-road places where people are likely to be after dark and the lights will not often be seen without the viewer having some sort of light nearby (such as property lights or car headlights). Walkers coming off the hills at dusk may see the lights with minimal other

lights (e.g. torches) but are likely to be focussed on the path they are following. In no instances are the aviation lights considered likely to constitute significant effects in their own right such that they need to be assessed separately from day-time effects.'

7.83 The applicant's conclusion that aviation lighting will not result in any Significant visual Effects is disputed. Although the area is not designated for dark skies, after dusk aviation lighting would visually intrude into a landscape that is overwhelmingly dark, disrupting the sense of remoteness experienced during hours of darkness from many locations across the area, which would be a substantial and significant change. While during the day the receptor's eye would be drawn to the moving blades of the turbines, in hours of darkness the receptor's eye would be drawn toward the red aviation lighting, which can have the effect of flattening the perception of distance in the landscape in dusk hours. Depending on the position of the receptor to the lighting, the lights may appear to flash as a result of the turning of the turbine blades, passing between the light and the viewer. Flashing red lights may present a confusing image for the receptor unless they were aware of the reason for the lights, particularly if lights are at different levels as one does not have the benefit of being able to relate the lighting to a landform. These effects will be experienced sequentially and in combination with Bunloinn and Bhlaraidh Extension Wind Farms.

7.84 As mentioned, NatureScot has recommended that the applicant attempts to secure approval for invisible infra-red lighting however there is much uncertainty at this time as to whether this technology will be approved for use in the UK and there remains a significant visual residual impact resulting from aviation lighting. Notwithstanding, six aviation lights is not sufficient grounds to recommend objecting to the application.

7.85 In terms of effects on routes and sequential cumulative effects, the applicant has assessed the proposal's impacts on the A87 and A887. The ZTV shows that the proposal would not be visible along the western sections of the A87 (west of the junction with A887) except for a small glimpse at the dam head of Loch Cluanie (no corresponding VP) for travellers journeying eastwards. Views of the development along this route will be more sustained for travellers journeying north from the section at the Beinneun ridge to Loch Cluanie Dam, where it will be visible in forward views as represented by VP5 (A87 Layby above Bun Loyne) and VP6 (A87 Layby near Memorial). Tomchrasky would be viewed sequentially (and successively) with Bunloinn and the Beinneun cluster. This section above Loch Loyne is a gateway location at the intersection of strath, rocky moorland, and rugged massif (within the Loch Ness Study Area) where Tomchrasky will be visible within its own rugged massif setting with the wilder sweeping peaks to its west. In that way Tomchrasky would act as a visual 'full stop' to the settled east to traveller's right, and the wilder west to travellers left. At this section of road between Beinneun ridge to Loch Cluanie Dam, the effect on the experience of the route is Significant with a Major Level of Effect, and Not Significant for all other sections of the road.

7.86 Along the A887, which is a key route, although not considered a gateway location in the OWESG, there is theoretical visibility of Tomchrasky between Torgyle Bridge and Bun Loyne for approximately 10.5km, all of which is within 5km of the proposed wind farm. In reality, actual visibility will be heavily reduced by woodland cover along this stretch, particularly in the summer months with vegetation in leaf. There will be no theoretical visibility from east of Torgyle Bridge. Viewpoints VP2 (A887, Inchmore Hatchery) and VP4 (A887 below Bun Loyne) illustrate glimpsed views from the route whereby the most prolonged section of visibility would be at the section opposite Tomchrasky Farm, as illustrated by VP3 (A887 opposite Tomchrasky Farm). The development would be visible from this section of road for approximately 1.5km. The applicant has provided wirelines that illustrate the effect of the proposal on the experience of road users travelling west along this route section (EIAR Volume 4a Figures 5- 29-5-30). From this data, the applicant concludes that the change to the experience for travellers would be low for most of the route section due to woodland screening, but high for the open section south of Tomchrasky Farm due to turbines being visible and relatively close to the receptor. Overall, the effect on this route is judged to be Not Significant (Minor) west of Torgyle except for a short 1.5km stretch with Significant (Major) effects around VP3.

7.87 The EIAR acknowledges that the 'existing roadside vegetation is largely birch or self-seeded coniferous scrub, and there are a few sections that are part of commercial plantations. It is considered that screening is therefore likely to continue for almost all of the route and the above assessment is carried out on that basis. However, should roadside vegetation be lost through felling or storm damage, there may be more open views of the proposed development and an increase in the sections for which significant effects may occur'.

7.88 For Core Paths, the applicant has concluded that there will be Moderate but Significant Effects for users on IV05.03 Eve's Road due to its proximity to the development and the openness of the views, represented by VP11 (Beinn Bhan, Eve's Road). Elsewhere, Minor and Not Significant impacts are predicted for IV16.16 Glen Moriston to Fort Augustus due to its location within settled areas and the presence of man-made features, represented by VP12 (Old Military Road, Inverwick). The applicant has also judged Moderate but Significant Effects for users of the Old Military Road west of Ceannacroc and the Ceannacroc Bridge to Tomich Path, again due to proximity and prominence of turbines along both routes. The findings of the EIAR with respect to visual amenity impacts on routes are generally accepted and it is considered that the thresholds of OWESG Criterion 2, 4, and 5 are met, as set out in Appendix 6 below.

7.89 For residential receptors, the applicant has scoped out a full assessment of impacts for occupants of properties at Tomchrasky and Ceannacroc within 2km of the development due to their financial interests in the development. 2km is considered the maximum distance where an energy development may appear oppressive,

overbearing, or overwhelming on living conditions, such that they may be a matter of public interest, when the 'lavender test' is applied. However, an assessment of impacts on the settlement at Dalchreichart and linear development along the minor road form Torgyle Bridge to Tomchrasky Farm is included. The applicant has reached the conclusion that the impact on visual amenity for properties along the route would be Moderate but Significant overall with this extending into hours of darkness as a result of aviation lighting. This finding is not disputed, however, it is considered that the proposal will not be significantly detrimental overall given that its location is west of properties that are predominantly oriented south for the views over the glen to its southern slopes, where there is already a presence of turbines.

7.90 With visual impacts taken together, it is acknowledged that compositionally, the scheme does show loose turbine groupings and densities, including cases of stacking. However, the 'coherent but non-rigid layout' as described previously has resulted in a standalone scheme with no significant compositional issues at any of the VPs. Poor composition can exacerbate adverse significant effects, particularly in larger schemes. However, in this instance, the proposal's siting, layout, and design principles have resulted in a scheme that is legible as being in its own landscape setting, which offers reasonable containment. The restraint shown in limiting the scheme to 14 turbines means that despite the height of the turbines, they do not appear imposed on or dominate its receiving landscape. As such, there are no significant effects at any VP that would lead to a recommendation to object to the application, despite the sensitivity of nearby designated sites and some of these significant effects occurring at more distant receptors.

Construction

7.91 The applicant anticipates that the construction period would commence in 2026 and take approximately 18 months. Construction will be scheduled from 07:00 - 19:00 Monday to Saturday, with deliveries on a Saturday restricted to the hours of 07:00 to 12:00. During the installation phase, the applicant states there may be a requirement for extended working hours as some critical elements of installation cannot be stopped once started such as concrete pouring. No working activities would be planned on Sundays or Bank Holidays. In the event of work being required out with these hours, the Planning Authority would be notified, wherever possible. Any blasting on site shall only take place between the hours of 10:00 to 16:00 on Monday to Friday inclusive and 10:00 to 12:00 on Saturdays with no blasting taking place on Sunday or on National Public Holidays, again unless otherwise approved in advance in writing by the Planning Authority.

7.92 Developers must comply with reasonable operational practices with regard to construction noise so as not to cause nuisance. Section 60 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 sets restrictions in terms of hours of operation, plant and equipment used and noise levels etc. and is enforceable via Environmental Health and not Planning.

A condition is suggested to secure details of how the contractors will employ the best practicable means available to reduce the impact of noise from construction activities.

7.93 The nature of the project anticipates the need for a Construction Environmental Management Document / Plan (CEMP), in association with the successful contractor engaged. The framework of a CEMP has been provided with the EIAR and this may be secured via planning conditions. Due to the scale of the development SEPA will control pollution prevention measures relating to surface water run-off via a Controlled Activities Regulations Construction Site Licence.

7.94 In addition to the requirement for submission and agreement on a CEMP, the Council will require the applicant to provide a financial bond regarding final site restoration (restoration bond) in the event of non-wind turbine operation and to provide a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) for the use of the local road network.

7.95 The applicant has anticipated a micrositing allowance of up to 100m for wind turbines and associated infrastructure including tracks and other hardstanding. Micrositing is acceptable, within reason, to address unforeseen onsite constraints. However, as set out above, anything in excess of 50m may have a significant effect on the composition of a development and therefore is not supported. Moreover, if matters are identified during the application stage which require movement of infrastructure, it is considered that this is best addressed during the application stage rather than relying on micrositing. A micrositing limit of no more than 50m should be conditioned, with micrositing to avoiding any areas of deeper peat, higher elevations of ground, watercourse buffers, Ground Water Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems and any encountered cultural heritage assets.

7.96 Should the development be granted consent, a Community Liaison Group (CLG) should be set up to ensure that the community council and other stakeholders are kept up to date and consulted before and during the construction period.

7.97 Once the turbines have been installed, the access tracks, substation and hardstand areas around the turbines would remain in place for the operational lifetime of the development. The construction compound areas and turning heads would be temporary with these areas and the site borrow pits would be restored.

Roads, Transport and Access

7.98 The applicant has highlighted the expected impact of this development, particularly through the construction phase, with the preferred Port of Entry (PoE) likely to be from the Kyle of Lochalsh harbour to the site via the A87(T). This preferred transport route would only be used for the turbine blades. The EIAR reports that the deliveries of the tower sections would require to be brought to site from a different port due to physical constraints and loading configurations. The preferred PoE for the tower

sections will be Corpach Harbour at Fort William. Components will be brought to site as a series of abnormal indivisible loads (AIL) via the local and strategic road network including the use of the A82, A87 and A887 Trunk Roads, which run through rural areas including the settlements of Invergarry, Invermoriston, and Kyle of Lochalsh.

7.99 The site will be accessed via an upgraded access track taken directly from the A887, approximately 300m east of the A87(T) / A887(T) junction to the satisfaction of Transport Scotland, final details of which should be secured by condition along with an audit of the road safety implications of the site access.

7.100 The proposed development would lead to a temporary increase in traffic volumes on the road network during the construction phase. Traffic volumes would decrease considerably outside the peak period of construction. Statistically, the greatest impact would occur on the A887(T) where during the peak construction period (month 6 of the construction programme) it would see an increase of 86 HGV journeys to the site per day, representing a 34% increase above baseline use. This represents a total of approximately seven journeys every hour (3 to 4 HGVs each way) which is not considered significant in terms of overall traffic flows on the Trunk Road network. However, based on IEMA Guidelines these figures required the need for a detailed assessment, which reported that the impacts were not significant for severance, drive, and pedestrian delay, amenity, dust/dirt, and safety.

7.101 The cumulative effects of construction with other wind farms has been assessed for impacts on the road network. Operational wind farms were discounted due to negligible operational traffic and therefore have no cumulative traffic effect. It was concluded that if abnormal load movements were coordinated there would be no significant cumulative effects, with the programme of construction traffic to be agreed with the Roads Authorities through the CTMP.

7.102 Traffic volumes would decrease considerably outside the peak period of construction. The anticipated total traffic volumes are projected to be within the capacity of the roads in question and the environmental effect is considered not to be significant providing that a comprehensive CTMP is established. However, the components are larger than those previously employed, and subject to detailed design review and trial runs, will need areas of accommodation works along the route, such as vegetation clipping and clearance of street furniture. The details of these matters can be secured by condition. In principle, this type of mitigation is accepted subject to detailed consideration of the plan in due course.

7.103 The Council's Transport Planning Team, and Transport Scotland, have confirmed that development traffic can be accommodated on the road network, subject to conditions as well as the requirement for a legal agreement to address "wear and tear" provisions. This is consistent with current best practice and the conditions

highlight potential cumulative impacts arising with other major developments. Pertinent matters to be secured via condition include:

- A Construction Traffic Management Plan for approval and implementation as agreed highlighting all mitigation / improvement works required for general construction traffic and abnormal load movements, including the timing of such works and appropriate reinstatement / restoration works;
- An un-laden trial run between the Port of Entry and the site access will be required in liaison with the police and both roads' authorities;
- Community liaison to ensure the project construction minimises impact on the local community, that construction traffic takes place outwith peak times on the network, including school travel times, and avoids identified community events; and
- All traffic management being undertaken by a quality assured contractor.

7.104 In terms of recreational outdoor access, The Council's Access Officer advises that the development will affect three public rights of way (HI1, HI99, and HI105) and three further routes that form a part of the wider path network, including route to neighbouring Munros and Corbetts, and, long distance route between Invermoriston and Glen Affric. The Access Officer has requested conditions to secure an Outdoor Access Plan as informed by an assessment of access that follows NatureScot Guidance to ensure that adequate mitigation is in place during the construction phase of development and to secure enhancements to public access during the operational phase of the development. To that end, the Access Officer advises that a Red Survey would be required, along with proposals for improvements to paths and tracks to allow better use by visiting walkers, cyclists, and horse riders, along with details of all existing and proposed pass gates, cattle grids, signage (including to warn users of any hazards), and other access related infrastructure, in order to protect and enhance wider public access.

Water, Flood Risk, Drainage, and Peat

7.105 The EIAR is clear that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be in place to control potentially polluting activities and to prevent adverse impact on downstream persons, properties, and the environment during construction. The CEMP will be a live document subject to periodic review and updating and can be secured by condition. This will ensure the agreement of construction methodologies with statutory agencies following appointment of the wind farm balance of plant contractor and prior to the start of development or works.

7.106 The mitigation measures to be implemented during construction to control water quality impacts include a pollution risk assessment; identification of controlled waters that may be affected by the works; details of phasing of construction activities; implementation of a pollution control system; monitoring of construction procedures for management of risk; storage of fuels/chemicals in accordance with best practice;

plan and design of dewatering activities associated with deeper temporary excavation to minimise local drawdown of ground water and contingency planning and emergency procedures. Surface water runoff will be captured and treated and then drained to an appropriate destination subject to an approved discharge consent. As outlined in the CEMP, environmental monitoring will be undertaken during construction to check compliance with the planning conditions, legislation and policies and mitigation measures.

7.107 Additional site management measures are also proposed to protect water quality including a Drainage Management Plan and detailed drainage design following Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) principles; a Water Quality Monitoring Plan with key hydrochemical parameters including flow data and turbidity measured in a UKAS laboratory, prepared in consultation with Marine Scotland Science, SEPA and THC; an Aquatic Ecology Monitoring Plan to include invertebrate sampling and fish population monitoring and the appointment of a qualified Hydrological Clerk of Works to supervise operations during the construction period.

7.108 SEPA do not object to the proposed development subject to the issues it has raised being covered by conditions to minimise the negative impacts on peat and carbon loss. The watercourse crossings within the development will be regulated under SEPA's Controlled Activities Regulations (CAR) regime and follow the designs outlines in Appendix 8.1 of the EIAR. The crossings will be designed to convey the 1 in 200 years plus climate change event and to allow hydraulic continuity so that the local hydrology is not significantly altered. Additional hydraulic modelling of fluvial flows will be undertaken of crossing WCX9 (Allt Bhuruisgidh) due to the presence of out of bank flows. Flood relief culverts will be provided to manage this flow pathway if necessary.

7.109 Furthermore, the proposed development site is located within the catchment of the Loch Ness Drinking Water Protected Area. Scottish Water acknowledges that the activity is sufficient distance from the activity that any risk would be low. The water quality will also be monitored. The Bunloyne Farm Private Water Supply (PWS), Ceannacroc Sub Station PWS and Ceannacroc Estate PWS are within 1km of the proposed development. As no works are proposed within the catchments of the PWS it is highly unlikely for these to be hydrologically connected to the works.

7.110 The site is home to potential Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTE) with the M10 springs being highly groundwater dependent. To mitigate the potential impacts on GWDTE (M10 flushes) the detailed drainage design as part of the CEMP will account for all flushes crossed by the development to ensure that drainage continuity is maintained and that new water sources (clean water and dirty water outfalls) are not discharged downstream of M10 flushes. Such measures are intended to mitigate adverse impacts on the resource.

7.111 The entire proposed development site is recorded as being underlain by largely peaty podzol and peaty gleys soils. Review of NatureScot's Carbon and Peatlands Map indicated that to the north west and west of the proposed development site lies Class 1 and 2 peatlands defined as nationally important carbon-rich soils, deep peat and priority habitat of high conservation value. Survey work for the EIAR indicate that peat depths are generally shallow across the area with localised pockets of deeper peat in hollows between the areas of high topography. Impact on peat deposits will include the loss and disturbance of peat through the construction of new tracks, borrow pits, hardstanding and turbine foundations. Overall, at total of 83,000 m^3 of peat (EIAR Table 8-2-6, Appendix 8.2) is expected to be extracted with the majority of peat impacts relating to borrow pit and crane hardstanding requirements. All the excavated peat could be reused on site which is detailed in EIAR Technical Appendix 8.2 Outline Peat Management Plan. The Habitat Management Plan will also provide a wider programme of peatland habitat management and restoration.

7.112 A Peat Landslide Hazard and Risk Assessment has been submitted as part of the EIAR and has helped to inform the proposals. The applicant's risk assessment identifies that the site is of low risk to peat instability. The finalisation of these documents, will be secured through the CEMP condition.

7.113 A Pollution Prevention Plan is also required to be finalised to mitigate pollution at the River Moriston SAC, which should be secured by condition.

7.114 Post construction, an Operational Environmental Management Plan (OEMP) is required to be developed and agreed with NatureScot, SEPA, and The Council. The OEMP which will detail site drainage design, soft engineering and measures proposed to control surface water runoff from hardstanding. Storage of fuels will follow best practice. With the mitigation measures proposed in the EIAR in place the residual effect on water, flood risk, drainage and peat is assessed as not being significant.

Natural Heritage (including Ornithology)

7.115 A section of the River Moriston Special Area of Conservation (SAC), protected for its Atlantic salmon and freshwater pearl mussel populations runs along the southern boundary of the application site while there are several watercourses within the site that drain directly to the SAC. NatureScot advises that the development has potential to impact the SAC and that consequently the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 as amended (the 'Habitats Regulations') apply. Consequently, the Competent Authority (the Scottish Government) is required to carry out an Appropriate Assessment in view of the site's conservation objectives.

7.116 NatureScot has withdrawn its initial objection in relation to impacts on the SAC following the submission of Further Environmental Information from the applicant subject to conditions to ensure that construction works and the operation of the

development are strictly undertaken in accordance with the mitigation outlined in its response. These measures include provision for:

- further detailed ground investigation works to be carried out to confirm the ground conditions, sediment composition, and level of interaction between the proposed development and non-peat sediment features in order to determine an optimal design and appropriate mitigation which minimises risk of sediment release to the SAC;
- following detailed ground investigation works, further consideration will be required for potential access track redesign in areas of known high risk of sediment release;
- a finalised Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), Operational Management Plan (OEMP) and Habitat Management Plans (HMP) to be agreed with the Scottish Government in consultation with NatureScot (and other consultees as appropriate) before any works, including forestry works, commence on site;
- the recommendations set out in Revision 2 of the Tomchrasky Wind Farm Geomorphological Assessment Report (referred to as 'the GDG Report' by NatureScot), including Table 5.1 and Section 5.3 of the Report, to be implemented in full;
- both the CEMP and OEMP to include a Sediment and Erosion Control Plan,
- the CEMP to include a Peat Management Plan;
- the proposed Water Quality Monitoring Plan to incorporate the principles contained within 'the GDG report'; and,
- the Habitat Management Plan to include detailed consideration of the potential for peat and sediment release to the SAC.

7.117 With the above mitigation in place, NatureScot consider that the development's impact on the SAC through the release of sediment can be sufficiently mitigated and that the proposal will not undermine the conservation objectives for the SAC and there will be no adverse effect on site integrity.

7.118 The proposal is also close (1km from site boundary) to the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA and SSSI, with the proposal having potential for significant effects on the common scoter qualifying interest of the SPA. NatureScot advises that Scottish Ministers are also required to carry out an appropriate assessment in relation this resource. However, based on the information provided, NatureScot considers that due to the location of the development and after consideration of the data provided by the applicant, the proposal is unlikely to adversely affect the integrity of the site, or the SPA scoter population, by virtue of the low likelihood of collisions.

Wider Countryside Birds and Ornithology

7.119 In terms of Wider Countryside Birds, NatureScot welcomes the provision of a Breeding Bird Protection Plan. Due to the potential presence of Schedule 1 birds

identified in the EIAR, the Plan will need to identify appropriate mitigation including buffers around the site access routes or areas where associated forestry or habitat management works are planned. Black grouse surveys should be undertaken each spring during construction to confirm the location of any leks which will require a buffer zone round them. For the golden eagle NatureScot note the mitigation proposed for the loss of foraging habitat and compensatory feeding during winter and that any feeding areas would be positioned out with the proposed development but within a 300m buffer. Additionally, NatureScot advises that any proposed feeding areas should be a minimum of 500m from the turbines with consideration given to likely flight lines in these areas in relation to the wind farm to reduce risk of collision. Additionally, the installation of manmade nest rafts to provide additional nesting opportunities for divers and grebes is also proposed.

7.120 Further mitigation measures are proposed including ensuring that the removal of plantation and construction activities requiring ground-breaking or land take of habitat are programmed outside the breeding season. These works will be required to be undertaken under the supervision of an experienced Ornithological Clerk of Works or Ecological Clerk of Works to monitor bird activity across the site and advise on any requirements to ensure birds are suitably protected. These mitigation measures should be secured by condition and implemented in full.

Geology

7.121 As stated in Paragraph 2.9 above, the Coire Dho Geological Review (GCR) site is within the site boundary, which contains landforms and glacial deposits that illustrate the development and sudden drainage of an ice dammed lake during the Loch Lomond Stadial. The objective for the management of this GCR site is to maintain accessibility and the visibility of exposure and to maintain the condition and extent of the geological exposure. Taking into account the minor area of encroachment, and that the footprint of the proposed development is located 280m from the GCR site where most geological features are found, the overall impact on geology including the GCR is assessed as not significant. Peatland restoration measures (Area C) of the Habitat Management Plan lie with the crucial area of the GCR site where the most important geomorphology features are best seen. NatureScot advises this aspect of the proposal does have the potential to negatively affect the GCR including the cross-valley moraine sequence and suggests mitigation measures which can be conditioned should the peatland restoration in this area be progressed.

Habitats

7.123 Priority peatland habitats including Annex 1 blanket bog and wet modified bog have been identified within the proposed development site. NatureScot recommends that the applicants clarify the area of priority peatland habitat that will be directly and indirectly impacted and that the final Habitat Management and Peat Management Plans demonstrate that there will be substantially more peatland restored than is lost

to development and that peatland habitats will attain a better state than without this proposal. The final Habitat Management Plan should also include additional information and mitigation regarding the proposed peatland restoration measures for Area C as this lies within the Coire Dho Geological Conservation Review site area. The applicant has confirmed acceptance of these measures, which should be secured by condition.

Protected Species

7.124 Baseline surveys have identified the likely presence of badgers, otters, pine marten, red squirrel, Rannoch brindled beauty and bats within the proposed development site. A Species Protection Plan will be required for badgers and unless impacts can be avoided by micro siting of infrastructure a badger licence is likely to be required. In terms of bats NatureScot is satisfied that the mitigation measures are adequate. The Rannoch Brindled Beauty is a UKBAP species of moth that is present on site that is classified as being nationally scarce. This species prefers blanket bog and dry heathland, and as such, the Council's Ecology Officer advises that measures should be included within the HMP to manage the site for this species and a species protection plan is required prior to construction, which should be incorporated in the HMP condition.

7.125 In terms of habitat losses, the footprint of the development and areas of indirect disturbance, would remove some 23ha of which the most extensive habitat is wet dwarf heath followed by blanket bog, coniferous woodland, acid grassland and broadleaved woodland. The extent of habitat lost is reported not to be significant. Scottish Forestry and The Council's Forestry Officer note that 10.67ha of woodland would need to be removed to accommodate the development, being mainly commercial forestry that requires 12.14ha of compensatory planting.

7.126 The Council's Ecology Officer notes that a metric has been supplied to demonstrate that there is sufficient biodiversity enhancement measures to comply with NPF4 Policy 3b. To comply with NPF4 Policy 3 b) and NatureScot's Peatland Guidance, a maximum of 251.79ha of peatland restoration is required. The applicant has confirmed that this level of restoration is possible within the site and accepts that it should be conditioned. It will be for the decision maker to decide whether the HMP required a further update to take account of these measures prior to the application's determination. Nevertheless, the EIAR states that additional enhancement measures will also be implemented to provide an overall net biodiversity gain with in the redline boundary.

7.127 Marine Scotland Science welcomes the proposed water quality monitoring programme and advises that this should be integrated with a fish population monitoring programme.

Built and Cultural Heritage

7.128 There are no World Heritage Sites, Conservation Areas, Inventory Battlefields or Inventory Gardens and Designated landscapes within the proposed development site or defined study area. There are however two scheduled monuments within the site; the Fort Augustus-Bernera Military Road 1890 W of Ceannacroc Lodge located in the western part of the site; and, Balnacarn Township in the eastern part of the site. Outwith the development site, two further scheduled monuments lie within the 1km study area, including the Fort Augustus-Bernera Military Road, 570m SE of Achlain and the burial cairn of Tir nan Og.

7.129 There are two listed buildings within the 1km study area: Glenmoriston Ceannacroc Bridge (old) over River Moriston (category B), and Achlain House (category C). Torgoyle Bridge over the River Moriston (category A) is within the 5km study area. The EIAR, identified a total of 30 cultural heritage assets within the proposed development site (the Core Area) including fords and viaducts associated with the Fort Augustus-Bernera Military Road and the location of a corn drying kiln within the Balnacarn township. Other assets were identified in the 1km, 5km and 10 km study area.

7.130 Historic Environment Scotland initially objected to the application because of insufficient information supplied to assess the effect of the proposals on Fort Augustus-Bernera Military Road, 1890m W of Ceannacroc Lodge (SM11484). This objection has now been withdrawn following the receipt of additional visualisations showing that the proposal would not raise issues of national significance for the setting of Military Road. HES has concluded that the turbines would not significantly detract from the ability to understand, appreciate and experience the relationship between the monument and its setting.

7.131 In terms of construction effects, the EIA has identified a moderate adverse and significant effect on the location of a probable culvert (Asset 5 EIAR) of the Fort Augustus to Bernera Military Road if extant (it was not located during walkover surveys). No direct effects are expected upon any of the other known heritage assets within the proposed development site.

7.132 Whilst there is some limited potential for impacts upon the setting of designated heritage assets during construction, any such effects would only be temporary and would not exceed the predicted operational effects upon the setting of heritage assets. Therefore, the potential for setting effects is considered under operational effects. A watching brief is proposed during all construction works that take place within 50m of Asset 5, the probable culvert and if remains are encountered then the impact could be avoided through micrositing, or the remains could be recorded prior to removal. It is recommended that trail markers should be set up marking and guiding visitors along the route of the scheduled military road. There remains a

potential for further previously unknown buried remains to be disturbed during construction and a watching brief will also be maintained on other ground-breaking works to identify any archaeological remains threatened by the proposed development to assess their significance and mitigate any impact.

7.133 The EIAR has concluded that there will be no likely significant effects upon the setting of the designated scheduled monuments or listed buildings during the operational phase of the proposed development. No direct effects are anticipated from decommissioning provided works are contained within the construction footprint. The possibility of cumulative effects was also assessed, and no significant effects were identified.

7.134 The Council's Historic Environment Team note that there is no specific assessment for the undesignated section of the former military road of which Asset 5, the culvert, is a constituent part. This should have been recorded and considered. Mitigation regarding non-designated assets is proposed in the EIAR and where Asset 5 is mentioned, the former (undesignated) military road should be considered in tandem. The recommended mitigation of a watching brief across a selected area is considered to be generally appropriate by the Council's Archaeologist. As there are upstanding prehistoric remains that appear to survive across the site including a roundhouse (Asset 20, which will not be directly impacted), the watching brief should be maintained for the new access route (or widening of any existing route) up to at least a height of 250m AOD**.** The mitigation proposed to mark out the former route of the military road is also welcomed, and this could be informed by the result of the watching brief as necessary.

7.135 The impacts of this development are within an acceptable range. A programme of archaeological works will be required, and the applicant will need to submit a detailed written scheme of investigation to agree these works. The required mitigation can be secured by means of a condition.

Noise and Shadow Flicker

7.136 In relation to operational noise, the applicant has considered noise impacts on the closest noise sensitive properties located to the south of the site, Balnacarn, Ceannacroc Lodge, Doe Cottage, and Tomchrasky farmhouse, as well as the settlement of Dalchreichart to the south east. These properties are generally south of the proposal and flank both sides of the A887, A87 as illustrated in EIAR Volume 3 Technical Appendix 11-5. Furthermore, Tomchrasky Farmhouse, Tomchrasky Farm Cottage, Doe Cottage, Ceannacroc Laundry Cottage, Ceannacroc Lodge, and 1 Ceannacroc are identified in the EIAR as having a financial interest in the proposal and therefore would be subject to a potential relaxation of noise limits.

7.137 The noise assessment includes background noise surveys covering daytime and night time periods. Owing to the closest noise sensitive properties being located

within the Glen Moriston strath, the development would result in combined wind farm developments on higher ground to the north and south. The potential for both individual and cumulative noise impacts to arise have therefore been assessed within the EIAR with no significant impacts being identified. The assessment demonstrates that predicted noise levels will comply with the ETSU-R-97 limits at all receptors without the need for mitigation or curtailment.

7.138 After receiving further clarification from the applicant relating to the EIAR's proposed operational noise limits, Environmental Health has no objection. In light of the recently consented Bunloinn Wind Farm, located further to the west, Environmental Health has also since advised that given the low operational noise limits and separation distances involved, the addition of Bunloinn would not materially alter the applicant's EIAR noise assessment or the proposed operational noise condition. The proposed conditions ensures that the Planning Authority will retain effective control over the potential noise impacts and have a suitable avenue for investigation should any noise complaints arise from the development.

7.139 It is not anticipated that noise of shadow flicker would be a significant issue as a result of this development due to the distance between the development and noise sensitive receptors (non-involved properties). There are six properties located within flicker impact distance of the proposed development namely Tomchrasky Farmhouse; Farm Cottage Tomchrasky; Doe Cottage; Ceannacroc Laundry Cottage; Ceannacroc Lodge and 1 Ceannacroc. The Shadow Flicker Assessment states that none will experience shadow flicker with zero hours predicted, being generally south of the turbines. The assessment also states that there are no other sites within 11 rotor diameters of any turbine within the proposed development which means there is no possibility of cumulative shadow flicker. Therefore, it is not anticipated that shadow flicker will be an issue for this development either individually or cumulatively given the location of the development in relation to properties.

Telecommunications

7.140 The application states that due to the distance of telecommunication links from the nearest proposed turbines, no significant effects are anticipated on telecommunication links. It concludes that there are no necessary mitigation measures over and above embedded design mitigation already in place, and that potential effects from the proposed development are not significant. No concerns have been raised in relation to potential interference with radio/television networks. However, a condition should nonetheless be sought to secure a scheme mitigation should an issue arise.

Aviation and Radar

7.141 The turbines exceed 150m in height which means visible aviation lighting is required that maintains flight safety for aviation operations in the area. Visible aviation lighting

is anticipated to comprise a 2000 candela fixed red light on top of the nacelle of six turbines, T1, T4, T6, T7, T13, and T14, with these lights being dimmed to 10% intensity when visibility exceeds 5km in fair weather conditions. These will also be screened below around -4 degrees from the horizontal, and visible through 360 degrees. No tower lights are proposed. There are no unresolved objections, with no outstanding objections subject to conditions on an aviation lighting scheme defining how the development will be lit throughout the lifespan to maintain civil and military safety. Should the proposal be granted permission, a condition can be applied to secure suitable mitigation in terms of aviation lighting and notification to the appropriate bodies of the final turbine positions.

Other Material Considerations

7.142 The applicant has sought permission to operate the windfarm for 30 years. As with any wind farm, a clear description of development is required, which specifies the precise number of turbines to be developed, the maximum blade tip height, the rotor diameter and includes details of all associated ancillary infrastructure with such matters not be left to planning conditions to avoid potential for further redesign or re-powering without requiring a full fresh consent.

7.143 At the end of its operational life, usual decommissioning and restoration requirements should therefore be secured. If the decision is made to decommission the wind farm, all components, track access and associated infrastructure requires to be removed from the site. It is normal practice for any foundations remaining on site; the exposed concrete plinths would also be removed to a depth of 1 m below the surface, graded with soil and replanted. Cables also require to be cut away below ground level and sealed. It would be expected that any new tracks or areas used for constructing the wind farm would be reinstated to the approximate pre-development condition, unless otherwise agreed.

7.144 The requirements to decommission at end of life is relatively standard and straight forward, with any request for re-powering to be considered with the submission of a relevant future application. It is important to ensure that any approval of this project secures by condition a requirement to deliver a draft Decommissioning and Restoration Plan (DRP) for approval prior to the commencement of any development and ensure an appropriate financial bond is put in place to secure these works.

7.145 A finalised DRP for the site, reflecting best practice measures at its time of preparation, would also be required. The finalised DRP would be expected to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with SEPA no later than 12 months prior to the final decommissioning of the site. The finalised DRP would then be implemented within 18 months of the final decommissioning of the development unless otherwise agreed.

7.146 Given the complexity of major developments, and to assist in discharge of conditions, the Planning Authority usually seeks that the developer employs a Planning Monitoring Officer (PMO). The role of the PMO, amongst other things, will include the monitoring of, and enforcement of compliance with, all conditions, agreements and obligations related to this permission (or any superseding or related permissions) and shall include the provision of a bi-monthly compliance report to the Planning Authority.

8. MATTERS TO BE SECURED BY LEGAL AGREEMENT / UPFRONT PAYMENT

8.1 A wear and tear agreement for the impact on the local road network, a decommissioning and restoration financial guarantee and a scheme for community benefit can be secured by condition. Therefore, no further legal agreements are required should consent be granted.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The Scottish Government gives considerable commitment to renewable energy and encourages planning authorities to support the development of wind farms where they can operate successfully and be situated in appropriate locations. The project has potential to contribute to addressing the climate emergency through additional renewable energy generation. In this regard it is anticipated to contribute an additional 84 MW of installed capacity, plus 50 MW of battery storage, and make a meaningful contribution toward addressing climate change on the road to net zero.

9.2 However, as with all applications, a balancing exercise must be undertaken. The benefits of the proposal must be weighed against potential drawbacks and then considered in the round, taking account of the relevant policies of the Development Plan, which includes NPF4, as well as all other material planning considerations.

9.3 Notwithstanding the nature and scale of the proposal, there has been a low level of public representation, with one objection from members of the public having been received and three letters of support. Although the host community council does not object, the neighbouring Strathglass Community Council do, citing impacts principally on the Glen Affric National Scenic Area (NSA) and wild land. No other consultees have raised objection following submission of further environmental information, and subject to the application of planning conditions.

9.4 It is clear from the EIAR and the Design and Access Statement that the applicant has worked diligently to reduce potential landscape and visual effects, where possible, through substantially increasing the development's setback from the A887 and refining the design and layout of the scheme. The report has set out that the proposal's siting, layout, and design principles have resulted in a scheme that is legible as being in its own landscape setting, one that offers reasonable containment despite the visibility of turbines across several landscape character types and its

siting within a transitional location. The siting, positioning, and the scheme's relative simplicity, combine to ensure that Tomchrasky would not appear to overwhelm any one Landscape Character Type or specific unit, or undermine the distinction between them. As such, the proposal appears to be appropriately designed for the receiving landscape.

9.5 Furthermore, the integrity and/or objectives of the Glen Affric NSA would not be compromised. This is because the NSA's Special Landscape Qualities can be, and are, readily appreciated by all visitors to the NSA from many accessible locations within the NSA, which would not be affected by the proposal. Similarly, effects on the Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel Special Landscape Area (SLA) are limited to visual and perceptual effects when experienced from limited and isolated locations near its northeast boundary, from the inside looking out, with no direct impacts on the SLA itself. As such, impacts on designated landscapes are considered within acceptable limits.

9.6 It is also set out that the proposal is for a reasonably designed wind farm, which although does show loose turbine groupings and densities including cases of stacking, the 'coherent but non-rigid layout' has resulted in a scheme with no significant compositional issues overall. The restraint shown in limiting the scheme to 14 turbines means that despite the height of the turbines, they do not appear imposed on or to dominate its receiving landscape. As such, there are no significant visual effects at any given viewpoint that would lead to a recommendation to refuse the application on visual grounds, despite the distance to the receptor or the sensitivity of nearby designated sites.

9.7 The application has been assessed against the policies set out in NPF4 and the Development Plan, including Policy 67 of the Highland wide Local Development Plan with its eleven tests which are expanded upon with the OWESG. This policy also reflects policy tests of other policies in the plan, for example Policy 28. The proposal can be considered to benefit from an in principle support, with the extent of landscape and visual effects being outweighed by the contribution the development would make toward tackling climate change.

9.8 The development also contains proposals for habitat management, which could, if appropriately conditioned, lead to peatland and biodiversity enhancement. While the socio-economic benefits of the development are welcome, there remains a question over whether the proposal can be considered to have maximised this opportunity and therefore met the policy requirements of NPF4 in this regard. It has been some years since the Scottish Government introduced its guidance for the voluntary provision of £5,000 per megawatt per annum to the community and this has remained static since. Furthermore, even where secured, this arrangement does nothing for the redistribution of wealth within an area such as Highland, which has many communities that are unlikely to directly benefit from such opportunities. In

addition, there are currently no guarantees that the development will create and support a local supply chain and develop and retain skills and employment within the area other than perhaps in the short term. Further consideration of this socio-economic benefits is necessary. It is therefore recommended that conditions be added to the Council's response to ensure that the EIAR socio-economic benefits of the proposal are delivered, and to secure a scheme for community benefit.

9.9 Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act sets out what an applicant shall do in relation of the preservation of amenity. It is considered that the proposal has had regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty and has mitigated the effects of the development in relation to the effects on the natural beauty of the countryside. This is by virtue of the location, setting and design of the wind farm, resulting in landscape and visual impacts that can be accommodated. It is the case that environmental effects of this development can be addressed by way of mitigation, with the suggested conditions incorporating a schedule of mitigation and operational compliance monitoring should permission be forthcoming.

9.10 All relevant matters have been taken into account when appraising this application. It is considered that the proposal accords with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and is acceptable in terms of all other applicable material considerations.

10. IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Resource: Not applicable

10.2 Legal: If an objection is raised to the proposal, the application may be subject to a Public Local Inquiry.

10.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural): Not applicable

10.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever: The proposal has the ability to make a meaningful contribution toward the production of renewable energy.

10.5 Risk: Not applicable

10.6 Gaelic: Not applicable

11. RECOMMENDATION

Action required before consultation response is issued: N

It is recommended to **RAISE NO OBJECTION** to the application subject to:

A. Members grant delegated authority to the Area Planning Manager - South to respond to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit regarding any

future Further / Supplementary Environmental Information, where that does not:
i) materially increase the scale of the proposed development; and
ii) result in any additional significant adverse environmental effects; and
iii) does not undermine or remove mitigation which was secured within the Council previous consultation response on the application;

B. Members grant delegated authority to the Area Planning Manager – South to agree the finished condition wording, with any substantive amendments to be subject to prior consultation with the Chair of the South Planning Applications Committee; and

C. The following conditions and reasons (which shall be subject to refinement):

Conditions to be attached to any Section 36 consent which may be approved:

1. Notification of Date of First Commissioning

Written confirmation of the Date of First Commissioning and the Date of Final Commissioning shall be provided to the Planning Authority and the Scottish Ministers no later than one calendar month after those dates.

Reason: To allow the Planning Authority and Scottish Ministers to calculate the date of expiry of the consent.

2. Commencement of Development

(1) The Commencement of development shall be no later than 5 years from the date on which this consent is granted, or in substitution, such other period as the Scottish Ministers may hereafter direct in writing.

(2) Written confirmation of the intended date of Commencement of development shall be provided to the Planning Authority and the Scottish Ministers no later than one calendar month before that date.

Reason: To ensure that the consent is implemented within a reasonable period and to allow the Planning Authority and the Scottish Ministers to monitor compliance with obligations attached to this consent and deemed planning permission as appropriate.

3. Non-assignation

(1) This consent shall not be assigned without the prior written authorisation of the Scottish Ministers. The Scottish Ministers may authorise the assignation, with or without conditions.

(2) The Company shall notify the Planning Authority and the Scottish Ministers in writing of the name of the assignee, principal named contact and contact details within fourteen days of the consent being assigned.

Reason: To safeguard the obligations of the consent if transferred to another company.

4. Serious Incident Reporting

In the event of any breach of health and safety or environmental obligations relating to the Development during the period of this consent, the Company will provide written notification of the nature and timing of the incident to the Planning Authority and the Scottish Ministers, including confirmation of remedial measures taken and/or to be taken to rectify the breach, within 24 hours of the incident occurring.

Reason: To keep the Scottish Ministers informed of any such incidents which may be in the public interest.

5. Energy Storage Technology

(1) No development shall commence on the energy storage facility unless and until details of the type of energy storage technology to be implemented have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Scottish Ministers.

(2) Thereafter, the type of energy storage technology shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Scottish Ministers.

(3) Written confirmation of when the energy storage facility is installed and commissioned shall be provided to the Scottish Ministers and the Planning Authority no later than one month after those dates.

Reason: To allow Scottish Ministers and the Planning Authority to consider all elements of the development in order to ensure they are acceptable in terms of visual, landscape, noise, and environmental impact considerations.

Conditions Attached to Deemed Planning Permission:

6. Commencement of Development

(1) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of 5 years beginning with the date of this permission.

(2) Written confirmation of the intended date of Commencement of development shall be provided to the Planning Authority and the Scottish Ministers no later than one calendar month before that date.

Reason: To comply with section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

7. Implementation in Accordance with Approved Plans

(1) Except as otherwise required by the terms of the section 36 consent and deemed planning permission, the Development shall be undertaken in accordance with the application:

(a) including the approved drawings listed within the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), Volume 4a – Figures, dated November 2022;

(b) the EIAR, dated November 2022; and,

(c) other documentation lodged in support of the application including Additional Information submitted December 2023 and March 2024.

Reason: To ensure that the Development is carried out in accordance with the approved details.

8. Site Enabling Works

The Site Enabling Works shall not commence until a detailed scheme of all Site Enabling Works (including off-site and on-site works) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. This shall include a timetable for all enabling works and shall be submitted a minimum of 1 month in advance of the proposed date of commencement of any Site Enabling Works.

Reason: To ensure the final details of the Site Enabling Works have regard for the rural setting of the Development Site and the potential impact of such works on the infrastructure of the area.

9. Design and Operation of Wind Turbines

(1) No development, with the exception of the Site Enabling Works, shall commence until full details of the proposed wind turbines hereby permitted, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. These details shall include:

(a) the make, model, design, direction of rotation (all wind turbine blades shall rotate in the same direction), power rating, sound power level and dimensions of the turbines to be installed which shall have internal transformers;

(b) the external colour and/or finish of the wind turbines to be used (including towers, nacelles and blades) which shall be non-reflective, pale grey semi-matte;

(c) no text, sign or logo shall be displayed on any external surface of the wind turbines, save those required for operational Health and Safety reasons or by law under other legislation; and,

(d) the application of a turbine blade pitch control system which pitching the blades out of the wind ("feathering") to reduce rotation speeds below 2rpm while idling to reduce bat collision risk.

(2) Thereafter, the wind turbines shall be installed and operate in accordance with these approved details and, with reference to part (b) above, the wind turbines shall be maintained in the approved colour and monitored to ensure no significant rust, staining or dis-colouration occurs until such time as the wind farm is decommissioned.

Reason: To ensure the Planning Authority is aware of the wind turbine details and to protect the visual amenity of the area.

10. Signage

No anemometer, power performance mast, switching station, transformer building, or enclosure, ancillary building or above ground fixed plant shall display any name, logo, sign or advertisement (other than health and safety signage) unless and until otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area.

11. Design of Substation, Ancillary Buildings and other Ancillary Development

(1) No development, with the exception of the Site Enabling Works, shall commence, unless and until final details of the external appearance, dimensions, and surface materials of the substation building, associated compounds, construction compound boundary fencing, external lighting and parking areas have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority.

(2) The substation building, associated compounds, fencing, external lighting and parking areas shall be constructed in accordance with the details approved under paragraph (1).

Reason: To safeguard the visual amenity of the area.

12. Micrositing

(1) All wind turbines, buildings, masts, areas of hardstanding and tracks shall be constructed in the location shown on EIAR Figure 3-1a (Site Layout Detailed Overview).

(2) Wind turbines, buildings, masts, borrow pits, areas of hardstanding and tracks may be adjusted by micrositing within the approved redline boundary shown on EIAR Figure 3-1a (Site Layout Detailed Overview). However, unless otherwise approved in advance in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with NatureScot and SEPA, micrositing is subject to the following restrictions:

   (a) with the exception of the substation and battery energy storage compound, which may be microsited within 100m, the wind turbines and other infrastructure hereby permitted may be microsited within 50 metres;
   (b) No wind turbine foundation shall be positioned higher than 3 metres when measured in metres Above Ordinance Datum (AOD) (Newlyn) than the position shown on EIAR Figure 3-1a (Site Layout Detailed Overview);
   (c) No micrositing shall take place within areas of peat deeper than currently shown for the relevant infrastructure on EIAR Figure 8-5;
   (d) No micrositing shall take place within areas hosting ground water dependent terrestrial ecosystems; and,
   (e) Turbine 7 shall not be microsited further into the Coire Dho Geological Conservation Review site than shown on EIAR Figure 3-1a (Site Layout Detailed Overview)

(3) All micro-siting permissible under this condition must be approved in advance in writing by the Environmental Clerk of Works (EnvCoW) (see Condition 5.

(4) A plan showing the final position of all wind turbines buildings, masts, areas of hardstanding, tracks and associated infrastructure forming part of the Development shall be submitted to the Planning Authority within three months of the completion of the development works. The plan shall also specify areas where micrositing has taken place and, for each instance, be accompanied by copies of the EnvCoW or Planning Authority's approval, as applicable.

Reason: To enable necessary minor adjustments to the position of the wind turbines and other infrastructure to allow for site-specific conditions while maintaining control of environmental impacts and taking account of local ground conditions.

13. Borrow Pit Scheme of Works and Blasting

(1) No development or Site Enabling Works shall commence unless and until a scheme for the working and restoration of each borrow pit relative to each phase of works has been prepared and submitted in advance of each phase to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority (in consultation with SEPA). The scheme shall include:

(a) a detailed working method statement based on site survey information and ground investigations;

(b) details of the handling of any overburden (including peat, soil and rock); drainage measures, including measures to prevent surrounding areas of peatland, water dependent sensitive habitats and Ground Water Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTE) from drying out;

(c) a programme of implementation of the works described in the scheme; and

(d) details of the reinstatement, restoration and aftercare of the borrow pit(s) to be undertaken at the end of the construction period, including topographic surveys of pre-construction profiles and details of topographical surveys to be undertaken of the restored borrow pit profiles.

(2) The approved scheme shall be implemented in full.

(3) Blasting shall only take place on the site between the hours of 10.00 to 16.00 on Monday to Friday inclusive and 10.00 to 12.00 on Saturdays, with no blasting taking place on a Sunday or on a Public Holiday, unless otherwise approved in advance in writing by the Planning Authority. At least 24 hours prior to any blasting, nearby properties shall be duly notified and temporary signage shall be placed at suitable locations along affected public rights of way.

Reason: To ensure that excavation of materials from the borrow pit(s) is carried out in a manner that minimises the impact on road safety, amenity and the environment, and to secure the restoration of borrow pit(s) at the end of the construction period. To ensure that blasting activity is carried out within defined timescales to control impact on amenity.

14. Watercourse Design

All new watercourse crossings shall be designed following the recommendations of the Watercourse Crossing Schedule (EIAR Volume 3 – Technical Appendix 8.1 – Watercourse Crossing Survey, dated 2022) unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority in consultation with SEPA, with:

(a) crossings WCX9, WCX11, and WCX14 (if upgraded) shall be single space bridges designed for the 1 in 200-year event including an allowance for climate changes;
(b) the watercourse crossing of the main tributary of Allt Coire na Creadha shall be a traditional style bridge demonstrated to pass the 1 in 200 year flood event plus an allowance for climate change and freeboard; and,
(c) all upgraded and other new watercourse crossings shall be oversized bottomless arched culverts.

Reason: In the interests of protecting the water environment and in order to mitigate flood risk to the development and the development causing flooding elsewhere.

15. Environmental Clerk of Works

(1) No development or Site Enabling Works shall commence unless and until the terms of appointment of an independent Environmental Clerk of Works (EnvCoW) by the Company have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The terms of the appointment shall:

(a) Impose a duty to monitor compliance with the environmental commitments provided in the EIA Report as well as the following (the EnvCoW works):

i) any micrositing as required under Condition 11;
ii) the Construction Environmental Management Plan as required under Condition 16;
iii) the Operational Environmental Management Plan as required under Condition 17;
iv) the Pre-Construction Ecological Surveys as required under Condition 18;
v) the Breeding Bird Protection Plan as required under Condition 19;
vi) The Species and Habitat Protection Plans as required under Condition 20;
vii) the Peat Management Plan as required under Condition 21;
viii) the Habitat Management Plan approved as required under Condition 22;
ix) the Detailed Geomorphological Ground Investigation Surveys and track design alterations as required under Condition 23;
x) the Water Quality and Fish Monitoring Plan under Condition 24;
xi) the Woodland Management Plan under Condition 25;

(b) Require the EnvCoW to report to the nominated construction project manager, developer, and Planning Authority, and relevant statutory agency any incidences of noncompliance with the EnvCoW works and remedial action undertaken/to be undertaken at the earliest practical opportunity;

(c) Require the EnvCoW to submit a monthly report to the construction project manager, developer, and Planning Authority summarising works undertaken on site, and any other environmental and ecological matters relevant to the EnvCoW Works;

(d) Provide training to the developer and contractors on their responsibilities to ensure that work is carried out in strict accordance with environmental protection requirements; and,

(f) Maintain a register of all inspections and audits undertaken to include an inventory of all mitigation measures on the site, their effectiveness, as well as advice provided;

(2) The EnvCoW shall be engaged by the Planning Authority but funded by the developer and shall be appointed as a minimum for the period from the commencement of site enabling works, through construction and post construction restoration works.

(3) No later than 18 months prior to the Date of Final Generation or the expiry of this consent (whichever is the earlier), details of the terms of appointment of an EnvCoW by the Company throughout the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases of the Development shall be submitted to the Planning Authority for written approval. The EnvCoW shall be appointed on the approved terms throughout the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases of the Development.

Reason: To secure effective and transparent monitoring of and compliance with the environmental mitigation and management measures associated with the Development during the construction, decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases.

16. Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP)

(1) No development or Site Enabling Works shall commence until a works specific Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) related to the phase or phases of works or development to be undertaken has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority, in consultation with NatureScot and SEPA. The CEMP shall outline site specific details of all on-site construction works, post-construction reinstatement, drainage and mitigation, together with details of their timetabling.

(2) The CEMP for each phase of works or development shall include (but is not limited to):

i. an updated Schedule of Mitigation highlighting amendments made to the existing schedule of mitigation set out at EIAR Technical Appendix 15-1 and the conditions of this consent;
ii. details of the formation of the construction compound, welfare facilities, any areas of hardstanding, turning areas, internal access tracks, car parking, material stockpiles, oil storage, lighting columns, and any construction compound boundary fencing;
iii. details and timetable for phasing of construction works;
iv. Risk Assessment of potentially damaging construction-type activities on the environment;
v. a finalised Peat Landslide Hazard Risk Assessment incorporating the recommendations set out within the Stage 2 Checking Report prepared by Ironside Farrar dated 28 August 2023;
vi. a Sediment and Erosion Control Management Plan;

vii. a Site Waste Management Plan dealing with all aspects of waste produced during the construction period (other than peat) including details of contingency planning in the event of accidental release of materials that could cause harm to the environment;

viii. a Pollution Prevention Plan, to reference the Drainage Management Plan for surface water and groundwater runoff, including a treatment plan with mitigation measures, and arrangements for the storage and management of oil and fuel on site;

ix. Drainage Management Plan demonstrating how all surface water runoff and wastewater arising during and after development is to be managed and prevented from polluting any watercourses and sources, which shall comply with SEPA Guidance WAT-SG-75: Water Run-off from Construction Sites. The Drainage Management Plan shall include details of foul and contaminated site drainage arrangements;

x. a Surface Water and Groundwater Management and Treatment Plan to include details of the separation of clean and dirty water drains, and location of settlement lagoons for silt laten water;

xi. details of all pollution prevention and mitigation measures to protect habitats and ecological resources on site, which shall include measure to maintain hydrological connectivity of Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems, biodiversity protection zones, and details of the location and timing of works;

xii. Species and Habitat Protection Plans for badger, bats, otter, pine marten, red squirrel, Rannoch Brindled Beauty moth, amphibians, reptiles, and breeding birds;

xiii. site specific details for the management and operation of any concrete batching plant including disposal of alkaline rich (high pH) water and any other substances;

xiv. a Water Crossing Method Statement to include details of the design of all water crossing structure;

xv. a Water Quality Mitigation and Monitoring Strategy to include, but is not limited to, mitigation measures to minimise the risk to water quality within the Invermoriston Water Treatment Works Drinking Water Protected Area (DWPA) (including from hydrocarbon leaks and spills) compliant with Scottish Water Guidance, and, any affected private water supplies;

xvi. a Soil Storage Management Plan;

xvii. details of on-site storage and off-site disposal of all imported or excavated material, including the maximum height and location of all stockpiles of aggregate;

xviii. details of all internal access tracks, turning areas, including accesses from the public road and hardstanding areas;

xix. details of archaeological supervision to oversee the protection / fencing off of all known heritage assets, including all areas to be used by construction vehicles;
xx. details of the management of noise and vibration during construction;
xxi. a Dust Management Plan;
xxii. details of how the best practicable measure to reduce the impact of construction noise at noise sensitive locations will be implemented;
xxiii. details of temporary site illumination;
xxiv. the Construction Method Statement for the construction of crane pads, wind turbine foundations, working cable trenches, the erection of the wind turbines and any meteorological masts, and water crossings;
xxv. details for the provision of the submission of a quarterly report summarising work undertaken at the site and compliance with the conditions imposed under the Deemed Planning Consent during the period of construction and post construction reinstatement;
xxvi. details of post-construction restoration and reinstatement of the working areas not required during the operation of the Development, including construction access tracks, borrow pits, construction compounds, storage areas, laydown areas, access tracks, passing places, and other construction areas, all of which are to be provided no later than 6 months prior to the date of first commissioning, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority. Wherever possible, reinstatement is to be achieved by the careful use of turfs removed prior to construction works. Details should include all seed mixes to be used for the reinstatement of vegetation.

(3) Thereafter, the approved CEMP shall be implemented throughout the construction, post-construction site reinstatement and operational phases in full unless otherwise approved in advance by the planning authority

Reason: To ensure that all construction operations are carried out in a manner that minimises their impact on amenity and the environment, and that mitigation measures contained in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (November 2022) which accompanied the application, or as otherwise agreed, are fully implemented.

17. Operational Environmental Management Plan

Details to be confirmed with NatureScot

Reason:

18. Pre-Construction Ecological Surveys

(1) No development or Site Enabling Works shall commence until pre-construction ecological surveys are undertaken, which shall no more than 3 months prior to

works commencing on site, and a report of the survey has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The survey shall cover both the application site and an appropriate buffer from the boundary of application site with the report including mitigation measures where any impact, or potential impact, on protected species or their habitat has been identified.

(2) Development and work shall progress in accordance with any mitigation measures contained within the approved report of survey and the timescales contain therein.

Reason: In the interest of protecting ecology, protected species and habitats.

19. Breeding Bird Protection Plan

No development or Site Enabling Works shall commence until:

(a) a breeding bird protection plan has been submitted and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with NatureScot. This shall include details of proposed pre-construction survey work, records of breeding or foraging birds within disturbance distance of the site; and appropriate mitigation to avoid the risk of disturbance and/or displacement occurring which:

(i) for golden eagle, shall include but not be limited to suspension of all works within 1km of an eyrie during the breeding season;

(ii) for black grouse, shall include but not be limited to suspension of all works within 750m of any lek sites before 9am in the months of April and May;

(b) a nesting bird survey shell be undertaken no more than 24 hours prior to the commencement of development if this coincides within the main bird breeding season (March- August inclusive) and throughout the breeding bird season if construction works commence on previously undisturbed areas or there has been a break in construction.

Reason: Construction works have the potential to disturb nesting birds or damage their nest sites, with all wild bird nests are protected from damage, destruction, interference and obstruction under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

20. Species and Habitat Protection Plans

(1) There shall be no Commencement of Development unless and until protected species surveys (including but not limited to otter, badger, pine marten, red squirrel and wildcat) have been carried out by a suitably qualified person. The surveys shall inform the mitigation measures, if required, for the protection of such species which shall be incorporated into a Species Protection Plan.

(2) The Species Protection Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

(3) The approved Species Protection Plan (as amended from time to time with written approval of the Planning Authority) shall be implemented in full.

Reason: In the interests of nature conservation

21. Peat Management Plan (PMP)

No development or Site Enabling Works shall commence until a works specific finalised Peat Management Plan (PMP), related to the phase or phases of works or development to be undertaken, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation SEPA.

(1) The PMP shall include:

(a) taking account of site and ground investigations to minimise the loss of peatlands and reduce carbon loss;

(b) include details of vegetated turf stripping and storage;

(c) include actions (including micrositing) to minimise excavated peat volumes and reuse peat in an appropriate manner, with the inclusion of a specific section outlining measures such as micrositing, limiting the footprint, and use of floating track to reduce disturbance from the formation of the T-junction directly north of the;

(d) show all tracks on peat in excess of 0.5m constructed of a floating construction unless otherwise agreed with the planning authority in consultation with SEPA.; and,

(d) follow SEPA's good practice for handling, storing and reinstating peat materials.

(2) The PMP shall thereafter be implemented as approved.

Reason: To ensure that a plan is in place to deal with the storage and reuse of peat within the application site, including peat stability and slide risk.

22. Habitat Management Plan (HMP):

(1) There shall be no Commencement of Development unless and until a Habitat Management Plan (HMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with NatureScot and SEPA. which shall at a minimum, adhere to the Outline Management Plan (EIAR Technical Appendix 6-6) and the provisions set out below.

(2) The HMP shall set out proposed habitat management of the site including all mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures including for the restoration of 251.79 ha of peatland, during the period of construction and operation, and shall detail the long-term management regimes of the compensation and enhancement measures required of the site.

(3) The HMP shall detail mitigation measures to protect the Coire Dho Geological Conservation Review site where peatland restoration measures lie within the site, which shall include:

- a Geomorphological Assessment, Map, and Restoration Plan that identifies key features including the moraines;
- provision to ensure no vehicle tracking over the moraine features in order to avoid disturbance of the protective vegetation layer, which could lead to erosion;
- a minimum 10 metre buffer zone maintained around the base of the moraine features in order to avoid undercutting the toe of the steep sides, which could trigger localised collapse or slumping.
- alternative measures to implement the buffer zone to avoid fencing the area off, which could obscure the spatial relationship between the geomorphological features of the site and impede access to the features.

(4) The HMP shall include long term habitat measures for species including, badger, bats and Rannoch Brindled Beauty Moth.

(5) The HMP shall implement measures to protect and where possible enhance wetland and peatland and to improve carbon sequestration and natural water management.

(6) The HMP shall include consideration of impacts on the River Moriston SAC including provision for detailed monitoring around High and Moderate sediment release risk areas, in particular Areas B and C of the Outline Habitat Management Plan (EIAR Technical Appendix 6-6), and demonstrate how water quality will be protected during and after the proposed works.

(7) The HMP shall include provision to provide habitat enhancement at the River Moriston in consultation with the Ness District Salmon Fishery Board.

(8) The HMP shall provide provision to leave brash piles from the removal of existing woodland as denning location for Scottish wildcats and other species, which shall be left on dry ground away from watercourses and more than 200m from turbines and tracks at location not likely to be at risk of disturbance during any future works at the site.

(9) The HMP shall include provision for regular monitoring and review to be undertaken against the HMP objectives and measures for securing amendments or additions to the HMP in the event that the HMP objectives are not being met.

(10) GIS Shapefiles of the compensation and enhancement areas shall be supplied with the HMP to the Planning Authority to the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of works.

(11) Unless and until otherwise agreed in advance in writing with the Planning Authority, the approved HMP (as amended from time to time with written approval of the Planning Authority) shall be implemented in full.

Reason: In the interests of protecting ecological features and to ensure that the development secures positive effects for biodiversity and to allow the Planning Authority to map areas of compensation and enhancement.

23. Detailed Geomorphological Ground Investigation Surveys

(1) No development or site enabling works shall commence until an updated Geomorphological Assessment Report has submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority in consultation with NatureScot, the report shall:

a) Include an updated risk assessment and schedule of mitigation as set out in the Additional Information Tomchrasky Wind Farm Geomorphological Assessment Report (Revision 2 dated 10 November 2023 Authors Gavin and Doherty Geosolutions) as informed by detailed geomorphological ground investigation surveys to confirm the ground conditions, sediment composition, and level of interaction between the development hereby approved and non-peat sediment features;
b) identify any additional areas of interaction between the development and sediment stores that form a High, Moderate or Low risk of sediment release to the SAC, taking account of any micro-siting requirements;
c) the Report shall provide location specific details on how the risk of sediment release to the SAC will be effectively mitigated and managed at all locations identified by the survey. These details shall be incorporated into the CEMP and OEMP;
d) the report shall inform any siting and design amendments that may be required for turbines, crossings, and access tracks where it is assessed that the risk of sediment release cannot be adequately mitigated in the approved location; and,
e) include specific sections for all infrastructure elements identified at High Risk locations in the aforementioned additional information at a) of this Conditions including Turbine 6, Water Crossing 3, and access track, and shall evidence that further investigation has been conducted to seek an alternative location for Water Crossing 11. If an alternative location is not possible, the report shall detail design amendments to reduce sediment release.

(2) For the avoidance of doubt, any siting and design amendments beyond the micrositing limits permitted under Condition 12 of this permission shall require the written approval of the Planning Authority in consultation with NatureScot and SEPA prior to works on these elements commencing on site.

(3) Thereafter the approved mitigation and recommendations shall be implemented in full throughout the construction and operational lifetime of the development.

(4) An updated Geomorphological Assessment Report informed by up to date detailed geomorphological ground investigation surveys shall be included in the finalised Decommissioning, Restoration and Aftercare Plan.

Reason: to determine an optimal design and appropriate mitigation which minimises risk of sediment release to the SAC *in order to protect ecological interests* in order

24. Water Quality and Fish Monitoring Plan

(1) There shall be no Commencement of development and Site Enabling Works until an integrated Water Quality and Fish Monitoring Plan (WQFMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with local District Fishery Board.

(2) The WQFMP must take account of Marine Scotland Science's guidance and shall include:

(a) a monitoring programme with an integrated water quality and fish population monitoring;

(b) provision that water quality sampling should be carried out for 12 months (or as agreed with the Planning Authority) prior to Commencement of development, during construction and for 12 months after construction is complete;

(c) key hydrochemical parameters shall be measured in a UKAS laboratory (including turbidity and flow data), the identification of sampling locations (including control sites), frequency of sampling, sampling methodology, data analysis and reporting;

(d) fully quantitative electrofishing surveys at sites potentially impacted and at control sites for 12 months (or as agreed with the Planning Authority) prior to the Commencement of development, during construction and for 12 months after construction is completed to detect any changes in fish populations;

(e) Where possible water quality sampling, fish habitat and fish population/electrofishing surveys shall be carried out at the same sites;

(f) appropriate site-specific mitigation measures.

(3) Thereafter, the WQFMP shall be implemented in full within the timescales set out in the WQFMP.

Reason: To ensure no deterioration of water quality and to protect fish populations within and downstream of the development area.

25. Woodland Management Plan

(1) No development or Site Enabling Works shall commence until a detailed scheme of Woodland Management and Compensatory Planting (including future maintenance) has been submitted and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. This shall be based upon and informed by EIAR Technical Appendix 3-2, November 2022 and associated Figures 3-2-1 through to 3-2-4, with a minimum area of 12.14 ha to be planted.

(2) All planting shall be implemented in full no later than 1st April following the date of the deemed planning permission, or as otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority.

(3) Thereafter, the planting and areas of woodland to be retained shall be maintained throughout the lifetime of the development in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity to aid screening of the Development as well as to protect Scotland's woodland resource, in accordance with the Scottish Governments policy on the Control of Woodland Removal.

26. Outdoor Access Plan

(1) No development or Site Enabling Works shall commence until a finalised and detailed Outdoor Access Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The purpose of the plan shall be to maintain public access routes to site tracks and paths during construction, and to maintain outdoor access in the long-term. The Outdoor Access Plan shall include details showing:

(a) all existing access points, paths, core paths, tracks, rights of way and other routes whether on land or inland water), and any areas currently outwith or excluded from statutory access rights under Part One of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, within and adjacent to the application site;

(b) any areas proposed for exclusion from statutory access rights, for reasons of privacy, disturbance or effect on curtilage related to buildings or structures;

(c) all proposed paths tracks and other alternative routes for use by walkers, riders, cyclists, canoeists, all-abilities users, etc. and any other relevant outdoor access enhancement (including construction specifications, signage, information leaflets, proposals for on-going maintenance etc; any diversion of paths, tracks or other routes (whether on land or inland water), temporary or permanent, proposed as part of the Development (including details of mitigation measures, diversion works, duration and signage);

(2) The approved Outdoor Access Plan, and any associated works, shall be implemented in full prior to the Commencement of development or as otherwise may be agreed within the approved plan.

Reason: In the interests of securing public access rights.

27. Archaeology

(1) No development or site enabling works shall commence on site unless and until an archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority and a programme of archaeological works has been carried out in accordance with the approved WSI.

~~**(2)**~~ The WSI shall include details of how the recording and recovery of archaeological resources found within the application site shall be undertaken, and how any updates, if required, to the written scheme of investigation will be provided throughout the implementation of the programme of archaeological works.

~~**(3)**~~ Should the archaeological works reveal the need for post excavation analysis the development hereby approved shall not be brought into use unless and until a Post-Excavation Research Design (PERD) for the analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority. The PERD shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to protect the archaeological and historic interest of the site.

28. Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP)

No development or Site Enabling Works shall commence until a works specific CTMP related to the phase or phases of works or development to be undertaken has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with the Trunk and Local Roads Authorities. The CTMP shall be agreed to by the Police, and affected Community Councils shall be notified. The final CTMP shall be submitted no later than three months prior to commencement of the relevant phase. The approved CTMP shall be carried out as approved in accordance with the timetable specified within the approved CTMP, which shall include (but not be limited to) the provision of:

(a) an Abnormal Loads Assessment;

(b) A risk assessment for transport during daylight and hours of darkness;

(c) Proposed traffic management and mitigation measures along the access routes, as required. Measures such as temporary speed limits, suitable temporary

signage, road markings and the use of speed activated signs should be considered;

(d) The routeing of all traffic associated with the Development. The proposed route for any abnormal loads on the trunk road network must be approved by Transport Scotland, prior to the movement of any abnormal load. Any accommodation measures required, including the removal of street furniture, junction widening, traffic management, must similarly be approved. Full details of proposed works should be developed in consultation with the trunk road Operating Company and Transport Scotland Area Manager at the earliest opportunity through a Minute of Agreement (https://www.transport.gov.scot/our-approach/industry-guidance/work-on-the-scottish-trunkroad-network) and issued for their approval prior to the commencement of construction operations.

(e) Measures to ensure that the specified routes as detailed in the CTMP are adhered to, including monitoring procedures;

(f) A contingency plan prepared by the abnormal load haulier. The plan shall be adopted only after consultation and agreement with the Police, Transport Scotland and THC Roads Authority. It shall include measures to deal with any haulage incidents that may result in public roads becoming temporarily closed or restricted;

(g) A procedure for the regular monitoring of road conditions and the implementation of any remedial works required as may be reasonably attributable to the project's construction plant and vehicle movements during the construction period, including the provision of a wear and tear agreement for the local road network under Section 96 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 (As Amended);

(h) A detailed protocol for the delivery of abnormal loads/vehicles, prepared in consultation with the Planning Authority, Transport Scotland and the affected community councils. The protocol shall identify any requirement for convoy working and/or escorting of vehicles and include arrangements to provide advance notice of abnormal load movements in the local media. Temporary signage, in the form of demountable signs or similar approved, shall be established, when required, to alert road users and local residents of expected abnormal load movements. Any accommodation measures required including the removal of street furniture, junction widening, traffic management must similarly be approved by Transport Scotland and the THC Roads Authority. All such movements on roads shall take place out with peak times on the network, including school travel times and shall avoid local community events.

(i) The developer shall submit proposals for an abnormal loads delivery trial-run to be undertaken with the involvement of Police Scotland and prior to the commencement of abnormal loads deliveries. Trial-run proposals shall be

submitted to and approved in writing by The Highland Council in consultation with Transport Scotland.

(j) During the delivery period of the wind turbine construction materials any additional signing or temporary traffic control measures deemed necessary due to the size or length of any loads being delivered or removed must be undertaken by a recognised QA traffic management consultant, to be approved by Transport Scotland and THC Roads Authority, before delivery commences;

(k) details of measure to prevent loose and deleterious material being deposited on the local road network including wheel cleaning and lorry sheeting facilities, and measures to clean the site entrances and the adjacent public road network;

(l) Any additional signage or temporary traffic control measures deemed necessary due to the size or length of loads being delivered must be undertaken by a recognised Quality Assured traffic management consultant, to be approve by the Planning Authority, in consultation with Transport Scotland, as the trunk roads authority before delivery commences;

(j) During the operational stage of the Development, advance written notification and approval of the Planning Authority in consultation with Transport Scotland, The Local Roads Authority, and affected community councils is required for Abnormal Load movement required during this period; and

(k) Identification of a nominated person to whom any road safety issues can be referred.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and to ensure that abnormal loads access the site in a safe manner.

29. Site Access

(1) No development or other Site Enabling Works shall commence until the layout and type (and method) of construction for the proposed means of access onto the trunk road including the creation and maintenance of associated visibility splays has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority, in consultation with Transport Scotland.

(2) The proposed permanent means of access to the trunk road shall be constructed to a layout and type (and method) of construction to the satisfaction of Transport Scotland

(3) Thereafter the approved details shall be implemented in full prior to any other site enabling works taking place.

Reason: To ensure that the standard of access layout complies with the current standards and that the safety of the traffic on the trunk road is not diminished.

30. Road Safety Audit

(1) from Transport Scotland No development or Site Enabling Works shall commence Until a combined Stage 1 and Stage 2 Road Safety Audit for the proposed site access junction with the A887(T), in accordance with DMRB GG119, has been submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority, in consultation with Transport Scotland as the trunk roads authority, and fully implemented thereafter.

(2) Any amendments to designs resulting from the audit shall thereafter be agreed with the Planning Authority in consultation with Transport Scotland and fully implemented thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and to ensure the provision of adequate design.

31. Aviation Safety – Lighting

(1) No development, with the exception of Site Enabling Works, shall commence until a scheme for aviation lighting for the Development has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). The aviation-lighting scheme shall define how the development will be lit throughout its life to maintain civil and military aviation safety requirements, and shall include:

(a) Details of any construction equipment and temporal structures with a total height of 50 metres or greater (above ground level) that will be deployed during the construction of wind turbine generators and details of any aviation warning lighting that will be fitted; and,

(b) The locations and heights of all wind turbine generators in the development, identifying those that will be fitted with aviation warning lighting and the position of the lights on the wind turbines generators; the types(s) of lights that will be fitted; and the performance specification(s) of the lighting types(s) to be used.

(2) Thereafter, the aviation-lighting scheme shall be implemented as approved. The lighting installed in accordance with the aviation lighting scheme shall remain operational for the life time of the development, unless visible aviation lighting requirements become redundant, or proximity activated lighting which is turned on by the detection of moving objects becomes widely available in the UK and is capable of being deployed at reasonable cost (evidenced through other recent wind farm consents), with this to be confirmed by the Planning Authority in consultation with the MoD and the CAA.

(3) In the event that the Planning Authority notify the Company that the approved aviation lighting scheme is redundant, or proximity activated lighting must be

introduced, within 3 months of receipt of this notification, an amended aviation lighting strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with the MoD and the CAA.

(4) Thereafter, the amended aviation lighting scheme shall be implemented as approved within a further 6-month period, and shall remain operational for the remaining life time of the development, unless otherwise agreed by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of aviation safety, landscape and visual amenity, ensuring that visible aviation lighting is switched off or replaced to reflect industry technological advances.

32. Aviation Safety Charting and Safety Management

At least one calendar month prior to the commencement of the erection of the turbines the Company shall provide the Planning Authority, Ministry of Defence, Defence Geographic Centre and National Air Traffic Services (NATS) with the following information and shall provide evidence to the Planning Authority of having done so.

(a) the date of the commencement of the erection of wind turbine generators;

(b) the maximum height of any construction equipment to be used in the erection of the wind turbines;

(c) the date any wind turbine generators are brought into use;

(d) the latitude and longitude and maximum heights of each wind turbine generator, and any anemometer mast(s).

Reason: In the interests of aviation safety.

33. Telecommunication

Within 12 months of the first export date, any claim by any individual person regarding television or telecommunications interference at their house, business premises or other building, shall be investigated by a qualified engineer appointed by the developer and the results shall be submitted to the Planning Authority. Should any impairment of services be attributable to the development, the developer shall remedy such impairment within 3 months.

Reason: To mitigate the potential effect of telecommunications interference on the development.

34. Site Decommissioning, Restoration and Aftercare

(1) The Development will be decommissioned and will cease to generate electricity by no later than the date thirty years from the date of Final Commissioning. The

total period for restoration of the Site in accordance with this condition shall not exceed three years from the date of Final Generation without prior written approval of the Scottish Ministers in consultation with the Planning Authority.

(2) No development or Site Enabling Works shall commence unless and until a decommissioning, restoration and aftercare strategy has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority (in consultation with NatureScot, SEPA and Transport Scotland). The strategy shall outline measures for the decommissioning of the Development and restoration and aftercare of the site and shall include proposals for the removal of the Development, the treatment of ground surfaces, the management and timing of the works and environmental management provisions, and borrow pit restoration.

(3) Not later than 3 years before decommissioning of the Development or the expiration of this consent (whichever is the earlier), a detailed decommissioning, restoration and aftercare plan, based upon the principles of the approved decommissioning, restoration and aftercare strategy, shall be submitted for the written approval of the Planning Authority in consultation with NatureScot and SEPA.

(4) The detailed decommissioning, restoration and aftercare plan shall provide updated and detailed proposals, in accordance with relevant guidance at that time, for the removal of the Development, the treatment of ground surfaces, the management and timing of the works and environment management provisions which shall include (but is not limited to):

(a) site waste management plan (dealing with all aspects of waste produced during the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases);

(b) details of the formation of the construction compound, welfare facilities, any areas of hardstanding, turning areas, internal access tracks, car parking, material stockpiles, oil storage, lighting columns, and any construction compound boundary fencing;

(c) a dust management plan;

(d) details of measures to be taken to prevent loose or deleterious material being deposited on the local road network, including wheel cleaning and lorry sheeting facilities, and measures to clean the site entrances and the adjacent road network;

(e) details of anticipated impacts on the road networks and vehicle types and movements;

(f) a pollution prevention and control method statement, including arrangements for the storage and management of oil and fuel on the site;

(g) details of measures for soil storage and management;

(h) a surface water and groundwater management and treatment plan, including details of the separation of clean and dirty water drains, and location of settlement lagoons for silt laden water;

(i) details of measures for sewage disposal and treatment;

(j) temporary site illumination;

(k) the construction of any temporary access into the site and the creation and maintenance of associated visibility splays;

(l) details of watercourse crossings;

(m) details of archaeological supervision to oversee the protection / fencing off of all known heritage assets within 50m of the proposed working areas, including all areas to be used by construction vehicles; and

(n) a species protection plan based on surveys for protected species (including birds) carried out no longer than eighteen months prior to submission of the plan.

(5) The Development shall be decommissioned, site restored, and aftercare thereafter undertaken in accordance with the approved plan, unless otherwise agreed in writing in advance with the Planning Authority in consultation with NatureScot and SEPA.

Reason: To ensure the decommissioning and removal of the Development in an appropriate and environmentally acceptable manner and the restoration and aftercare of the site, in the interests of safety, amenity and environmental protection.

35. Financial Guarantee

(1) No development or Site Enabling Works shall commence unless and until a bond or other form of financial guarantee in terms reasonably acceptable to the Planning Authority which secures the cost of performance of all decommissioning, restoration and aftercare obligations referred to in Condition 32 is submitted to the Planning Authority.

(2) The value of the financial guarantee shall be agreed between the Company and the Planning Authority or, failing agreement, determined (on application by either party) by a suitably qualified independent professional as being sufficient to meet the costs of all decommissioning, restoration and aftercare obligations referred to in Condition 34.

(3) The financial guarantee shall be maintained in favour of the Planning Authority until the date of completion of all decommissioning, restoration and aftercare obligations referred to in Condition 34.

(4) The value of the financial guarantee shall be reviewed by agreement between the Company and the Planning Authority or, failing agreement, determined (on application by either party) by a suitably qualified independent professional no less

than every five years and increased or decreased to take account of any variation in costs of compliance with decommissioning, restoration and aftercare obligations and best practice prevailing at the time of each review.

Reason: to ensure that there are sufficient funds to secure performance of the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare conditions attached to this deemed planning permission in the event of default by the Company.

36. Redundant Turbines

In the event that any wind turbine installed and commissioned fails to produce electricity on a commercial basis to the public network for a continuous period of 12 months, then unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority, after consultation with the Scottish Ministers, such wind turbine will be deemed to have ceased to be required. If deemed to have ceased to be required, the wind turbine and its ancillary equipment will be dismantled and removed from the site within the following 12-month period, and the ground reinstated to the specification and satisfaction of the Planning Authority after consultation with the Scottish Ministers.

Reason: To ensure that any redundant wind turbine is removed from Site, in the interests of safety, amenity and environmental protection.

37. Site Inspection Strategy

(1) Prior to the Date of Final Commissioning, the Company shall submit an outline Site Inspection Strategy ("Outline SIS)" for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The Outline SIS shall set out a strategy for the provision of site inspections and accompanying Site Inspection Reports ("SIRs") to be carried out at 25 years of operation from the Date of Final Commissioning and every five years thereafter.

(2) No later than 24 years after the Date of Final Commissioning, the Company shall submit a final detailed Site Inspection Strategy ("Final SIS"), based on the principles of the approved Outline SIS for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The Final SIS shall set out updated details for the provision of site inspections and accompanying SIRs, in accordance with relevant guidance at that time, to be carried out at 25 years of operation from the Date of Final Commissioning and every five years thereafter.

(3) At least one month in advance of submitting each Site Inspection Report to the Planning Authority, the scope of the Site Inspection Report shall be agreed with the Planning Authority.

(4) The SIRs shall include, but not be limited to:

(a) Details to demonstrate that the infrastructure components of the Development are still operating in accordance with Condition 8 and Condition 31; and

(b) An engineering report which details the condition of tracks, turbine foundations and the wind turbines and sets out the requirements and the programme for the implementation for any remedial measures which may be required.

(5) The SIS and each Site Inspection Report shall be implemented in full unless otherwise agreed in advance in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the Development is being monitored at regular intervals throughout after the first 25 years of operation.

38. Socio-Economic Benefit

(1) No later than 15 months after the Date of Final Commissioning of the development, a report demonstrating the project has met the minimum socio-economic benefit assumptions provided within the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), received November 2022 for both the development's construction period and initial 12 month operational period, for both Highland and Scotland, shall be submitted for the written approval of the Planning Authority.

(2) Where the report shows that projected socio-economic benefit has not achieved the assumptions in the EIAR, it shall include proposed measures to address, and compensate for any shortfall, to ensure that the economic assumptions for the development have been met. In the absence of any alternative actions, the Scheme for Community Benefit, as required by Condition 37, shall be enhanced accordingly to offset any detriment of economic impact.

Reason: In order to ensure compliance with NPF4 Policy 11c) and to maximise the local socio-economic benefits of the development to the wider local community**.**

39. Scheme for Community Benefit

Anytime between 3 months to 6 months prior to the Date of Final Commissioning of the development, details of a Scheme for Community Benefit shall be submitted for the prior written approval of the Planning Authority. This scheme, comprising a developer financial contribution, or alternative means of provision, shall be to the prevailing value required for onshore wind energy development in Highland, at the time of the developer applying to satisfy this condition. The scheme shall be used for projects across Highland directly related to infrastructure, supply chain development, support for business, including tourism and regeneration projects, skills and barriers to employment in Highland. The scheme shall be implemented as approved, and administered by The Highland Council, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure compliance with NPF4 Policy 11c) and to maximise the local socio-economic benefits of the development to the wider local community.

40. Community Liaison Group

No development or Site Enabling Works shall commence unless and until a Community Liaison Plan has been approved in writing by the Planning Authority after consultation with the relevant local community councils. This plan shall include the arrangements for establishing a Community Liaison Group to act as a vehicle for the community to be kept informed of project progress by the Company. The terms and condition of these arrangements must include that the Community Liaison Group will have timely dialogue in advance on the provision of all transport-related mitigation measures and keep under review the timing of the delivery of turbine components. The terms and conditions shall detail the continuation of the Community Liaison Group until the wind farm has been completed and is fully operational. The approved Community Liaison Plan shall be implemented in full.

Reason: To assist with the provision of mitigation measures to minimise potential hazards to road users including pedestrians, travelling on the road networks.

41. Planning Monitoring Officer

(1) There shall be no Commencement of Development unless and until the terms of appointment by the Company of a suitably qualified environmental consultant as Planning Monitoring Officer (PMO) have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The terms of appointment shall:

(a) impose a duty to monitor compliance with the terms of the deemed planning permission and the conditions attached to it;

(b) require the PMO to submit a report to the Planning Authority every 2 months summarising works undertaken on site; and

(c) require the PMO to report to the Planning Authority any incidences of non-compliance with the terms of the deemed planning permission and conditions attached to it at the earliest practical opportunity.

(2) The PMO shall be appointed on the approved terms throughout the period from Commencement of Development to completion of construction works and post-construction site reinstatement works.

Reason: To enable the development to be suitably monitored to ensure compliance with the permission and the conditions attached to it.

42. Noise

The rating level of noise immisions from the combined effects of the wind turbines hereby permitted (including the application of any tonal penalty), when determined

in accordance with the attached Guidance Notes, shall not exceed more than 2dB above the maximum predicted levels within Environmental Impact Assessment Report dated November 2022 at any windspeed up to and including 12 m/s at a standardised height of 10m. The noise limits are presented in the table below:

Receptor	Noise Limit (dB LA90)

In addition:

(A) Prior to the First Commissioning Date, the Company shall submit to the Planning Authority for written approval a list of proposed independent consultants who may undertake compliance measurements in accordance with this condition. Amendments to the list of approved consultants shall be made only with the prior written approval of the Planning Authority.

(B) Within 21 days from receipt of a written request of the Planning Authority, following a complaint to it alleging noise disturbance at a dwelling, the Company shall, at its expense, employ an independent consultant approved by the Planning Authority to assess the level of noise immisions from the Development at the complainant's property (or a suitable alternative location agreed in writing with the Planning Authority) in accordance with the procedures described in the attached Guidance Notes.

The written request from the Planning Authority shall set out at least the date, time and location that the complaint relates to. Within 14 days of receipt of the written request of the Planning Authority made under this paragraph (B), the Company shall provide the information relevant to the complaint to the Planning Authority in the format set out in Guidance Note 1(e).

(C) Prior to the commencement of any measurements by the independent consultant to be undertaken in accordance with these conditions, the Company shall submit to the Planning Authority for written approval the proposed measurement location

identified in accordance with the Guidance Notes where measurements for compliance checking purposes shall be undertaken.

Where the proposed measurement location is close to the wind turbines, rather than at the complainant's property (to improve the signal to noise ratio), then the Company's submission shall include a method to calculate the noise level from the wind turbines at the complainants property based on the noise levels measured at the agreed location (the alternative method). Details of the alternative method together with any associated guidance notes deemed necessary, shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing by the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any measurements.

Measurements to assess compliance with the noise limits of this condition shall be undertaken at the measurement location approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

(D) Prior to the commencement of any measurements by the independent consultant to be undertaken in accordance with these conditions, the Company shall submit to the Planning Authority for written approval a proposed assessment protocol setting out the following:

i. the range of meteorological and operational conditions (the range of wind speeds, wind directions, power generation and times of day) to determine the assessment of rating level of noise emissions.

ii. a reasoned assessment as to whether the noise giving rise to the complaint contains or is likely to contain a tonal component.

The proposed range of conditions shall be those which prevailed during times when the complainant alleges there was disturbance due to noise, having regard to the information provided in the written request of the Planning Authority under paragraph (B), and such others as the independent consultant considers necessary to fully assess the noise at the complainant's property. The assessment of the rating level of noise immisions shall be undertaken in accordance with the assessment protocol approved in writing by the Planning Authority and the attached Guidance Notes.

(E) The Company shall provide to the Planning Authority the independent consultant's assessment of the rating level of noise immisions undertaken in accordance with the Guidance Notes within 2 months of the date of the written request of the Planning Authority made under paragraph (B) of this condition unless the time limit is extended in writing by the Planning Authority. The assessment shall include all data collected for the purposes of undertaking the compliance measurements, such data to be provided in the format set out in Guidance Note 1(e) of the Guidance Notes. The instrumentation used to undertake the measurements shall be calibrated in accordance with Guidance Note 1(a) and certificates of calibration shall be submitted to the Planning Authority with the independent consultant's assessment of the rating level of noise emissions.

(F) Where a further assessment of the rating level of noise immisions from the Development is required pursuant to Guidance Note 4(c) of the attached Guidance Notes, the Company shall submit a copy of the further assessment within 21 days of submission of the independent consultant's assessment pursuant to paragraph (E) above unless the time limit for the submission of the further assessment has been extended in writing by the Planning Authority.

(G) The Company shall continuously log power production, wind speed and wind direction, all in accordance with Guidance Note 1(d) of the attached Guidance Notes. The data from each wind turbine shall be retained for a period of not less than 24 months. The Company shall provide this information in the format set out in Guidance Note 1(e) of the attached Guidance Notes to the Planning Authority on its request within 14 days of receipt in writing of such a request.

(H) In the event that the rating level, after adjustment for background noise contribution and any tonal penalty, is found to exceed the conditioned limits, the Company shall submit to the Planning Authority for written approval, a scheme of mitigation to be implemented within fourteen days of submission of the report identifying the exceedance (as required under paragraph (F) above). The scheme shall define any reduced noise running modes to be used in the mitigation together with sound power levels in these modes and the manner in which the running modes will be defined in the SCADA data.

(I) The scheme referred to in paragraph H above should include a framework of immediate and long-term mitigation measures. The immediate mitigation measures must ensure the rating level will comply with the conditioned limits and must be implemented within 14 days of the submission of the report identifying the exceedance. These measures must remain in place, except during field trials to optimise mitigation, until a long-term mitigation strategy is ready to be implemented.

Guidance Notes for Noise Condition

These notes are to be read with and form part of the noise condition. They further explain the condition and specify the methods to be employed in the assessment of complaints about noise immissions from the wind farm. The rating level at each integer wind speed is the arithmetic sum of the wind farm noise level as determined from the best-fit curve described in Note 2 of these Guidance Notes and any tonal penalty applied in accordance with Note 3 with any necessary correction for residual background noise levels in accordance with Note 4. Reference to ETSU-R-97 refers to the publication entitled "The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms" (1997) published by the Energy Technology Support unit (ETSU) for the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

Note 1

a) Values of the LA90,10-minute noise statistic should be measured at the complainant's property (or an approved alternative representative location as

detailed in Note 1(b)), using a sound level meter of EN 60651/BS EN 60804 Type 1, or BS EN 61672 Class 1quality (or the equivalent UK adopted standard in force at the time of the measurements) set to measure using the fast time weighted response as specified in BS EN 60651/BS EN 60804 or BS EN 61672-1 (or the equivalent UK adopted standard in force at the time of the measurements). This should be calibrated before and after each set of measurements, using a calibrator meeting BS EN 60945:2003 "Electroacoustics - sound calibrators" Class 1 with PTB Type Approval (or the equivalent UK adopted standard in force at the time of the measurements) and the results shall be recorded. Measurements shall be undertaken in such a manner to enable a tonal penalty to be calculated and applied in accordance with Guidance Note 3.

b) The microphone shall be mounted at 1.2 - 1.5 metres above ground level, fitted with a two-layer windshield or suitable equivalent approved in writing by the Planning Authority, and placed outside the complainant's dwelling. Measurements should be made in "free field" conditions. To achieve this, the microphone shall be placed at least 3.5 metres away from the building facade or any reflecting surface except the ground at the approved measurement location. In the event that the consent of the complainant for access to their property to undertake compliance measurements is withheld, the Company shall submit for the written approval of the Planning Authority details of the proposed alternative representative measurement location prior to the commencement of measurements and the measurements shall be undertaken at the approved alternative representative measurement location.

c) The LA90,10-minute measurements should be synchronised with measurements of the 10-minute arithmetic mean wind speed and wind direction data and with operational data logged in accordance with Guidance Note 1(d) and rain data logged in accordance with Note 1(f).

d) To enable compliance with the conditions to be evaluated, the Company shall continuously log arithmetic mean wind speed in metres per second and wind direction in degrees from north at hub height for each turbine, arithmetic mean power generated by each turbine and any data necessary to define the running mode as set out in the Curtailment Plan, all in successive 10-minute periods. Unless an alternative procedure is previously agreed in writing with the Planning Authority, this hub height wind speed, averaged across all operating wind turbines, shall be used as the basis for the analysis. Each 10-minute arithmetic average mean wind speed data as measured at turbine hub height shall be 'standardised' to a reference height of 10 metres as described in ETSU-R-97 at page 120 using a reference roughness length of 0.05 metres. It is this standardised 10 metre height wind speed data which is correlated with the noise measurements determined as valid in accordance with Note 2(b), such correlation to be undertaken in the manner described in Note 2(c). All 10-minute periods shall commence on the hour and in 10 minute increments thereafter synchronised with Greenwich Mean Time and adjusted to British Summer Time where necessary.

e) Data provided to the Planning Authority shall be provided in comma separated values in electronic format with the exception of data collected to assess tonal noise (if required) which shall be provided in a format to be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.

f) A data logging rain gauge shall be installed in the course of the independent consultant undertaking an assessment of the level of noise immissions. The gauge shall record over successive 10-minute periods synchronised with the periods of data recorded in accordance with Note 1(d). The Company shall submit details of the proposed location of the data logging rain gauge to the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of measurements.

Note 2

a) The noise measurements should be made so as to provide not less than 20 valid data points as defined in Note 2 paragraph (b).

b) Valid data points are those measured during the conditions set out in the assessment protocol approved by the Planning Authority but excluding any periods of rainfall measured in accordance with Note 1(f).

c) Values of the LA90,10-minute noise measurements and corresponding values of the 10-minute standardised ten-meter height wind speed for those data points considered valid in accordance with Note 2(b) shall be plotted on an XY chart with noise level on the Y-axis and wind speed on the X-axis. A least square, "best fit" curve of an order deemed appropriate by the independent consultant (but which may not be higher than a fourth order) shall be fitted to the data points to define the wind farm noise level at each integer speed.

Note 3

a) Where, in accordance with the approved assessment protocol noise immissions at the location or locations where compliance measurements are being undertaken contain or are likely to contain a tonal component, a tonal penalty shall be calculated and applied using the following rating procedure.

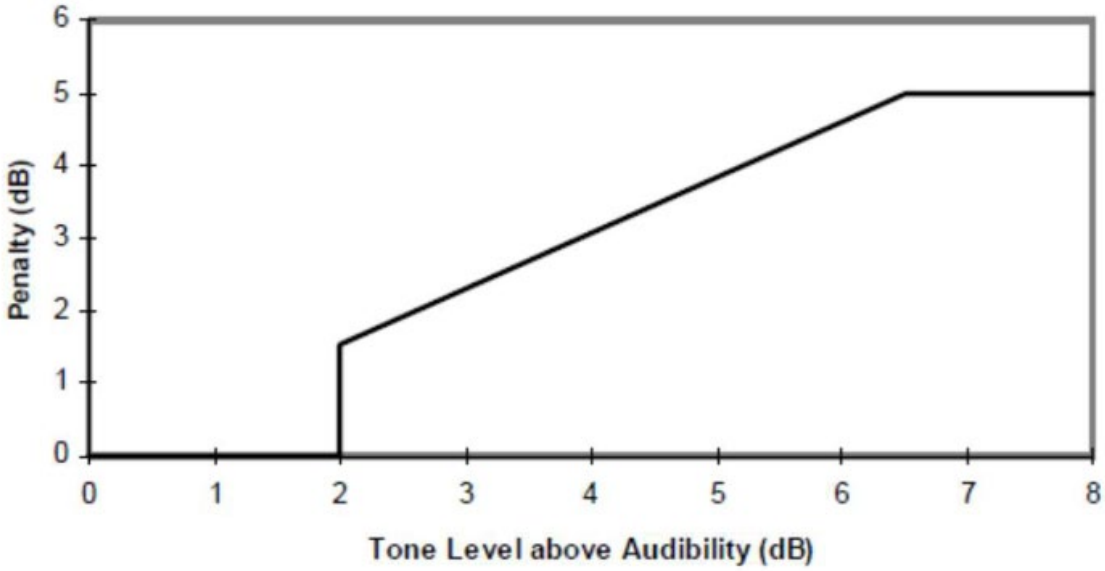
b) For each 10-minute interval for which LA90,10-minute data have been determined as valid in accordance with Note 2, a tonal assessment shall be performed on noise immissions during 2 minutes of each 10-minute period. The 2-minute periods should be spaced at 10-minute intervals provided that uninterrupted uncorrupted data are available ("the standard procedure"). Where uncorrupted data are not available, the first available uninterrupted clean 2-minute period out of the affected overall 10-minute period shall be selected. Any such deviations from the standard procedure shall be reported.

c) For each of the 2-minute samples the tone level above audibility shall be calculated by comparison with the audibility criterion given in Section 2.1 on pages 104 -109 of ETSU-R-97.

d) The tone level above audibility shall be plotted against wind speed for each of the 2-minute samples. Samples for which the tones were below the audibility criterion, or no tone was identified, a value of zero audibility shall be substituted.

e) A least squares "best fit" linear regression shall then be performed to establish the average tone level above audibility for each integer wind speed derived from the value of the "best fit" line fitted to values within ± 0.5m/s of each integer wind speed. If there is no apparent trend with wind speed then a simple arithmetic mean shall be used. This process shall be repeated for each integer wind speed for which there is an assessment of overall levels in Note 2.

f) The tonal penalty is derived from the margin above audibility of the tone according to the figure below derived from the average tone level above audibility for each integer wind speed.



Note 4

a) If a tonal penalty is to be applied in accordance with Note 3 the rating level of the turbine noise at each wind speed is the arithmetic sum of the measured noise level as determined from the best fit curve described in Note 2 and the penalty for tonal noise as derived in accordance with Note 3 at each integer wind speed within the range set out in the approved assessment protocol. If no tonal penalty is to be applied then the rating level of the turbine noise at each wind speed is equal to the measured noise level as determined from the best fit curve described in Note 2.

b) If the rating level lies at or below the noise limits approved by the Planning Authority then no further action is necessary. In the event that the rating level is above the noise limits, the independent consultant shall undertake a further

assessment of the rating level to correct for background noise so that the rating level relates to wind turbine noise immission only.

c) The Company shall ensure that all the wind turbines in the development are turned off for such period as the independent consultant requires to undertake the further assessment. The further assessment shall be undertaken in accordance with the following steps:

i) Repeating the steps in Note 2, with the turbines switched off, and determining the background noise (L3) at each integer wind speed within the range set out in the approved noise assessment protocol.

ii) The wind farm noise (L1) at this speed shall then be calculated as follows where L2 is the measured level with turbines running but without the addition of any tonal penalty:

$$L_1 = 10\log\left[10^{L_2/10} - 10^{L_3/10}{}_1\right]$$

iii) The rating level shall be re-calculated by adding the tonal penalty (if any is applied in accordance with Note 3) to the derived noise L1 at that integer wind speed.

iv) If the rating level after adjustment for background noise contribution and adjustment for tonal penalty lies at or below the noise limits approved by the Planning Authority, then no further action is necessary. If the rating level at any integer wind speed exceeds the noise limits approved by the Planning Authority, then the Development fails to comply with the conditions.

Reason: To protect amenity and to ensure that noise limits are not exceeded and to enable prompt investigation of complaints.

Signature:	David Mudie
Designation:	Area Planning Manager – South
Author:	Mark Fitzpatrick
Background Papers:	Documents referred to in report and in case file.
Relevant Plans:	Plan 1 - Location Plan - EIAR Figure 1.1
	Plan 2 - Site Layout Plan - EIAR Figure 1.3
	Plan 3 - Typical Wind Turbine Design - EIAR Figure 3.3

Appendix 1 – Cumulative Wind Farm Developments

A1.1 This list has been updated by Officers to reflect the most recent position as of 1 April 2024. This excludes all refused applications and those at EIA Scoping stage.

Site Name	No. of Turbines	Tip Height (m)	Distance / Direction from Proposed Development
Operational Sites			
Millennium	26	115 – 125	3km SE
Beinneun	25	113.5	4km S
Beinneun Extension	7	136	4km S
Bhlaraidh	32	125 – 135	8km NE
Corrimony	5	100	11km NE
Stronelairg	66	125 – 135	23km SE
Corriegarth	23	119.3	27km E
Dunmaglass	33	117.5	35km NE
Consented / Sites Under Construction			
Bunloinn	10	200	4km SW
Bhlaraidh Extension	15	180	12km NE
Cloiche	36	149.9	21km SE
Dell	14	115.5 - 130.5	23km SE
Corriegarth 2	14	149.9	29km E
Application / Appeal Sites			
Chrathaich	14	149.9	10km
Loch Liath	13	180 - 200	12km NE

Culachy	8	200	14km SE
Dell 2 (Redesign)	9	180 – 200	23km SE

Appendix 2 – Development Plan and Other Material Policy Considerations

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

National Planning Framework 4 (2022)

A2.1 The NPF4 policies of most relevance to this proposal include:

National Development 3 (NAD3) - Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure

1 - Tackling the climate and nature crisis.

2 - Climate mitigation and adaptation

3 - Biodiversity

4 - Natural places

5 - Soils

6 - Forestry, Woodland and Trees

7 - Historic assets and places

11 - Energy

13 - Sustainable transport

22 - Flood risk and water management

23 - Health and safety

25 - Community wealth benefits

33 - Minerals

Highland Wide Local Development Plan 2012

A2.2 28 - Sustainable Design

29 - Design Quality and Place-making

30 - Physical Constraints

31 - Developer Contributions

51 - Trees and Development

52 - Principle of Development in Woodland

53 - Minerals

55 - Peat and Soils

56 - Travel

57 - Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage

58 - Protected Species

59 - Other important Species

60 - Other Importance Habitats

61 - Landscape

62 - Geodiversity

63 - Water Environment

64 - Flood Risk

66 - Surface Water Drainage

67 - Renewable Energy Developments

68 - Community Renewable Energy Developments

69 - Electricity Transmission Infrastructure

72 - Pollution

73 - Air Quality

74 - Green Networks

77 - Public Access

78 - Long Distance Routes

Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2015 (IMFLDP)

A2.3 No policies or allocations relevant to the proposals are included in the adopted Local Development Plan.

Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan - Proposed Plan (2022)

A2.4 The Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan Proposed Plan 2 was submitted to Scottish Ministers in March 2023. This contained a number of general policies which are applicable including Policy 2 - Nature Protection, Preservation and Enhancement.

Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance, Nov 2016 (OWESG)

A2.5 The Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG) provides additional guidance on the principles set out in HwLDP Policy 67 for renewable energy developments. The Guidance sets out the Council's agreed position on onshore wind energy matters, and, although reflective of Scottish Planning Policy at the time of its

adoption prior to the adoption of NPF4, the document remains an extant part of the Development Plan and is therefore a material consideration in the determination of onshore wind energy planning applications. Nevertheless, the Spatial Framework included in the document is no longer relevant to the assessment of applications as in effect, the policies of NPF4, specifically Policy 11 Energy, removes Group 2 Areas of significant protection from consideration by effectively making all land in Scotland either Group 1 Areas where wind farms will not be acceptable, or Group 3, Areas with potential for wind farm development.

A2.6 The OWESG also contains the Loch Ness Landscape Sensitivity Study, the Black Isle, Surrounding Hills and Moray Firth Coast Sensitivity Study, and, the Caithness Sensitivity Study. The eastern extent of the site falls within the Loch Ness Landscape Sensitivity Study Area however the turbines are located outwith the study area boundary.

Other Highland Council Supplementary Guidance

A2.7 Developer Contributions (Mar 2018)
Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment (Jan 2013)
Green Networks (Jan 2013)
Highland Historic Environment Strategy (Jan 2013)
Highland's Statutorily Protected Species (Mar 2013)
Highland Renewable Energy Strategy and Planning Guidelines (May 2006)
Physical Constraints (Mar 2013)
Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments (May 2013)
Special Landscape Area Citations (Jun 2011)
Sustainable Design Guide (Jan 2013)

OTHER MATERIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Emerging Highland Council Development Plan Documents and Planning Guidance

A2.8 The Highland-wide Local Development Plan is currently under review and is at Main Issues Report Stage. It is anticipated the Proposed Plan will be published following publication of secondary legislation post National Planning Framework 4.

A2.9 The Highland Council also has further advice on the delivery of major developments in a number of documents, which include the Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects; and The Highland Council Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments.

Other National Guidance

A2.10 Onshore Wind Energy Policy Statement (2022)

Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023)

Scottish Energy Strategy (2017)

2020 Route map for Renewable Energy (2011)

Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map, Scottish Government (2018)

Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape, SNH (2017)

Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas, Technical Guidance, NatureScot (2020)

Wind Farm Developments on Peat Lands, Scottish Government (2011)

Historic Environment Policy for Scotland, HES (2019)

PAN 1/2011 - Planning and Noise (2011)

PAN 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (2008)

Circular 1/2017: Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (2017)

Appendix 3 - Compliance with the Development Plan / Other Planning Policy

National Policy

A3.1 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) forms part of the Development Plan and was adopted in February 2023. It comprises three parts:

- Part 1 – sets out an overarching spatial strategy for Scotland in the future and includes six spatial principles (just transition / conserving and recycling assets / local living / compact urban growth / rebalanced development / rural revitalisation. Part 1 sets out that there are eighteen national developments to support the spatial strategy and regional spatial priorities, which includes single large-scale projects and networks of smaller proposals that are collectively nationally significant.
- Part 2 – sets out policies for the development and use of land that are to be applied in the preparation of local development plans; local place plans; masterplans and briefs; and for determining the range of planning consents. This part of the document should be taken as a whole in that all relevant policies should be applied to each application.
- Part 3 – provides a series of annexes that provide the rationale for the strategies and policies of NPF4. The annexes outline how the document should be used and set out how the Scottish Government will implement the strategies and policies contained in the document.

A3.2 The Spatial Strategy sets out that we are facing unprecedented challenges and that we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to future impacts of climate change. It sets out that that Scotland's environment is a national asset which supports out economy, identity, health and wellbeing. It sets out that choices need to be made about how we can make sustainable use of our natural assets in a way which benefits communities. The spatial strategy reflects legislation in setting out that decisions require to reflect the long-term public interest. However, in doing so it is clear that we will need to make the right choices about where development should be located ensuring clarity is provided over the types of infrastructure that needs to be provided and the assets that should be protected to ensure they continue to benefit future generations. The Spatial Priorities support the planning and delivery of sustainable places, where we reduce emissions, restore and better connect biodiversity; liveable places, where we can all live better, healthier lives; and productive places, where we have a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.

A3.3 The proposed development is of national importance for the delivery of the national Spatial Strategy, whereby in principle support for the development is established. As the proposed development would be capable of generating over 50 MW, it is of a type and scale that constitutes NPF4 National Development 3 - Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure.

A3.4 At the national level, NPF4 considers that Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure will assist in the delivery of the Spatial Strategy and Spatial Priorities for the north of Scotland, and that Highland can continue to make a strong contribution toward meeting Scotland's ambition for net zero. Alongside these ambitions, the strategy for Highland aims to protect environmental assets as well as to stimulate investment in natural and engineered solutions to address climate change. This aim is not new and will clearly require a balancing exercise to be undertaken, which is reflected throughout NPF4.

A3.5 NPF4 Policies 1, 2, and 3 now apply to all development proposals Scotland-wide, which means that significant weight must be given to the global climate and nature crises when considering all development proposals, as required by NPF4 Policy 1. To that end, development proposals must be sited and designed to minimise lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions as far as is practicably possible in accordance with NPF4 Policy 2, while contributing to the enhancement of biodiversity, as required by NPF4 Policy 3.

A3.6 Specific to this proposal, as well as the support in Policy 1 (significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crisis when considering development), Policy 11 of NPF4 supports all forms of proposals for renewable, low-carbon and zero emission technologies including wind farms. However, any project identified as a national development requires to be considered at a project level to ensure all statutory tests are met, as set out in Annex 1 of the NPF4. This includes consideration against the provisions of the Development Plan, of which NPF4 is a part.

A3.7 Complementing those policies is NPF4 Policy 4 Natural Places, which sets out that development proposals by virtue of type, location, or scale that have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment will not be supported. The policy goes on to clarify what that means for different designations. It sets out that proposals with likely significant effects on European sites (SACs or SPAs) require appropriate assessment, and that development proposals that will affect a National Park, NSA or SSSI will only be supported where: i) the objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the areas will not be compromised; or ii) any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance. This is an important consideration given the proximity of the development in relation to The West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA and SSSI which lie to the immediate west of the proposed site.

A3.8 Similarly, sites designated in Development Plans for local nature conservation or Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) are protected in NPF4 Policy 4 unless the development will not result in significantly adverse effects on its qualities or its integrity, or these effects are clearly outweighed by social, environmental, or economic benefits of at least local importance.

A3.9 The most significant policy change for Natural Places brought about by NPF Policy 4 is with regard Wild Land Areas, which states that renewable energy developments that support national targets will be supported in Wild Land Areas (WLA) and that buffer zones around WLAs will not be applied, so that effects of development outwith WLAs will not be a significant consideration. The site itself is not within a Wild Land Area, however, WLA24 Central Highlands borders the northern boundary of the site. WLA 18 Kinlochhourn – Knoydart – Morar 15km is to the southwest and WLA 19 Braeroy-Genshirra-Creag Meagaidh, 17km to the southeast.

A3.10 Specific for energy developments, NPF4 Policy 11 states that the principle of all forms of renewable, low-carbon, and zero emission technologies is supported with the exception of wind farm proposals located in National Parks or National Scenic Areas. Policy 11 Part c) qualifies this position by stating that wind farms should only be supported where they maximise net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business, and supply chain opportunities. The policy goes on to state that while significant weight will be placed on the contribution of the proposal to renewable energy generation targets and on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions targets, the development's impacts, including cumulative impacts, must be suitably addressed and mitigated against. In this regard, The Highland Council has consistently given significant weight to a development's contribution to environmental targets prior to and post the adoption of NPF4.

A3.11 NPF4 Policy 11 Part e) sets out the additional project design and mitigation requirements for energy proposals. This includes a broad range of matters akin to those to be assessed under HwLDP Policy 67. This includes consideration of the landscape and visual impacts and advises that where impacts are localised and / or appropriate design mitigation has been applied such effects will generally be considered acceptable. Members will be aware that the concept of wind energy developments that have only localised impacts as being more likely to be acceptable is not new and is also reflected in previous planning decisions. However, the landscape and visual impacts of a wind farm proposal of this scale remains challenging to be entirely contained. While the adopted NPF4 reflects a stronger presumption in favour of all national scale energy developments, judgment still requires to be applied at the project level to ensure proposals do not have unacceptable landscape and visual impacts even if the contribution to national renewable energy targets is considerable.

A3.12 On that point it is noted that both legislation and planning law indicate that where there may be incompatibility between NPF4 and the Local Development Plan (LDP) (HwLDP, IMFLDP, and Highland Council Supplementary Guidance) published prior to NPF4, then the more recent document shall prevail. Notwithstanding however, in instances of incompatibility, this requirement may not eliminate the provisions of the LDP in their entirety whilst these documents remain an extant part of the adopted Development Plan. That means that the Council may wish to give more weight to the

provisions of its LDP over national policies where there is strong justification for doing so, such as where it feels that LDP policy is better equipped to respond to local conditions for example. However, this matter is yet to be tested through the planning system.

Highland wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP)

A3.13 The principal HwLDP policy on which the application needs to be determined is Policy 67 - Renewable Energy. HwLDP Policy 67 sets out that renewable energy development should be well related to the source of the primary renewable resource needed for operation, the contribution of the proposed development in meeting renewable energy targets and positive/negative effects on the local and national economy as well as all other relevant policies of the Development Plan and other relevant guidance. In that context the Council will support proposals where it is satisfied they are located, sited and designed such as they will not be significantly detrimental overall, individually or cumulatively with other developments having regard to 11 specified criteria (as listed in HwLDP Policy 67). Such an approach is consistent with the concept of Sustainable Design (HwLDP Policy 28) and the concept of supporting the right development in the right place at the right time.

A3.14 Although HwLDP Policy 67, the OWESG and NPF4 Policy 11 are considered compatible, NPF4 expresses greater support for renewable energy projects outwith National Parks and NSAs and requires greater weight to be attributed to the twin climate and biodiversity crises in the decision making process, whilst still recognising that a balancing exercise must still be carried out.

Area Local Development Plan

A3.15 The Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP) does not contain land allocations related to the proposed development. It confirms the boundaries of Special Landscape Areas within the plan area. Highland Wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) Policies 28, 57, 61 and 67 seek to safeguard these regionally important landscapes. The impact of this development on landscape is primarily assessed in the Design, Landscape and Visual Impact section of this report.

A3.16 The IMFLDP is under review and is at Proposed Plan stage. As this is the case the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan Proposed Plan (IMFLDPPP) can be given weight in the determination of applications, albeit not the same weight which would be given to the adopted development plan as it still requires to be subject to examination.

A3.17 The IMFLDPPP contains policies on Nature Protection, Preservation and Enhancement (Policy 2). This sets out that major development will only be supported where it is demonstrated that the proposal will conserve and enhance biodiversity within and adjacent to a site. This is similar to the approach taken in NPF4 and will

be considered in the relevant sections of this report. The IMFLDPPP also sets out that developers will be required to demonstrate that adequate capacity to serve the proposal exists or can be created by a programmed improvement or via direct developer provision or funding. Where this is appropriate, the need for enhancements to infrastructure will be highlighted in this report.

Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG)

A3.18 The Council's OWESG forms part of the Development Plan and remains a critical document in the determination of applications. The supplementary guidance does not provide additional tests in respect of the consideration of development proposals against Development Plan policy. However, it provides a clear indication of the approach the Council takes towards the assessment of proposals, and thereby aids consideration of applications for onshore wind energy proposals.

A3.19 The OWESG approach and methodology to the assessment of proposals is applicable and is set out in the OWESG Para 4.16 - 4.17. It provides a methodology for a judgement to be made on the likely impact of a development on assessed "thresholds" in order to assist the application of HwLDP Policy 67. The 10 criteria are particularly useful in considering visual impacts, including cumulative impacts. An appraisal of how the proposal relates to the thresholds set out in the criteria, is included in Appendix 6 of this report.

Onshore Wind Energy Policy Statement (2022), Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023) and Onshore Wind Sector Deal for Scotland (2023)

A3.20 The Onshore Wind Energy Policy Statement supersedes the previously adopted Onshore Wind Energy Policy Statement which was published in 2017. The document sets out a clear ambition for onshore wind in Scotland and for the first time sets a national target for a minimum level of installed capacity for onshore wind energy, being 20 GW. This is set against a currently installed capacity of 9.4 GW (June 2023). Therefore, a further 10.6 GW of onshore wind requires to be installed to meet the target. It is however acknowledged that targets are not caps. In delivering such a target Scotland would play a significant role in meeting the requirement of 25-30 GW of installed capacity across the UK identified by the Climate Change Committee.

A3.21 Like the previous iteration of the Onshore Wind Energy Policy Statement, the document recognises that balance is required and that no one technology can allow Scotland to reach its net zero targets. The document is clear that in achieving a balance, environmental and socio-economic benefits to Scotland must be maximised. In taking this approach, this echoes Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy.

A3.22 The document recognises that there may be a need to develop onshore wind energy development on peat. While peatland is present on the site, it is considered that

appropriate mitigation has been applied by design and peat management plan can be secured by condition.

A3.23 Additionally, the document acknowledges that in order for Scotland to achieve its climate targets and the ambition for the minimum installed capacity of 20 GW by 2030, the landscape will change. However, the OWEPS also sets out that the right development should happen in the right place. Echoing NPF4, the document sets out that significant landscape and visual impacts are to be expected and that where the impacts are localised and / or appropriate mitigation has been applied the effects will be considered acceptable.

A3.24 The role of Landscape Sensitivity Appraisals in considering wind energy proposals is promoted through the document. This highlights the importance of applying those contained within the Council's OWESG when assessing applications.

A3.25 Benefits to rural areas, such as provision of jobs and opportunities to restore and protect natural habitats, are also highlighted in the document. It considers some of the wider benefits and challenges faced by in delivery of ambition and vision for onshore wind energy in Scotland. These include shared ownership, community benefit, supply chain benefits, skills development and financial mechanisms for delivery. The proposed development does lead to such benefits being delivered, however, in relation to maximising socio-economic benefits, there is no current guidance on what that should look like and evidence of a significant shift of requirements is yet to emerge, which Members may expect to see, from what was likely to be offered pre-adoption of NPF4.

A3.26 Finally, the document also highlights technical considerations, those relevant to this application have been considered and mitigation, where required has been secured by condition.

A3.27 The Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan has been published for consultation. Ministers will likely give consideration to this document in their decision on the application, however, limited weight can be applied to the document given its draft status. Unsurprisingly, the material on onshore wind in the document reflects in large part that contained in NPF4 and the Onshore Wind Energy Policy Statement 2022. A fundamental part of the Strategy is expanding the energy generation sector. Overall, the draft Energy Strategy forms part of the new policy approach alongside the OWEPS and NPF4 and confirms the Scottish Government's policy objectives and related targets reaffirming the crucial role that onshore wind and enabling transmission infrastructure will play in response to the climate crisis which is at the heart of all these policies.

A3.28 To deliver the ambition for onshore wind, the Onshore Wind Sector Deal for Scotland was introduced in September 2023. The document focuses on necessary high-level actions by Government and the Sector to support onshore wind delivery. Jointly,

Government and the Sector are committed to working together to ensure a balance is struck between onshore wind and the impacts on land use and the environment. The document looks to expediate decision making and consent implementation to achieve 20 GW of installation by 2030, meaning we should be seeing faster decisions on applications that are already in the system, with more consents being build out. Again, the sector deal does not detail what the socio-economic commitments should be.

Appendix 5 – Visual Assessment Appraisal (Operational only)

			Proposed Development			Cumulative, with other developments		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low	Magnitude of change (MoC) (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (LoE) (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major & Moderate are Significant. Minor & Negligible are not significant)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (MoCC) (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Level of Cumulative Effect (LoCE) (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
VP1 Dalchreichart	App	High	High	Major	**Significant**		Major	**Significant**
	THC	Medium-High	High	Major	**Significant**	Medium-High	Major-Moderate	**Significant**
Distance 3 km WNW	The baseline is as described in Section 4.1 of the EIAR Volume 3: Technical Appendix 5-4: Assessment of Visual Effects. High susceptibility of residential receptors but minor infrequently used road heading towards designated landscapes however ultimately ending at Tomchrasky Farmhouse and linked to rough agricultural and forestry track. The Sensitivity is Medium-High. Turbines are not in the direct view of houses at Dalchreichart. All turbines visible, towers visible for all but three which are the only three that do not break the skyline, although 12 hubs are visible. The array recedes to the viewer's left. Turbines are in the mid-distance over several summits of rugged low ridgelines and backdropped by distant peaks, which the array obscures however the view is funnelled along Glen Moriston to the left of the array towards more distant peaks, which are not obscured. Development is large in WNW portion of the view and are behind and associated with a low undulating mid-distant ridgeline, which acts as a scale indicator of the geographic extent of the array but also helps to unify it. In that way it helps to soften the visual effect of produced by the composition of turbines appearing at different densities across the array however Ts 13 & 14 look like outliers and their removal would reduce the extent that proposal impinges views of the more distant peaks. The development is a highly noticeable change to the baseline view with large moving structures at relatively close proximity. The MoC is High producing a Major and Significant LoE							

			Proposed Development			Cumulative, with other developments		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low	Magnitude of change (MoC) (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (LoE) (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major & Moderate are Significant. Minor & Negligible are not significant)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (MoCC) (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Level of Cumulative Effect (LoCE) (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
	Theoretical successive views of wind energy development with Millennium South and Millennium (in forward views of housing), and potentially Bunloinn (now consented), although these schemes are somewhat screened with limited influence on the view and maintain their own setting. However Bunloinn and Tomchrasky would bookend some of the Ceannacroc Forest mountain peaks (Glen Affric NSA and Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SPA). Turbines on both sides of Glen Moriston will give the sense of enclosure. There are no further schemes in planning to consider. The approval of Bunloinn WF reduces the MoCC resulting the addition of Tomchrasky in this consented scenario a little to Medium-High resulting in a Major-Moderate and Significant LoCE.							
VP2 A887, Inchmore Hatchery Distance 4.7 km WNW	App	Medium	Low	Minor	Not Significant		Negligible	Not Significant
	THC	Medium-High	Low	Moderate-Minor	Not Significant	Low	Moderate-Minor	Not Significant
	The baseline is as described in Section 4.2 of the EIAR Volume 3: Technical Appendix 5-4: Assessment of Visual Effects. Tourist road users will be of a higher susceptibility, including passengers and locally valued route to Skye but not designated as a national tourist route, consider the sensitivity of the receptor is Medium-High. Turbines have an awkward relationship with the hatchery building as they sit above it, combining to give unnatural vertical structure in contrast to the otherwise rural and wilder scene beyond the hatchery while extending human influence vertically in the view and impinging views of wilder backdrops and summits beyond the plantation line. Compositionally, turbines are arranged in 3 groupings of, Ts 13 & 14, Ts 7 - 11, and, Ts 1 - 6 & 12. Baseline photography is taken from a stopping place on eastbound carriageway of the A887 otherwise for most receptors the turbines will be viewed in passing briefly as the road is enclosed on both sides by trees. These trees funnel views							

			Proposed Development			Cumulative, with other developments		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low	Magnitude of change (MoC) (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (LoE) (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major & Moderate are Significant. Minor & Negligible are not significant)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (MoCC) (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Level of Cumulative Effect (LoCE) (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
	forward, making oblique views of distant peaks more precious when they fortuitously open up for vehicle passengers however given the 60mph speed limit of the road, the views will be limited and brief. Agree with applicant's assessment of Magnitude of Change and significance of effect. Some theoretical successive and sequential visibility of Millennium, Bunloinn, Bhlaraidh, and Bhlaraidh Extension WFs however in reality these schemes turbines are screened by forestry and woodland and exert very little influence in the view – Not Significant from LoCE from this location.							
VP3 A887 opposite Tomchrasky Farm Distance 2.2 km NNW	App	High	High	Major	**Significant**		Major	**Significant**
	THC	Medium-High	High	Major	**Significant**	High	Major	**Significant**
	The baseline is as described in Section 4.3 of the EIAR Volume 3: Technical Appendix 5-4: Assessment of Visual Effects. Higher Susceptibility of receptor as people stopped in the layby will be enjoying an appreciation of their surroundings but not a designated Viewpoint. turbines viewed almost at their widest extent behind a mix of felled and in situ forestry plantation with bases screened by forestry and topography. From here they are backdropped by the lower hills at the SE edge of Central Highland Wild Land Area WLA24 although Ts 7 & 13 will impinge views of some Glen Affric NSA peaks. Compositionally, turbines are loosely spread with some grouping so they appear at different densities across the array. Given the height and proximity of turbines, the High Magnitude of Change, Major and Significant Level of Effect is agreed.							

			Proposed Development			Cumulative, with other developments		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low	Magnitude of change (MoC) (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (LoE) (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major & Moderate are Significant. Minor & Negligible are not significant)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (MoCC) (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Level of Cumulative Effect (LoCE) (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
	Successive views with Millennium, Beinneun (although with negligible influence in the view), with the area currently experienced as a landscape with occasional wind farms. Tomchrasky will be the biggest contributor to the sense of encirclement at the location, changing the perception to a landscape with wind farms, which is a significant cumulative effect.							
VP4 A887 below Bun Loyne Distance 2.8 km NE	App	Medium	High	Major	**Significant**		Major	**Significant**
	THC	Medium-High	Low	Minor	Not Significant	Low	Moderate-Minor	Not Significant
	The baseline is as described in Section 4.4 of the EIAR Volume 3: Technical Appendix 5-4: Assessment of Visual Effects. Further west on the A887 800m east of the junction with the A87 and south of the wind farm's western extent Like VP2, High Susceptibility of road users (tourists) and locally valued route to Skye but not designated as a national tourist route, consider the sensitivity of the receptor is Medium-High. View will be experienced by traveller's heading east. Three hubs and five tips in total are visible in sideways views, otherwise the development is largely screened from this location and would be further screened by the ridge north of the road from the road. Magnitude of Change is Low, the level of effect is Minor and Not Significant. The applicant's conclusion of effects doesn't appear to correspond with this viewpoint and may be an error. Successive theoretical views with Bhlaraidh and Bhlaraidh Extension, Beinneun and Beinneun Extension, and Bunloinn WFs, such that if stationary the receptor would experience the location as being within a landscape with occasional wind farms due to turbines being located and behind ridgelines and well screened however the receptor is unlikely to be stationary. As experienced from this VP, Tomchrasky will							

			Proposed Development			Cumulative, with other developments		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low	Magnitude of change (MoC) (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (LoE) (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major & Moderate are Significant. Minor & Negligible are not significant)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (MoCC) (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Level of Cumulative Effect (LoCE) (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
	contribute to a hemming in of the road by turbine blades however the array has a short geographical extent on the horizon and therefore does not lead to a change in the perception of the landscape's relationship with wind farms. The MoCC is Low, the effect is Moderate-Minor and Not Significant.							
VP5 A87 Layby above Bun Loyne Distance 3.5 km NNE	App	Medium	High	Major	**Significant**		Major	**Significant**
	THC	Medium-High	Medium-High	Major-Moderate	**Significant**	Medium-High	Major-Moderate	**Significant**
	The baseline is as described in Section 4.5 of the EIAR Volume 3: Technical Appendix 5-4: Assessment of Visual Effects. Higher Susceptibility of receptor as people stopped in the layby will be enjoying an appreciation of their surroundings but not a designated Viewpoint, also not a designated tourist route but is on the road to Skye for travellers from the south. Therefore Medium-High sensitivity. Tomchrasky turbines are consistently skylined and appear to recede to the viewer's right in the mid-distance with Ts 1-4, Ts 7-10, and T13 partially screened by a ridgeline with the remainder turbines (5) visible to the base however all appear to be within the same landscape setting formed by the northern slopes of Glen Moriston. The composition of the array appears a little loose with turbines appearing singularly, in pairs and a group of three that stacks, nevertheless the visual effects are not so jarring by virtue of there being only 14 turbines. Turbines are viewed against the more settled and less wild and rugged mountain landscape. Given relative screening and the sense of enclosure at this VP as a result of undulating landform and nearby slopes and vegetation, the array would represent a Medium-High magnitude of change and a Major-Moderate Significant level of effect (given the presence of turbines in the surrounding landscape).							

			Proposed Development			Cumulative, with other developments		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low	Magnitude of change (MoC) (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (LoE) (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major & Moderate are Significant. Minor & Negligible are not significant)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (MoCC) (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Level of Cumulative Effect (LoCE) (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
	Successive views with Beinneun and Beinneun Extension turbines and Bhlaraidh and Bhlaraidh Extension (distant hubs and tips) WFs. Tomchrasky will have the greatest influence on the view and be the largest change to the baseline condition by occupying the forward view (although Beinneun and extension would have been quite noticeable beforehand when travelling north). The addition of Tomchrasky would represent a perceptual change in the character of the view from a landscape with occasional wind farms to a landscape with wind farms at this location, which is a significant cumulative visual effect							
VP6 A87 Layby near Memorial Distance 6.7 km NNE	App	High	High	Major	**Significant**		Moderate	**Significant**
	THC	High	High	Major	**Significant**	Medium-High	Major	**Significant**
	The baseline is as described in Section 4.6 of EIAR Volume 3: Technical Appendix 5-4: Assessment of Visual Effects. High Susceptibility of receptor as people stopped in the layby will be enjoying an appreciation of their surroundings. OWESG gateway location, although it is acknowledged that this is not a designated Viewpoint and the main focus of the view would be west and southwards, also not a designated tourist route but is on the road to Skye for travellers from the south. All in, receptors here are considered to have a High sensitivity. Tomchrasky is mostly backdropped by distant low hills with just discernible receding of the array to the viewer's right. Ts 1, 7 and 8 are partially screened. The remainder turbines are visible to the base. As with VP6, all turbines appear to be within the same landscape setting formed by the northern slopes of Glen Moriston viewed in combination with the Loch Loyne damn and commercial forestry. The composition is again a little loose with turbines appearing singularly, in pairs, and groups of three with limited stacking, but due to there being 14 turbines, the resultant visual effects are not so jarring. MoC is High even with the presence of the now approved Bunloinn as turbines are not viewed in combination with other wind farm developments..							

			Proposed Development			Cumulative, with other developments		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low	Magnitude of change (MoC) (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (LoE) (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major & Moderate are Significant. Minor & Negligible are not significant)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (MoCC) (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Level of Cumulative Effect (LoCE) (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
	Successive views with Bunloinn (10 hubs and some tower sections) and Beinneun (single hub) WFs although the latter has negligible influence on the view. The now approved Bunloinn WF gives the perceptual experience of the view of a landscape with occasional wind farms, while the addition of Tomchrasky in the successive view will change that perceptual experience to a landscape with wind farms, given the change of texture and form of turbine development occupying the landform at the end of funnelled views to the receptor's right (sequentially heading north along this route, the presence of Tomchrasky removes the visual respite of turbines afforded by that landform on that section of road). The MoCC would be reduced to Medium-High with a Major and Significant LoCE.							
VP7 Old Military Road	App	Low	High	Moderate	**Significant**		Moderate	**Significant**
	THC	Medium	High	Major-Moderate	**Significant**	Medium	Moderate	**Significant**
Distance 2.9km NW	The baseline is as described in Section 4.7 of EIAR Volume 3: Technical Appendix 5-4: Assessment of Visual Effects. High susceptibility of walkers using the path which has some historical significance, although not a Core Path or the part of that landscape with the greatest value; sensitivity is considered Medium. Turbines are in forward views from this rough path and sited on open exposed ground with towers of Ts 1-10 and 13 visible although landform screens Ts 11, 12 and 14 to tip. All turbines are skylined and appear to recede, as well as drop in ground level, to the viewer's right. Relative proximity, means that turbines are viewed as a single development of large vertical and moving objects in an undifferentiated undulating receiving landscape, the MoC is High. Similar compositional issues as described above. Major-Moderate and Significant LoE as a singular development.							

			Proposed Development			Cumulative, with other developments		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low	Magnitude of change (MoC) (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (LoE) (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major & Moderate are Significant. Minor & Negligible are not significant)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (MoCC) (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Level of Cumulative Effect (LoCE) (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
	Successive views of Millennium, Beinneun and Beinneun Ext., and Bunloinn WFs however proposal is a distinctive landform and setting on the northern slopes of Glen Moriston relative to Millennium, Beinneun, Beinneun Ext. and Bunloinn, which are each associated with different landform features and are in their own distinctive settings. With Bunloinn WF approved, Tomchrasky will contribute to an encroaching sense of encirclement with turbines occupying 180° of the view with the character of the view changing from a perception of a landscape with occasional to a landscape with wind farms. Given spacings between successive views of WFs, the MoCC is Medium with a Moderate and Significant LoCE.						
VP8 Creag Bhog	App	Medium	High	Major	**Significant**		Major	**Significant**
	THC	Medium-High	Medium-High	Major-Moderate	**Significant**	Medium	Major-Moderate	**Significant**
Distance 2.9 km NE	The baseline is as described in Section 4.8 EIAR of Volume 3: Technical Appendix 5-4: Assessment of Visual Effects. Path within a Wild Land Area. Hillwalkers having a high susceptibility to WF developments while the path is included in the Scotways 2011 guide, Medium-High sensitivity. Development is visible to the viewer's left walking south along the pathway. Ts 5 and 6 to the viewer's left and T13 to the right of the array are fully screened by landform. Seven hubs visible, four tower sections visible with closest turbines and greater density of turbines in the centre of the array where turbines appear to recede and step down the slope of the hill away from the viewer and large gaps between Ts 7, 8, and 9 to the array's right, which results in the scheme appearing loose							

			Proposed Development			Cumulative, with other developments		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low	Magnitude of change (MoC) (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (LoE) (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major & Moderate are Significant. Minor & Negligible are not significant)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (MoCC) (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Level of Cumulative Effect (LoCE) (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
	compositionally. Screening and the receding drop in ground levels reduce the perception of scale of the turbines while the array is reasonably contained by the landform. There are several wind farms visible in the wider vista including in combination views with Millennium, Millenium South, and Beinneun WFs, although Tomchrasky will be the closest and most stark in the view. The Magnitude of singular Change resulting from the turbines is Medium-High resulting in a Major-Moderate and Significant LoE. Successive views with Corriegarth Cluster at a distance to the viewer's left, Dell, Stronelairg, and Cloiche WF cluster, Tomchrasky in combination with the Millenium cluster appearing in direct views (Millennium with the greater influence in comparison with Millennium South), and Beinneun and Beinneun Extension to the panning right, with Bunloinn WF further to the to the viewer's right still. The proposal does not represent a new development type in the wider landscape and view; however it does bring the influence of turbine development significantly closer to the receptor and increases the vertical spread of turbines with the Millennium schemes and reduces the visual gap between schemes, albeit Dell, Stronelairg, and Cloiche WFs exert very little influence in the view, while the outlier T7 connects the Millenniums with the Beinneun' s. Given that the development pattern is noticeably associated with the south of Glen Moriston and beyond, the addition of Tomchrasky changes the experience of the view from a view with occasional wind farms to a view of a landscape with wind farms. The MoCC is reduced to Medium, the LoCE is Major-Moderate, which remains the same as the LVIA, and Significant.							
VP9 Coire Sgreumh	App	Medium	High	Major	**Significant**		Negligible	Not Significant
	THC	Medium-High	High	Major	**Significant**	High	Major	**Significant**
Distance 7.4 km East WLA	The baseline is as described in Section 4.9 EIAR in Volume 3: Technical Appendix 5-4: Assessment of Visual Effects. The path is within a Wild Land Area, although the EIAR advises it is infrequently used, this is not clear and the receptor is still considered to be Medium-High sensitivity.							

			Proposed Development			Cumulative, with other developments		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low	Magnitude of change (MoC) (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (LoE) (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major & Moderate are Significant. Minor & Negligible are not significant)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (MoCC) (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Level of Cumulative Effect (LoCE) (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
	Focussed view as 'tunnelled' through dramatic landform where turbines occupy the central area between framing slopes but are legible as being in the adjacent valley beyond the ridgeline of the valley that opens up ahead of the viewer, while the scheme is backdropped by the southern slopes of Glen Moriston and more distant hills. 13 hubs, 14 tips visible as are large portions of the towers of 11 turbines, turbines appear large and reduce the sense of scale in the landscape, particularly as viewed in combination with the valley that opens up immediately ahead of the viewer in front of the scheme. Uneven spread, groupings, and densities across the array from this angle however the proposal is contained between lower summits. Highly notable change to the baseline view despite the Corriegarth cluster being visible directly behind it. Given that the scheme is central within the focus of the view, the MoC is High and the LoE is Major-Moderate and Significant. Tomchrasky will be visible in combination with Corriegarth and Corriegarth 2 turbines (Dell WF has negligible influence), which are visible on higher ground in the distance behind the southern slopes of Glen Moriston, which means that Tomchrasky will increase the vertical spread of turbines when experienced from this VP, the scheme will increase the influence of turbines in the view and make more distant turbines more noticeable. However, the distance and separation afforded by clear land between schemes reduces the interaction between the schemes as they are legible as being within their own settings. The addition of Tomchrasky changes the degree to which the view is characterised by development from a landscape with occasional (distant) wind farms, to a landscape with occasional wind farms, the MoCC is as assessed, High, with a Major-Moderate LoCE, and is Significant. This is in opposition to the applicant's assessment, which states that there are no other wind farms in the view.							
VP10 Sgurr nan Conbhairean	App	High	Medium	Moderate	**Significant**		Moderate	**Significant**
	THC	High	Medium	Moderate	**Significant**	Medium	Moderate	**Significant**
	The baseline is as described in Section 4.10 EIAR Volume 3: Technical Appendix 5-4: Assessment of Visual Effects.							

			Proposed Development			Cumulative, with other developments		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low	Magnitude of change (MoC) (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (LoE) (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major & Moderate are Significant. Minor & Negligible are not significant)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (MoCC) (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Level of Cumulative Effect (LoCE) (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
Distance 8.4 km East	Highly valued and often visited location with 360 panoramic view with high susceptibility of receptors, therefore high sensitivity. All turbines are visible to the base as viewed from above in the middle distance and backdropped by land. Compositionally turbines appear as three groupings reasonably legible as rows although T1 is sited somewhat alone with. Turbines appear large in comparison with nearest landscape features especially the lower summits however the scheme is well contained within the larger expansive landscape and appears within its own setting away from the valley floor. Agree with the applicant's assessment that the MoC is Medium, and the LoE is Moderate and Significant. Sweeping successive views of relatively distant WFs from Corrimony WF to the NE, through Bhlaraidh, Dunmaglass (not included in the cumulative assessment), Corriegarth, Dell, Stronelairg, Millennium, Beinneun, and the recently approved Bunloinn. Each of these clusters have potential to increase in size and density with proposals for extensions and new developments nearby. The clusters are generally viewed within their own landscape setting however from this viewpoint the receptor is aware that the wider landscape is one with occasional wind farms. It is considered that the addition of Tomchrasky will introduce turbine development to an area currently free of turbines closer to the viewer a perception of experiencing a landscape with wind farms rather than result in a landscape that is dominated by wind farm development. Therefore the MoCC is Medium and the LoCE Moderate and Significant based on the applicant's methodology.							
VP11 Beinn Bhan, Eve's Road	App	Medium	Medium	Moderate	**Significant**		Moderate	**Significant**
	THC	High	Medium-High	Major	**Significant**	Medium	Major-Moderate	**Significant**
	The baseline is as described in Section 4.11 EIAR Volume 3: Technical Appendix 5-4: Assessment of Visual Effects.							

			Proposed Development			Cumulative, with other developments		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low	Magnitude of change (MoC) (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (LoE) (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major & Moderate are Significant. Minor & Negligible are not significant)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (MoCC) (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Level of Cumulative Effect (LoCE) (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
Distance 5 km SW	The Core Path and Scotways promoted pathway at this location mean the location is of high value and that walkers using the path have a high susceptibility to change, therefore a High Sensitivity of receptor. Turbines are increasingly 'revealed' from behind the ridgeline from the viewer's right to left (or increasingly screened by landform from the viewer's left to right), with the development appearing largely as a linear scheme although with some tight grouping with stacking. Notwithstanding, there are no major concerns with the composition of the array, T1 appears as a slight outlier however is largely screened with only the tip being visible. Turbines are associated with the settled rural landscape as well as different rises, slopes, and summits with the scheme appearing perceptibly wide in the mid-distance while diminishing the scale of these foregrounding hills. Bunloinn WF will be visible in the same view behind Ts 6, 11, 12, and 14, albeit further away, although the vertical spread of turbines in the view is increased. The MoC should be categorised more as Medium-high given relative turbine scales, spread, and proximity compared to Bunloinn. The LoE is Major and Significant. Dell, Stronelairg, and Cloiche WFs to the viewer's left are not likely to exert much influence in the view given distances from the viewpoint. Agree that the nearby OHL is a prominent feature with a large influence in successive views, albeit away from the main focus of the view, which Tomchrasky interacts with. The OHL would affect the MoC not the susceptibility of the receptor to change. Successive views of Millennium, Millennium Extension, Beinneun and extension WFs, while as mentioned, Bunloinn would be viewed in combination with Tomchrasky. Millennium, Millennium Extension, Beinneun WFs are south of Glen Moriston and have a consistent development pattern of turbines skylined along ridgelines, while Tomchrasky would be consistent with Bunloinn WF with turbines of both WFs appearing to recede along sloping hillsides. Tomchrasky would increase the vertical spread of turbines in combination with Bunloinn however the addition of Tomchrasky would increase the influence of wind farm development within the view sufficient to change the character of the view by making						

			Proposed Development			Cumulative, with other developments		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low	Magnitude of change (MoC) (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (LoE) (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major & Moderate are Significant. Minor & Negligible are not significant)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (MoCC) (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Level of Cumulative Effect (LoCE) (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
	wind farms a key characteristic within views whether or not Bunloinn is built out. The MoCC is Medium, the LoCE is Major-Moderate and Significant.							
VP12 Old Military Road, Inverwick	App				Not Significant		Negligible	Not Significant
	THC	Medium-High	Low	Moderate-Minor	Not Significant	Negligible	Negligible	Not Significant
Distance 9.1 km WNW	The baseline view is not described in Section 4.12 EIAR Volume 3: Technical Appendix 5-4: Assessment of Visual Effects. The ground slopes down away from the viewer such that much of the foreground is not visible to the viewer due to the track verge obscuring the near slopes, however the track (Core Path) is visible to viewer's right. Much of the mid-distance is characterised by undulating slopes of plantation cover. To the right of the viewer the valley floor of Glen Moriston and its northern defining slopes are visible with more forestry on the lower slopes and moorland above. Above these slopes are more distant peaks including those of the Ceannacroc horseshoe and the Glen Affric NSA. Also to the right of the view are OHL towers. The location has a higher value being part of a Core Path, with users being sensitive to change however the overall sensitivity is judged to be Medium-High given the location is rural but not remote. Turbines appear as a geographically short linear array behind mid-distant forestry and in front of distant slopes and backdropping peaks, with six hubs and a further seven blades and tips theoretically visible although forestry will reduce this visibility while it remains in situ. The turbines will result in a Low Magnitude of Change being visible in successive views between Millenium WF and OHL towers, which have a larger presence, with the LoE being Moderate-Minor and Not Significant.							

			Proposed Development			Cumulative, with other developments		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low	Magnitude of change (MoC) (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (LoE) (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major & Moderate are Significant. Minor & Negligible are not significant)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (MoCC) (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Level of Cumulative Effect (LoCE) (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
	Cumulatively there would be successive views with Millennium and Millennium South WFs. Tomchrasky would interact with these schemes to reinforce the character of the view as a landscape with occasional wind farms.							
VP13 Meall Fuar 'mhonaidh	App				Not Significant			Not Significant
	THC	High	Low	Moderate-Minor	Not Significant	Low	Moderate-Minor	Not Significant
Distance 21.8 km WSW	The baseline isn't described in Section 4.13 EIAR Volume 3: Technical Appendix 5-4: Assessment of Visual Effects. Viewpoint is elevated looking WSW over undulating rocky and undifferentiated rough grazing and moorland summits and slopes, lochans, and distant peaks. There is some forestry plantation particularly on southern slopes of Glen Moriston to the viewers left. Glen Moriston is a noticeable feature that cuts in to the view from the left and separates the two areas of high ground north and south of Glen Moriston. Bhlaraidh is in forward views while Millennium, Millennium Extension, and Beinneun WFs are clustered to the viewer's left south of the Glen. Prominent summit above Loch Ness within the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA and popular with hill walkers, High sensitivity. Six hubs and a further four blades and tips of Tomchrasky will be visible either side of a low summit with turbines appearing to be on the slopes facing the Glen floor and therefore occupying visibly lower ground than the current wind farm development pattern. The scheme appears contained from this view, and of limited geographic extent at a distance. Successive views of Corriegarth, Stronelairg, Millennium and Extension, Beinneun, Bunloinn (now approved), and Bhlaraidh WFs. Although reducing the gap between Bunloinn and Bhlaraidh WFs, Tomchrasky would be sited to the left and behind of Bhlaraidh WF, which, with the majority of towers showing, is vastly more prominent than Tomchrasky would be. The MoC occasioned by Tomchrasky is low, the LoE is Moderate-Minor and Not Significant.							

			Proposed Development			Cumulative, with other developments		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low	Magnitude of change (MoC) (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (LoE) (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major & Moderate are Significant. Minor & Negligible are not significant)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (MoCC) (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Level of Cumulative Effect (LoCE) (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
	Tomchrasky would have very little influence on the cumulative picture. The addition of Tomchrasky would not contribute to the creation of a wind farm landscape, as such the MoCC occasioned by Tomchrasky is as above, Low with Moderate-Minor Not Significant LoCE.							
VP14 Toll Creagach	App				Not Significant			Not Significant
	THC	High	Low	Moderate-Minor	Not Significant	Low	Moderate-Minor	Not Significant
Distance 14 km SSE	The baseline is not described in Section 4.14 EIAR Volume 3: Technical Appendix 5-4: Assessment of Visual Effects. Elevated panoramic view from a summit looking SSE over Glen Affric with lower rounded settled hills to the viewer's left, which increase in height, rugged- and wild- ness to the south and west as the viewer pans to their right. The distinctive ridges defining Glen Moriston, Glen Shiel, and Glen Garry become more apparent in southern and western views. Theoretically, there are distant successive views of Corrimony, Corriegarth, Bhlaraidh, Stronelairg, Dell (consented), Millennium, Beinneun and Extension, and Bunloinn as the viewer pans left to right. The summit of Toll Creagach is at the boundary of Glen Affric NSA with the Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA, and, is within WLA23 Central Highlands used by hillwalkers/mountaineers, the sensitivity is High. Tomchrasky would bring the influence of turbines nearer to the NSA and to the viewer from this VP with three towers, an additional hub, and seven further tips being theoretically visible, albeit at a distance. Turbines sit comfortably behind a ridgeline with the visible blades on to the left and right of the array being less notable. Turbines are reasonably contained between low rounded summits and are backdropped by larger mountains, which maintain their dominance in the view. The scheme appears as a simple linear array when experienced from this VP. The magnitude of change is Low, the LoE is Moderate-Minor and Not Significant.							

			Proposed Development			Cumulative, with other developments		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low	Magnitude of change (MoC) (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (LoE) (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major & Moderate are Significant. Minor & Negligible are not significant)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (MoCC) (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Level of Cumulative Effect (LoCE) (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
	South of the east-west axis from Toll Creagach, this is an expansive landscape with wind farms at a distance, however the peaks, ridgelines, and valleys ensure that the mountains remain the dominant feature. wind farms and clusters are generally discrete while proposals for extensions and new developments will widen and densify existing clusters, which Tomchrasky will not do despite bringing the influence of turbine development closer to the NSA and viewer. As with the singular development, the addition of Tomchrasky is considered to result in a Low Magnitude of cumulative Change, and a Moderate-Minor Not Significant LoE.							
VP15 Creag A' Mhàim	App	High	Medium-Low	Moderate	**Significant**		Moderate	**Significant**
	THC	High	Medium-Low	Moderate	**Significant**	Medium-Low	Moderate	**Significant**
Distance 13.8 km ENE	The baseline is as described in Section 4.15 EIAR Volume 3: Technical Appendix 5-4: Assessment of Visual Effects. High sensitivity of receptor at this location. All fourteen turbines visible, T1 is an outlier but only visible to the tip being largely screened by Càrn nam Feuaich and therefore less noticeable. Otherwise 11 towers, an additional hub and an additional tip are visible. Turbines appear as a discrete group with the exception of T1, although T14 appears to be creeping away from the scheme somewhat although it fits within the rhythm of the array of alternate dense and thin groupings. The siting on lower ground in comparison to existing turbines is apparent, with the scheme occupying a lower area of ground that acts as a buffer between (and closer to) the nearer higher rugged mountains and the more distant higher ground of the hills west of Loch Ness. This siting makes the scheme more apparent in the view. Agree the MoC is considered Medium-Low with a Moderate and Significant LoE.							

			Proposed Development			Cumulative, with other developments		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low	Magnitude of change (MoC) (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (LoE) (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major & Moderate are Significant. Minor & Negligible are not significant)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (MoCC) (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Level of Cumulative Effect (LoCE) (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
	Tomchrasky will be visible in combination with Bhlaraidh and its Extension to increase the vertical spread of wind farm development in that section of the view, however the addition of Tomchrasky will not cause the landscape north of Glen Moriston to appear as a Wind Farm landscape but it would increase the influence of turbines such that this area would increase from a landscape with occasional WFs to a landscape where wind farms are a notable feature of the view. In wider successive views however, Tomchrasky, while drawing attention to wind farm development and therefore increasing the prominence of other turbines in the wider view, is unlikely to be the cause of any perception of a wind farm landscape.							
VP16 Glas Bheinn	App	Low	Medium-Low	Minor	Not Significant		Minor	Not Significant
	THC	Medium-High	Medium-Low	Moderate	**Significant**	Medium-Low	Moderate	**Significant**
Distance 17.8 km NE	The baseline is as described in Section 4.16 EIAR Volume 3: Technical Appendix 5-4: Assessment of Visual Effects. Bunloinn and Millennium South WFs now consented also. Site is within Wild Land, is accessible and used by hill walkers with a high susceptibility to change, considered to be of Medium-High Sensitivity rather than Low as specified by the applicant. All 14 turbines visible to the base occupying south facing hosting slopes of Glen Moriston and appearing large above the forestry on the lower slopes. These slopes are framed by Beinn Loinne to the west and Meall Dubh to the east and backdropped by the Ceannacroc mountains. Consequently, the turbines are prominent in the view despite the distance and represent a notable change to the character of the view with a Medium MoC and Moderate and Significant Level of visual Effect.							

			Proposed Development			Cumulative, with other developments		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low	Magnitude of change (MoC) (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (LoE) (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major & Moderate are Significant. Minor & Negligible are not significant)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (MoCC) (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Level of Cumulative Effect (LoCE) (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
	Tomchrasky will occupy an important gap between the Beinneun and Millennium cluster, whereby the array appears near continuous with Bunloinn such that its addition would result in the perception of wind farm landscape extending from the slopes of Meall Dubh, which is a Significant cumulative effect.							

Appendix 6 - Assessment against Landscape and Visual Assessment Criteria contained within Section 4 of the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance

1	Relationship between Settlements/Key locations and wider landscape respected.	Turbines are not visually prominent in the majority of views within or from settlements/Key Locations or from the majority of its access routes. _____ No key settlement location
2	Key Gateway locations and routes are respected	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. _____ There is something of a gateway location on the A887 in the approach to the Bun Loyne junction from the east, but since Scoping the development has been pulled back more from the boundary between Wooded Glen and Rugged Massif and back from the road itself such that it would not overwhelm the experience of these transitions as experienced from the road.
3	Valued natural and cultural landmarks are respected	The development does not, by its presence, diminish the prominence of the landmark or disrupt its relationship to its setting. _____ Beinn Loinne can be considered as a locally important landmark hill, effectively defining the transition from eastern to western landscapes, this is something that is appreciated more from the approach from the east on the A887 than from the northbound A87. The visualisations confirm that while the development has visibility around this area, it would not diminish the landmark role that exists.
4	The amenity of key recreational routes and ways is respected.	Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of key routes and ways. ----- The development would have some effect on local rights of way H17 and H105 which pass close to the development, but the effects would not be overwhelming. Likewise the affect on the Isles: Inverness(Invergarry) – Uig via Kyle of Lochalsh cycle route would be contained to areas of the route within the vicinity of Beinn Loinne and not overwhelm the experience of the route as a whole. Considering the A887 and A87 as recreational routes for vehicular tourism, for which they are popular despite not being designated as tourist routes, again, the effects would be largely restricted to the immediate vicinity of Beinn Loinne and the Bun

		Loyne junction and would not overwhelm the visual appeal of the routes as a whole.
5	The amenity of transport routes is respected	Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of transport routes _____ A887 and A87 are considered under Recreational routes.
6	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 ---------- While the pattern of wind energy and the turbine scale may differ from the existing cluster within the same Landscape Character Area, the differences in topography, with the proposed development occupying a long rising slope rather than a position close to a ridge, and the difference in the assemblage of surrounding Landscape Character types, sitting between Rocky Moorland Plateau and Sweeping Interlocking Peaks, rather than above glen landscapes and Rocky Moorland, creates sufficient difference, combined with distance to reduce the need to a close match in character of layout of pattern.
7	The need for separation between developments and/or clusters is respected	The proposal maintains appropriate and effective separation between developments and/ or clusters ------- The space between the existing Millennium/Beinneun cluster and the proposed development, and between Bunloinn is sufficient to maintain appropriate separation.
8	The perception of landscape scale and distance is respected	The perception of landscape scale and distance is respected _____ While there is some reduction in perception of distance in the landscape when the development is viewed from viewpoints on the A87 to the south, this is not of sufficient impact or duration to significantly effect scale and distance perception in the wider area.
9	Landscape setting of nearby wind energy developments is respected	Proposal relates well to the existing landscape setting and does not increase the perceived visual prominence of surrounding wind turbines. ---------- The proposed development does relate acceptably to the existing landscape setting and any increase in perceived visual prominence of surrounding turbines is within supportable limits.

10	Distinctiveness of Landscape character is respected	Integrity and variety of Landscape Character Areas are maintained. ---------- There is no significant diminution of the integrity and variety of landscape Character Areas arising from the development.

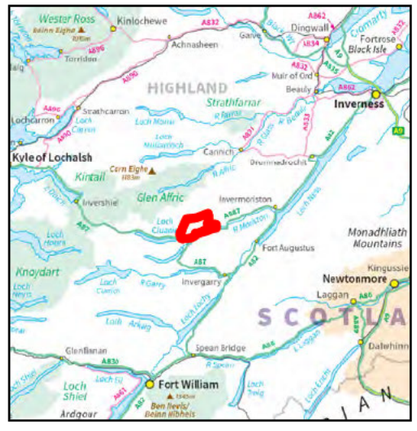
Tomchrasky Wind Farm

Tomchrasky

Figure 1-1
Site Location

Key

Site boundary



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0 0.5 1 2

Kilometres

N

Scale @ A3:
1:50,000

09/09/2022 56254/BP/003d

Drawn by: AF Checked by: TH Approved by: JM

Tomchrasky Wind Farm

Tomchrasky

Figure 3-1a
Site Layout Detailed Overview

Core Development Area

Ceannacroc Forest

222000
224000
226000
814000
812000
810000

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

Key

- Site boundary
- Proposed turbine
- Existing access track to be upgraded
- New onsite access track
- Substation and battery storage
- Construction compound
- Crane hardstanding and working areas
- Met mast
- Borrow Pit

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0 200 400 800
Metres

N

Scale @ A3:
1:20,000

23/09/2022	TL01I	56254/SL/032b
Drawn by: KM	Checked by: TH	Approved by: JM

Tomchrasky Wind Farm

Tomchrasky

Figure 3-1b
Site Layout Detailed
Core Development Area

Key

- Site boundary
- Proposed turbine
- Existing access track to be upgraded
- New onsite access track
- Substation and battery storage
- Construction compound
- Crane hardstanding and working areas
- Met mast
- Borrow Pit

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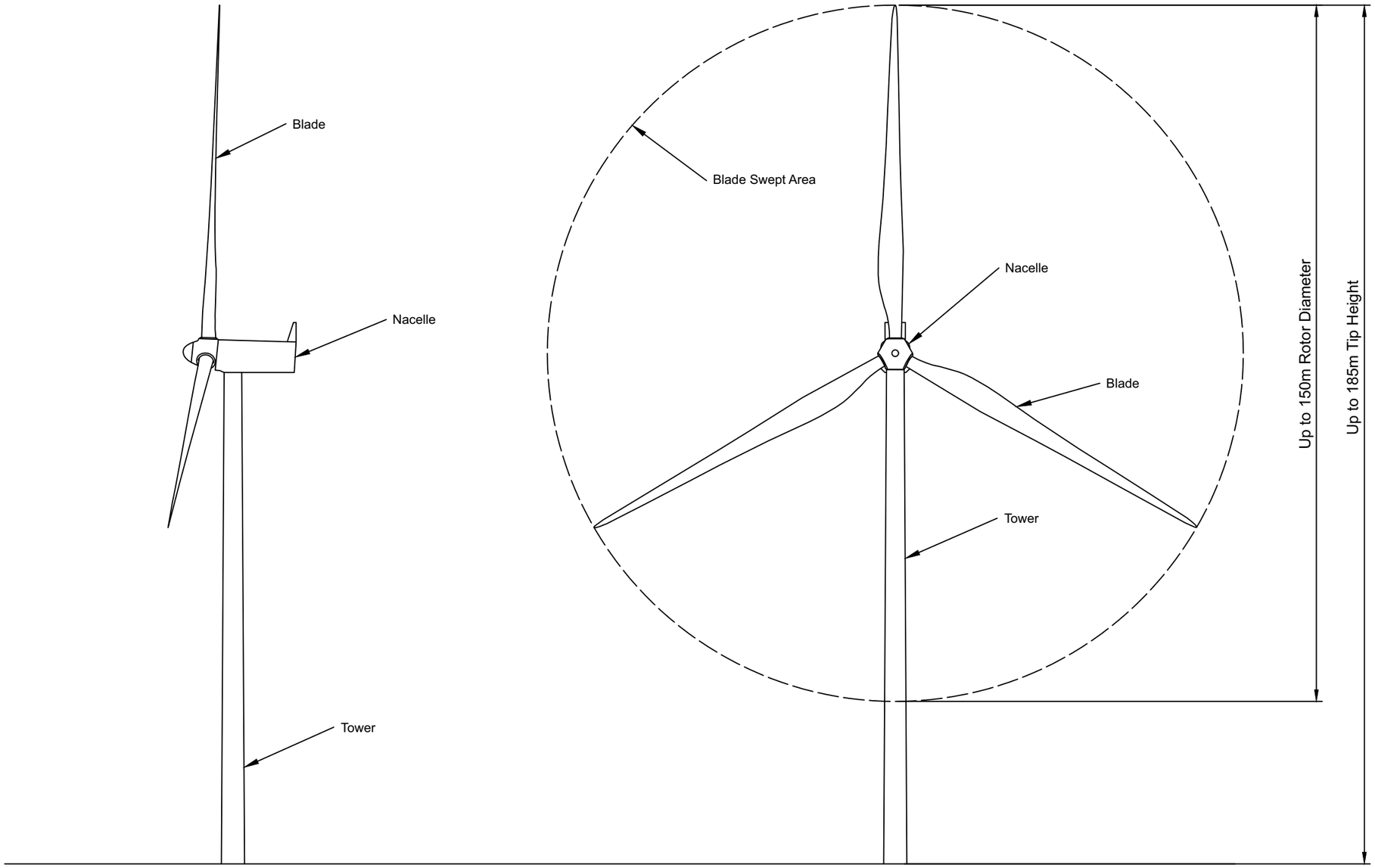
0 200 400 800
Metres

N

Scale @ A3:
1:13,000

23/09/2022 TL01I 56254/SL/032b
Drawn by: KM Checked by: TH Approved by: JM



Tomchrasky Wind Farm

Tomchrasky

Figure 3-3
Indicative Turbine

Scale@ A3: 1:1000

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15/08/2022 56254_CS_C001a

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